



KENSINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
AGENDA
Thursday, June 25, 2026, 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.
Kensington Community Center - Meeting Room 3,
59 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707 (and hybrid)

How to Submit Public Comments:

Prior to the meeting: Members of the public may submit public comment by emailing the Chair and Board Clerk by emailing: public.comment@kensingtonfire.org. by two hours prior to the meeting start time. Such comments will be noted as received and their contents orally summarized; however, if you attend the meeting, you will need to make your comment during the meeting.

During the meeting: Public comment will be taken on each agenda item, and comment on issues not on the agenda will be taken at the beginning of the meeting (*regular meetings only*). Members of the public who attend the meeting either in-person or via Zoom are allowed to provide public comment verbally with a maximum allowance of 3 minutes per individual comment, subject to the Chair's discretion. Each member of the public will be allotted the same maximum number of minutes to speak as set by the Chair, except that public speakers using interpretation assistance will be allowed to testify for twice the amount of the public testimony time limit (California Government Code section 54954.3(a)).

In-person: At points in the meeting when the meeting chair requests public comment, members of the public participating in-person can simply raise their hand to be recognized.

Via Zoom: If participating via internet, please click the "raise hand" feature located within the Zoom application screen. If connected via telephone, please dial "*9" (star, nine).

Accommodations: To enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title 1), if you need special assistance to participate, please email public.comment@kensingtonfire.org 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Agenda and supplemental materials: This agenda is available on the KFPD website under the relevant meeting date: <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/emergency-preparedness-committee>. Please note that supplemental materials will be posted on the website with the agenda as soon as they are available prior to the meeting. Additional information and/or materials may be presented at the meeting itself.

PLEASE NOTE: The District will use Zoom to allow virtual access to this meeting. This additional means of access is provided as a courtesy to the public and is not required by law. The meeting will continue to be conducted at the physical address provided above regardless of any interruption or failure of the Zoom transmission.

Hybrid Meeting Option Internet Address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87249886164?pwd=gYtgTuk36auhDOdYKuWpU2JsR4SiKP.1>

Telephone Access:

(669) 444-9171

Zoom Webinar ID: 872 4988 6164

Passcode: 185972

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Directors: Director Madugo, Director Paul, Director Spath and Director Watt
Public Members: Kay Blonz, Katie Gluck, Annette McCoubrey, Paul Moss and Laura Westphal
Staff: David Aranda Interim General Manager
Consultants: Mary Morris-Mayorga
Raychel Jackson
Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Under “Public Comment,” the public may address the Committee on any subject not listed on the agenda. Please address your comments to the Committee and not to staff and/or the audience. Each speaker may address the Committee once under Public Comment for a limit of three minutes. The public will be given an opportunity to speak on each agenda item and once the public comment portion of any item on this agenda has been closed by the Committee, no further comment from the public will be permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The Committee cannot act on items not listed on the agenda and, therefore, cannot respond to non-agenda issues brought up under Public Comment other than to provide general information. Committee members will also have an opportunity to comment on items not on the agenda.

3. ADOPTION OF CONSENT ITEMS

a. **Approval of Minutes** for the regular meeting on May 28, 2026

4. OLD BUSINESS – None

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Receive status updates on 2026 EPC Work Plan progress - Valenzuela**
- b. **Discuss and finalize recommendation to the Board on rebranding the Fire Plug**
- c. **Discuss school evacuation concerns**

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The list of future agenda items discussed during the meeting will be summarized here.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting of the Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Kensington Community Service District is scheduled for July 23,2026 at 4:00pm in person (Committee members) at the Kensington Community Center with hybrid option for attendees (guest speakers, public), unless noticed otherwise per the Brown Act.



**KENSINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

DATE/TIME: May 28, 2026, 4:00PM

Agenda Item 03a

LOCATION: Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue, Kensington (and hybrid)

PRESENT: Directors: Director Madugo, Director Paul, and Director Watt
Absent: Director Spath
Public Members Kay Blonz, Katie Gluck, Annette McCoubrey, Paul Moss, and Laura Westphal
Absent Staff: David Aranda, Interim General Manager
Consultants: Mary Morris-Mayorga
Raychel Jackson
Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Director Madugo called the regular meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and confirmed the roll call.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (00:01:05)

3. ADOPTION OF CONSENT ITEMS

a. Approval of Minutes EPC special meeting: 5/14/2026

Moved/Seconded: Paul / Watt **Action:** Approved special minutes of the 5/14/2026 meetings **Ayes:** Paul, Madugo, Watt, Blonz, Gluck, Moss, McCoubrey and Westphal **Noes:** None **Abstain:** None **Absent:** Spath
Video Time Stamped: 00:17:14

4. OLD BUSINESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Receive status updates on 2026 EPC Work Plan progress (00:17:57)

b. Discuss and provide recommendation to the Board on rebranding the Fire Plug (01:23:14)

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM (01:35:26)

7. ADJOURNMENT: Director Madugo adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Kensington Community Services District is scheduled for June 25, 2026 at 4:00pm in person (Committee members) at the Kensington Community Center with hybrid option for attendees (guest speakers, public), unless noticed otherwise per the Brown Act.

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Raychel Jackson

These minutes were approved at the Emergency Preparedness Committee Meeting of the Kensington Community Services District on June 25, 2026.

Attest: _____
Emergency Preparedness Committee Member



KENSINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
Emergency Preparedness Committee
June 25, 2026

KCSD Board of Directors approved on February 12, 2026

2026 Emergency Preparedness Committee Work Plan		
Work Plan Goal/Project	Assigned Members	Steps/Status
1. Red Flag Day Parking - staff to facilitate a workshop with Fire and Police Chiefs and the EPC to arrive at consensus on an approach to be submitted for Board approval.	Blonz, Moss, Watt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of workshop
2. Create two grant tiers (small vs. large) for Board approval and initiate program for FY 2026-27.	Blonz, Moss, Spath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved • 3/1 grant opens
3. Secure \$15k BOD approved funding and develop Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP) Pilot Program.	Blonz, McCoubrey, Watt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15k approved • Develop mesh program
4. Increase coordination and awareness of vegetation removal programs through Firewise leads, block presentations, and FPO inspections.	Madugo, Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas
5. Support Firewise leadership development and resident participation in Kensington Firewise Strategic Plan objectives.	Moss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
6. Determine next steps for Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs).	Gluck, Madugo, Spath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
7. Reinforce the community's understanding of the Red Flag Day Banners and improve the community's understanding of Watch Duty to promote early pre-evacuation.	Gluck, Moss, Westphal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
8. Increase earthquake preparedness.	Gluck, Madugo, McCoubrey, Moss, Westphal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
9. Establish a strong CERT program partnership in Kensington.	staff/consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD



Kensington Community Services District

Prepared by: Emergency Preparedness Coordinator | Johnny Valenzuela

Submitted to: Kensington Community Services District – Emergency Preparedness Committee

Date: June 25, 2026

Reference Program: HVRR Grant Program — Proposed Enhancements to the Hazardous Vegetation Removal Reimbursement Grant Program (HVRR)

Executive Summary

This report presents three recommended enhancements to the Kensington Community Services District's Hazardous Vegetation Removal Reimbursement (HVRR) Grant Program. These enhancements are designed to address emerging fire risk factors unique to Kensington — specifically eucalyptus concentrations, evacuation route safety, and the long-term sustainability of grant participation. The recommendations are grounded in community feedback, operational observations, and coordination with regional fire safety partners. Each item is submitted for committee consideration and direction.

1. Development of a Dedicated Eucalyptus Program

Background and Justification

An emerging body of concern within the community and fire safety field highlights eucalyptus as a distinct and elevated fire risk. Eucalyptus groves concentrated west of Arlington Avenue pose a direct threat to residential safety and, critically, to the evacuation corridors relied upon by nearly all Kensington residents. These trees present unique hazards: falling debris increases ground-level ignition risk, continuous canopy cover creates fuel ladders, and their oil-rich foliage promotes rapid fire spread.

The HVRR program's current structure is not purpose-built to address the scale or specificity of eucalyptus management. Inquiries from residents about eucalyptus removal and support have increased, and while the program's reimbursement threshold has recently been expanded, no sufficient or sustainable pathway

exists for community-level eucalyptus management. A dedicated program would focus community dialogue, structure grant applications toward a defined goal, and establish the organizational framework needed to pursue county and state funding.

Recommended Actions

- **Develop a formal Eucalyptus Program** separate from the general HVRR framework, with its own scope, eligibility criteria, and funding strategy.
- **Incorporate the Berkeley Program model** as a reference for debris thinning and grove management, adapting it to Kensington's specific needs.
- **Conduct community engagement** to assess the scope of eucalyptus on private property, gauge willingness to participate in mitigation, and educate residents on the fire risk profile of these trees.
- **Pursue targeted grant applications** at the county and state level using the formal program as evidence of a structured community approach — a key requirement for competitive grant consideration.
- **Coordinate formally with Firesafe Kensington** to leverage their eucalyptus mapping work and tap into their network of East Bay Fire Safe partners who have completed analogous projects. Their expertise and existing data represent a significant asset for establishing best practices.

Program Scope Considerations

Mitigation activities should address the full spectrum of eucalyptus hazard reduction, including:

- Debris removal around trees to eliminate ground-level ignition sources
- Limbing to reduce canopy fire risk and ladder fuel continuity
- Strategic thinning to break up continuous fuel and increase spacing between trees
- Ongoing maintenance scheduling to sustain progress over time, paired with chipping programs

The cost burden on individual residents is substantial. A formal program structure allows the District to apply for grant funding that requires demonstrated programmatic intent, rather than relying solely on case-by-case reimbursement.

2. Qualifying Vegetation Removal for Off-Street Parking and Evacuation Route Improvements

Background and Justification

Narrow roadways throughout Kensington create a persistent tension between residential parking needs and evacuation route capacity. With the District actively working with the County to establish no-parking restrictions during red flag conditions, community awareness and compliance depend in part on residents having viable off-street parking alternatives. Vegetation encroachment on private parcels adjacent to roadways increasingly limits the creation of those alternatives.

There is a clear public safety rationale for classifying vegetation that impedes off-street parking capacity or restricts evacuation route clearance as hazardous — thereby qualifying it for HVRR reimbursement.

Recommended Action

It is recommended that any HVRR application seeking reimbursement for vegetation removal that would:

1. Create or expand off-street parking to support red flag day compliance, or
2. Improve sight lines, road shoulder width, or access along a designated evacuation route

These applications may be referred to the Emergency Preparedness Committee Subcommittee responsible for Work Plan Item 4: *"Increase coordination and awareness of vegetation removal program through Firewise leads, block presentations and FPO inspections."*

The Subcommittee would evaluate whether the vegetation qualifies as hazardous under this public safety rationale and, upon confirmation, authorize eligibility for HVRR reimbursement. This referral process ensures appropriate oversight while creating a clear pathway for residents whose properties can contribute meaningfully to community-level evacuation and parking safety.

3. Revising Limitations on Prior Grant Recipients

Background and Justification

Residents who have previously received HVRR awards are currently ineligible to reapply, effectively rendering the program's utility for households with recurring or large-scale vegetation management needs de facto expired. Larger lots, steep properties, and parcels with dense growth often cannot achieve meaningful fire risk reduction within a single funding cycle. As currently structured, the program is finite in its community-wide impact — every applicant awarded becomes a permanently excluded applicant.

Allowing reapplication — with clear prioritization rules — extends the program's long-term value without displacing new applicants.

Recommended Reapplication Framework

Eligibility: Prior recipients may reapply. No award is guaranteed, and reapplication is contingent on the availability of funds after all new applicants are served.

Prioritization Hierarchy:

Priority Tier	Applicant Type	Selection Method
1st	New applicants (no prior award)	First-come, first-served
2nd	Reapplicants (prior award, oldest award year first)	By original award year, then by reapplication date
Lowest	Reapplicants from the most recent award year	Last prioritized within reapplicant pool

This structure ensures the program continues to expand its reach to new participants while creating an equitable and transparent pathway for returning applicants.

Shortening Time to Approval

The current application review cycle creates administrative bottlenecks and delays the time between application and project completion. It is recommended to:

- **Adopt a first-come, first-served rolling model** that awards funding throughout the fiscal year until resources are depleted. This eliminates batch review delays, speeds project execution, and gives applicants timely confirmation of their status.
- **Engage certified volunteers for site validations.** CAL FIRE-certified home hardening and defensible space assessors — typically Firewise Kensington leads or Firesafe Kensington participants — are well-positioned to conduct site visits that confirm address and vegetation eligibility. Volunteers validate only the property address and qualifying vegetation; no personal or financial information is shared or accessed. This approach:
 - Reduces administrative cost and staff workload
 - Increases volunteer engagement and program ownership
 - Accelerates the validation step without compromising accuracy

- **Reserve subcommittee review for edge cases.** The majority of applications clearly meet qualification criteria. Only those requiring further context or judgment should be escalated to the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee. This keeps the committee's time focused on decisions that genuinely require deliberation.

Summary of Recommended Actions for Committee Direction

#	Enhancement	Recommended Next Step
1	Eucalyptus Program	Direct staff to develop program framework; initiate coordination with Firesafe Kensington
2	Off-Street Parking / Evacuation Route Vegetation	Authorize subcommittee referral pathway for qualifying HVRR applications
3	Reapplication & Process Reform	Approve reapplication framework and first-come, first-served rolling award model



Kensington Community Services District

DATE: June 25, 2026

TO: Emergency Preparedness Committee

FROM: Johnny Valenzuela, Consultant/Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

SUBJECT: Recommendation to the Board on rebranding the Fire Plug

Purpose

This memorandum presents consolidated feedback from Emergency Preparedness Committee members regarding the future of the Fire Plug publication, including its name, purpose, cadence, contributors, and content structure. The feedback was gathered to inform a formal recommendation to the Kensington Community Services District Board as the District evaluates how best to strengthen emergency preparedness communications for the community.

The committee's overall direction is clear: the existing publication should evolve into a more purposeful, preparedness-centered communication tool that better reflects Kensington's broader resilience goals. Committee feedback also suggests that the current "Fire Plug" title no longer fully aligns with the publication's expanded scope, which now extends beyond fire prevention to include earthquake readiness, emergency self-reliance, and neighborhood preparedness.

Background

The Fire Plug has historically served as a district communication piece focused primarily on fire prevention and related public safety information. Based on committee input, the publication's role appears to have

broadened over time, creating an opportunity to revisit its branding, editorial focus, and delivery model to better support resident preparedness, community engagement, and potential alignment with related grant objectives.

The committee was asked to provide feedback on six areas: publication name, annual budget, print and digital cadence, publication objective, contributors, and recurring segments. Responses reflected both broad areas of consensus and some differences in preferred format and channel strategy.

Summary of Committee Feedback

1. Publication name

Committee feedback indicates substantial support for renaming the publication if it is intended to cover all-hazards emergency preparedness rather than fire alone. Members noted that “Fire Plug” may feel too narrow or no longer fully descriptive of the publication’s intended role.

Suggested direction favors a title that is direct, clear, and explicitly tied to emergency preparedness. One committee member recommended a name such as an emergency preparedness bulletin or newsletter, while the detailed concept proposal included several alternative titles centered on readiness, resilience, and neighborhood connection.

2. Publication objective

The strongest area of agreement is that the publication should not function as a general community newsletter. Committee members generally believe that role is already served by existing channels such as the Outlook or KCSD newsletter.

Instead, respondents support a publication that serves as a preparedness reminder, reference guide, and community engagement tool focused on helping residents understand what the District, EPC, and partner organizations are doing, as well as what individuals and households should do to prepare for wildfire, earthquakes, and other local emergencies.

Several responses also emphasized that messaging should avoid fear-based framing and instead encourage practical action, participation, and confidence. The detailed concept proposal specifically recommends a community-centered model that combines expert guidance with resident stories and practical, seasonal preparedness steps.

3. Frequency, format, and distribution

Most committee responses support maintaining a limited print cadence, with twice-yearly publication generally viewed as acceptable if the piece remains concise and strategic. Spring and fall were identified as especially logical windows because they align with seasonal hazards and preparedness planning cycles.

At the same time, one committee member recommended reconsidering whether a separate publication is needed at all, suggesting that emergency preparedness content could instead be incorporated into the KCSD quarterly newsletter and supplemented by articles in the Outlook and updates on the KCSD website. This view was grounded in concern about information overload and message duplication.

In contrast, the detailed proposal recommends a quarterly model with a shorter, denser format of approximately 6 to 8 pages, organized around seasonal themes such as spring preparation, summer wildfire and heat, fall readiness, and winter recovery. That proposal argues a quarterly cadence would keep preparedness visible year-round while still allowing adequate production time and avoiding the repetitiveness of monthly messaging.

There is also support for improving the publication's digital accessibility. One response recommends a prominent front-page location on the consolidated website so residents can easily find emergency preparedness content and related resources.

4. Budget and production scope

Committee feedback suggests the estimated budget range of \$2,000 to \$3,500 per issue may be acceptable, although not all respondents felt they had enough production information to evaluate the amount with confidence. One member simply described the estimate as acceptable, while another tied budget appropriateness to page count and publication frequency.

Across the responses, there is a clear preference for a concise format rather than a long publication. Suggestions ranged from a maximum of two pages to approximately two to four pages per issue for a twice-yearly print version, while the more detailed quarterly concept proposed six to eight pages if the publication were redesigned for a different cadence and format.

5. Contributors and editorial approach

Committee members generally support a multi-contributor model rather than a publication written solely from a district perspective. Recommended contributors include District staff, Fire and Police personnel, EPC

representatives, CERT, Firewise and Firesafe participants, community organizations, and subject matter experts.

There is also support for some form of editorial oversight, whether through an EPC or Board subcommittee, to ensure the publication remains concise, aligned with its purpose, and disciplined in tone and topic selection. The detailed proposal further recommends adopting a set of editorial principles to guide future content decisions and prevent the publication from drifting into a generic newsletter format.

6. Recurring segments and content priorities

Committee members consistently pointed toward recurring segments that emphasize practical preparedness and shared responsibility. Examples include what the District is doing to prepare for wildfire and earthquakes, what residents should do to prepare, seasonal reminders, Firewise updates, evacuation information, and community preparedness spotlights.

The detailed proposal expands this concept considerably, suggesting recurring segments such as a Letter from the Chief, CAL FIRE, and grant information, a Neighbor Spotlight, Skill of the Season, a simple “Ready in 30 Minutes” action item, Ask the Experts, a community calendar, and resident go-bag or kit profiles. It also recommends that final recurring segments be selected only after the publication’s core editorial principles and mission are formally defined.

Key Findings

Several conclusions emerge from the committee’s feedback.

- First, there is strong support for clarifying the mission of the publication before finalizing name, format, or recurring sections. The most consistent view is that the publication should exist to promote household and neighborhood preparedness, not to serve as a general community newsletter.
- Second, there is meaningful support for rebranding because the current title does not fully reflect an all-hazards preparedness focus.
- Third, there is broad support for concise, high-value content with a practical orientation, even though members differ on whether that content should live in a dedicated publication or be folded into existing district communications.
- Fourth, the more detailed proposal demonstrates an opportunity to reposition the publication as a stronger community engagement tool that builds capability, visibility, and measurable participation over time.

Recommendation

Based on the committee's feedback, the District may wish to consider the following course of action:

1. Confirm the publication's mission as a preparedness-focused communication tool dedicated to resident readiness, neighborhood resilience, and public awareness of local preparedness efforts.
2. Direct staff and the EPC to develop a rebranding recommendation, including title options that clearly communicate an all-hazards emergency preparedness purpose.
3. Maintain a concise publication format and evaluate two viable operating models:
 - a dedicated preparedness publication issued twice yearly with strong digital support; or
 - a redesigned quarterly preparedness format if production capacity, budget, and editorial resources can support it.
4. Establish editorial principles and an oversight process to ensure content remains practical, resident-centered, and aligned with the publication's mission.
5. Build the content model around a small number of recurring segments that combine district updates, resident actions, seasonal preparedness, and community participation.
6. Strengthen digital integration by placing the publication and related preparedness resources prominently on the KCSD website.
7. Incorporate measurable engagement tools, such as QR code surveys or reader response mechanisms, so the District can evaluate whether the publication is improving awareness, preparedness behavior, and community connectedness.¹¹

Attachment and Acknowledgment

One committee response stands apart because of its level of detail and strategic development. The submission titled **Kensington Fire Plug – Rebranding Suggestion 2026** by Laura Westphal provides a comprehensive concept proposal addressing naming, editorial direction, cadence, audience engagement, recurring content, and performance measurement.

Because of the depth of that contribution, it should be acknowledged separately and included as an attachment to the packet rather than folded entirely into the general summary. This approach gives the Board a concise synthesis of overall committee feedback while preserving the full detail of a substantive individual proposal for separate review.

Kensington Fire Plug – Rebranding Suggestion 2026

-Laura Westphal

Publication name:

Does "Fire Plug" still resonate, or should we rebrand with a new name that better reflects the publication's purpose?

Yes, if the intention is to not only focus on Fire, the title is constraining and maybe a little misleading. Looking back on past publications, it seems like the intent was originally focused solely on Fire prevention and evolved into a larger scope.

One question raised during the last EPC meeting was, "What is the mission or objective of the publication?" If given creative freedom, I would envision a publication focused on helping residents become more prepared, connected, informed, capable, and resilient through practical guidance, community engagement, and local expertise.

The past publications came from people that represent the District like the Fire Chief, Fire District staff, Board member and had a more here is information from the District a top down approach. I think there is an opportunity to evolve towards a more here is how our community prepares (community centered) model or could prepare that combines expert guidance with resident stories help guide that effort.

Personally, I'm not a fan of fear-based preparedness messaging. Fear and obligation often lead to disengagement. Instead, I would like the publication to inspire curiosity, participation, and capability. The message should be that prepared people are interesting, capable, creative, connected, and engaged in their community. That kind of positive encouragement is what helps people move from awareness to action. The only fear I would want to push is a FOMO (fear of missing out) and a spark desire to be a participant of our community efforts.

Suggested Titles: **The Kensington Readiness Exchange** / The Neighborhood Signal /The Readiness Journal / The Resilience Report / The Resilience Signal /Kensington Ready / The Neighborhood Dispatch

Sub Titles:

Practical Preparedness for Everyday Life.

Information, Preparedness, and Community Action.

Kensington's Preparedness & Resilience Quarterly.

Tagline: Every issue helps you learn one skill, complete one action, and strengthen one connection.

Annual budget:

Estimated range is \$2,000–\$3,500 per issue, depending on page count; is this appropriate given our goals?

I would need more information on how it's currently being produced. The proposed budget may be appropriate, but I'm not sure what is being outsourced and where it's printed, pictures or not or how it's distributed etc..

If the publication moves to a quarterly cadence, I would consider exploring a more streamlined format with denser content and a page count closer to 6–8 pages rather than 12–16 pages. This may allow us to increase frequency while remaining mindful of budget and volunteer capacity.

Print & digital cadence:

Currently mailed twice a year; should frequency or format change?

I would recommend moving it to be a quarterly publication with the thought that it is to keep preparedness visible year-round which is a stronger framework for encouraging ongoing action, if it's just to get more information out then we have the Outlook for that.

With quarterly issues, I would want it to align with seasons and preparedness cycles, also it helps people to focus on one seasonal priority at a time, example;

Spring = Theme: Build & Prepare

Summer = Theme: Wildfire & Extreme Heat

Fall = Theme: Readiness Month & Self-Reliance

Winter = Theme: Recovery & Community

Reasons:

- Allows enough time to create quality content.
- Gives people time to actually act.
- Aligns with seasonal risks.
- Doesn't overwhelm staff and volunteers.
- Differentiates from the Outlook.

Monthly preparedness content often becomes repetitive.

National Preparedness Month is September, wouldn't it be cool to introduce the rebranding with a first new addition for Fall?

Publication objective:

Should this function as a community newsletter, an editorial, a preparedness reminder tool, a community engagement piece, or some combination?

I envision a community publication supported by expert contributors, so a combo of both and like I mentioned before not a District directive. Something to help Kensington residents build practical preparedness skills, stronger neighborhood connections, and greater self-reliance through actionable, seasonal guidance.

We are fortunate to have a lot of significant professionals with technical knowledge, as well as well-educated residents, older adults with deep expertise, and a community that generally

responds better to competence. I think there is a foundational desire to have positive impact growth and participation.

If our desired outcomes are that we want our residents to become, more prepared, connected, informed, capable, and less dependent on outside rescue, then the publication should consistently reflect and reinforce those values.

Rather than focusing solely on risks, it should focus on building capability, encouraging volunteerism, strengthening neighborhood networks, and helping residents understand both what they can do and what their community is doing.

Contributors:

Who should be writing and contributing content — staff, community members, partner agencies, fire departments?

I would encourage a mix of contributors, including District staff, CERT members, EPC representatives, community members, subject matter experts, partner agencies, and local organizations.

A diversity of contributors would help ensure the publication remains informative, relevant, and representative of the broader community.

Recurring segments:

What standing components should every issue include? For example, a Firewise Community Spotlight highlighting local Firewise USA recognized neighborhoods, seasonal preparedness reminders, evacuation updates, etc.

Before defining recurring content, we might want establish and to anchor into a set of Editorial Principals to help give guidance to future content decisions and maintain consistency over time. Then it also keeps focus on the objective and prevents drifting into something it shouldn't be. 3-6 at most, like; Shared Responsibility (what agencies are doing and what individuals can do) and place a segment based on that. This is something I would want a collaborative vote on with the EPC.

Preparedness is not one-size-fits-all. Different households have different needs, resources, and priorities. The publication should acknowledge that reality while helping residents take practical steps forward.

I also believe transparency is important. Many residents do not know what preparedness efforts are already underway at the District, EPC, CERT, or community level. While that information may be available elsewhere, many people will not actively seek it out. The publication provides an opportunity to bring those efforts directly to residents in an accessible format.

People remember stories far more than checklists, but I still think checklist are helpful and giving a reference for resources will cast a broader net of enabling different learning and action types. I think people want to know how to prepare, but without turning their home into a bunker.

Some suggested segment:

Letter from the Chief (love this, don't change!)

CAL FIRE & Grants

Information and reminders for eligibility for CAL FIRE and related grant programs. Maybe comments and feedback from those who have participated and its impact

Neighbor Spotlight

Feature:

- CERT/Firewise volunteers
- Block leaders
- Local preparedness champions
- Senior Residents- Aging in place preparedness

Skill of the Season

Examples:

- Fire extinguisher use
- Water purification
- Shutting off utilities
- First aid
- Radio basics

Ready in 30 Minutes

One simple preparedness project.

Ask the Experts

Fire Chief, CERT, EPC, Public Works, PG&E, Red Cross.

Ask the community to send in question to be addressed and answered for the next publication

Community Calendar and Due Dates

Grant programs

Training.

Drills.

Volunteer opportunities.

Events.

Ready Like Me/Go Bag Spotlight (3 people)

What's In Your Kit? Showcasing actual residents and what they have/love.

Gear, organization, personalization, and a chance to peeking into other people's systems, helps others solve problems that they might have

Could feature:

- Go bags
- Pet kits
- Car kits
- Medical kits

- Kid kits
- Mobility devices

What's New

Tech, Gadgets and latest Devices

Reviews, with a rating system (give it blank out of blank things-)

What would social media engagement look like other than making an online version? Instagram, Nextdoor and maybe Facebook?

Lastly, one thing I would like to propose is to find a way to measure success metrics of this change with the community (not a few opinions based on individual bias or anecdotal feedback).

Awareness, are people seeing it? Engagement, are people interacting? (reader submissions/surveys, go bag volunteers, event registration.)

QR Polls and see what the submission rate is.

Example:

Annual or Quarterly Community Survey

Ask:

- Do you have a go bag?
- Do you have 2 weeks of water?
- Do you know your evacuation zone?
- Are you signed up for alerts?
- Have you attended a preparedness event?

Then repeat.

Now you can show:

Go bag ownership increased from X% to X%.

Or Poll

Community Connectedness

Ask annually:

Do you know at least three neighbors you could contact during an emergency?

Yes / No



Kensington Community Services District

DATE: June 25, 2026

TO: Emergency Preparedness Committee

SUBMITTED: Danielle Madugo, Director

STAFF REPORT: David Aranda, Interim General Manager & Mary A. Morris-Mayorga, Consultant

SUBJECT: School Evacuation Concerns

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for the Emergency Preparedness Committee's discussion of school evacuation concerns.

BACKGROUND (provided by staff):

The Emergency Preparedness Committee held a special roundtable meeting on March 11, 2026 focused on Red Flag Days including evacuation. Chief Saylor specifically addressed the question of what the district should recommend to other entities, including the school. Chief Saylor responded, "...we don't have authority over everybody, specifically the schools. We don't have authority over the school district. The only person that can close the school is the school district, not the police chief, not the fire chief." The best venue for voicing concerns would be directly to the school district since the district does not have authority over the school; therefore, it would not be appropriate for the district to make recommendations based on the chief's discussion at that meeting. The chiefs discussed related school concerns raised during this meeting (beginning at 08:21 of the Zoom recordings) that can be reviewed here:

<https://www.kensingtonfire.org/2026-03-11-emergency-preparedness-committee-special-roundtable-meeting>

INTRODUCTION (provided by Director Madugo):

Kensington Elementary School (KES) recently adopted new safety protocols for Extreme Fire Hazard or Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS) Days. Those safety plans and the potential evacuation of KES do not occur in a vacuum; it directly impacts not only their students but the safety of the surrounding Kensington residents. The goal of this item is to identify the broader impacts of KES's new safety protocols, e.g., closure and evacuation, and how they relate to resident safety, evacuation impacts, resources at the school for residents, and finally incorporate them into the EPC's "Evacuation is your responsibility campaign," and other ongoing EPC work plan objectives, as applicable.

Attached is a PDF with a few pages from KES's Comprehensive School Safety Plan and Berkeley Fire's Red Flag rubric to aid the discussion. A link to the entire 108-page of KES's Comprehensive School

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Safety Plan is provided below for those who might want more information:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hq8-jYAdDNRIK6wKwsvl1RznaINldgiY/view?usp=sharing>

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact identified from this item.

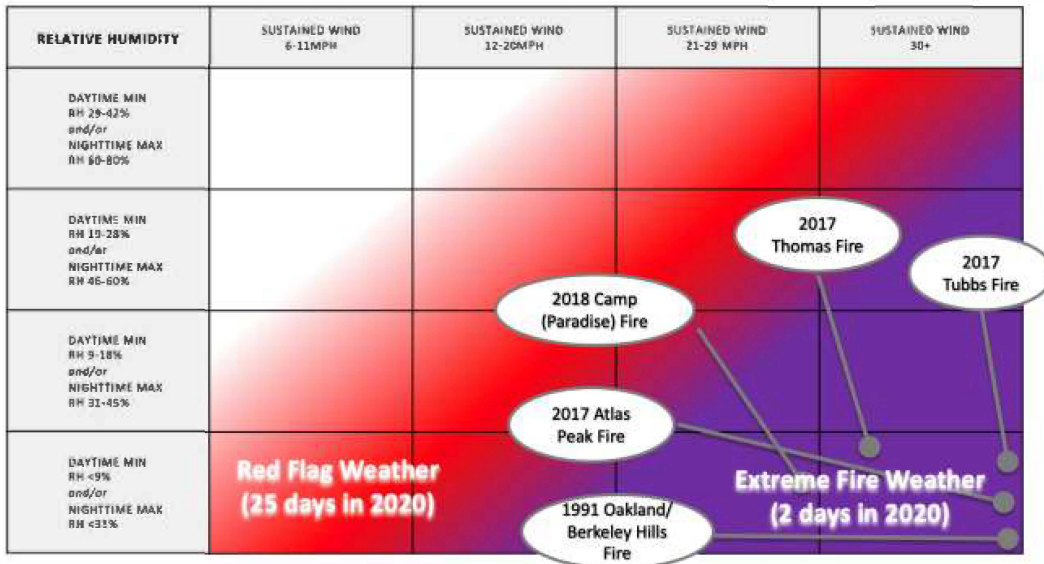
EXHIBIT(S):

- Berkeley's Recommendations Based on Research
- School Site Safety Plan, Kensington Elementary School - Section 5: Emergency Response Actions

BERKELEY'S RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON RESEARCH

The Berkeley Fire Department's recommendation to leave during Extreme Fire Weather is based on research and past fires. The 1991 Oakland/Berkeley Hills fire—and many recent major fires in California—started during similar weather.

Extreme Fire Weather means very high winds and very low humidity. These conditions make fires more likely and more dangerous.



Many major fires in California started during Extreme Fire Weather. Berkeley Fire Department recommends leaving the hills during this weather, which is typically forecast once every few years.

Berkeley's evacuation instructions use findings from the 2025 Evacuation Time Study. Learn more about evacuations in Berkeley by visiting the [Evacuation StoryMaps](#) or downloading the [Evacuation Time Study](#).

Berkeley also performed an analysis to comply with State evacuation planning requirements. Download the [Access Impaired Neighborhoods Analysis](#) and the [Evacuation Route Safety, Capacity, and Viability Analysis](#) to learn more.

Section 5: Emergency Response Actions

The following emergency response actions refer to the Principal, Site Manager, or appropriate designee as the “School Administrator.” In addition, Public Information Officer (PIO) for the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is referred to as the Director, Communications and each site must assign an Emergency Planning Coordinator who is responsible for emergency response actions at each individual school site.

Every effort has been made to address the requirements for the special needs population, where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the school administrator, individual teachers, and other classroom aides to ensure that hearing, sight, mobility impaired students, as well as other special needs students, are accounted for and receive appropriate instructions.

Emergency Notification Procedures:

Purpose:

To ensure critical information is shared with the departments and positions responsible for providing support and to communicate relevant information with senior leaders and elected officials.

Criteria:

- Power outage
- Fire
- Lockdown / suspicion of weapons
- Students involved in a shooting (includes weekend activity)
- Hospitalization (Student or staff injury requiring medical assistance.), 5150
- Police Activity / Student or Staff arrest
- Missing student
- Schoolwide impact
- Pandemic response (Covid-19)
- Could it make the news?

Notification Process:

1. Immediate notification:
 - a. Principal to Executive Director
 - b. Executive Director to Chief Academic Officer (CAO)
 - c. CAO or CBO to Superintendent
 - d. ERT or Communications sends to Cabinet via text, Union Partners where needed

2. Recovery Stage:

At the earliest possible convenience (within 24 hours), the Principal will share a written summary of the event with clarity around injuries, schoolwide implications, arrests as well as next steps.

3. Debrief:

Director, Safety Coordinator and Principal will debrief events within 7 days to garner any learning from the event and course correction that can be made.

Definition: Lockdown / Shelter-In-Place

Lockdown

A Lockdown is defined as those conditions requiring complete separation and protection of school staff and students from any situation regarding an existing internal or external situation that could directly threaten their safety. All school activity ceases, doors are locked, windows covered, no movement outside of the classroom. Examples: Intruder on Campus, Active Shooter on/off campus, Police Activity within close proximity of the school where activity may overflow onto the school campus.

Shelter-in-Place

A Shelter-in-Place is defined as, provides refuge for students, staff and public within a school building during an emergency. Shelters are located in areas that maximize the safety of inhabitants. Safe areas may change depending on emergencies.

Class activities may continue, but students should stay in classrooms, other than to use the bathroom.

Examples: Police Activity in local community, but with no immediate threat to school. Environmental emergencies; gas leak, chemical release.

Please note that Shelter-in-Place may be upgraded to a Lockdown and Lockdown may be downgraded to a Shelter-in-Place.

Fire

Fire in a School Building

- The School Administrator will:
 1. call 9-1-1,
 2. sound the fire alarm, and
 3. notify the Executive Director.
- School Staff will:
 1. supervise evacuation according to the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted in every classroom,
 2. close doors upon evacuating,
 3. take roll books and take roll at the evacuation site, and
 4. report missing students to the School Administrator.
- The Custodian or ERT member will open necessary gates for emergency vehicles.
- Re-occupy buildings when ordered to do so by the Fire Department and the School Administrator

Fire in Surrounding Area During Low Risk Fire Day

School Administrator will:

- Notify the Executive Director who will contact Superintendent through chain of communication
- Monitor the situation via official channels (local fire department, law enforcement, and emergency alerts).
- Assess proximity and severity of fire in consultation with emergency services.
- In coordination with district personnel and emergency agencies, determine if shelter-in-place or evacuation is necessary based on current threat level.

School Staff will:

- Remain alert and follow directions from administration.
- Prepare students for possible evacuation or shelter-in-place.
- Limit outdoor activities and close windows/doors if air quality is affected.

Custodian will:

- Ensure all gates and access points are ready for emergency personnel if needed.
- Monitor air filtration systems and maintain indoor air quality.
- Support communication and logistical needs of school administration.

- All communication will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Coordinated Communication

All communication related to fire safety issues will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Communication Tools:

- **ParentSquare:** Send Initial alert and updates to families
- **Internal Group Text/Email:** Staff alert

After-School Programs:

- Will be included in all communication chains
- Informed and coordinated with for any changes or emergency procedures.
- May be canceled if conditions worsen or as a precaution.

Extreme Red Flag Days or other High Fire-Risk Events

To ensure safe and consistent actions are taken during Red Flag Warnings or extreme fire weather conditions, this plan prioritizes the safety of students, staff, and community members while minimizing disruption.

1. Definitions

- **Extreme Weather:** Includes sustained winds over 45 mph and critical fire weather conditions.
- **Red Flag Warning:** Issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) indicating elevated fire risk due to dry conditions, low humidity, and high winds. Typically issued 48 hours in advance when possible.
[NWS Zone 508 Info](#)
- **Particular Dangerous Situations (PDS)** or Extreme Red Flag Days forecasted by NWS
- **Weather Zone:** Kensington School is located in NWS Zone 508 (San Francisco Bay Shoreline).

2. Authority to Close

The decision to close Kensington Hilltop School due to fire danger or extreme weather will be made by the **WCCUSD Superintendent or designee**, in consultation with **local fire and emergency response agencies** and the **Contra Costa County Superintendent**.

3. Criteria for Closure

Closure may be enacted if:

- Particular Dangerous Situations (PDS) or Extreme Red Flag Days is forecasted by NWS
- Active wildfire within 10-mile radius
- Evacuation warning/order issued

4. Decision Timeline for Closure

- **48 Hours in Advance (if possible):** Based on early NWS alerts
- **Day Before (Preferred):** If forecast certainty exceeds 80%, closure decision by 2:00 PM
- **Morning Of:** If overnight changes occur, closure decision by 6:00 AM
- **During School Day:** Emergency release protocols initiated if needed

5. Coordinated Communication

All communication related to closures or fire-related safety issues will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Communication Tools:

- **ParentSquare:** Initial alert to families
- **Internal Group Text/Email:** Staff alert
- **Local Media:** If broader area closures occur
- **After-School Programs:** Will be included in all communication chains

6. Safety Considerations

- Office staff works with families to maintain updated emergency contact lists
- Ensure availability of battery-powered walkie talkies
- Establish direct coordination with fire departments for threat updates
- Integrate after-school programs into all emergency planning

7. Reserve Days for Closure

The academic calendar includes reserve days for emergency closures. These dates will be used if school is closed due to fire-related emergencies:

Reserve Days for 2025-2026 School Year

- November 10, 2025
- March 27, 2026
- May 22, 2026

Earthquake

Earthquake Procedures Inside

- DROP to the ground. For those students and staff who are physically unable to drop to the ground, they should remain seated and cover their heads with their arms and hands.
- COVER under or near desks, tables, or chairs in a kneeling or sitting position.
- HOLD onto table or chair legs. Protect eyes from flying glass and debris by using your arm to cover your eyes.
- Remain in the DROP position until ground movement ends. Be prepared to DROP, COVER, and HOLD during aftershocks.
- School staff should check for injuries and assess the general safety of the room.
- Report any hazards to the school Damage Survey Team.
- All Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) should report to the School Administrators Office or pre-designated location.

Earthquake Procedures Outside

- Move away from overhead hazards such as power lines, trees, and buildings. DROP to the ground and COVER the back of the neck with your hands.
- Do not enter buildings until it is safe to do so.
- School staff should check for injuries.
- Report any hazards to the school Damage Survey Team.
- All ERTs should report to the School Administrator's Office or pre-designated location.

Intruder on Campus

A campus intruder is defined as an individual who loiters or creates disturbances on school property. If an intruder is found on campus:

- Assess the situation and if it appears safe to approach the intruder, greet the individual in a polite and non-threatening manner.