



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DATE: June 19, 2024
TO: Board of Directors
RE: Renewal of Emergency Preparedness Coordination Contract
SUBMITTED BY: Mary A. Morris-Mayorga, Consultant

Recommended Action

This item is provided for information and collection of feedback on the contract renewal for emergency preparedness coordination.

Background

The annual contract for emergency preparedness coordination currently expires June 30, 2024 and a proposal for FY 2024-2025 has been received from Alтиву. While the contract funding is included in the budget which allows the General Manager to sign a contract for this, the proposal is being provided to discuss the alignment with District activities.

With an Emergency Preparedness Work Plan in progress (anticipated for approval earlier in this agenda), the expectation would be to align this and the Emergency Preparedness Coordination goals such that EPC reporting is measurable to the Board and community. This Work Plan would facilitate the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to take a more guiding role in the Emergency Preparedness Committee such as: working with subcommittees, exploring potential grant funding, coordination with KPPCSD as applicable, and engaging social media (as referenced in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and with volunteers).

As a proactive measure, given that the fiscal analysis on consolidation is in progress, we will include a contract term which allows re-evaluation of priorities in November/December if consolidation may become a serious consideration in the near future.

Fiscal Impact

The Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget contains funds in the amount of \$110,935 for the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator consulting contract.

Attachment: Alтиву Emergency Preparedness Coordination Proposal for FY 2024-2025



**Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
2024-25 Services Contract Proposal**

KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
JUNE 2024

INTRODUCTION

The following information provides background information and insight to assist in decision-making regarding the contract renewal between Kensington Fire Protection District and Altivu LLC for the 2024-2025 contract period commencing July 2024.

The following sections also provide recommendations to the board for critical decision points to empower the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to improve emergency preparedness for the Kensington community on behalf of the Kensington Fire Protection District.

- Summary of Contract Periods from 2021-2023
- Overview of 2023-2024 Contract Period Recommendations and Status Updates
- Proposed KFPD Emergency Preparedness Committee Work Plan with notes and insights from the EP Coordinator, Including Goals
- Continuation of Established Initiatives/Activities
- EP Coordinator Education & Certifications
- 2024-2025 Fee Structure

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CONTRACT PERIODS 2021-2023

Over the last three contract periods, Kensington residents have enhanced community engagement through the Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Party initiative. This initiative has provided crucial face-to-face opportunities for residents to discuss safety improvements and emergency preparedness directly with the Kensington Fire Protection District. Through this increased interaction, Firewise community formation in Kensington took root.

A cultural strength of Kensington is the active participation of its residents, which stands out even among other wildfire-prone communities. This engagement is crucial in building a sustainable fire prevention and emergency preparedness volunteer model. Despite high registration rates with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System (estimated 96% of residents), challenges remain in reaching a similar audience size via social media platforms, where social media engagement measures below 5%. It is particularly important to have frequent, fast, and cost-effective communication with the district residents.

Our most effective non-alert communication has been through direct email, where approximately 74% of our Red Flag Warning list subscribers actively engage with the content. This method has proven essential in providing early warnings of increased wildfire risks or other emergency preparedness messages, which are critical as the Community Warning System (CWS) only issues broad alerts in imminently dangerous situations.

In addition to maintaining high CWS alert registration, we have identified areas for improvement in emergency preparedness, particularly in personal evacuation and family communication plans

and the storage of emergency supplies. Recent surveys conducted at our Block Parties and through the Fire Plug newsletter indicate a need for improved personal household preparedness.

By leveraging Kensington's community-centric culture, we aim to deepen our preparedness efforts and build stronger collaborations for improved resilience through Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties, Firewise community initiatives, and coordination with CERT members.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2023-2024

The following are recommendations from the 2023-2024 Contract period, updated with accomplishments over the last year.

1. Continue to promote Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties.

Inspired by the success of Kensington's National Night Out, these block parties are intended to bring neighbors together to discuss and plan how to make their communities more resilient. The introduction of the NEP Block Party has encouraged blocks to gather more than once a year for the National Night Out. Kensington Court has quickly grown from an annual National Night Out event to an NFPA Recognize Firewise community in just a few months. The benefit of block organization and frequent gatherings to promote initiatives through these channels cannot be understated. This is the most effective way to reach our residents and encourage action throughout the community.

2024 UPDATE: Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties continue to be the most effective method of reaching the community, monitoring preparedness progress, creating local preparedness ambassadors, and positively affecting change, such as the development of Firewise communities in the existing footprints of these block areas throughout Kensington. These block parties typically were anchored around National Night Out but are starting to happen throughout the year. As Firewise communities develop, more frequent gatherings occur, such as with residents on Yale and within Maybeck and Wildcat Firewise.

2. Expand Firewise Recognized Communities in Kensington

Funding vegetation abatement projects has been a concern in Kensington, specifically for Cerrito Canyon and the eastern ridge bordering East Bay Parks. Firewise recognition has finally been achieved for a part of the community, and the Wildcat Firewise Community has already set its sights on grants and lowering individual homeowners' insurance expenses. With these Firewise communities, there is an opportunity to implement a Fire Ambassador Program in Moraga Orinda to train community volunteers to work as experts to guide home hardening and defensible space prescriptions on homes. This resource will further emphasize the work being done by the Fire Marshal.

2024 UPDATE: As of June 1st 2024, Kensington has two nationally recognized Firewise communities (Wildcat and Maybeck), with two additional sites currently working on an

application to submit for Firewise recognition. Three other areas in Kensington have requested information about forming Firewise and are working toward starting an application. The relationship between Kensington and Berkeley Fire Department continues to strengthen over Firewise coordination along Tilden Park, Cerrito Canyon, and the Grizzly Peak corridor.

3. Volunteer Recruitment For Sustainability

As Kensington's preparedness needs become more complex and demanding, volunteers must support the objectives. In the last year, a concerted effort has been made to focus on public events without depending on El Cerrito/ Kensington Fire Department on-duty personnel, especially since their primary focus should be responding to incidents. As CERT ramps back up to a regular training schedule, it will be a primary source of volunteers to pull from for other emergency preparedness initiatives. Focusing on a sustainable volunteer culture and bringing in younger families is a critical need for the community.

2024 UPDATE:

Firewise Establishment has increased volunteer activity and efficiency in distributing information in the community. The relationships built between the active Firewise communities and the Fire District through the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator role are seeing improvements in wildfire risk awareness, home hardening education, and vegetation removal through two completed chipping days and one planned for July 2024.

The CERT training program partnership with Lamorinda CERT has empowered recent graduates to organize CERT resources in Kensington and explore inter-agency coordination across the East Bay.

- 4. Expectations for Evacuation Drills** The first Kensington Evacuation Drill (2022) created a template that can be used and adapted for evacuation scenarios throughout the district. Nine agencies supported the Kensington Evacuation Drill, which can be increased by coordinating a safety fair at the final check-in location. Neighboring agencies participating in the Tri-City Safety Fair can incorporate an evacuation drill leading to the safety fair. Participants can attend an exciting community event after an evacuation drill instead of showing up at a parking lot, giving their address, and going home. The desire to have a 2023 Evacuation Drill did not come to fruition, as drills are often resource-intensive for public safety agencies. A regular interval of at least every other year to drive awareness and discover blind spots in planning should be considered. All other drills can be done virtually or on a block level with residents going through scenarios at Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties. Maps can be distributed to the community through a mailer to help residents plan for evacuations, learn their routes, drive alternate routes to understand the community better and consider options if their mobility is compromised.

2024 UPDATE:

Staffing shortages continue to be an obstacle for our local agencies. The June 2024 Evacuation is Your Responsibility Campaign was a workaround to provide valuable information to the community instead of hosting an evacuation drill. This campaign focuses on the areas that need improvement for individual and household emergency preparedness, identifying an individual's options for evacuation out of Kensington, and establishing a family communication plan when an emergency occurs.

KFPD Emergency Preparedness Committee Proposed Workplan

1. Develop and Distribute the Evacuation Plan Package to all residents.

Objective: Ensure all residents are aware of evacuation routes and prepared for emergencies. Expand on the Evacuation Is Your Responsibility campaign and continue tailoring the information to the residents' needs.

The "Evacuation is Your Responsibility" campaign launched in June 2024

Materials were distributed to all Kensington households via USPS. The campaign will be mentioned at all public events in the future, and the theme will be pushed during the 2024 National Night Out Block Parties.

Red Flag parking should be the next coordinated campaign with Kensington Police.

Focus on parking the car in the direction of travel on Red Flag Days, knowing how to open a garage door manually when the power is out, and checking with neighbors who may need assistance before evacuating.

Residents are asking for parking changes to be made on critical streets.

Certain streets are problematic and will negatively impact traffic flow during an emergency. Streets such as St. Albans, Windsor, and York were included in a plan for permanent street parking changes and should be proposed to KPD and the County to execute these changes. The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator can facilitate Neighborhood Emergency Block Parties, public messaging, and community organization when the County and Police are ready to implement the changes.

Residents must understand the dynamics of an evacuation.

Kensington's crowded, narrow streets pose challenges for first responders traveling toward the ridgeline during an incident. Kensington has an aging population, with several residents experiencing mobility challenges and other medical diagnoses that will make an urgent evacuation difficult. Pre-evacuation, preparedness, and practicing evacuation exercises are recommendations embraced by neighboring agencies and are also recommended by CAL Fire, as noted in the Subdivision Review.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Expand the emergency preparedness survey tool developed for the 2022 Evacuation Drill to measure individual and household preparedness based on evacuation readiness (at least two routes established, go bag assembly and staging, etc.) and Family Communication Plan to track progress on the content in the 2024 Evacuation Is Your Responsibility Campaign. Deploy the new survey for National Night Out 2024 (August 6th) to create a baseline to work toward a 90% + preparedness KPI to match the estimated 96% CWS registration for Kensington, which can be sampled at various block party events throughout the contract period.

2. Assist in developing a good relationship and planning with East Bay Regional Park District to address fire concerns with Tilden Park.

Objective: Enhance fire safety related to Tilden Park and Kensington risks through meaningful collaboration with East Bay Regional Park District. Celebrate the collective accomplishments and inform the community of the work to improve public awareness.

In recent KFPD Board meetings, Kensington residents and East Bay Regional Park District provided information regarding work accomplished in areas of concern adjacent to Kensington. EBRPD detailed the challenges they face with resource conservation and wildfire mitigation and noted that Kensington residents have a right of entry for volunteer work that has been done over the last few decades.

Wildcat Firewise and Maybeck Firewise have hosted several walks focused on evacuation routes, home hardening, and vegetation management in the last year. Expanding on this concept to collaborate with East Bay Regional Park District to do guided walks in treated areas will inform the community and allow residents to experience firsthand the challenges East Bay Regional Parks faces with balancing ecology and wildfire mitigation.

The question was asked, “What can Kensington (KFPD) do to help in this partnership?”

Improve access to material resources for home hardening.

Moraga Orinda Fire has a grant program for ember-resistant vent screens and Gutter Guards for residents to reduce the risk of home ignition. A similar program should be adopted in Kensington to improve community wildfire resilience.

Adopt a more aggressive hazardous vegetation removal program.

The 2024 Replanting Grant program revealed the challenges residents experience in removing hazardous vegetation. Projects were extended due to some applicants' difficulty before the replanting portion could begin for qualified reimbursement. A program focusing on reimbursement for the removal instead of the replacement will expedite the removal of hazardous plants in the community.

Explore the feasibility of establishing a Kensington Fire Safe Council.

Diablo Fire Safe Council oversees both Contra Costa County and Alameda County. As a result, the funds and programs available to Kensington are scarce. A feasibility study should be done to understand the benefits of establishing a Fire Safe Council dedicated to the needs of Kensington and how grant awards can positively impact KFPD objectives.

Increase the establishment of Firewise communities with additional resources.

As Firewise communities grow, additional support will be needed to maintain and assist in their program objectives. The Fire District can provide grants for Firewise communities

for specific initiatives or public engagement activities. Residents often ask about the benefits of establishing a Firewise community. Outside of the possible insurance premium discounts and community building, the Fire District has an opportunity to create incentives and benefits for Firewise at a local level.

Coordinate with groups that have actively worked in EBRPD-responsible areas.

Residents working for decades with EBRPD along the park boundary have received financial support from donations or grants provided by Diablo Fire Safe Council. The Fire District must learn more about what these groups have done and how to lower the barrier to accomplish the work being allowed by EBRPD.

Calculate and track the volunteer work being done by Kensington residents in EBRPD.

Use the Firewise reporting method to capture all work in EBRPD and use this information when applying for grants. Provide this information to the community so residents can better understand what is being accomplished, encourage them to do their part at home, and report their activities.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

To demonstrate coordination along a shared boundary line, invite EBRPD to participate in two community outreach events in established and aspiring Kensington Firewise communities during the next contract period. Provide quarterly updates to the community via KFPD Monthly Board meetings and the Kensington Fire Plug Newsletter with updates provided by EBRPD.

3. Establish a small subcommittee to interact with the Emergency Preparedness Committee, the Fire Chief, and the Police Chief to determine what form of CERT Kensington can build now, given resources and capabilities that can evolve.

Objective: Build a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) tailored to Kensington's needs and recruit members willing to train, instruct, and conduct drills frequently to improve disaster readiness in Kensington and across the broader East Bay.

The Emergency Preparedness coordinator supports CERT objectives by promoting programs within Kensington, such as the CERT training course and the water storage and fire extinguisher sales.

There is a need for increased coordination with surrounding agencies and CERT program managers to boost CERT capabilities across the region. Albany has established a non-profit to structure its CERT organization. This coordination will ensure Kensington is a stakeholder in region-wide planning and development of volunteers. A large-scale disaster will impact the broader region. Kensington CERT should be well positioned to provide not only local assistance but also assistance to other communities. Building these relationships and training across the region improves on-scene performance.

Volunteer recruitment is critical for CERT, and the Fire District can benefit from the same group of volunteers for other operational needs that align with its objectives.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Assist CERT with a recruitment plan by proposing a social media-based campaign focused on the training objectives of El Cerrito Kensington Fire Department's objectives and target the campaign to residents living in zip codes 94707 and 94708 with interests and experience in medical response, disaster assistance, and recovery, and other relevant categories. Create the campaign to launch 35 days before the first course hosted by the El Cerrito Kensington Fire Department.

4. Develop and promote specific action items for House Hardening to citizens (e.g., fire screens, etc.)

Objective: Through education and material resources, improve the fire resilience of homes in Kensington to prevent ignition from wildland ember storms or radiant heat from house fires within the community.

The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator published the Spring 2024 Edition of The Fire Plug, which included a Home Hardening Checklist mailed to all Kensington homes. El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department's Prevention Division reviewed and approved this checklist. The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator managed the 2024 Replanting Grant Program to reduce wildfire risk by removing hazardous plants and encouraging fire-resistant planting practices.

Revamp the Hazardous Plant Removal Program

The Replanting Grant is under review to improve effectiveness and shorten project timelines. As previously stated, residents participating in this program needed help working through the removal before getting to the replanting portion of the program. This program should only focus on removal to effectively meet the district's objectives.

Implement A Home Hardening Grant Program

Adopt a program like Moraga Orinda Fire's Home Hardening Grant Program, which provides qualifying residents with ember-resistant vent screens and Gutter Guards.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Develop and pilot a campaign in one Kensington Firewise community for single-species hazardous plant removal (juniper) upon approval of proposed changes to the Kensington Fire Protection District's Replanting Grant and attach it to a future approved Measure X Community Chipping Day.

5. Determine next steps for Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs)

Objective: Enhancing community alert systems with LRADs will require building a public awareness campaign informing residents of the different alerts, communications, and capabilities.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Develop a public awareness campaign in collaboration with CWS on talking points to educate the public of any changes/additions to alerting infrastructure when those technologies are installed. Distribute printed public awareness materials focused on the installation and capabilities of the alerting infrastructure to all Kensington residences via USPS and host one town hall webinar with a recording to be posted featuring a guest speaker from CWS to answer questions from the public.

6. Develop a volunteer program guide and resources. (The District should develop a BOD policy to cover volunteer activities.)

Objective: Establish a robust volunteer program to create a sustainable model for implementing and maintaining emergency preparedness initiatives in Kensington.

Kensington Fire Protection District can increase the effectiveness of implementing emergency preparedness initiatives in the community by leveraging volunteers through an official volunteer program and developing a pathway for volunteers to learn about the district's mission and objectives and increase their capability to boost the message of emergency preparedness throughout the community.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Subject to approval by the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) Board and establishing an official volunteer program, volunteers should be incorporated into public events. This initiative aims to enhance the interaction between the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and community members who have expressed interest in volunteering. These volunteers will play a vital role in strengthening emergency preparedness efforts across Kensington. Within six months of Board approval and adoption, integrate volunteers into two of the following community initiatives:

- The Paper Shredding Event
- Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties
- National Night Out
- Public Presentations
- Firewise Community Events
- CERT Events / Training
- Community Chipping Days
- Distributing Community Notices

7. Assess the feasibility of an evacuation drill or tabletop exercise in coordination with the Fire Chief and Police Chief.

Objective: Improve community readiness for evacuations.

A public awareness campaign for an evacuation drill was created for the April 2022 Kensington Evacuation Drill. This campaign can be easily redeployed when Kensington Police and Kensington Fire have the staffing resources and mutual aid agencies available to participate.

Surrounding agencies have attempted Evacuation Drills, and the turnout could have been more favorable. It is vital to do a robust public awareness campaign to engage the public and build a survey to collect preparedness data and feedback from resident participants to improve public awareness campaigns and learn more about the experiences from a resident's perspective that the agencies may not consider. In 2022, we collected feedback and data that determined which areas of preparedness to focus on in subsequent campaigns and public events. During the summer of 2022, the Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Party initiative was launched, and data collection through a short survey was done on a localized level. Around 60% of residents consistently did not have a family communication or shelter plan for emergencies. This became the focus of the "Evacuation is Your Responsibility" campaign to improve this area of preparedness.

During Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Parties, simulations can be conducted on a block-to-block level without a drill or exercise. The "Evacuation is Your Responsibility" campaign was created as a workaround to staffing challenges that hindered the planning of a community evacuation drill.

Residents want to engage in meaningful exercises/drills. Tabletop exercises should include a critical component: public engagement. A more accessible tabletop drill will increase the public's understanding of each public safety agency's roles and capabilities.

Conduct the tabletop exercise over Zoom.

Program opportunities for the public to participate in a survey or poll during the tabletop exercise.

Deploy a test signal with a link to "check-in."

Coordinate with CWS to conduct an annual test to boost alert registration, coordinating this with a campaign and tabletop exercise. Conduct a data-collecting survey to update Kensington's preparedness metrics for continuous improvement.

Stage a scene with an Engine and cars crowding a street.

Simulate the problem of an evacuation on a local level in a controlled setting to illustrate the problem of Kensington's crowded, narrow streets. Record/photograph this for a public awareness campaign or demonstrate this through the Zoom tabletop Livestream.

KFPD EP Coordinator Goal

Upon approval of the Kensington Fire and Police Departments to execute a drill or tabletop exercise, create a public awareness campaign to launch two months before the target

exercise date (with a minimum of five months' advance notice for planning prior to the target date). This campaign will distribute print material to all Kensington residences through USPS and social media/newsletters/email subscribers.

CONTINUATION OF ESTABLISHED INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES

Maintain Agency Coordination

- Berkeley Fire Department – Firewise Collaboration
- CAL FIRE Coordination (Firewise Application Approvals)
- California Fire Safe Council
- CERT Support Initiatives/ Events
- Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Coordination (Measure X)
- Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Service & CWS
- Diablo Fire Safe Council
- East Bay Regional Park District Coordination and Relationship Building
- El Cerrito Kensington Fire Department Support
- Genasys
- Hills Emergency Forum
- Kensington Police Department
- Lamorinda CERT

Community Preparedness Education, Campaigns, and Initiatives

- CERT recruitment
- Community Chipping Days
- Doorhanger distribution
- Firewise Community Development
- Evacuation Readiness Campaigns
- National Night Out
- National Preparedness Month
- Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Party
- Red Flag Email Notification Subscription
- Sandbag Procurement
- Shredding & Medical Collection Event
- The Kensington Fire Plug Publications
- The Kensington Outlook Articles
- Vegetation Management Grant
- Wildfire Community Preparedness Week

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE / OPERATIONS

- Ad hoc assignments, errands to support KFPD operations
- Answer phone inquiries and redirect them to the appropriate departments

- Coordinate invoice payments to vendors
- Graphic Design
- Public Information Messaging /Notices
- Website Uploads and Updates

EP Coordinator Education & Certifications

EDUCATION

- **BA International Business Management** – Russian Language, Eastern and Central European Studies- San Diego State University
- **International Relations and World Politics** - Moscow State University – Russian Federation
- **Project Management** - University of California Los Angeles Extension
- **Fire Academy** – Georgetown Fire Protection District - El Dorado County, CA

CERTIFICATIONS

Public Information

- Advanced Public Information Officer (L0388) – CSTI
- Intermediate Public Information Officer – CSTI
- Public Information Basics (L0105) - CSTI
- Public Information Officer Awareness (IS-29A) -FEMA
- Media Relations (MR) - CSTI
- Social Media in Emergency Management (IS-42A) -FEMA
- Integrated Public Alert and Warning Systems for Alert Originators (IS-247B)- FEMA

Emergency Management

- Integrating Access & Functional Needs into Emergency Management (G197) - CSTI
- Standardized Emergency Management System Online Course (SEMSG606)-CSTI
- Emergency Operations Center Action Planning (G626) – CSTI
- Forms Used for The Development of The Incident Action Plan (IS-201) – FEMA
- NIMS Intrastate Mutual Aid (IS-706)-FEMA
- Recovery From Disasters: The Local Community Role (G205)-CSTI
- Emergency Management Concepts (G191/G775) - CSTI

Wildland Firefighting / Structural Firefighting / Incident Command

- Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS-100) - FEMA
- Incident Command System for Initial Response (ICS-200) - FEMA
- Introduction to the National Incident Management System (ICS-700) - FEMA

- Human Factors in The Wildland Fire Service (L-180) - NWCG
- All Hazard Safety Officer (L-954) - FEMA
- Wildland Firefighter Training (S-130) - NWCG
- Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (S-190) - NWCG
- Wildland Fire Chain Saws (S-212) - NWCG

FEE STRUCTURE

Compensation rates have increased, per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. The June 2021 Emergency Preparedness Coordinator contract value of \$100,000 adjusted for inflation to May 2024, based on the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator, is \$116,670.00. Monthly billing will not exceed \$9,722.50, with the contract beginning July 1st, 2024, immediately after the current contract expires.

\$110,935 annual (billed hourly) agreed to by JV and MMM