



KENSINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Application to Serve on the KCSD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

Please review the attached Emergency Preparedness Committee Protocols (draft) and Board and Committee Member Remote Meeting Attendance

Name: _____ Date: _____

(Please do not supply private contact information; this document is accessible to the public.)

I am a Kensington resident aged 18 or over

Areas of interest (check all that apply):

- Evacuation preparation
- Emergency notification (remote sensing/cameras, sirens, cell towers, radios, phones)
- Path ownership, clearing, etc.
- Collaboration and coordination with other agencies (County, Parks, FireSafe Councils, other towns)
- Hazard mitigation (education about hazardous plants, house-hardening, etc.)
- CERT training and network formation
- Development of Firewise neighborhood designations
- Public education about emergency preparedness, earthquake and related topics
- Red Flag Day Parking Strategy
- Other _____

Please explain your experience and current efforts in your areas of interest:

If named to the Committee, what goals and objectives would you recommend for the work plan?

*Thank you for your interest. Applications will be considered annually and/or as the need arises.
Committee size is limited to five (5) public members. Please email your application to
fire@kensingtonfire.org.*

Laura Westphal EPC Committee Application

“Please explain your experience and current efforts in your areas of interest.”

I bring a mix of operational, strategic, and community-based experience in emergency preparedness. I’m a combat-deployed OEF Air Force Veteran with a background in Logistics and Operations. I was trained to manage resources, work with gov’t contract vendors, coordinate under pressure, and make decisions in high-stakes environments. I also have training in combat first aid and have been CPR certified. I hold a degree in Sociology from UC Berkeley. Post-graduation, I became President of the Cal Veterans Alumni Association as well as volunteered full-time with the American Red Cross in the Oakland chapter, supporting HR administration operations, assisted in building a regional training program, and served as a disaster response caseworker at the community level.

Professionally, I have over 15 years of experience in Human Resources across public and private sectors, including higher education, nonprofit, FinTech, and MedTech organizations. I currently work as a Human Resources Business Partner, supporting six departments across all levels of the business, with a focus on employee centered trauma-informed practices, training and development, and organizational planning and response. As part of our Emergency Response Team (ERT), I was designated as the Officer Site Commander for my building, where I lead fire safety coordination, conduct drills, and ensure compliance with OSHA standards in partnership with our Employee Health and Safety Department.

At the community level, I am stepping into a volunteer CERT coordinator role for my neighborhood in Kensington (in Zone 5), focused on strengthening local preparedness through practical, relationship building based planning and engagement that is people-centered and actionable. I am also currently working toward my Technician-level HAM amateur radio license and learning on my YAESU VX-6R with the intent to join in to support resilient communication through the K6NN repeater network and participation in KARO-ECHO led community nets.

My perspective is shaped by lived experience growing up in rural California, including Boulder Creek and Paradise, where I experienced wildfires, mudslides, and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake firsthand. These experiences inform how I approach both evacuation and shelter-in-place realities, particularly in communities with diverse needs and constraints. I take a solution focused collaborative approach, grounded in listening and learning, with respect for the work already in place. I bring an analytical, systems-oriented mindset and thrive in diverse communities and across a range of cognitive styles. I’m motivated to strengthen and connect existing efforts in practical ways. As an engaged member of the community, service is foundational to who I am, and I believe I would be a strong value add to the committee.

“If named to the Committee, what goals and objectives would you recommend for the work plan?”

If selected, my recommended goal would be to support and strengthen the existing work plan, which I see as foundational and thoughtfully structured. I fully support the current subcommittee focus areas and would be interested in becoming more deeply engaged in the ongoing efforts, particularly in CERT, where I am actively working to build neighborhood-level engagement as a local coordinator.

One objective I would recommend, if not already in place, would be to strengthen coordination and visibility across CERT, Firewise, communication systems, and community education, as the framework of preparedness is similar up to a point or worse, cascading events (e.g., earthquake leading to fire). This could be supported to improve community engagement and buy-in, by simplifying participation through a clear “minimum preparedness standard,” through more consistent messaging, clearer and centralized access to information (such as website updates and local publications like the Kensington Outlook), and regular neighborhood-level touchpoints through neighborhood/zones, so residents experience these efforts as connected, relevant, and easier to engage with.

Another objective would be to continue improving community participation by focusing on low-barrier, locally grounded ways for residents to get involved. From what I understand, engagement is an ongoing challenge, and I would be interested in supporting approaches that make preparedness feel more practical, visible, and integrated into everyday community life, without adding complexity to the existing work. A final objective is to strengthen neighbor-to-neighbor support systems, ensuring that more vulnerable residents are identified, connected, and supported through existing community networks ahead of an emergency.

Overall, my recommendations focus on building on what is already in place, supporting alignment, increasing participation, and translating strong planning into actions residents can see, understand, and act on at the neighborhood level.



Kensington Community Services District

DATE: January 8, 2025
TO: Emergency Preparedness Committee
FROM: David Aranda, KPPCSD Interim General Manager
Mary A. Morris-Mayorga, Consultant
SUBJECT: Review and provide input on draft Emergency Preparedness Committee Protocols

As the Kensington Community Services District (KCS D) Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) is newly created, it is recommended that EPC Protocols be established to help guide its members. To facilitate this, staff developed a draft for review and input by the EPC in November and has incorporated feedback from that meeting.

Emergency Preparedness Committee Protocols (DRAFT)

Purpose

The Emergency Preparedness Committee has been established as a standing committee by the Board of Directors for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, and facilitating solutions to civic emergencies and hazards in the Kensington Community. The committee shall: establish and update an annual work plan for Board approval which serves as the foundation of the committee's work; evaluate and recommend initiatives which support the established work plan; and other functions as referred by the Board of Directors.

Composition, Appointment, and Term

The Emergency Preparedness Committee will be comprised of four Board directors and five public members who will be appointed annually (and as vacancies occur) for a term of one year by the Board President with approval by a majority of the Board of Directors.

Annual Reporting Requirement

Public members, like Board members, will be required to file a California Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest annually with the Fair Political Practices Commission which is facilitated through the NetFile website by the Board Clerk. Failure to file this form will result in removal of a public member from the committee.

Meetings and Staffing

Meetings will be held bi-monthly on the fourth Thursday or as needed (for 2026, meetings will be held in January, February, and March, then bi-monthly beginning in May). Staff support will be provided by the General Manager (or Interim), board clerk or administrative staff/consultant, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator (consultant), and others as deemed necessary by the General Manager. Committees may not direct staff to perform specific duties unless authorized by the Board of Directors. Staff direction will be provided by the General Manager.

Meeting Attendance

Standing committees serve an important role in assisting to fulfill the District's mission and goals by supporting the work of Board of Directors. Regular meeting attendance by members is critical in establishing a meeting quorum and to the success of the committee. Members are allowed to miss two meetings per year and must notify the General Manager or their designee of the member's absence prior to the meeting, or as soon as practical. Remote attendance is possible provided that it complies with the Brown Act (see attached).

Committee Authority and Recommendations

Committee motions and recommendations shall be advisory to the Board of Directors. Committees do not have the authority to commit the District to any expenditure or obligation. Generally, committee members should reach a consensus on recommendations to present to the Board of Directors. When consensus is not reached, the committee is encouraged to work with the General Manager on a supported compromise; however, alternative recommendations can be forwarded to the Board of Directors through the General Manager for further direction if necessary.



Kensington Community Services District

Board and Committee Member Remote Meeting Attendance

(Last update – November 18, 2025)

Teleconferencing Options:

1. Traditional Brown Act - Gov't Code Section 54953(b)

A meeting of individuals in different locations, connected by electronic means, through either audio or video, or both. Requires:

- at least a quorum of members must participate from locations within District;
- agendas are posted at teleconferencing location(s) specifying all locations;
- public access and opportunity to speak is provided at each location; and
- all votes are taken by roll call.

Action needed by Board/Committee Member:

- Notify Board President/Committee Chair/GM prior to agenda preparation (or as soon as possible prior to posting).
- Provide specific location for teleconference participation.
- Confirm agenda posting ability, public access, and actual posting once completed.

2. Reasonable Accommodation - Gov't Code Section 54953.8

Legislative body members may participate by teleconference as an accommodation for a disability. The member must participate using both audio and visual technology and must disclose if another adult is in the room with them, and the general nature of that person's relationship with the member; the teleconferencing member's participation counts towards a quorum at the same physical location as the members participating in person.

3. State of Emergency - Gov't Code Section 54953(e)

4. Just Cause or Emergency – Gov't Code Section 54953(f)(2)

The Board/Committee can use teleconferencing without noticing each teleconference location or making it publicly accessible, provided at least a quorum of the Board/Committee participates in person at a single physical location that is identified on the agenda, open to the public, and within the boundaries of the District, and provided that other requirements regarding accessibility are met. However, an individual member of the Board/Committee may participate remotely for one of the following:

- “just cause”: a childcare or caregiving need of a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner; contagious illness; a need related to a physical or mental disability; or travel while on official business of the legislative body or another state/local agency. Under this provision, a member is limited to participating remotely in two meetings per calendar year.
- “emergency circumstances”: defined as a physical or family emergency that prevents the member from attending in person, the member can participate remotely by requesting approval to do so from the Board/Committee. The Board/Committee may take action on the request as soon as possible, including at the beginning of the meeting, even if there was not sufficient time to place the request formally on the agenda.

Under either circumstance, the member must give a general description of the circumstances relating to their need to appear remotely, but need not disclose any medical diagnosis, disability, or other confidential medical information. The member shall publicly disclose at the meeting before any action is taken, whether any other individuals 18 years of age or older are present in the room at the remote location with the member, and the general nature of the member's relationship with any such individuals. The member shall participate through both audio and visual technology. The member may not participate remotely for more than two meetings per year, if the legislative body regularly meets once per month or less.

Action needed by Board/Committee Member:

- Notify Board President/Committee Chair/GM as soon as possible and which circumstance applies.

Action needed by Board/Committee at Meeting:

- Announce and take action to approve the remote participation request.