Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District
10940 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
217 Arlington Avenue
Kensington, CA 94707

DATE: August 12, 2025 Agenda Item 08

TO: Board of Directors

RE: Pending KFPD future funding match toward Berkeley Fire Safe Council's CalOES Hazard Mitigation Grant for "A Strategic Fuel Break Between Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Parks & Berkeley, Kensington and El Cerrito"

SUBMITTED BY: Mary A. Morris-Mayorga, KFPD General Manager

Recommended Action
This item is provided for information only and potential input from the Board on an item for the KFPD Board of Directors to consider at its August 20, 2025 meeting.

Background
The attached commitment for matching funds request was received from the Berkeley Fire Safe Council as they were recently notified that their project Notice of Intent on CalOES' Hazard Mitigation Grant for "A Strategic Fuel Break Between Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Parks & Berkeley, Kensington and El Cerrito" was approved. They are submitting a grant request of $3M which requires matching funds of 25%, $737,500, and are seeking those funds from local groups and agencies (local governments and fire departments, PG&E, and EBMUD, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation).

The project "will establish a continuous shaded fuel break to reduce or prevent the probability of a Diablo wind-driven fire in Tilden or Wildcat Canyon Parks entering the communities of Kensington, El Cerrito and Berkeley and the consequent urban conflagration and associated catastrophic effects from wildfire". The KFPD Board may want to consider committing matching funds on a relevant ratio basis such as affected area or population. The estimated Kensington population as used in the LAFCo reorganization documents for Kensington is 5,428. The State of California Department of Finance population estimate for El Cerrito is 25,862 and Berkeley is 128,348.

Fiscal Impact
If this funding commitment is approved, the fiscal impact will be calculated on the relevant basis selected.

Attachment:
- Letter requesting matching funds from Berkeley Fire Safe Council
- CalOES Hazard Mitigation Assistance Pre-Approval PA-00003557
- Map of 10' Fire Break

berkeleyfiresafecouncil.org info@firesafeberkeley.org

August 5, 2025
Board of Directors
Kensington Fire Protection District
217 Arlington Avenue
Kensington, CA 94707
Delivered via email: mmayorga@kensingtonfire.org
Subject: CalOES Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding Match Request

Dear Board of Directors:

The Berkeley Fire Safe Council (BFSC) submitted a Notice of Interest (NOI) to the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the project entitled "A Strategic Fuel Break Between Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Parks & Berkeley, Kensington and El Cerrito". I am pleased to inform you this NOI (attached) was recently approved by CalOES, and we are now in the process of seeking commitments of the required matching funds.

This Wildfire & Vegetation Management Project will establish a continuous shaded fuel break to reduce or prevent the probability of a Diablo wind-driven fire in Tilden or Wildcat Canyon Parks entering the communities of Kensington, El Cerrito and Berkeley and the consequent urban conflagration and associated catastrophic effects from wildfire. It encompasses clearance of hazardous ground fuels, invasive trees and shrubs, and ladder fuels under mature noninvasive trees 100 feet from homes in the WUI and science-based restoration by planting fire resistant trees, shrubs and grasses where needed.

We are reaching out to local groups and agencies (local governments and fire departments, PG&E, and EBMUD) as well as major foundations (the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation) to ask for a commitment of funds.

It would greatly help the proposal's chances if the communities affected could provide some funds, which would demonstrate both community support and project impact. The application deadline is September 15th, and the funder requires that all sources and amounts of matching funds are to be identified at that point (and they must still be available in the 2-4 years after

grant review and before its potential approval, so in essence we are actually looking for future funding). We are requesting a grant of $3M for the establishment of this fuel break and the 25% match for this amount is $737,500.

Also attached is a very rough map showing the area between property lines and Park property for Kensington and parts of El Cerrito and Berkeley. It's difficult to see on a printout – here's a link:
https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1PhTpuIhxHROhoMSR0TAXW_hhBLlbwvY&usp=sharing
that will allow you to view the map on a computer and expand it. I am in the process of creating a better map and hope to have this ready soon.

According to this initial map, there are approximately 15 acres of land in Kensington between the edge of each structure adjacent to the Park boundaries and the edge of the Park land (this is probably an overestimate since I've included the grounds of the Kensington Elementary School). The cost of clearing this land is probably between $4,000 and $12,000 per acre, depending upon the amount and type of vegetation and the slope. The total cost of clearance for these 15 acres would thus range between $60,000 and $180,000 – however, since the work would be done over the four-year period of the grant, the cost per year would be $15,000 to $45,000.

A wildfire that started on Park land would likely affect all of Kensington's 5428 residents. Please consider committing a portion of the matching funds for this worthwhile project, and let me know if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Chris Cullander
Berkeley Fire Safe Council

Cal OES - Hazard Mitigation Assistance

- Close Window
- Print This Page
- Expand All | Collapse All

PA-00003557

Information

Pre-App Number	PA-00003557	**Owner**	
First Name of Person Completing NOI	Cynthia	**Last Name of Person Completing NOI**	Chen
Subapplicant Name (Entity)	Hillside Association of Berkeley	**Subapplicant Type**	Private Non-Profit
EIN (For Private Non- Profits)	94-3175888	**UEI**	N5TZB5XY4U48
FIPS			

NOI Status

Application Status	Approved	**Sub-Applicant Eligible**	Yes
Status Reason	NOI Approved	**Activity Eligible**	Yes

NOI Information

Subapplication Type	Project	**Project Type**	Wildfire & Vegetation Management
Hazard	Fire	**HMA Program**	HMGP

Address Information

Street Address	2587 Buena Vista Way	**County**	Alameda
City	Berkeley	**Region**	Coastal
State	CA	**Zip Code**	94708

Project/Plan Information

Project / Plan Title	A Strategic Fuel Break Between Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Parks & Berkeley, Kensington and El Cerrito	**Brief Summary**	This Wildfire & Vegetation Management Project will establish a continuous shaded fuel break to reduce or prevent the probability of a Diablo wind-driven fire in Tilden or Wildcat Canyon Parks entering the communities of Kensington, El Cerrito and Berkeley and the consequent urban conflagration and associated catastrophic effects from a wildfire. It encompasses 1. Clearance of hazardous ground fuels, invasive trees and shrubs, and ladder fuels under mature non-invasive trees 100 feet from homes in the WUI; 2. Science-based restoration by planting fire resistant trees, shrubs and grasses where needed.
Activity Location	37°53'52"N 122°14'43"W	**Project Duration (in Months)**	48

Previous Subapplication Information

Subapplication previously submitted?	No	**Previously Submitted under this Program:**	
Project number of previous submission			

Potential for Duplication of Programs

Another Federal entity has authority?	No	**If yes, identify the Federal Entity**	

Work Started/Authority

Physical project work already started?	No	**Description of work started/ completed**	
Subapplicant is responsible for asset?	No	**Entity Responsible For Operation**	Private, city right of way, EBRPD

Feasibility

Independent mitigation activity?	Yes	**Mitigation is dependent on**	
Planning studies or feasibility reports?	Yes	**If yes, what is available?**	Berkeley’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), a report by XyloPlan on probable fire pathways from Tilden Park into Berkeley; the El-Cerrito-Kensington Wildfire Action Plan; and The Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan by the EBRP
Design documents for this project?	Yes	**If yes, what is available?**	Each of the Plans named above includes sections on implementation that detail what needs to be done.
Is activity repair or maintenance?	No	**Is there increased level of protection?**	Yes

Problem Statement

Describe the problem to be mitigated	1. Although most of the various entities involved already have or plan to establish fuel breaks along their part of the WUI, these fuel breaks are not deep enough and are discontinuous. 2. In some instances, it is not clear whether restoration of the cleared area with fire-resistant native species is planned. 3. Community engagement and education are key components in the establishment of a shaded fuel break that would include private property.

Solution Description

What is the mitigation action?	Create a shaded fuel break along the WUI along the unincorporated area of Kensington, and the cities of El Cerrito and Berkeley. Approximately 6 miles in length.
Protection From Future Natural Hazards	The project will reduce the probability of a Diablo wind-driven fire in Tilden or Wildcat Canyon Park entering Kensington, El Cerrito and Berkeley, resulting in urban conflagration and associated catastrophic effects. Potential effects to be prevented or reduced include loss of life, loss of homes and personal property, loss of insurance, loss of income and/or net worth, diminished air quality, increased toxic ground and water contamination in multiple watersheds.
Implementation Plan For Mitigation	Project implementation will be conducted by Hillside Association in conjunction with the fire safe council.

Phase Determination

Is (are all) Project Site(s) identified?	Yes	**What is the percentage level of design?**	60%
Is this project phased?	No		

Benefit Cost Analysis

Do you have documented past damage/loss?	Yes	**If yes, what is available?**	As shown in the Berkeley Community GIS Portal, Berkeley has experienced wildfires that began in EBRPD land and spread into the city in 1923, 1928, 1946, and 1991. Cal Fire's web page on Historical Fire Perimeters does not show any wildfires in El Cerrito and Kensington, and the El Cerrito - Kensington Wildfire Action Plan describes the potential for wildfires but does not include information about historical fires.
Do you have data on the extent of risk?	Yes	**If yes, what is available?**	Berkeley’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the El-Cerrito-Kensington Wildfire Action Plan, and The Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan by the EBRPD all information about the current risk of wildfire due to climate change. Documentation of the extent and severity of Berkeley's historical wildfires is readily available.

Activity Cost

Total Activity Cost	$2,950,000.00	**Non-Federal Cost Share**	$737,500.00
Federal Request Share	$2,212,500.00	**Percentage of Subapplicant Match**	25.0%
Percentage of Federal Request Share	75.0%	**Source of subapplicant match**	Grants will be applied for from public and private entities including California Fire Foundation, California Coastal Conservancy, PG&E, and Cal Fire Wildfire Prevention.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Information

Does your entity have an active LHMP?	Yes	**LHMP Approval Date**	3/10/2022

LHMP Development Status	Adopted	**Activity in Mitigation Plan**	Yes
Created By	Cynthia Chen, 5/29/2025, 11:29 AM	**Last Modified By**	6/16/2025, 12:58 PM

Applications

AP-01984

Contact Roles

CR-00016036

Contact	**Henry DeNero**
Role	**Primary Contact**
Type	**Primary**

CR-00016037

Contact	**Cynthia Chen**
Role	**Primary Contact; Responsible Representative**
Type	**Primary**

Tilden fuel break - El Cerrito, Kensington & Berkeley

Untitled layer

100' out, +/- 5'

Kensington/El Cerrito structure line

Furthest extent of house footprints

Start of BFD Treatment Area

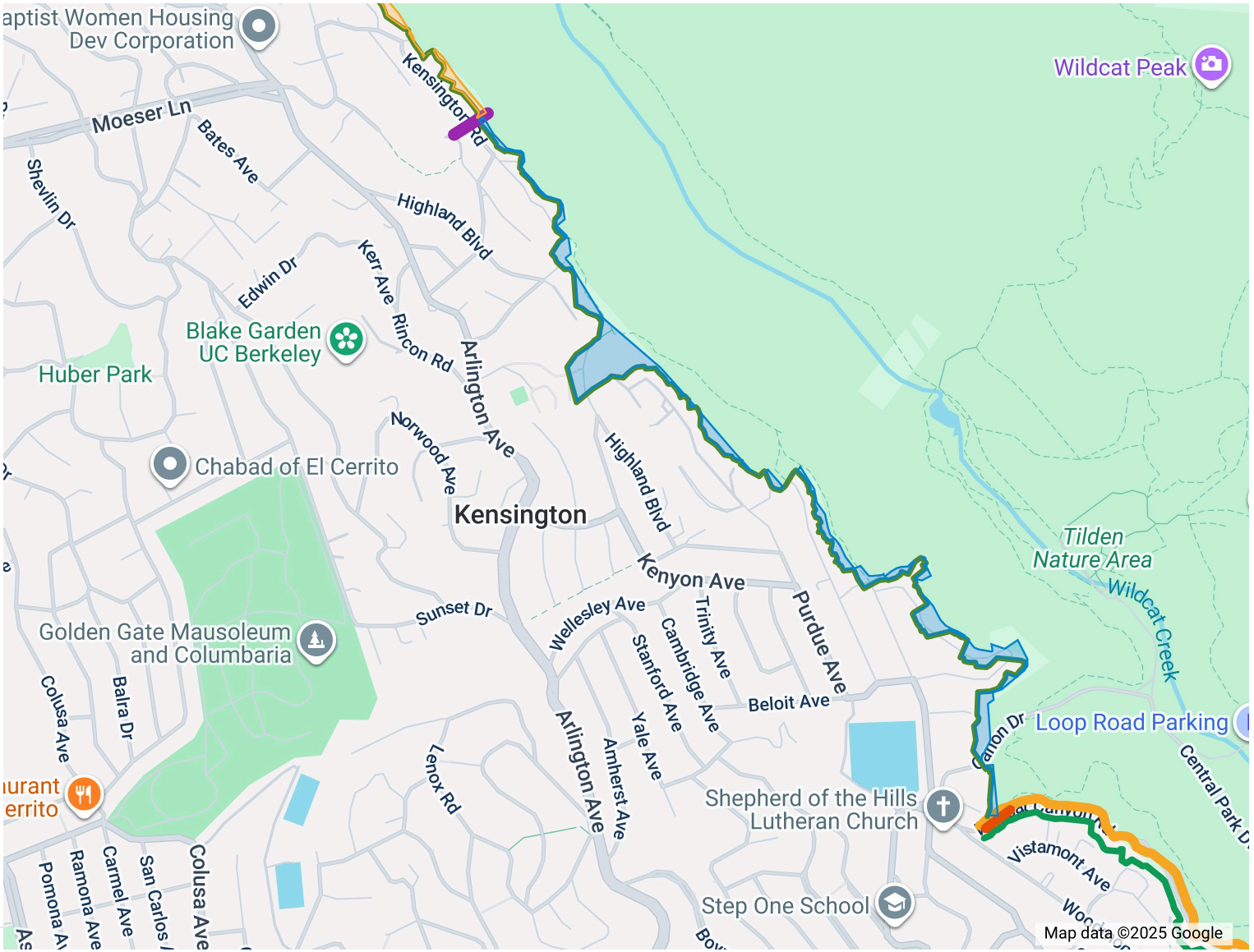
Kensington-Berkeley border

El Cerrito-Kensington border

approximate area of Kensington PROW

approx area El Cerrito PROW

not on Assessor's map



Proposed 100' fuel break between properties in El Cerrito, Kensington & Berkeley and Tilden Park