

KENSINGTON | CONTEXT

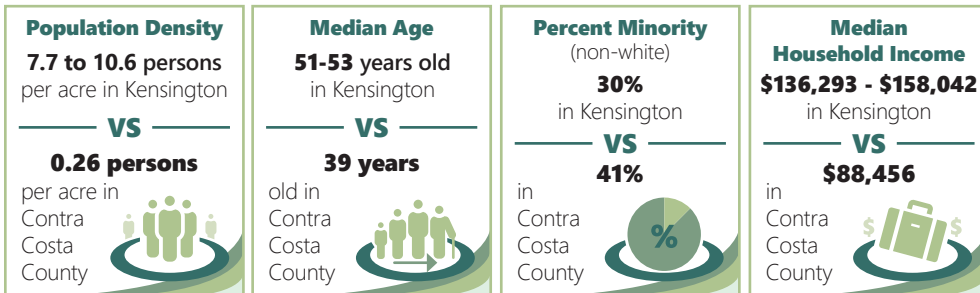
As a charming residential community situated near the University of California, Kensington has been a desirable neighborhood for academics, students, urban professionals, and families for decades. Kensington residents also enjoy the community's panoramic views, mature trees, a walkable scale, and easy access to transit and regional parks. Although there is very limited potential for growth, many of the homes date from the 1930s and 40s and there is significant construction activity to upgrade and expand those homes.

Kensington is oriented along Arlington Avenue ("the Arlington"), a winding thoroughfare that connects to Berkeley on the south and El Cerrito on the north. There is a small commercial district located on the Arlington just north of the Berkeley city limit. A second commercial district is located on Colusa Circle in the lower part of Kensington, near the border with El Cerrito. Although almost all of the homes in Kensington are single family, it is relatively dense. Community features that are important to the community include Sunset View Cemetery, the University's Blake Garden, the Kensington Library, Kensington Elementary School, and portions of Tilden Park. A number of pedestrian paths also traverse the community. Unlike most unincorporated communities, Kensington has jurisdiction over many of its local services, including police, fire, parks, and waste collection. Many of the planning and development in Kensington issues relate to view preservation, design compatibility and scale, parking, and emergency access.



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.

WHO LIVES IN KENSINGTON?



KENSINGTON | CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

Climate Change Hazards

-  Drought
-  Extreme Heat
-  Human Health Hazards
-  Landslides
-  Seismic Hazards
-  Severe Weather
-  Wildfire

Major Climate Vulnerabilities

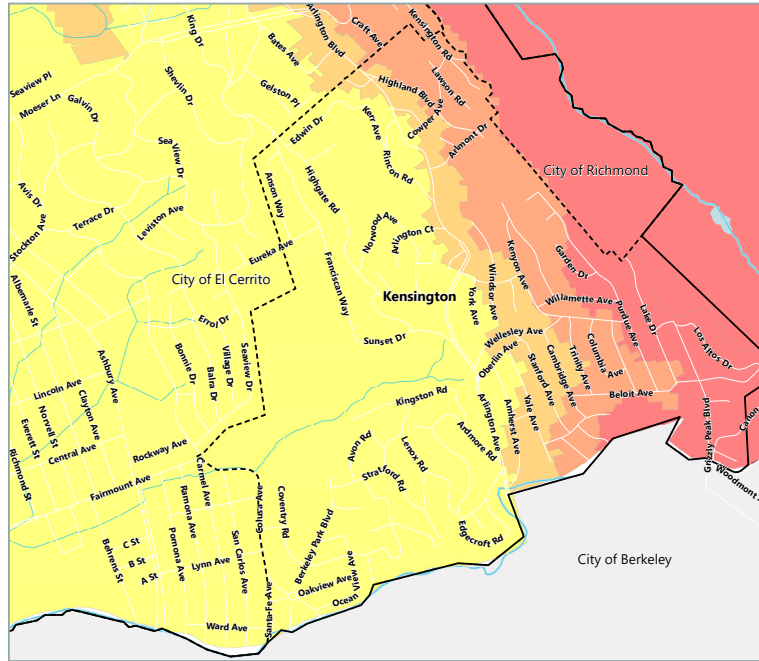
Seniors, especially seniors living alone, are vulnerable to extreme heat, human health hazards, and wildfire due to limited mobility.

The homes of cost-burdened households and renters are vulnerable to landslides, wildfire, seismic hazards, and severe weather.









Sunset View Cemetery, Tilden Park, and general outdoor recreation are vulnerable to drought, landslides, severe weather, and wildfire.

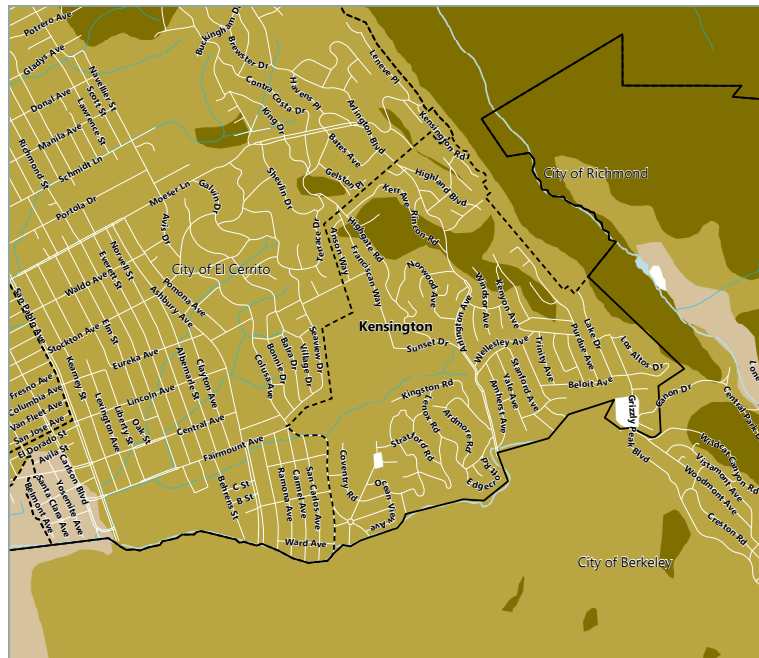
The Kensington Community Center, Kensington Library, and commercial centers along Colusa Avenue and Arlington Avenue are vulnerable to damage from landslides, seismic hazards, severe weather, and wildfire.

Public health and safety response, water and wastewater infrastructure, and public transit access are vulnerable to obstruction and delay from landslides, severe weather, and wildfire.










WILDFIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES

-  Urban Limit Line
-  Incorporated City
-  Creeks
-  Waterbodies
- Wildfire Severity Zones
 -  Urban Unzoned
 -  Moderate
 -  High
 -  Very High



LANDSLIDES

-  Urban Limit Line
-  Incorporated City
- Landslides
 -  Mapped landslides
 -  Few large mapped landslides, but contains scattered small landslides and questionably-identified larger landslides
 -  Areas of gentle slope at low elevation that have little or no potential for landslides
 -  Waterbodies
 -  Creeks



PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for Kensington are shown on the land use map. Kensington is planned primarily for single-family residential use, with small pockets of mixed use, commercial and office uses, public/institutional sites, and abundant parks and recreation land.

Kensington contains two small commercial areas that serve as the primary centers of local business for Kensington residents. They are located on the Arlington, just north of the Berkeley city limit, and on Colusa Circle, in the lower part of Kensington near the border with El Cerrito. Colusa Circle is designated Town Center to encourage mixed-use development on vacant and underutilized parcels. The commercial area along Arlington is intended to maintain the community-serving uses already in place.

Kensington's proximity to Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Regional Parks provides premier outdoor recreational opportunities for residents. As such, there are wide swaths of land designated for open space and park uses. Kensington also includes multiple areas designated for public use, including community facilities such as the Kensington Public Safety Building, the University of California's Blake Garden, the Kensington Library, and Kensington Elementary School.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Kensington residents live in close proximity to their neighbors and care about their community. The friendly, safe, quiet, and small community feel should be preserved.
2. Kensington's panoramic views of San Francisco Bay, bridges and cities, and natural landscapes are a defining characteristic that should be preserved.
3. Kensington residents enjoy easy access to regional parks, trails, and open spaces. These amenities should be preserved and enhanced.
4. To maintain a safe and tight-knit community, existing public services should be supported and enhanced, such as the Kensington Fire Protection District and Police Department facility, Kensington Library and Community Center, and local schools.
5. Because Kensington is proximate to Wildcat Canyon and Tilden Regional Parks and the Hayward Fault, it is exposed to potentially severe wildfires and earthquakes. The community should be protected from these hazards through proper planning and emergency response.
6. A variety of housing types, including multi-family units, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), should be encouraged within Kensington to diversify the housing stock and better serve residents of all ages and abilities.

POLICIES

1. When reviewing new development proposals, prioritize the need for mitigation of wildfire and earthquake exposure as appropriate. (3-???)
2. Ensure new development provides reasonable protection for existing residences with regard to views, design compatibility (including building mass, height, and mechanical devices), adequate parking, privacy, and access to sunlight. (3-211, 3-213, 3-214)
3. When reviewing new development proposals, ensure views of scenic natural features (e.g., San Francisco Bay, mountains) and the developed environment (e.g., bridges, San Francisco skyline) are substantially preserved (3-212)
4. Improve pedestrian and roadway infrastructure in a way that balances the needs of users with the desire to maintain Kensington's character. (3-???)
5. Improve access to medical facilities and services. (3-???)

ACTIONS

1. Coordinate with public safety and health agencies to create a comprehensive emergency plan, including establishing evacuation routes in Kensington. (3-68)
2. Improve pedestrian safety and roadway infrastructure with designated paths, ongoing maintenance, illuminated crossings, delineated on-street parking spaces along major roads, and ADA facilities.
3. Complete sidewalk gaps throughout Kensington, especially near schools and transit stops.
4. Underground utilities to reduce fire hazards and improve community safety and appearance.
5. Prioritize review of projects incorporating community-serving medical facilities and services.