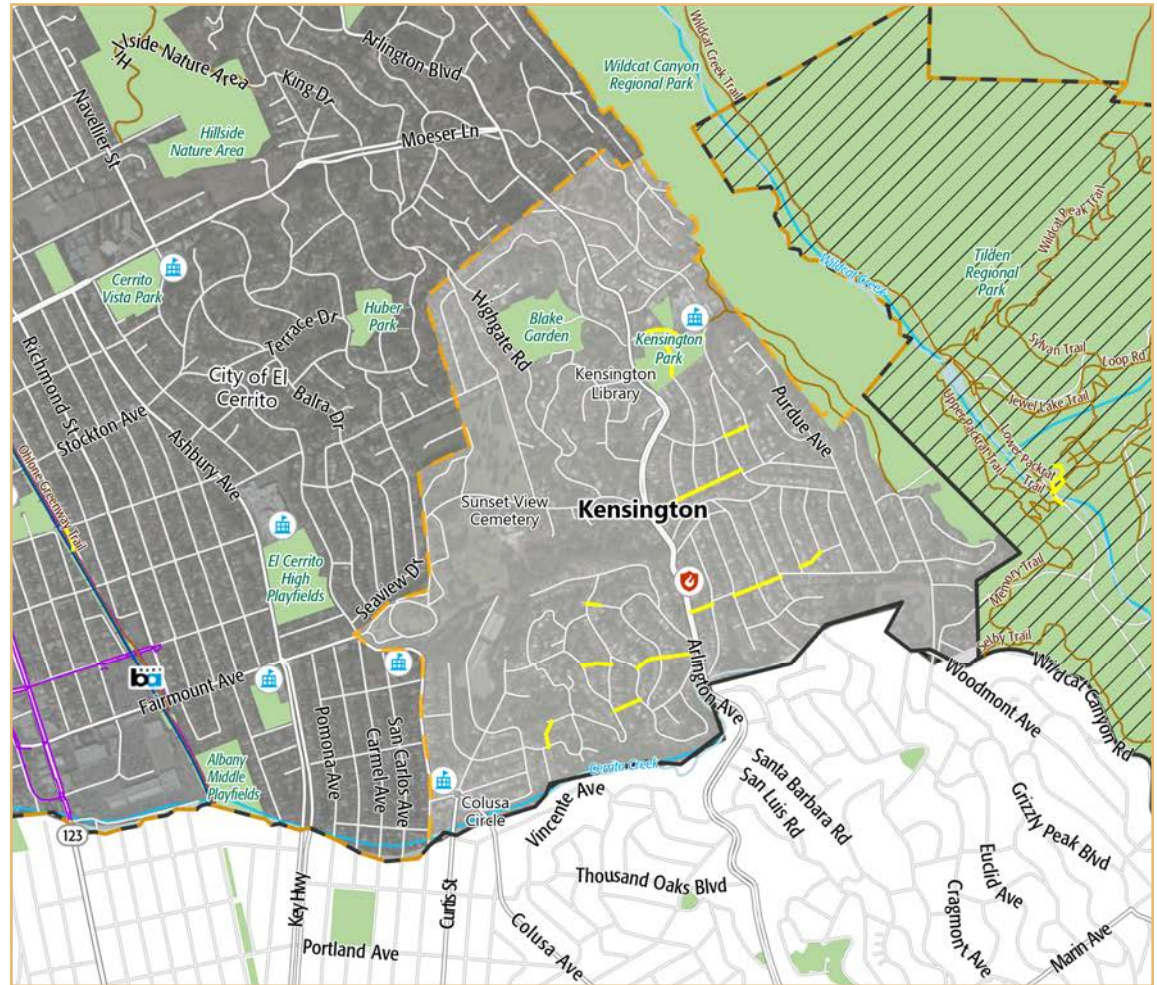


KENSINGTON - CONTEXT - 1

Situated near the University of California, adjacent to the City of Berkeley and within El Cerrito's Sphere of Influence, Kensington has been a desirable neighborhood for academics, students, urban professionals, and families for decades. Kensington residents enjoy the community's panoramic views, mature trees, walkable scale, easy access to El Cerrito Plaza BART and other transit options, and proximity to regional parks. Although there is very limited potential for growth, there is significant construction activity to upgrade and expand existing homes, most of which date from the 1940s and earlier.

Kensington is located 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 on the Arlington just north of the Berkeley city limit. A second commercial district is on Colusa Circle in the lower part of Kensington, near the border with El Cerrito. Almost all the homes in Kensington are single-family and densities for that style of development are relatively high. Features that are important to the community include Kensington Park, Sunset View Cemetery, the University's Blake Garden, the Kensington Library, Kensington Elementary School, and public pedestrian paths. 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 issues in Kensington relate to view preservation, design compatibility and scale, parking, hillside protection, ingress/egress, and emergency access given the community's proximity to the Hayward Fault and designated fire hazard zones.



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

WHO LIVES IN KENSINGTON?

<p>Median Age 49 years old in Kensington</p> <p>VS</p> <p>40 years old in Contra Costa County</p>	<p>Average Life Expectancy 86 years old in Kensington</p> <p>VS</p> <p>81 years old in Contra Costa County</p>	<p>Median Household Income \$163,190 in Kensington</p> <p>VS</p> <p>\$103,997 in Contra Costa County</p>	<p>Race & Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 71% White ▶ 10% Asian ▶ 8% Hispanic or Latino ▶ 2% Black or African American
---	--	--	--





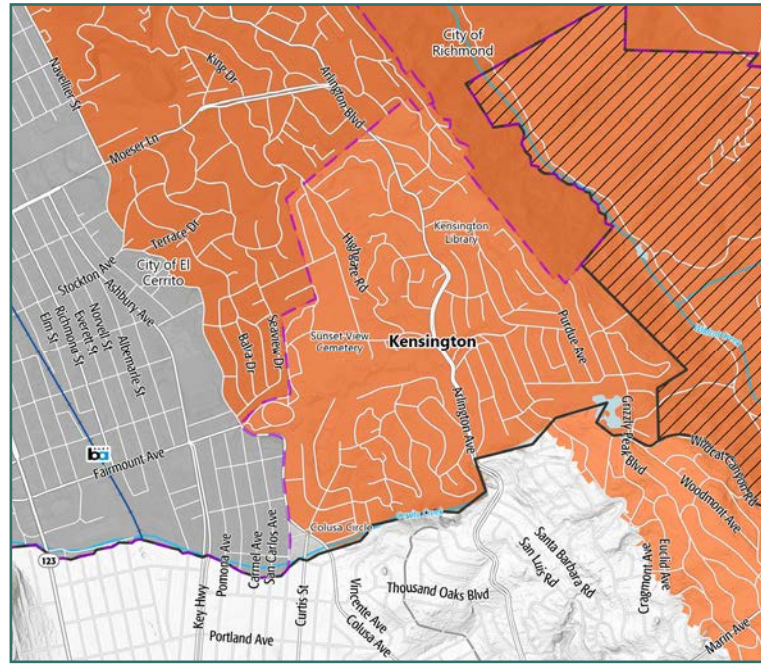
The information on this page presents a summary of hazards and vulnerabilities in Kensington based on the Contra Costa County Vulnerability Assessment; please see the **online Vulnerability Assessment** for a full description of these hazards and vulnerabilities.

HAZARDS

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

MAJOR 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 Regional Park, Kensington 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.

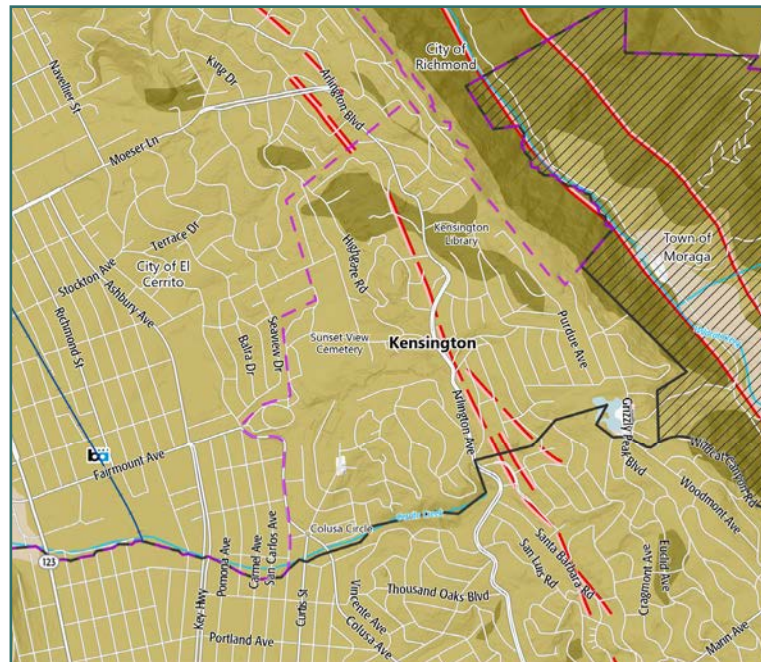


WILDFIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES

- Wildfire Severity Zones**
- Very High
 - High
 - Moderate
 - Unincorporated Areas
 - Incorporated Cities
 - Urban Limit Line
 - Outside Urban Limit Line
 - BART Route
 - Railroads
 - Creeks and Drainages
 - BART Station



Source: CalFire, 2024; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.



LANDSLIDES

- 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
 - Incorporated Cities
 - Urban Limit Line
 - Outside Urban Limit Line
 - Regional Faults
 - BART Route
 - Railroads
 - Creeks and Drainages
 - BART Station



Source: US Geological Survey, 2018; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for Kensington are shown on Figure LU-1, General Plan Land Use Map, and defined in Table LU-1 in the Land Use Element. Kensington is planned for continued residential use at a density consistent with existing development, with small pockets of mixed use, commercial and office uses, public/institutional uses, and abundant parks and recreational land. Kensington's two small commercial areas will continue to serve as the primary centers of local business for Kensington residents. The commercial area at Colusa Circle is intended to maintain the community-serving uses already in place while accommodating mixed-use development on vacant and underutilized parcels. Kensington's proximity to Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Regional Parks provides premier outdoor recreational opportunities for residents. As such, wide swaths of land beyond the developed area continue to be designated for public/semi-public and park and recreation uses.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles articulate the values, priorities, and aspirations for the future shared by Kensington community members:

1. Kensington residents care deeply about their community. The friendly, safe, quiet, and close-knit 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. Bicycle and pedestrian access to these amenities should be enhanced.
4. To remain a safe and complete community, enhancements to the existing public services and facilities, such as the Kensington Fire Protection District and Police Department facilities, Kensington Library and Community Center, the pedestrian path network, and local schools, should be supported.
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. Parts of the community fall within Very High, High, and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The community should be protected from these hazards through proper planning, mitigation, and emergency preparedness and response.
6. A variety of housing types, including small multiple-family developments, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units, should be encouraged to diversify the housing stock and better serve residents of all ages and abilities.
7. New housing should be compatible with the existing community character and be designed to minimize negative impacts on roads, emergency response capacity, and infrastructure.



POLICIES

1. Prioritize mitigation of wildfire and earthquake exposure when reviewing new development proposals.
2. Prioritize evacuation preparedness when making decisions affecting the Kensington community.
3. Ensure new development provides reasonable protection for existing residences regarding views, design compatibility (including building mass, height, and mechanical devices), adequate parking, privacy, and access to sunlight.
4. When reviewing new development proposals, ensure views of scenic natural features (e.g., San Francisco Bay, distant mountains) and the developed environment (e.g., bridges, San Francisco skyline) are substantially preserved.
5. For new developments, encourage building scale, massing, architectural style, and materials to provide harmonious scale transitions and blend with the surrounding existing residential neighborhood.
6. Encourage new development on large parcels to closely follow the natural slope of the site with grading and building forms and heights.
7. Encourage a mix of unit types and densities in new housing projects to diversify the housing stock and better serve residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities. To achieve the required density, encourage development of greater numbers of smaller-scaled buildings that are harmonious with surrounding areas and contain fewer units per building, instead of large-scale buildings containing higher numbers of units.
8. Promote local-serving commercial uses to encourage small business growth, create retail shopping near residents, and provide opportunities for residents to conduct business within their own community.
9. Improve pedestrian and roadway infrastructure in a way that balances the needs of users with the desire to maintain Kensington's character.
10. Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements with large-canopied street trees, open spaces, ground cover, and flowering plants where opportunities exist.

POLICIES (CONTINUED)

11. Prioritize approval of projects that incorporate community-serving medical facilities and services.
12. Support replacement of police and fire facilities with modern facilities that meet Kensington's long-term needs.
13. Condition new development projects to minimize impacts on neighbors and local roads, which may be compounded by existing small lots and narrow, winding roadways.
14. Determine on a project-by-project basis whether a traffic impact analysis is warranted, considering factors beyond peak-hour trip generation, such as individual and cumulative impacts on pedestrian safety and neighborhood-scale evacuation plans.

ACTIONS

1. Improve pedestrian safety and roadway infrastructure with features such as designated paths, illuminated crossings, stop signs, traffic calming measures, on-street parking spaces along Arlington Avenue and Colusa Circle, and ADA facilities.
2. Complete sidewalk gaps throughout Kensington, prioritizing gaps near schools and transit stops.
3. Review County Ordinance Code Chapters 84-74 – Kensington Combining District and 816-2 – Tree Obstruction of Views Combining District and amend as necessary to ensure issues related to view blockage by trees and vegetation are addressed.
4. Explore options for funding maintenance and improvement of Kensington's public pedestrian path system, working with the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District.
5. Improve local drainage infrastructure.