Kensington Community Services District

DATE: July 9, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: David Aranda, Interim General Manager (IGM)

SUBJECT: Discussion and Direction Regarding the Kensington Park Wildfire Risk Assessment

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RECOMMENDATION:

A good discussion with the IGM and volunteers in pursuing the home hardening process for the three buildings that sit on the Kensington Park Site.

BACKGROUND:

The Kensington Community Services District has a beautiful park and on the park are three buildings. The district "preaches" the importance of home hardening and so that importance should be the example we follow in respect to our three buildings -- the Community Center, Recreation Building, and the Annex.

A group of residents have spent a good amount of time providing the District with a very comprehensive report that includes recommendations that should be pursued regarding the hardening of the three buildings on the district's park property.

The IGM will provide an overview of his thoughts by addressing the list of items in the attached priority list.

EXHIBIT(S):

- Wildfire Risk Assessment – Kensington Park Structures
- Kensington Park Wildfire Assessment – Priority Action List for KCSD Board and Staff

Wildfire Risk Assessment

Kensington Park Structures

Kensington, California

Prepared for:
Kensington Community Services District Board and Staff

Assessment Date: April 27, 2026
Report Date: May 18, 2026
(Corrected: June 29, 2026)

Assessment Team
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Lori Gomes — Redtail Ridge Firewise Community
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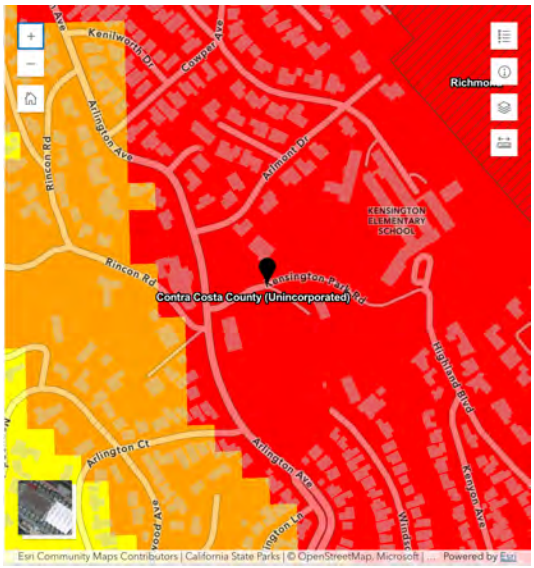
Sheryl Drinkwater — Licensed Architect and Home Hardening Specialist

Introduction

Kensington Park was acquired by the Kensington Community Services District (formerly the KPPCSD) in 1995, transforming a former elementary school property into a recreational hub for the community. Residents at the time stood up to real estate developers who wanted to build housing on the ten-plus-acre site, and supported a bond measure to buy the land for the community's benefit.

A Master Plan was developed and finalized in 1997 to design the park's current layout, including the removal of the old school district buildings and the creation of a grass field and amphitheater. In 2021, the Community Center was significantly renovated and seismically retrofitted. Now fully paid off, the park has become the town's crown jewel, beloved by residents young and old, new and multigenerational, for its many amenities and as a place to unwind and enjoy the outdoors.

There has been recent discussion by the District's elected officials about developing a new Kensington Park Master Plan. Given that the park sits in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, this is an ideal moment to assess the park's vulnerabilities to wildfire — and specifically to ember storms, which are the primary means by which wildfires spread into developed areas. Located on the developed side of the East Bay Hills, the parklands are subject to hot, drying Diablo winds that intensify as they descend from the ridgeline, significantly exacerbating fire danger.



For these reasons, this report's authors urge new, focused action to reduce wildfire risk in the park and ask that the Kensington Community Services District prioritize risk mitigation when considering both routine maintenance and future capital improvements.

This report grew out of the broader movement for wildfire safety in Kensington. Over the past decade, residents have become increasingly sensitized to fire risk. Thanks to support from the KCSD and staff, 22 recognized Firewise community groups have formed, and a new nonprofit — Firesafe Kensington (FSK) — has been founded to educate residents and promote actions that reduce the risk of property loss and harm to life. Four Firewise community leads, trained by CalFire to conduct defensible space assessments, and a licensed Home Hardening Specialist conducted this assessment on April 27, 2026, on their own time and at no cost to the District.

Goals and Methodology

This report was prepared to support informed decision-making by the Kensington Community Services District Board, its staff, and the residents it serves. The

assessment reflects visible conditions observed during an exterior inspection of three structures and their surrounding landscapes in Kensington Park. It is not a substitute for a professional structural inspection or a formal evaluation by the fire authority having jurisdiction.

The assessment team focused on three interrelated areas of wildfire risk: structural hardening (a building's physical resistance to ignition), defensible space (the management of vegetation and combustibles in the surrounding landscape), and evacuation safety as it relates to the structure. A separate, more comprehensive evaluation of evacuation routes and safety in and around Kensington Park should also be conducted. Findings are guided by California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) regulations, the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) best practices for structural hardening, and the most recent draft Zone 0 regulations, which are expected to be finalized by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in 2026.

The Importance of Ember Protection

The leading cause of property destruction during wildfires is not the wall of flame most people picture — it is the tens of thousands of tiny burning embers that travel on high winds through neighborhoods, sometimes for miles ahead of the fire front. These embers move like water, flowing onto properties and seeping into structures through small gaps, vents, and openings, or landing on combustible surfaces close to a building and igniting a secondary fire that then spreads to the structure itself.

Research consistently shows that property owners can dramatically reduce the risk of structural loss through two complementary strategies. The first is structural hardening: identifying and sealing the points of vulnerability on a building where embers can lodge or ignite — vents, roof edges, eaves, windows, and wall bases. The second is defensible space: removing or replacing combustible vegetation and materials in a series of buffer zones around the building, depriving an approaching fire of the fuel it needs to reach the structure.

Studies show that homeowners nearly double a property's chances of wildfire survival by managing the vegetation and combustibles in the immediate 0-to-5-foot zone around the building — an area small enough to be addressed with relatively modest effort. Extending that management outward through Zones 1 and 2 further multiplies the benefit. Individual efforts also compound: as more properties in a neighborhood become fire-resistant, the community's collective chances of survival increase.

These principles apply equally to public spaces. The three structures assessed in this report — the Community Center, the Recreation Building, and the Annex — sit at the

heart of a beloved community park in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Protecting them means protecting a resource that belongs to all of Kensington.

Background: Defensible Space and Structural Hardening

Defensible space refers to the buffer created between a building and the grass, trees, shrubs, and other vegetation surrounding it. California law requires property owners[1] in designated fire hazard zones to maintain defensible space, and the regulations are organized into three concentric zones measured from the structure's perimeter.

Zone 0 (0 to 5 feet) is the most critical zone. Research shows this narrow band has an outsized effect on a structure's survival. The goal is to create a noncombustible buffer — using stone, pavers, concrete, or similar materials — that prevents ember accumulation and denies fire a path to the building. New California draft regulations expected to be finalized in 2026 will require this zone to be largely free of combustible vegetation, mulch, and materials. Within Zone 0, there is also a noncombustible "safety zone" extending from the building's perimeter to the drip line of the eaves (or 1 foot, whichever is greater), and 2 feet in front of all doors, windows, and vents.

Zone 1 (5 to 30 feet) is the lean, clean, and green zone. Vegetation here should be well-irrigated, well-spaced, and kept free of dead material. Trees should be limbed up from the bottom to prevent fire from "laddering" up into the canopy, and shrubs and trees should be spaced to prevent fire from traveling continuously across the landscape. Combustible structures such as wooden decks and outbuildings should be kept at least 10 feet from the main structure or replaced with noncombustible materials.

Zone 2 (30 to 100 feet, or to the property line) is the reduced fuel zone. The goal here is to prevent fire from building up enough intensity to threaten Zone 1. Trees and shrubs should be thinned and spaced to interrupt continuous fuel; spacing requirements increase with slope. Limbs should be removed from the lower third of trees. Debris and dead material should be cleared regularly. On steeper slopes, increased spacing is required because fire travels faster and with greater intensity when moving uphill.

Structural hardening addresses the building itself. Even with excellent defensible space, a building with gaps, unscreened vents, combustible wall bases, or single-pane windows can be ignited by embers. Key vulnerabilities include: roof and gutter areas where debris accumulates; vents and openings larger than 1/8 inch mesh (through which embers can enter); wall bases where combustible siding contacts the ground; windows that can crack from radiant heat; and attached or adjacent combustible structures such as wood decks, fences, and storage sheds. Addressing these vulnerabilities does not require rebuilding — targeted upgrades to screens, cladding, and clearances can substantially reduce risk.

The three sections that follow assess the Community Center, the Recreation Building, and the Annex using this inside-out framework: structure first, then Zone 0, Zone 1, and Zone 2. A consolidated reference to applicable regulations and spacing requirements is provided in the Appendix.

[1] Public agencies are not specifically included in the definition of a “person” who is required to comply with defensible space regulations (PRC § 4291(j)), though the law is broadly applied to any person or entity that “owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure.’

Photo: Aerial view of Kensington Park with 100’ defensible space zones marked in white for each building in the assessment.

Section 1: The Community Center

Assessment lead: David Tuft, Colgate-Columbia Firewise Community

The Kensington Community Center, renovated in 2020, is well-maintained and has many features designed to protect the structure from wildfire. In a heavily wooded section of the park, its amenities — including the manicured lawn in front and the

large terraced amphitheater in the rear — provide robust defensible space out to the edges of the property.

However, the landscape design also presents hazards: combustible materials within Zone 0, maintenance issues on the building exterior that are largely out of public view, combustible structures and improperly spaced vegetation in Zone 1, and densely wooded areas between the outer walkway and the fire road on the south side in Zone 2. Each of these is addressed in turn below.

1.1 Structural Hardening — The Building Envelope

Roof

Based on visual inspection, the roof material appears to be TPO (Thermoplastic Polyolefin), which typically carries a Class A fire resistance rating—the highest available.[2] The District should confirm this through documentation from the 2020 renovation, or, if documentation is unavailable, consult a licensed roofing contractor.

Regardless of the roof material, the more immediate concern is maintenance. Given the Community Center's location beneath a dense tree canopy, the roof surface, drains, gutters, and downspouts are highly susceptible to the accumulation of pine needles,

[2] See UL Roof Rating guide for more information.

leaves, branches, and other combustible debris. This debris provides both ignition material and a pathway for fire to reach the building.

Also located at the roof level are domed skylights that appear to be acrylic. Acrylic can melt during a wildfire event, creating openings through which embers can enter the building. Similarly, clerestory windows at the roofline — some fixed, some awning-style — appear to be sitting improperly in their frames or slightly ajar, creating a potential pathway for ember intrusion.

Recommendations — Roof

- Confirm that the roof assembly carries a Class A fire resistance rating (ASTM E108 or UL 790) through documentation from the 2020 renovation. If documentation is unavailable, engage a licensed roofing contractor to evaluate the assembly.
- Implement a regular maintenance schedule to clear combustible debris from all roof surfaces, gutters, drains, and downspouts, with increased frequency during periods of high fire danger.
- Inspect the clerestory windows to determine whether they require adjustment or weatherstripping to seal gaps. Develop operational protocols to ensure all operable windows — including the clerestories — are closed and latched during Red Flag events.
- If any clerestory windows are single-pane, consider upgrading to double-pane tempered glass to resist radiant heat and ember impact.
- When the acrylic skylights reach the end of their service life, replace them with low-profile skylights featuring multi-pane tempered glass and fitted with 1/8-inch mesh screens.

Exterior Walls and Foundation

The Community Center is nearly surrounded (approximately 75 percent) by a noncombustible concrete sidewalk or bare soil, which functions as an effective ember kill zone — though some of this walkway is less than the empirically protective 5-foot width. The exterior walls are a combination of concrete block and relatively new stucco over a wood frame, both of which are considered fire-resistant.

A significant concern exists on the east side of the building, where the wall base lacks the recommended 6-inch noncombustible clearance from the ground. Old wood siding is visible below the stucco along portions of this wall, creating a combustible ignition point ranging from less than an inch to several inches above grade. This is a meaningful vulnerability: ember accumulation at the base of a wall is one of the most common ignition pathways during a wildfire.

Additionally, in the rear of the building, to the left of the main rear entrance, there is a 2” gap at the edge of a soffit vent screen. The mesh itself appears to comply with the current 1/8-inch maximum.

Recommendations — Walls and Foundation

- Working with a licensed contractor, investigate the most cost-effective means of adding 6 vertical inches of noncombustible cladding wherever old wood siding is exposed below the stucco on the east wall. Suitable materials include metal flashing, fiber cement panels (such as Hardie Board), brick, stone, or stucco applied directly to the existing substrate.
- Fill any edge gaps on in the eaves or soffits with additional screening or intumescent fill to prevent ember infiltration.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): 6” combustible siding below stucco base, gap in soffit screen, clerestory windows, debris in gutters.

1.2 Zone 0 — The Noncombustible Buffer (0 to 5 Feet)

California's new draft Zone 0 regulations, expected to be finalized in 2026, specify a 5-foot low-combustibility zone around the building perimeter. Within that zone, the area from the foundation to the drip line of the eaves (or 1 foot, whichever is greater) must be noncombustible — no mulch, no vegetation, no wood. This noncombustible safety zone extends 2 feet in front of all doors, windows, and vents, and 5 feet from any attached deck or similar feature.

At the Community Center's main entrance and along the west side, an L-shaped planter cutout containing mulch and vegetation sits directly beneath the front overhang and eaves — a condition that will not meet the draft code. Rounding the south corner, additional landscape cutouts contain small trees, and two wood-slatted screens concealing mechanical equipment, which are located under the eaves, also noncompliant.

On the east side (rear) of the building, approximately 18 inches from the building perimeter, a water management system traps combustible organic debris beneath a drainpipe. Behind it sits a pressure-treated wood retaining wall, positioned directly behind a concrete retaining wall. The wooden wall shows signs of age — deteriorating posts, and the presence of sandbags and straw wattles suggests it no longer effectively manages hydrostatic pressure. The combination of trapped debris and a wooden retaining wall close to the building creates a meaningful ignition hazard. A combustible wooden barrier at the end of the east wall presents a further risk.

The new draft regulations have also reduced the allowable overhang of tree limbs over a roof from 10 feet to 5 feet. The District appears to have maintained good limbing practice on the north and northeast sides of the building in the past. However, new growth now appears to be within 5 feet of the abandoned chimney, and tree branches overhang the parapet section of the roof at the northeast corner. Fire risk in this area is compounded by understory bushes that grow from the ground to the lower branches of these overhanging trees — a classic ladder fuel configuration that can allow a ground fire to climb rapidly into the tree canopy and then to the roof.

Recommendations — Zone 0

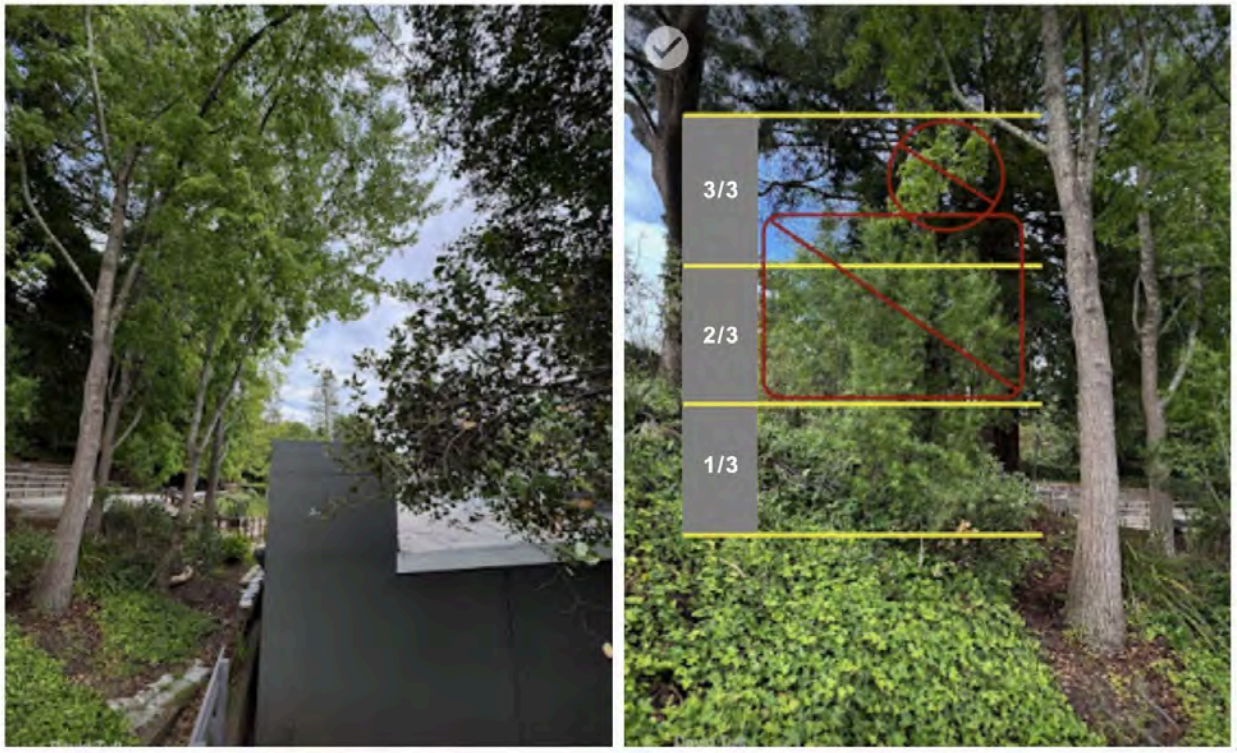
- Remove all mulch and combustible vegetation from beneath the eaves at the entrance, west-facing, and south-facing sides of the building. A landscape architect can suggest attractive noncombustible alternatives — decorative stone, tiles, pavers, sculpture — that maintain the building's welcoming character while meeting fire safety standards.
- Replace the wood-slatted screens concealing the mechanical equipment on the south side with metal or other noncombustible alternatives, such as fiber-cement panels, that can be painted to match the building.
- Implement a routine debris management plan for the rear of the building, with particular attention to the area beneath and around the water management system where organic material accumulates.
- Given the apparent age and declining effectiveness of the wooden retaining wall, consider replacing the entire rear drainage and retaining configuration with a more comprehensive system designed to manage both hydrostatic pressure and

wildfire risk. This is an opportunity to eliminate a combustible wall close to the building while improving drainage — a dual benefit.

- Replace the combustible wooden barrier at the end of the east wall with a noncombustible alternative, such as metal or fiber cement board.
- Limb all trees with branches within 10 feet of the roofline. While the draft regulations specify 5 feet, the 10-foot standard provides greater protection at minimal additional effort and is recommended. At the northeast corner, prune trees completely away from the roofline. Remove the understory bushes below the overhanging trees, or prune them to no more than one-third the height of the lowest tree limb, to eliminate the ladder fuel hazard.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): L-shaped planter with mulch and vegetation beneath eaves at front; wooden screens for mechanical equipment on side.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): Water management system and wooden retaining wall traps debris on the east side.



Photos: Tree overhanging the roof (L); ladder fuel understory at northeast corner showing where to cut limbs and underbrush (R).

1.3 Zone 1 — Lean, Clean, and Green (5 to 30 Feet)

The area immediately surrounding the Community Center in Zone 1 includes a manicured lawn with benches and a stone grill in front; a large terraced amphitheater carved into the heavily wooded slope at the rear; a property line along the north side; and seating areas, terraced gardens, a message board, and concrete pathways on the west side.

A wooden deck outside the rear classroom at the southeast corner of the building sits just over 5 feet from the building perimeter on a concrete pad. Because it is not attached to the structure, it is classified as a detached structure and should maintain at least 10 feet of clearance from the building. Replacing the wood decking with a noncombustible material such as concrete pavers, slate, or composite stone would both meet the clearance requirement and eliminate the fuel risk.

A Kirbybuilt message center made of recycled plastic is located in a planter cutout approximately 8 feet from the building's south perimeter. Recycled plastic is highly flammable. Moving the message board to the far side of the walkway — at least 10 feet from the building — and maintaining a 5-foot noncombustible zone around it would mitigate this hazard.

The shrubs and small trees in the large L-shaped concrete planter box above the wooden deck, along the south and east sides of the building, form a nearly continuous band of vegetation that can serve as an accelerant and intensifier during a wildfire. To disrupt the fire's path and improve the ability of firefighters to halt spread, this vegetation

should be "islanded" into clusters of no more than 10 feet, separated by 10-foot gaps of noncombustible material. Individual shrubs should be spaced at twice their mature height, up to 5 feet.

This L-shaped planter presents a unique opportunity. With thoughtful redesign, it could become a demonstration garden showcasing native, fire-resistant plantings with noncombustible features — an educational amenity for Kensington residents and a model for fire-safe landscaping that is as attractive as it is safe.

Recommendations — Zone 1

- Replace the wood decking at the southeast corner with a noncombustible material (concrete pavers, slate, stone tile, or similar). If replacement is not immediately feasible, consider its removal.
- Relocate the recycled plastic message board to a position at least 10 feet from the building. Ensure a 5-foot noncombustible zone is maintained around it at its new location.
- Redesign the L-shaped planter located behind the deck, to island vegetation into 10-foot clusters separated by 10-foot noncombustible breaks. Consult with a landscape architect experienced in fire-safe native plantings. Consider using this planter as a community demonstration garden for fire-resistant landscaping.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): Recycled plastic message board; wooden deck south of building. L-shaped planter with continuous vegetation on the south and east sides.

1.4 Zone 2 — Reduced Fuel Zone (30 to 100 Feet)

The Community Center has significant District-owned property beyond 30 feet on three sides — west, east, and south — which are not in accordance with defensible space best practices. The west side is of particular concern: it encompasses the parking lot at the southwest corner, a garbage enclosure, the upper pathway to the amphitheater, and Kensington Park Road that serves as a potential evacuation route for Hilltop Elementary School above. The density of woody vegetation in this area, between the garbage enclosure and the upper pathway on one side and the roadbed on the other, would be considered out of compliance with defensible space requirements.

The same tree and shrub spacing rules described in the Background section apply here, at a larger scale. Trees should be limbed from the ground to at least 6 feet, or to one-third of the tree's total height for smaller trees, whichever is less. Spacing between

canopies must account for the topography (see illustration in Appendix 1): on flat to mild slopes, 10 feet of horizontal clearance between individual canopies is required; on moderate slopes (20 to 40 percent grade), 20-foot spacing between tree canopies and 4-times spacing for shrubs; on steep slopes (greater than 40 percent grade), 30 feet for trees and 6-times spacing for shrubs.

We recommend that the continuous cluster of hedges west of the parking have the same separation described for Zone 1 — 10-foot clusters separated by 10-foot breaks. These gaps are especially important in a parking area where vehicles may be trapped by fire, preventing evacuation during a wildfire.

A wooden garbage enclosure on the south side of the building is surrounded by vegetation on two sides and from above. This structure is classified as an outbuilding[3] and requires 10 feet of clearance on all sides, down to bare soil (or stone.

Recommendations — Zone 2

- Conduct a comprehensive vegetation management assessment of the west side of the property, including the area between the garbage enclosure and upper pathway, and develop a thinning and spacing plan that meets current defensible space requirements, accounting for slope.
- Island the continuous hedge row west of the parking lot into 10-foot clusters with 10-foot noncombustible breaks, with particular attention to maintaining clear vehicle access and egress.
- Clear a minimum 10-foot perimeter of bare mineral soil around the wooden garbage enclosure.
- Ensure that the fire road/evacuation roadbed on the south side is kept clear of encroaching vegetation to maintain access for fire apparatus and evacuees.

[3] 14 CCR 1299.03 distinguishes between an “outbuilding” of “less than 120 sq ft in size and not used for human habitation” and a “building or structure” that is “intended for support, enclosure, shelter, or protection … property that has a permanent roof supported by walls or posts connected to the ground.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): Wooden garbage enclosure; surrounded by vegetation; vegetation between enclosure and Kensington Park Road; and dense vegetation along upper walkway.

Section 2: The Recreation Building

Assessment lead: Al Wanger, College District Firewise Community

The Recreation Building is generally well-maintained and benefits from excellent natural defensible space on its north and east sides. With targeted improvements described below, the building can be meaningfully hardened against ember intrusion. The south and west sides require more substantial attention, including tree work and vegetation management. The roof assembly appears to include asphalt composite shingles, in good condition, though of indeterminate age.

- While composite shingles are typically Class A-rated, the District should confirm this observation using existing records or with a licensed roofing contractor.

This section follows the same inside-out framework used for the Community Center, moving from the building structure outward through Zones 0, 1, and 2. Where appropriate, brief explanatory notes are included to help readers understand why a particular feature poses a wildfire risk.

2.1 Structural Hardening — The Building Envelope

Vents and Openings

Vents are among the most common pathways for ember intrusion into a structure. During a wildfire, embers can be carried by wind directly into foundation vents, gable vents, and other openings, igniting the building from within. CalFire recommends that

vent openings at attics and crawlspaces be covered with 1/16-inch or 1/8-inch corrosion-resistant mesh — a straightforward and relatively low-cost upgrade.

The Recreation Building's foundation and gable vents do not appear to have appropriately-sized ember-resistant mesh screening. Gaps and openings around electrical and other utility boxes attached to the south wall also present points of entry for embers.

Recommendations — Vents and Openings

- Retrofit all foundation and gable vents with 1/16-inch or 1/8-inch corrosion-resistant mesh screening. This is a high-priority, relatively low-cost action.
- Inspect all utility boxes and conduit penetrations on the south wall. Cover or enclose any gaps and openings with appropriate mesh or intumescent caulk to prevent ember accumulation and intrusion.

Photos (from left): vents needing repair, and rodent mesh screen; gable vents requiring check for screen size; and gaps found around several wall penetrations.

Doors, Siding, and Wall Base

The recommended 6-inch vertical clearance between the bottom of exterior siding and the ground surface is one of the most effective — and most commonly overlooked — structure hardening measures. When combustible siding contacts or comes close to the ground, embers that accumulate at the building's base ignite small fuels, which in turn ignite combustible siding. A noncombustible barrier, typically metal flashing or masonry material, closes this pathway.

The concrete foundation along the west side of the Recreation Building provides an excellent 6-plus-inch clearance between siding and ground for most of its length, with the exception of an approximately 20-foot section where wood siding comes too close to grade. The exterior doors on the east side also warrant attention: the base of the doors and the siding beneath them should maintain similar noncombustible separation from the concrete walkway below.

The small wooden utility access door on the west side of the building is a separate concern. Wood doors and panels in exterior utility access points are an ignition hazard,

allowing fire to enter the building. Replacing it with a noncombustible alternative and ensuring it closes fully are both important measures.

Recommendations — Doors, Siding, and Wall Base

- Create a 6-inch noncombustible clearance at the base of the west wall. Expose the existing concrete or apply metal flashing or another noncombustible material along this 20-foot section of wall.
- Add noncombustible flashing or a 6-inch noncombustible base treatment along the bottom of the siding and doors on the east side to create proper separation from the concrete walkway. This can be painted to match the building's color.
- Replace the small wooden utility access door on the west side with a noncombustible alternative — such as fiber cement board (Hardie Board) or other noncombustible material — and ensure it is fitted to close and latch securely.
- During Red Flag events, remove all door mats from building entrances, and move any potted plants to a location at least 5 feet from the building and doorways.

Photos (from left): Two views showing combustible wood at the base of doors and siding; and a wooden access door with a poor fit and ember entry gaps.

2.2 Zone 0 — The Noncombustible Buffer (0 to 5 Feet)

The north side of the Recreation Building has a planting area beneath a window that currently contains vegetation. Under both current best practice and the forthcoming Zone 0 regulations, vegetation within 5 feet of the building — and particularly beneath windows and eaves — must be removed and replaced with noncombustible material. Embers landing in a planted area close to a window can smolder and eventually ignite the building.

On the south side and southwest corner, vegetation management within 5 feet of the building is also needed: weeds, ground cover, and plant material in this zone should be removed and replaced with gravel, rock, or another noncombustible surface. The wooden retaining wall near the southeast corner is another concern; combustible retaining walls near a structure can contribute to building ignition. This creates a narrow corridor between the buildings that can trap debris.

Recommendations — Zone 0

- Remove all vegetation from the planting area beneath the north-side window. Replace with gravel, rock, or another approved noncombustible material.
- Remove the overgrown vegetation and plant material at the northwest corner of the building.
- Apply gravel, rock, or other noncombustible material within 5 feet of the west side of the building, beneath the oaks, to reduce debris accumulation and ember risk.
- Remove all weeds, groundcover, and combustible debris along the south wall and within 5 feet of the building on the south and west sides. Apply gravel, rock, or other noncombustible ground cover throughout this area.
- Keep the ground between the retaining wall on the east and south side of the building free of all vegetation and debris. When it reaches the end of its useful life, replace with a noncombustible alternative — concrete block or a noncombustible material.

Photos (clockwise from upper left): view of trees and vegetation overhanging structure; vegetation in Zone 0 on NW corner; planter under north-side windows; overgrown vegetation on NW corner; wooden retaining wall in southeast corner prone to collecting debris.

2.3 Zone 1 — Lean, Clean, and Green (5 to 30 Feet)

The small cluster of trees at the southeast corner of the building is within 5 feet of the structure and roof — the minimum required clearance under current regulations. Trees this close to a building can transfer fire directly to the roof or walls and provide a

continuous fuel pathway. While removal is the preferred option, at a minimum, the trees must be routinely trimmed to maintain the required clearance.

The hillside to the south and west of the building carries significant vegetation that requires regular management. Plants and shrubs on the southwest hillside should be pruned and spaced to maintain at least 10 feet of horizontal separation from other plants and trees, adjusted for slope. Weeds and debris on this hillside should be cleared regularly.

The large oak trees on the west side of the building currently extend over the roof, allowing debris accumulation — a significant risk. The oaks are mature trees worthy of preservation; an arborist should be engaged to design a pruning program that achieves the necessary setback while maintaining the trees' long-term health.

Recommendations — Zone 1

- Remove the small cluster of trees at the southeast corner of the building, or, if total removal is not feasible, commit to partial removal and/or regular trimming to maintain at least 5 feet of clearance from the building and roof at all times. [addressed in May, 2026]
- Engage a certified arborist to develop a pruning plan for the large oak trees on the west side, achieving a minimum 5-foot setback from the roof edge. [addressed in May, 2026]
- Remove all leaf litter, vegetation, and debris from beneath the oaks and maintain regularly.
- Prune and thin the vegetation on the south and southwest hillside to achieve the spacing requirements described in the Appendix, accounting for slope. Remove all weeds and debris regularly.

Photos (from left): cluster of trees crowding the building at southeast corner; two views of the large oak trees on west side touching the roof and gable vent, and shedding leaves and branches.

2.4 Zone 2 — Reduced Fuel Zone (30 to 100 Feet)

Ongoing vegetation management in Zone 2 on the south and west slopes is necessary to prevent the buildup of fuel that could drive fire toward the building and park. Invasive

species and opportunistic regrowth are common on these slopes and require regular monitoring.

Recommendations — Zone 2

- Maintain the hillside vegetation in Zone 2 to the south and west in accordance with the spacing and clearance standards described in the Appendix. Update the park's vegetation management schedule to include this area and address rapid regrowth and invasive species.
- Keep grasses and forbs cut down to a maximum height of 4 inches

2.5 Accessory Structure — Storage Shed

A small storage shed to the east of the Recreation Building is classified as a detached structure and has its own defensible space requirements. The shed's current condition — surrounded by weeds and debris, with an open base that may provide access for rodents and combustible material — requires attention. Coordination with the adjacent neighbor regarding the shared cyclone fence and overhanging trees is also warranted.

Recommendations — Storage Shed

- Clear all weeds and debris from around the shed. Establish a 5-foot zone of noncombustible material — gravel or rock — around the entire structure.
- Attach fire-resistant mesh to the base of the shed and bury it at least 6 inches into the ground to prevent animals from burrowing beneath the structure and accumulating nesting material.
- Coordinate with the adjacent neighbor to trim back trees and vegetation that overhang or encroach on the shed, and to repair the shared cyclone fence. Remove any wooden slats from the cyclone fence; if privacy screening is needed, replace with aluminum slats.

Photos (from left): underside of shed open, weeds and debris between shed and fence; and wooden slats on cyclone fence showing areas in need of repair.

2.6 Specialist Engagement

Several of the issues identified at the Recreation Building warrant the involvement of qualified specialists. The District is encouraged to engage the following:

- A Fire Marshal to validate the overall risk level for the building and defensible space conditions and to provide formal guidance on compliance.
- A certified arborist to assess tree health and advise on the most appropriate thinning and pruning strategy, particularly for the oak trees on the west side.
- A landscape architect or contractor experienced in fire-safe planting and slope stabilization to advise on appropriate plant selection and spacing for the south and west hillsides.

Section 3: The Annex

Assessment lead: Lori Gomes, Redtail Ridge Firewise Community

The Annex presents the most complex and consequential wildfire risk situation of the three structures assessed. The combination of significant structural vulnerability, dense and aging surrounding vegetation, a sloped site, and proximity to active recreation areas and an important evacuation corridor makes it a high priority for attention — regardless of what long-term decisions are made about the building's future.

This section departs somewhat from the inside-out format used for the Community Center and Recreation Building. The reason is straightforward: the condition of the Annex is sufficiently deteriorated that a detailed itemization of individual structural deficiencies would not be the most useful guide to action. What is needed first is a decision about the building's future. A remediation plan is dependent on the community’s decision about the building’s future. In the meantime, vegetation management and hazard reduction actions are both possible and urgent.

3.1 Structural Condition and Vulnerability

The Annex exhibits multiple significant points of vulnerability to ember intrusion and structural ignition. Based on exterior visual inspection, affected elements include the siding, windows, doors, gutters, and likely the roof assembly. The building shows visible signs of deterioration across much of its exterior.

It is the assessment team's judgment that a majority of the structure's exterior — estimated at 60 to 80 percent — would require upgrade or replacement to achieve meaningful fire resistance. This is not a building that can be hardened with targeted,

low-cost improvements. Any serious effort to bring the Annex into compliance with current fire safety standards would constitute a substantial renovation.

Photos: View of building from rear showing worn siding, missing windows, and multiple areas of decay.

3.2 Location and Evacuation Risk

The Annex's location within the park amplifies the significance of its condition. The building sits within 100 feet of the upper parking lot, picnic tables, tennis courts, and the playing field — all frequently used public spaces.

Of particular concern is the building's relationship to Kensington Park Road, which runs upslope and in close proximity. This road serves as a popular pedestrian path, a fire access route, and a potential evacuation corridor for schoolchildren and Tilden Park hikers descending toward Arlington Avenue. Due to the combination of slope, current vegetation density, and the building's condition, a fire involving the Annex and its surrounding vegetation could produce enough radiant heat and ember output to compromise the safety of this evacuation route.

The trail with railroad-tie steps adjacent to the Annex is a potential evacuation route with fire risk from vegetation and the combustibility of the Annex itself. It should be evaluated for fuel reduction management as part of a comprehensive evacuation route analysis.

Photo: Aerial view of Annex building with 100' defensible space zone marked in white. Note the parking lot, tennis courts and picnic area to its west. Kensington Park Road walking path is upslope, winding around the building. The foot trail just north of the building cuts through the vegetation to the picnic area.

3.3 Vegetation and Defensible Space

The vegetation surrounding the Annex is dense, aged, and in several areas highly combustible. Ladder fuels — shrubs and understory vegetation that allow ground fire to climb into the tree canopy — are present. The area between the building and Kensington Park Road is of particular concern, given the uphill fire behavior that slope conditions promote and the proximity to the evacuation corridor.

Current conditions do not meet recommended defensible space practices for any of the three zones. While the building's structural condition is the primary driver of the overall risk level, the vegetation surrounding it can and should be addressed immediately, independent of any decision about the building itself.

Vegetation Management Recommendations

- Remove all combustible materials attached to the building. This includes benches, wood add-ons, and enclosures. Replace with noncombustible alternatives where needed.
- Given the building's poor structural condition, consider expanding the noncombustible buffer around the building to 10 feet rather than the standard 5, to provide additional margin.
- Thin dense shrubs, ladder fuels, and understory vegetation throughout Zones 1 and 2, following the CAL FIRE vegetation management guidelines described in the Appendix and accounting for slope conditions.

- Treat the area between the building and Kensington Park Road as a priority corridor: clear vegetation to the maximum extent possible consistent with slope stability, and ensure the evacuation route remains passable and free of overhanging fuel.
- Replace or redirect the railroad-tie trail through this area with a wider, fire-resistant footpath — compacted gravel or decomposed granite — and formally designate this corridor as a secondary evacuation route.
- Update the park's vegetation management standards and maintenance schedule to address this area explicitly, with attention to preventing rapid regrowth and the spread of invasive species.

Photos: Views of dense vegetation between rear of building and Kensington Park Road, ladder fuels, and tree limbs overhanging the building.

3.5 Accessory Structure — Storage Shed

A 12’ x 20’ storage shed is installed 15’-18’ to the south of the Annex Building and is classified as a detached structure with its own defensible space requirements. The shed is new and in good condition, except for an open base that allows combustible material and embers to enter, overhanging tree branches, and combustibles stored in Zone 0.

Recommendations — Storage Shed

- Attach ember-resistant mesh to the base of the shed and bury it at least 6 inches into the ground to prevent animals from burrowing beneath the structure and accumulating nesting material and to prevent ember intrusion.

- Prune back tree limbs overhanging the shed, allowing for a minimum 5-foot clearance from the roof.
- Remove all combustible items within 5 feet of the building.

Photos(from left): View of new shed, proximity to annex and tree with overhanging branches; and combustibles, debris and open base under the structure.

3.6 Conclusions and Options

Managing the structural and vegetative conditions at the Annex, taken together, require a decision on its future use. Delaying action increases risk exposure for park visitors, neighborhood residents, and anyone using the Kensington Park Road corridor during a fire event. We recommend that vegetation management begin immediately. The structural question requires a decision among the following options.

Option A: Renovation

A major renovation would aim to bring the Annex into compliance with current building codes and fire safety standards. Given the estimated scope of exterior work required — 60 to 80 percent of the exterior envelope — this would be a significant capital investment. Before committing to this path, the District should engage a professional to assess the building's structural integrity.

Option B: Replacement

Given the scope of remediation required, demolition and replacement may offer better long-term value than renovation. Replacement could take the form of a new permanent structure built to current code, or a high-quality modular or portable structure placed on the existing site.

3.5 Recommended Next Steps

Regardless of which long-term option is chosen, the following actions are recommended:

- Engage the Fire Marshal to conduct a formal risk assessment of the building and the Kensington Park Road corridor, and to provide guidance on defensible space treatment for the evacuation route.

- Engage a licensed professional to assess the building's structural condition and viability for renovation, and to develop cost estimates for renovation and replacement.
- Engage a certified arborist to assess tree health and advise on the appropriate thinning strategy for the dense vegetation surrounding the building.
- Engage a landscape contractor experienced in fire-safe planting and slope stabilization.
- Begin vegetation management immediately, independent of any structural decision.

Appendix: Defensible Space Reference — Applicable Regulations and Standards

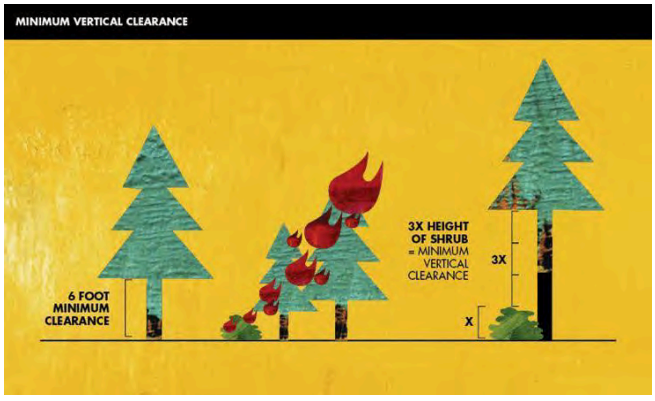
The following requirements are drawn from applicable California law and regulations and reflect standards relevant to Kensington Park. Sources include 14 CCR § 1299.03, PRC § 4291, Board of Forestry General Guidelines, CFC § 505.1, and CBC § 2113.9.2. Requirements should be applied without delay. Draft Zone 0 regulations are expected to be finalized in 2026 and will be phased in over a 3- or 5-year period.

Zone 0 (0 to 5 Feet) — Noncombustible Buffer

- Remove all combustible vegetation, mulch, and materials from beneath eaves and overhangs, and within the area from the building foundation to the drip line of the eaves (or 1 foot, whichever is greater).
- Maintain a 2-foot noncombustible clearance in front of all doors, windows, and vents.
- Maintain a 5-foot noncombustible clearance from attached decks and similar features.
- Tree limbs must not extend within 5 feet of the roofline (draft regulation; 10 feet recommended for greater protection).
- Replace combustible siding, fencing, and retaining walls within Zone 0 with noncombustible alternatives where feasible.

Zone 1 (5 to 30 Feet) — Lean, Clean, and Green

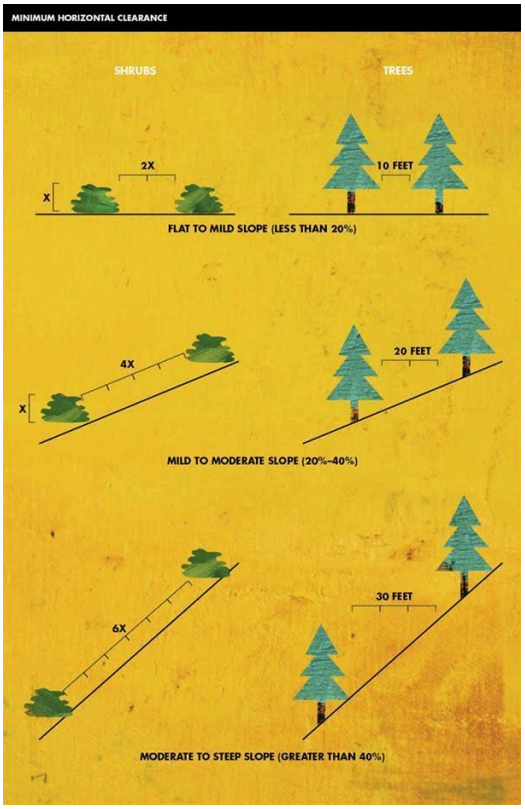
- Remove all dead and dying grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches, leaves, weeds, and pine needles.
- Keep grass and herbaceous plants at a height of no more than 4 inches (or under 18 inches for erosion control on slopes).
- Prune tree limbs from the ground up to a height of 6 feet, or to one-third the tree's total height for smaller trees, whichever is less.
- Create separation within continuous rows or large tree clusters: clusters of smaller trees with a combined canopy of 10 feet may be treated as a single canopy and should be separated by at least 10 feet of horizontal clearance from the next canopy.
- Space individual shrubs at twice their mature height (minimum 5 feet). Multiple shrubs may be planted in 10-foot clusters, with 10-foot breaks between clusters.



- Avoid ladder fuels: keep shrubs away from tree canopies to prevent fire from climbing from the ground to the tree crown.
- Detached structures (decks, sheds, outbuildings) must maintain at least 10 feet of clearance from the primary structure.

Zone 2 (30 to 100 Feet) — Reduced Fuel Zone

- Loose surface litter (fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones) is permitted to a depth of no more than 3 inches.
- Prune tree limbs from the ground up to feet, or one-third of tree height for smaller trees (whichever is less).
- Horizontal spacing between tree canopies varies by slope:
  - Flat to mild slope (less than 20% grade): 10 feet between canopies.
  - Moderate slope (20% to 40% grade): feet between canopies; shrubs spaced times their mature height.
  - Steep slope (greater than 40% grade): feet between canopies; shrubs spaced times their mature height.
- Remove wood piles and propane tanks from Zone 1 (relocate to Zone 2 beyond).
- Outbuildings require 10 feet of clearance on all sides to bare mineral soil.



6

20
4

30
6

or

Structural Hardening Recommendations

- Vent openings should be covered with 1/16-inch or 1/8-inch corrosion-resistant metal mesh screening.
- Exterior siding should maintain a minimum 6-inch vertical clearance from the ground. Noncombustible material should be used at the wall base where this clearance is not achievable.
- Roofs must carry a Class A fire resistance rating (ASTM E108 or UL 790).
- Skylights should be low-profile, multi-pane tempered glass. Operable skylights should be fitted with 1/8-inch metal mesh screens.
- Windows in high-exposure locations should be double-pane tempered glass.

- Wood utility access doors should be replaced with noncombustible alternatives and fitted to ensure complete closure.
- Gaps, penetrations, and transitions between building materials should be sealed with intumescent caulk or appropriate fire-resistant sealant.

Additional Resources

- All photos available on Google Photos at this link.
- CAL FIRE Defensible Space Program: www.readyforwildfire.org
- Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) Wildfire Prepared Home: www.ibhs.org
- Firesafe Kensington: www.firesafekensington.org
- Kensington Community Services District: www.kppcsd.org

Limitations

The findings and recommendations in this report represent the team's good-faith observations based on training and field experience. They are not exhaustive. Conditions not visible from the exterior, conditions that have changed since the date of inspection, and conditions requiring specialist expertise beyond the scope of this assessment may not be reflected here. Readers should not assume that structures or areas not specifically identified as hazardous are free of risk.

Fire safety regulations, defensible space requirements, and insurance standards are subject to change. The team makes no representation that compliance with the recommendations in this report will satisfy the requirements of any insurer, regulatory agency, or fire authority, now or in the future. Property owners and the District are encouraged to consult directly with CAL FIRE, a licensed contractor, and their insurer regarding current requirements.

The assessment team assumes no liability for actions taken or not taken in reliance on this report, for conditions not observed or not reasonably observable during the inspection, or for any loss, damage, or injury arising from wildfire or related events.

Kensington Park Wildfire Risk Assessment

Priority Action List for KCSD Board and Staff

June 29, 2026 | Prepared by the Kensington Park Wildfire Assessment Team

Executive Summary

Kensington Park sits in California's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, on the leeward side of the East Bay Hills ridge, where descending Diablo winds create tinderbox conditions during fire season. The Community Center, Recreation Building, and Annex — structures at the heart of a park beloved by the entire community — face real and documentable wildfire risk. This document summarizes the findings of a volunteer assessment team and identifies the actions needed to reduce that risk.

The assessment was conducted on April 27, 2026, by four Firewise community leads trained by CAL FIRE to conduct defensible space assessments, and a licensed architect and Home Hardening Specialist. The full assessment report, available on the KCSD website, reflects visible conditions from an exterior inspection of all three structures and their surrounding landscapes. It is not a substitute for a professional structural inspection or a formal evaluation by the fire authority having jurisdiction. The team conducted this work on their own time at no cost to the District.

Why Ember Protection Is the Priority

The primary wildfire threat to structures in Kensington is not the wall of flame — it is the tens of thousands of tiny burning embers that travel on high winds ahead of a fire, sometimes for miles. These embers move like water, flowing onto properties and seeping into buildings through small gaps, unscreened vents, and openings, or landing on combustible surfaces near a building and igniting a fire that then spreads to the structure itself.

Two strategies, taken together, dramatically reduce this risk. The first is structural hardening: sealing the points on a building where embers can lodge or ignite — vents, roof edges, wall bases, windows, and utility penetrations. The second is defensible space: removing or replacing combustible vegetation and materials in buffer zones around the building, organized into three concentric zones (Zone 0: 0–5 feet; Zone 1: 5–30 feet; Zone 2: 30–100 feet). Research shows that managing even the innermost 5-foot zone nearly doubles a structure's chances of surviving a wildfire.

Summary of Findings

The Community Center, renovated in 2020, is the best-maintained of the three structures and has meaningful wildfire protections in place. It has targeted vulnerabilities — primarily in Zone 0, where combustible planters, a deteriorating retaining wall, and tree overhang require attention — and moderate Zone 1 and Zone 2 vegetation management needs. With focused action, it can be brought into strong compliance.

The Recreation Building is also generally well-maintained, with good natural defensible space on its north and east sides. Its primary vulnerabilities are noncompliant vents, combustible material at the building base, and significant vegetation on the south and west sides. Several recommended actions have already been completed since the assessment.

The Annex presents the most urgent and complex situation. An estimated 60 to 80 percent of its exterior envelope would require upgrade or replacement to achieve meaningful fire resistance, making targeted hardening impractical without first making a decision about the building's future. Its proximity to active recreational areas and to Kensington Park Road — a key evacuation corridor for schoolchildren and Tilden Park users — makes the structural and vegetation risks here a public safety matter. A

decision on the building's future is needed promptly. Vegetation management around the Annex should begin immediately, independent of that decision.

How to Use This Document

The Priority Action List that follows organizes all recommendations from the full assessment report into three tiers — Immediate, Near-Term Capital, and Longer-Term Capital — and aligns each item with the District's budget categories of Landscaping, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements. Within each section, Maintenance and Landscaping items are listed before Capital items, and items are grouped by structure. A separate Consultants and Service Providers section identifies the professional expertise needed to advance key items.

Note: The recommendations in this document reflect the team's good-faith assessment based on training and field experience. Fire safety regulations, defensible space requirements, and insurance standards are subject to change. The District is encouraged to consult directly with CAL FIRE, a licensed contractor, and its insurer regarding current requirements. See the Limitations section of the full report for complete disclaimer language.

Priority Action List

Tier 1 — Immediate Actions

These items should be addressed now. Most are low-cost, operationally simple, or involve acute safety risk that cannot wait for budget cycles. Many fall within existing Landscaping and Maintenance budgets. Within each zone section, Maintenance items are listed first, followed by Landscaping, then Capital items. Structures (Community Center, Recreation Building, and Annex) are grouped where possible.

Action Item	Structure(s)	Budget Category
Structural Hardening		
Confirm the roof assembly carries a Class A fire resistance rating (ASTM E108 or UL 790) through 2020 renovation documentation or a licensed roofing contractor.	Community Center, Recreation Building	Maintenance
Inspect clerestory windows; adjust fit or add weatherstripping to seal gaps.	Community Center	Maintenance
Fill the gap at the edge of the soffit vent screen (rear of building, left of main entrance) with additional screening or fire-blocking caulk.	Community Center	Maintenance
Inspect and seal gaps around utility boxes and conduit penetrations on the south wall using metal mesh or fire-blocking caulk.	Recreation Building	Maintenance
Retrofit all foundation and gable vents with 1/16" or 1/8" metal mesh screening (i.e., stainless steel).	Recreation Building	Maintenance
Establish Red Flag Day operational protocols: close and latch all operable windows and clerestories; remove doormats and move potted plants at least 5 feet from all building entrances.	All structures	Maintenance
Zone 0 — Noncombustible Buffer (0–5 Feet)		
Implement a routine debris management plan for the rear (east) side of the building, particularly beneath and around the water management system.	Community Center	Maintenance
Keep the ground between the wooden retaining wall and building on the SE corner free of all vegetation. Leave bare mineral soil or apply gravel. Implement a routine debris management plan to keep free of combustible material.	Recreation Building	Maintanence
Remove all combustible materials attached to or within 5 feet of the building, including benches, wood add-ons, and enclosures. Expand noncombustible buffer to 10 feet given building condition.	Annex	Maintenance/ Landscaping
Remove all mulch and combustible vegetation from beneath eaves at the main entrance and along the west and south sides. Can replace with noncombustible, decorative material(s). (I.e., stone, pavers, gravel, artwork, etc.)	Community Center	Landscaping
Prune all trees with branches within 10 feet of the roofline (the 10-foot standard is recommended; draft code requires 5	Community Center	Landscaping

Action Item	Structure(s)	Budget Category
feet). At the northeast corner, prune completely away from the roofline.		
Remove understory bushes below overhanging trees at the northeast corner, or prune to no more than one-third the height of the lowest tree limb, to eliminate ladder fuel hazard.	Community Center	Landscaping
Remove all vegetation from the planting area beneath the north-side window. Leave bare mineral soil or replace with decorative, noncombustible material (stone, pavers, etc).	Recreation Building	Landscaping
Remove overgrown plants at the northwest corner of the building.	Recreation Building	Landscaping
Prune back tree limbs overhanging the storage shed to a minimum 5-foot clearance; remove all combustibles within 5 feet of the shed.	Annex Storage Shed	Landscaping
Zone 1 — Lean, Clean, and Green (5–30 Feet)		
Attach metal mesh to the base of the storage sheds and bury at least 6 inches to prevent animals from burrowing beneath.	Storage Sheds (Recreation Building & Annex)	Maintenance
Remove leaf litter, vegetation, and debris from beneath the oak trees on the west side, and maintain the area on a regular schedule.	Recreation Building	Maintenance/ Landscaping
Ensure the message board has at least 5 feet of noncombustible ground cover on all sides, either in its current location or by relocating.	Community Center	Maintenance/ Landscaping
Clear vegetation in the corridor between the Annex and Kensington Park Road, to the maximum extent consistent with slope stability; keep the evacuation route passable and free of overhanging fuel.	Annex	Landscaping
Thin dense shrubs, ladder fuels, and understory vegetation throughout Zones 1 and 2, per CAL FIRE vegetation management guidelines and accounting for slope.	Annex	Landscaping
Zone 2 — Reduced Fuel Zone (30–100 Feet)		
Keep grasses and forbs on the south and west slopes cut to a maximum height of 4 inches; maintain regularly to prevent regrowth and invasive species spread. Apply the vegetation spacing standards in the Appendix of the full report.	Recreation Building	Maintenance/ Landscaping
Keep the fire road/evacuation roadbed on the south side clear of encroaching vegetation to maintain access for fire apparatus and evacuees. Remove vegetation within 10 feet of the parking area to maintain clear egress.	Community Center	Maintenance/ Landscaping
Clear a 10-foot noncombustible perimeter (bare mineral soil or stone) around the wooden garbage enclosure on the south side. Ensure vegetation above and on all sides is removed.	Community Center	Landscaping

Tier 2 — Near-Term Capital (Lower-Cost, Quick-Win)

These items require a contractor and/or the services of a professional (i.e., Landscape Architect), but are within the range of a skilled handyman or landscape contractor to implement. They deliver meaningful fire risk reduction at relatively modest cost and should be prioritized in the near-term capital budget.

Action Item	Structure(s)	Budget Category
Structural Hardening		
Add 6 vertical inches of noncombustible cladding (metal flashing, fiber cement, stucco, or similar) wherever old wood siding is exposed below the stucco on the east wall.	Community Center	Capital Improvement
Apply noncombustible flashing or a 6-inch noncombustible base treatment along the approximately 20-foot section of west wall siding where clearance from grade is insufficient.	Recreation Building	Capital Improvement
Add noncombustible flashing along the base of siding and doors on the east side to create a 6-inch separation from the concrete walkway.	Recreation Building	Capital Improvement
Replace the small wooden utility access door on the west side with a fiber cement or other noncombustible alternative; ensure it closes and latches securely.	Recreation Building	Capital Improvement
Zone 0		
Replace the wood-slatted screens concealing mechanical equipment on the south side with metal or fiber-cement panels (can be painted to match building).	Community Center	Capital / Maintenance
Zone 1		
Replace the wood decking at the southeast corner with a noncombustible material (concrete pavers, slate, stone tile). If not immediately feasible, consider removal.	Community Center	Capital Improvement
Relandscape the L-shaped planter on the south & east side to create fire breaks between plantings in accordance with best practices. Consider use as a community demonstration garden for fire-safe landscaping.	Community Center	Landscaping / Capital
Clear all weeds and debris around the storage shed; establish a 5-foot zone of gravel or rock around the entire structure.	Recreation Building Storage Shed	Landscaping / Capital

Tier 3 — Longer-Term Capital (Planning and Budget Cycle)

These items require more significant planning, permitting, professional design, or budget allocation. Several are contingent on decisions yet to be made — particularly regarding the Annex. They should be incorporated into the next capital planning cycle and the forthcoming Kensington Park Master Plan process.

Action Item	Structure(s)	Budget Category
Structural Hardening		
When clerestory windows reach the end of service life, upgrade to double-pane tempered glass to resist radiant heat.	Community Center	Capital Improvement
When acrylic skylights reach the end of service life, replace with low-profile multi-pane tempered glass skylights fitted with 1/8" metal mesh screens.	Community Center	Capital Improvement
Zone 0		
Replace the wooden retaining wall and rear drainage configuration with a more comprehensive water impoundment and drainage system that also eliminates combustible materials close to the building. High value as a long-term infrastructure improvement.	Community Center	Capital Improvement
Replace the wooden retaining wall near the SE corner with a concrete block or noncombustible alternative when it next requires maintenance or replacement.	Recreation Building	Capital Improvement
Zone 1		
Replace or redirect the railroad-tie trail with a wider, fire-resistant footpath (compacted gravel or decomposed granite) and formally designate this corridor as a secondary evacuation route.	Annex	Capital Improvement
Zone 2 — Vegetation Management (Complex Sites)		
Engage a Fire Marshal and landscape contractor to develop a comprehensive vegetation management plan on the south and east side of the Community Center and the slope surrounding the Annex in accordance with defensible space standards. Update vegetation management practices accordingly.	Community Center & Annex	Capital / Landscaping
Annex — Structural Decision Required		
Engage a Structural Engineer/Architect to assess the building's structural condition and develop cost estimates for renovation or full replacement to WUI building code.	Annex	Capital Improvement
Option A — Renovation: If the District determines the Annex serves a long-term programmatic need, proceed with major renovation to current code. Scope is estimated at 60–80% of exterior envelope. Vegetation management should proceed in parallel on an immediate track.	Annex	Capital Improvement
Option B — Replacement: Demolish and replace with a new structure built to current fire-resistant construction standards. Evaluate relative to renovation cost and programmatic need.	Annex	Capital Improvement

Consultants and Service Providers

The following professional expertise is needed to advance key items in this action list. Some engagements should proceed immediately; others depend on structural decisions about the Annex. Recommended timing is noted for each.

Specialist	Purpose	Applies To	Timing
Fire Marshal (CAL FIRE or local)	Conduct a formal risk assessment of all three buildings and the Kensington Park Road corridor; provide guidance on defensible space compliance and evacuation route vegetation treatment.	All structures	*Immediate*
Licensed Roofing Contractor	Confirm Class A rating of roof assemblies at the Community Center and Recreation Building.	Community Center, Recreation Building	*Immediate*
Structural Engineer / Architect	Assess Annex structural condition; develop cost estimates for renovation and replacement options.	Annex	*Immediate*
Certified Arborist	Assess tree health; develop pruning programs for oak trees (Recreation Building west side) and trees overhanging the Annex and Community Center; advise on thinning strategy.	All structures	*Near-term*
Landscape Architect	Advise on noncombustible landscape alternatives for Zone 0; Redesign L-shaped planter (Community Center) as a fire-safe demonstration garden with fire-resistant plants and spaced in accordance with defensible space standards.	Community Center & Annex	*Near-term*
Landscape Contractor (fire-safe / slope stabilization)	Assist with Zone 1 and 2 vegetation thinning and slope stabilization planning. Coordinate with Fire Marshal on Community Center and Annex Zone 2 assessments.	All structures	*Near-term*

About This Assessment

This action list is a companion to the full Wildfire Risk Assessment of Kensington Park Structures (April 27, 2026), available on the KCSD website. The assessment was conducted voluntarily at no cost to the District by David Tuft (Colgate-Columbia), Al Wanger (College District), Lori Gomes (Redtail Ridge), and Alan Siegel (Wildcat) — all trained Firewise community leads — and Sheryl Drinkwater, licensed architect and Home Hardening Specialist.

For questions about the findings or recommendations, contact David Tuft by emailing d.tuft@sonic.net.