



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Application For Appointment to Fill a Vacancy on the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) Board

Application must be completed and submitted to KFPD by **January 21, 2025 at 2 p.m.**

Application Process:

1. Candidates are required to submit an application and may include a candidate statement (maximum words 500). Applications are required, or the candidate will be disqualified.
2. All communications with board members shall strictly adhere to all elements of the Brown Act.
3. Applications may be withdrawn at any time; however, if not withdrawn prior to the KFPD website publishing date (expected to be January 22, 2025) will remain on the website and not be removed.
4. Candidate interviews will be held in person at a special board meeting on January 29, 2025 at 7:00pm. Board members will ask each candidate one question for a total of four questions. Candidates may make a closing statement.

Please complete the following information:

Date: January 21, 2025

Name: Arjun Singh

Home address: [REDACTED]

Business or Mailing address: _____

Phone (daytime): [REDACTED] Phone (evening): [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Are you currently at least 18 years of age, a registered voter, and residing in Kensington? Yes No

Note: Board members are subject to the Conflict of Interest Policy: [Policy 1040 Conflict of Interest](#)

Please answer the following questions on a separate page with a maximum of 350 words each:

1. Why did you decide to apply?
2. How do you consider the sufficiency of Fire District revenues for expenditures over the next five years?
3. What is your position on consolidating the two districts?
4. If appointed to the Board of Directors, what will be your priorities for the Fire District in the next year?
5. Consistent with the mission of the Fire District, what do you think needs to be done to prepare Kensington better for a catastrophic emergency (wildfire, earthquake, severe weather, landslide)?

I certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct.

Signature [REDACTED] Date January 21, 2025

Dear KFPD Board Members,

My name is Arjun Singh, and I've been in the East Bay for 20 years, with the past two years in Kensington. I hold undergraduate and PhD degrees in computer science and artificial intelligence from UC Berkeley. I co-founded Gradescope, an educational technology company that streamlines grading processes for instructors, serving millions of students worldwide. Following its acquisition by Turnitin, I served on their executive team. Through these experiences, I have honed my ability to work effectively with diverse teams, from startups to large organizations.

A neighbor once remarked, "Last night's meeting reinforced for me my conclusion last month that you are a singularly able planner, organizer, leader, and detail-oriented person." I am eager to apply these skills to help prevent catastrophic fires in our community.

I will help us:

- **Prioritize Initiatives:** Focus on strategies that effectively prevent and mitigate fires.
- **Learn from Past Incidents:** Analyze previous challenges, both locally and statewide, to inform our approach.
- **Leverage Technology:** Utilize AI and other technologies to educate residents and reduce fire risks cost-effectively.
- **Foster Partnerships:** Develop collaborations to enhance prevention efforts.
- **Enhance Awareness:** Ensure all local institutions understand and fulfill their roles in maintaining Kensington's fire safety.

I have observed a lack of urgency from some local leaders, outside of the KFPD, regarding community safety. This mindset must change. Additionally, many neighbors were unaware that certain foliage lining our street, such as juniper, is highly flammable. We can address this through targeted education.

As an expert in applying technology to achieve cost-effective solutions, I am committed to using my expertise to enhance the safety and resilience of our community.

Thank you,

Arjun Singh

1. Why did you decide to apply?

Although we've been in the east bay for nearly 20 years, my wife and I have only been in Kensington for two years. We plan to stay here. My wife knew people when growing up that lost everything to a house fire. We know we're in a very high-fire-risk area. We know there are several people, both within Kensington Fire and outside of it, that have made substantial progress making things safer. However, as the devastating fires in southern California have shown, we also know we're not ready, and we may not even know what the biggest risks are.

I want to make sure we learn everything we can from other emergencies and apply those learnings here. I also want to help the district run more efficiently and effectively.

2. How do you consider the sufficiency of Fire District revenues for expenditures over the next five years?

I think there are sufficient revenues to make substantial progress, but clearly we can do much more with more resources, and I think we should consider how to generate more resources without increasing taxes, including potential grants and private partnerships.

3. What is your position on consolidating the two districts?

First, this does not seem like the highest priority thing for Kensington. When there is this much controversy about an issue, it becomes easy to get dug in and continue spending substantial time on it. But neither consolidation nor staying separate are going to be the largest factors that help prevent and mitigate future fires in Kensington. Unfortunately, it seems that this has been the primary focus recently.

That said, I don't have a strong opinion, but I do think that before making a long-term decision that's based primarily on reducing administrative overhead, we should consider how the world will change as new technologies help reduce that overhead.

If there were no substantial cost savings, it would seem better to have a separate districts, particularly given how the fire risk in Kensington is such an outlier.

The current projections go out several years, and do not take into account how much of the work done by contractors will go down in price.

4. If appointed to the Board of Directors, what will be your priorities for the Fire District in the next year?

Learn everything we can about what failed in southern California so we can prevent similar failures here. Ensure all parts of our local ecosystem appreciate the fire risk and do their part to prevent fires and enable the best possible response if and when one occurs.

I'd also like to increase educational efforts. We can use a combination of satellite and street images and AI to provide every resident an audit of their current home and risks, for little cost (< \$5000). For example, several of my neighbors had no idea that the juniper that used to be in front of our homes was highly flammable.

5. Consistent with the mission of the Fire District, what do you think needs to be done to prepare Kensington better for a catastrophic emergency (wildfire, earthquake, severe weather, landslide)?

1) Continue to expand educational efforts for residents

- 2) Audit all critical systems to ensure we don't have failures like what was seen in other parts of the state
- 3) Educate all relevant local committees and boards about their role in keeping Kensington fire safe
- 4) Explore funding options to expand preventative measures (whether that is on a neighborhood or home basis).