



Kensington is one of the oldest neighborhoods in San Diego first established in the early years of the 20th century.

It contains approximately 1000 homes bounded by Interstate 8 to the North, Fairmont Ave to the East, Interstate 15 to the West, and Madison Ave to the South.

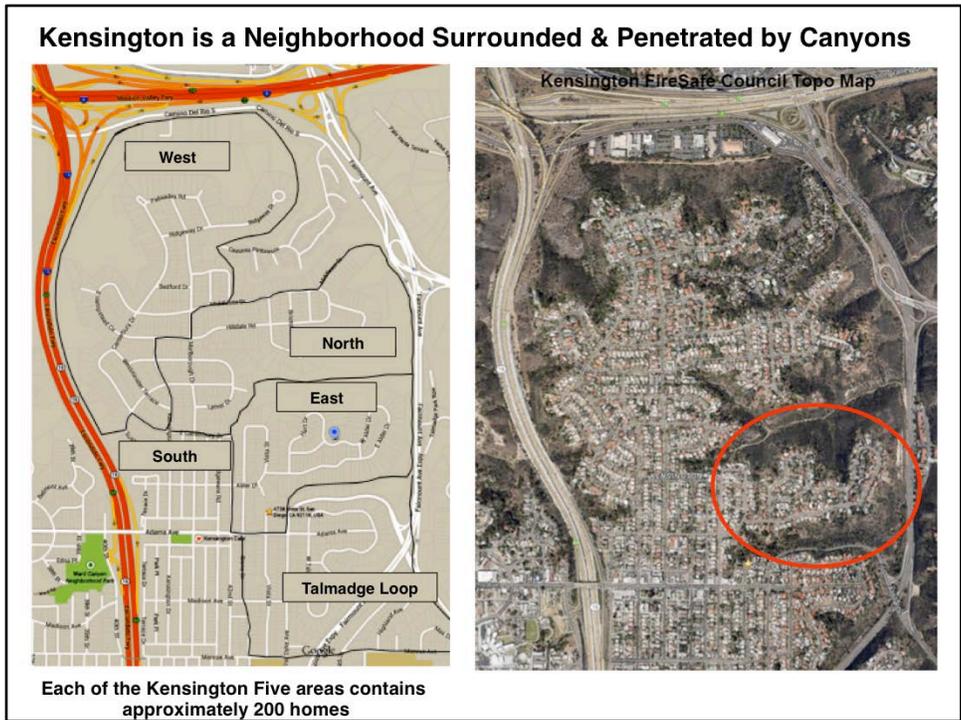
Bev Barrett established the first **Fire Safe Council** in Kensington in 2013 modeled on one in the neighborhood to our east, Talmadge.

- Her inspiration was the memory of her grandfather’s mountain cabins in rural San Diego County destroyed by a wildfire and how devastated he was by the loss
- This first Kensington FSC comprised approximately 200 homes.
- In subsequent years she recruited neighbors to establish four additional Fire Safe Councils now known as the ***Kensington Five***.
- Each of the ***Kensington Five*** represents approximately 200 homes.

The Five Kensington Fire Safe Councils and their leaders are:

- **East – Bev Barrett**
- **South – Robb Bower**
- **West – Brad Cameron**
- **North – Tom Evons**
- **Talmadge Loop – Mike Brown**

The work of the ***Kensington Five*** benefits from the invaluable assistance of Eddie V. our liaison with the SDFD



The boundaries of the **Kensington Five Fire Safe** Councils are shown on the map above.

- Note from the Google satellite photo that Kensington is surrounded and deeply penetrated by four major canyons
- Most of the canyons run East to West, so annual hot Santa Ana winds blow through them and could carry hot embers from a fire up to homes.
- **Kensington FSC East** is especially vulnerable as it is surrounded by two major canyons.

In June 1985, our community neighbor, **Normal Heights**, experienced the type of fire we fear, fueled by fierce winds blowing up the canyons that

- Burned 300 acres
- destroyed 76 homes
- damaged 57 homes
- caused \$9 million dollars damage
- evacuated 1000-1500 residents

The Canyons Are Filled With Fuel for Potential *Wildfires*



Overgrown Brush Meets the Roadway



Overgrown Palm Trees



Homeless Campers

- The canyons are filled with ample fuel for potential wildfires.
- This problem is compounded by the fact that the homeless frequently camp in the canyons smoking and lighting campfires.
- On one occasion we observed a young couple hiking into Fairmont Canyon carrying their belongings that included a portable BBQ grill
- Most of the canyon area is private property as lot lines go to the centers of the canyons.
- There is a triangle of publicly owned “mitigated” land at the corner of Fairmont and Aldine, and we are working to persuade the city to clean up this very flammable area, particularly the fan palms with skirts down to the ground.

Electrical Power is Distributed via Wires and Transformers in Canyons



The electrical power lines and transformers are located in Kensington's canyons. This is the view from Bev Barrett's deck.

- The wires were placed in the canyons back in the earliest days of Kensington at the request of the developers who didn't want power and telephone wires and poles in the streets
- We've observed transformers sparking violently on more than one occasion.
- We are currently working with the **City of San Diego** and **SDG&E** to the wires in canyons surrounding **Kensington East**, the most vulnerable FSC, undergrounded in the next 4-5 years, a triumph of safety and aesthetics!

With the support from **SDG&E FSC/CERT** grants the **Kensington Five** have helped residents clean up and thin brush and trees in their canyon lots by providing dumpsters to haul away vegetation (fuel) from their canyon lots.



In most areas lot boundaries extend into the centers of the canyons.

- The emphasis of the **Kensington Five** has been to facilitate clean up and thinning of brush and trees in the canyon lots of residents creating defensible space.

Residents have been responsible for cleaning and thinning bringing the debris to the street, but hauling away the brush is a daunting task. \Thus, through generous grants from the San Diego Gas and Electric Co. and the help of Eddie V., the **Kensington Five** have:

- Held neighborhood meetings educating residents on proper canyon land thinning to preserve sensitive species in creating 100 ft of defensible space.
- This is critical as in previous years a very few residents have been two thorough in clearing their land.
- We have provided dumpsters on the street throughout Kensington to haul away the cleared brush every fall.



Residents have been very careful not to put inappropriate items in the dumpsters which must contain only green waste to avoid extra charges.

- On very rare occasions, other items such as office furniture has been placed in dumpsters; this is the worst example necessitating “dumpster diving”.
- To mitigate this problem, Bev has arranged a date this fall for the City of San Diego to come through the neighborhood and pick up castoffs large and small.

Future plans include:

- Investigating other grant opportunities
- Assisting residents who are not able to thin a defensible space owing to age, infirmity, and/or financial hardship
- Thinning canyon areas beyond the defensible spaces through
 - New techniques that trim and leave material in place to decay naturally
 - We also are investigating using hungry goats.

Through our outreach programs, the **Kensington Five** builds support for Fire Safety among Kensington residents, young and old.



The **Kensington Five** has endeavored to raise awareness of fire danger

- We do this through regular meetings in neighborhood homes and through the annual Kensington Memorial Day Parade.
- Here we see residents, young and old(er), getting ready to march in the parade behind the SDFD truck this past Memorial Day distributing literature about fire safety.

We witnessed a significantly increased awareness of fire danger during the most recent canyon lot inspections conducted by **Sandy Cordova**, Safety Inspector SDFD.

- The previous inspections four years earlier aroused the suspicion of residents, so this time Bev accompanied Sandy.
- Bev's assistance this time turned out to be unnecessary as residents welcomed Sandy, cooperated with her instructions, and asked her what else they could be doing to protect their neighborhood.

You Rock Kensington!

The ***Kensington Five*** appreciates the recognition and support provided by our community and by the ***Fire Safe Council of San Diego County***



The ***Kensington Five*** cherishes their relationship with the San Diego Fire Department and SDG&E. We make a great and effective team and appreciate the recognition our community has achieved.