



FIRE DEPARTMENT

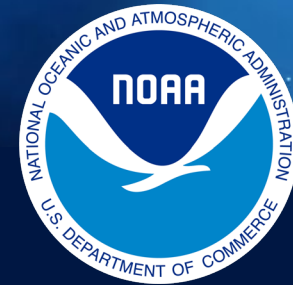
Storm Preparedness Update

Office of Emergency Services

Stacey Rosenberger, Emergency
Services Manager

Brian D'Amour, Public Works
Director

September 22, 2026



2026-27 Outlook

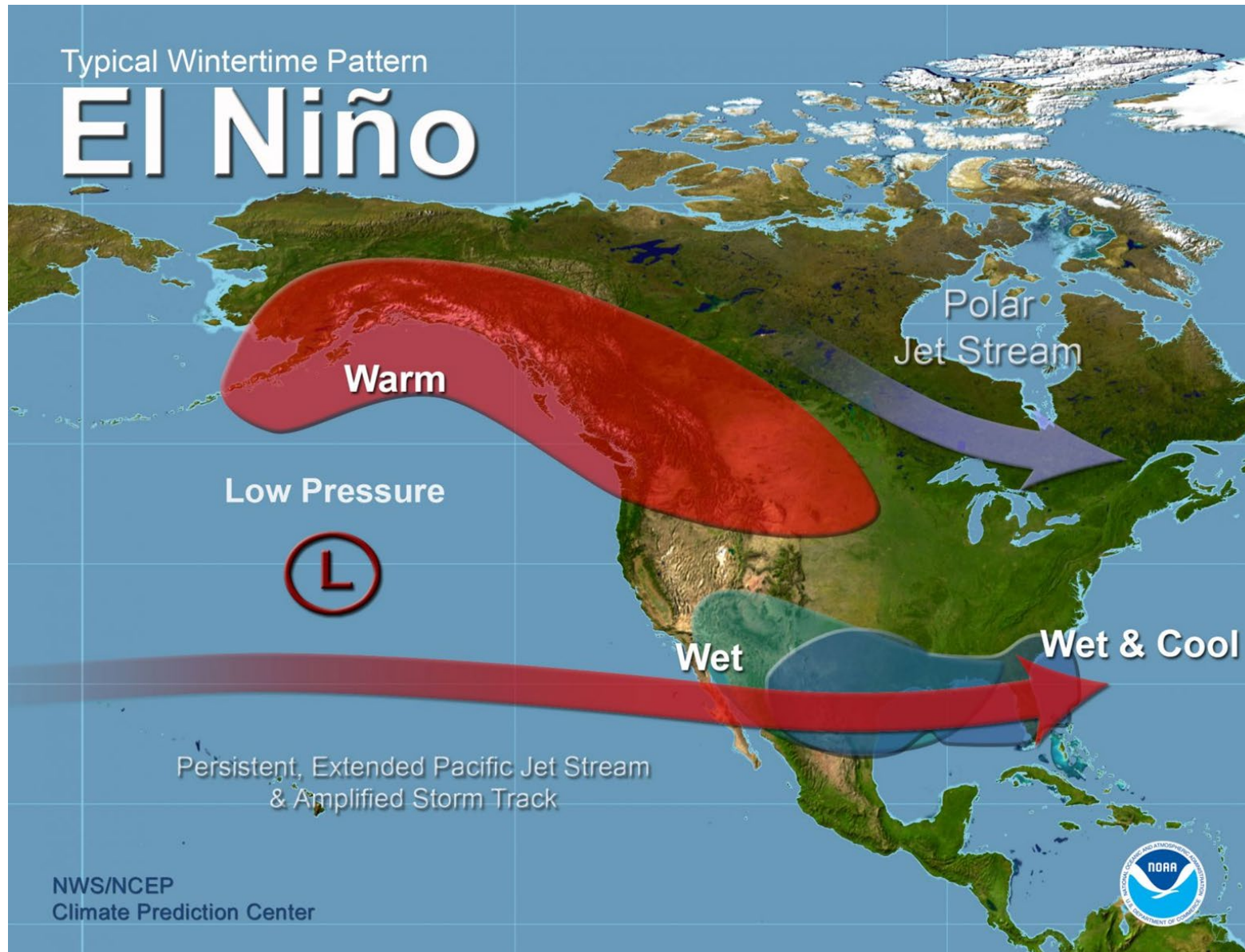
El Niño Advisory

Todd Hall

NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard, CA

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service

El Niño North American Impacts





Key Points Leading up to the 2026-27 El Niño

Key Forecasting Principles & Winter Outlook (1 of 3)

- **Signal Strength vs. Certainty:** We are highly confident a very strong El Niño will persist through the winter. However, very strong signals do not guarantee strong impacts everywhere. We are discussing a shift in probabilities, not a prediction of specific outcomes or certainties.
- **Oceanic Signal & Atmospheric Response:** The ocean is sending a strong climate signal, but the question is not whether El Niño exists. The key question is how efficiently the atmosphere will respond and convert that signal into local weather impacts favoring storm activity in Southern California.



Key Points Leading up to the 2026-27 El Niño

Key Forecasting Principles & Winter Outlook (2 of 3)

- **Climate Background vs. Weather Events:** El Niño influences the background environment for the season, but it does not determine the timing, track, or intensity of individual storms. Elevated odds exist, but we cannot yet speak with confidence about specific storms, exact locations, or specific rainfall amounts.
- **Actionable Operational Forecasting:** There is a meaningful difference between a seasonal outlook (which describes risk) and an operational storm forecast (which describes what is expected to happen). The most actionable forecasts will come just days before an event, once storms move onto the horizon of predictability. Weather forecasting is a wide range of reasonable outcomes, not a binary choice between "nothing happens" and "disaster."



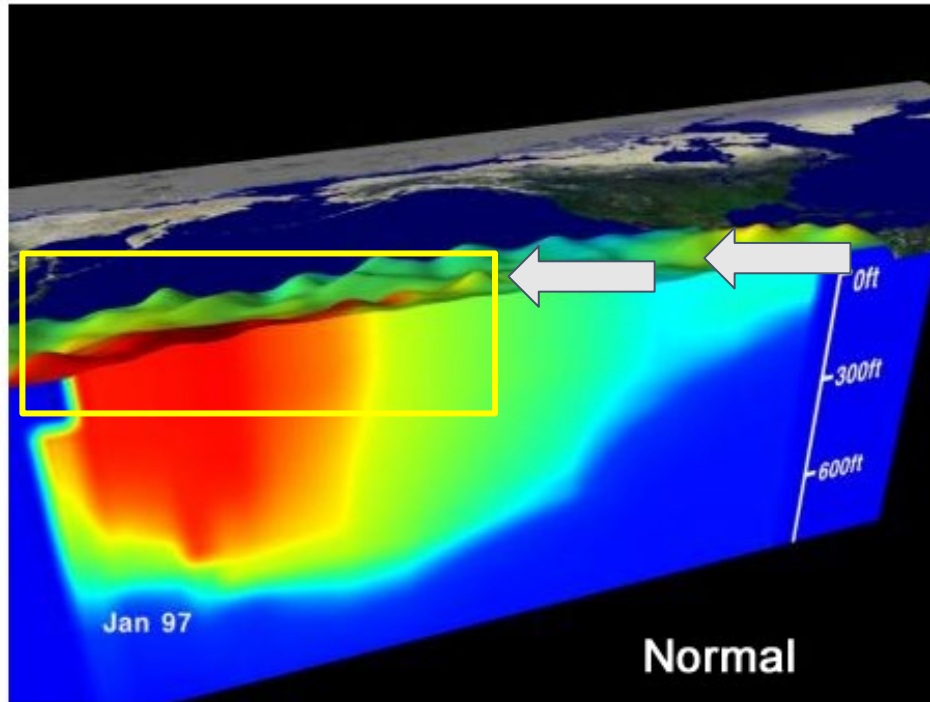
Key Points Leading up to the 2026-27 El Niño

Key Forecasting Principles & Winter Outlook (3 of 3)

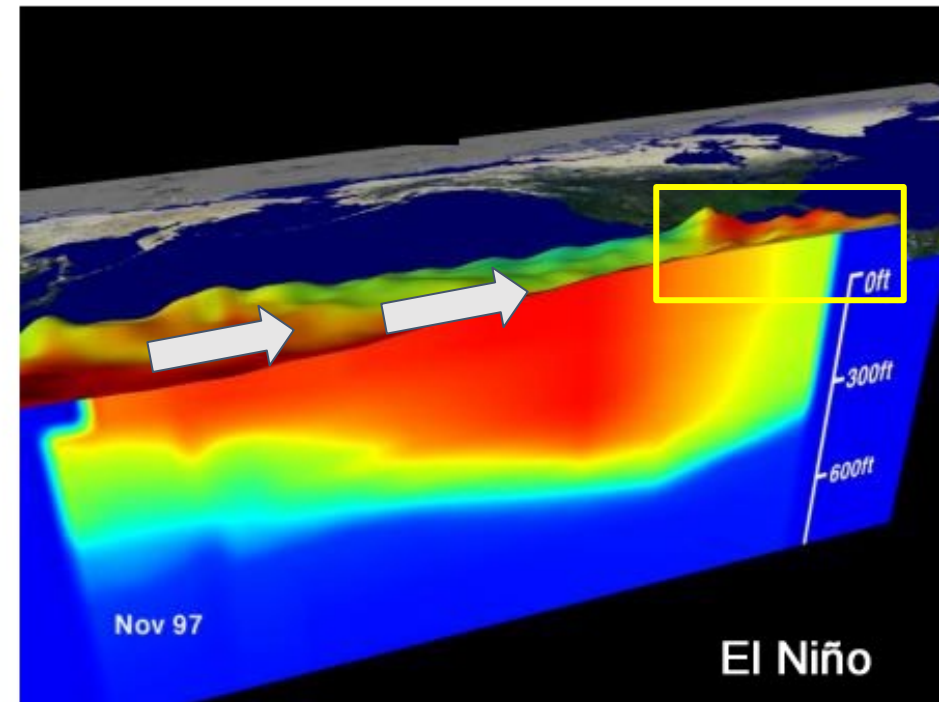
- **Credibility & Messaging:** We are careful not to overstate long-range risks, as maintaining credibility is critical for when high-confidence warnings become necessary. Right now, this winter is best described as having a noteworthy climate signal combined with substantial uncertainty about the details. Our messaging will evolve as the season unfolds and science provides greater certainty.



Kelvin Waves – Basics of “Water Slosh” with El Niño



Sea level is higher near Southeast Asia during Neutral/Normal conditions as trade wind pile water up in the Western Pacific Ocean.



During El Niño water comes sloshing back in underwater waves across the Pacific as trade wind break down or reverse (strong El Niño). These waves can refract and change direction, height and period.

City Departmental Preparations

- Continuous monitoring of weather forecasts
- Internal and external coordination for El Niño/winter storms
- Inspections of city facilities prior/after storms
- Pre-stage equipment and barriers for storm response
- Public information

Fire Department/OES

- Coordination with NWS, and County partners
- Public Information & Education
- Training & Exercises
- City Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- Upstaffing of Fire personnel:
 - Swift water/ocean rescue certified personnel
 - Additional apparatus including Type 3 engines
 - Visible presence and patrolling of hazard areas
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation (Level 1-3)

Police (1 of 2)

- Continuous monitoring of weather forecasts and coordination with regional law enforcement and emergency management partners.
- Pre-event briefings with city departments, fire, public works, and utilities to ensure unified situational awareness.
- Increased staffing and readiness of patrol units during forecasted storm periods for rapid response.
- Pre-positioning of critical equipment such as barricades, high-clearance vehicles, and traffic control assets.



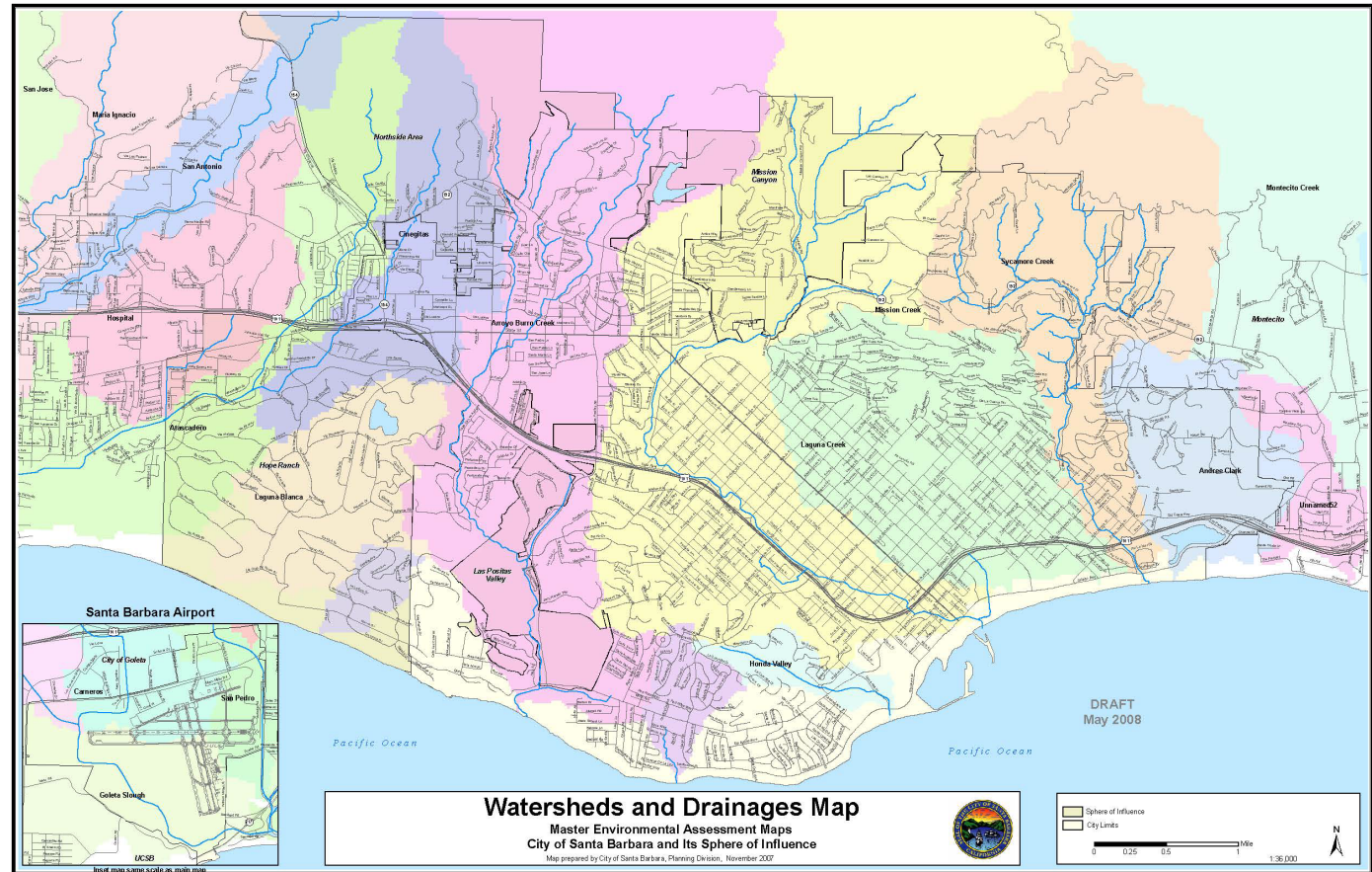
Police (2 of 2)

- Implementation of an emergency communications plan to push timely information to the public via Nixle, social media, and city platforms.
- Coordination with shelters and outreach teams to assist unhoused and vulnerable populations before and during storm impacts.
- Rapid response protocols for flooded roadways, downed power lines, traffic hazards, and evacuations.
- Assessment of flood-prone and landslide-risk areas to plan resource allocation and patrol deployment.
- Collaboration with Public Works on road closures, debris flow monitoring, evacuations, and real-time hazard updates.



Public Works – Major Watersheds

- Sycamore Creek
- Laguna Channel
- Mission Creek
- Arroyo Burro



Public Works – Drainage System Readiness (Citywide)

- Inspect drains, culverts, creeks, channels
- Perform recommended maintenance
- Coordinate with Creeks, Fire, Police, Parks
- Monitor forecasts; adjust operations



Public Works – Regional Coordination & Public Messaging

- Quarterly City/County Flood Control meetings
- Council briefings (Sept 22 El Niño update)
- Lower Eastside neighborhood meeting (Sept 24)
- Rainy-season outreach (CNIB, Water Resources)

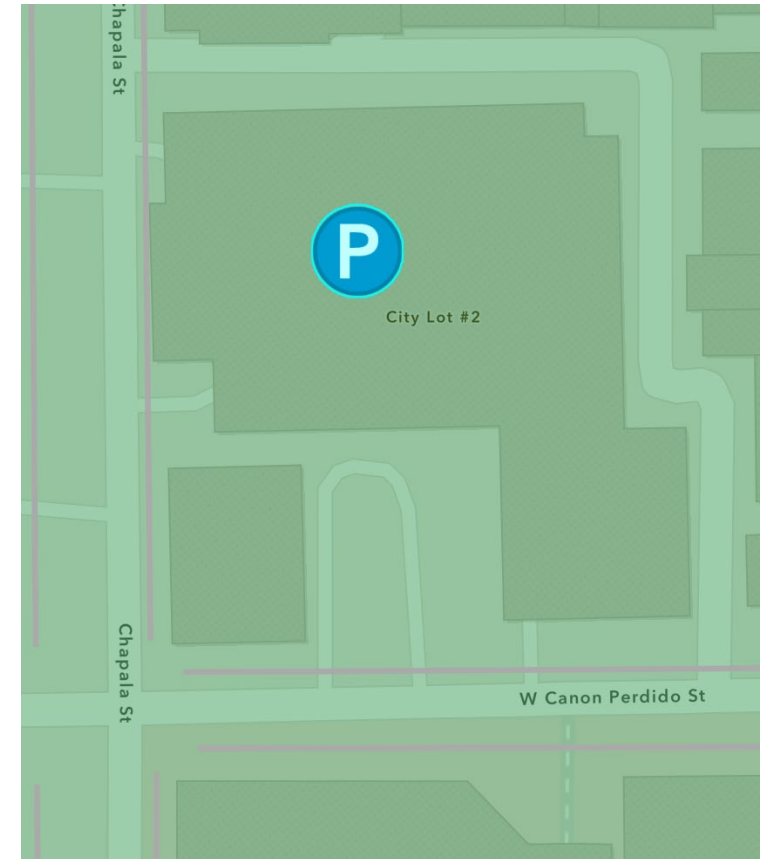
Public Works – Sandbag Information

- City and County have sandbag stations
- Scheduled hours of operation: TBD
- Additional availability prior to major rain events



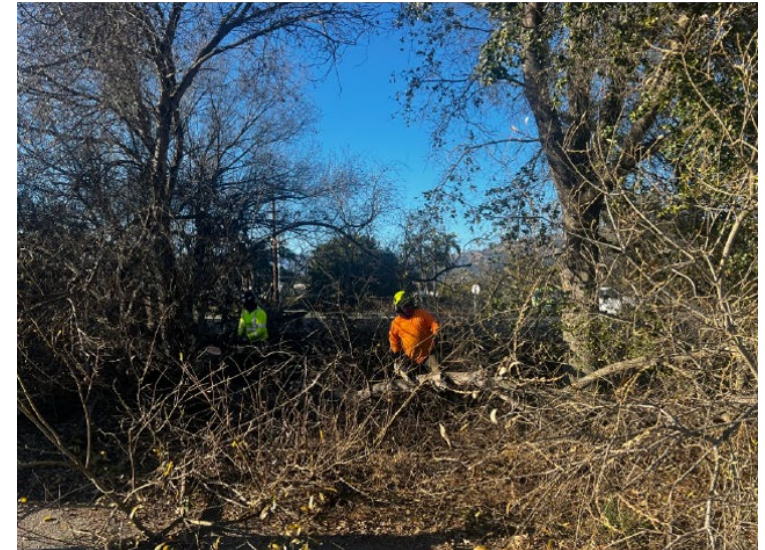
Emergency Storm Parking

- Free parking for residents in flood-prone areas
- City Lot #2 (Chapala/Canon Perdido)
- Activated prior to predicted large scale storms
- Utilize all city community channels to inform community of activation



Airport

- Clear drainage and inspect roofs
- Pre-stage pumps and flood barriers
- Complete priority flood-mitigation work
- Maintain stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) and sweeping
- Test equipment and confirm staff readiness
- Monitor weather and Goleta Slough conditions



Parks and Recreation

- Inspect and clear interior park storm drains
- Prioritize large tree pruning and dead tree removals
- Facility inspections for waterproofing needs, roof and gutter clearance
- Distribution of flood response kits for city staff use:
 - Stock and stage straw wattles, install door dams, sandbags

Waterfront (1 of 2)

- Constructing defensive sand berms at Mission Creek and Harbor West Parking lot in October (earlier than usual).
- Removing catamaran sailboats off Leadbetter beach in October (earlier than usual)
- Preparing materials and equipment for potential closures of parking lots and other coastal areas that could be impacted by increased tide and swell events.
- Identifying dates and times of King High tides which increase risk of flooding and coastal damage. (Thanksgiving and Christmas King Tides)

Waterfront (2 of 2)

- Notifying slip holders and anchorage users to prepare their vessels for winter.
- Stocking chain, materials, and equipment to secure marina docks during large swells.
- Preparing sandbags for Waterfront businesses and tenants.
- Preparing and clearing drainage systems in known areas of flooding within the Waterfront.

Sustainability & Resilience (1 of 2)

- Working with Public Works and Santa Barbara County Flood Control District to inspect major creeks and remove hazardous downed trees and debris as needed.
- Operate and maintain tide gates at Andrée Clark Bird Refuge to minimize flooding.
- Conducting annual creek walks to remove trash and note creek changes and issues.
- Completing maintenance activities at restoration and water quality improvement project sites to remove hazardous debris and maintain drainage features

Sustainability & Resilience (2 of 2)

- Catch basin screen replacement and maintenance
- Work to move unhoused individuals and remove illegal dumped items within creek areas.
- Monitoring flooding and shoreline erosion changes over time.
- Contract with Marborg to provide debris removal services before, during, and after storm.
- Manage several long-term flood and erosion risk reduction projects at Waterfront, Laguna Creek, and Sycamore Creek.

Office of Housing and Community Vitality

- **Freedom Warming Centers** (operated by Good Samaritan Shelters)
 - *Provides pop up shelter at the Unitarian Society November 15 through March 15*
 - *Activated when overnight weather is forecasted (48 hours in advance) to drop below 35° or 50% chance of rain*
 - Hotline: (805) 203-3666
- **Casa Cacique** opens 25 inclement weather beds
 - *Uses same criteria for activation as Freedom Warming Centers*
- **FARO Center** provides information and updates at the center as well as through social media - coordinates community partners.
- **CityNet** Street Outreach provides transportation for unhoused individuals to shelter locations

Communications Plan

- Social media- weekly through fall/winter
- National Preparedness Month (September)
- Flood Preparedness Week (October 17-24, 2026)
- Public education programs- Community Disaster Education, CERT, Listos
- Spanish translation of outreach materials
- City and county storm specific response webpages

Alerting & Public Information Tools

Alerting Tools

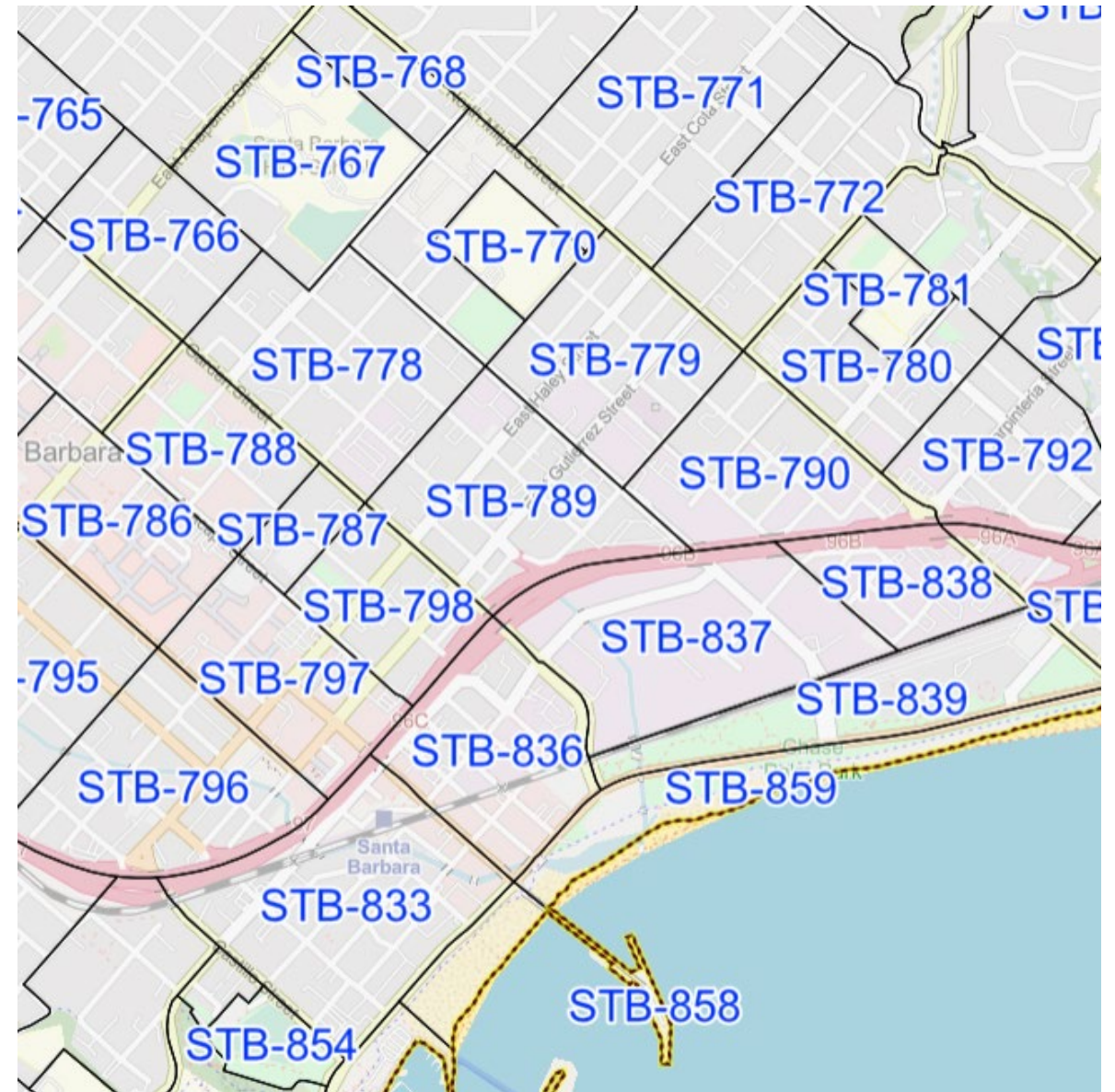
- Field Notifications
- Ready SBC Alerts
- Nixle
- Wireless Emergency Alerts
- Emergency Alert System
- NOAA/NWS Weather Radios

Public Information Tools

- CNIB, City webpage
- Social Media Channels
- Traditional Media
- Genasys
- Rainfall and road closure information
- ReadySBC.org
- County Call Center (when activated)

Genasys

- Pre-identified emergency zones throughout the city and county
- Enhanced communication & coordination
- Public facing map
- Map can be found at:
 - Readysbc.org/emergency
 - protect.genasys.com
 - Genasys Protect Mobile App



Individual Preparedness

1. Know Your Risk

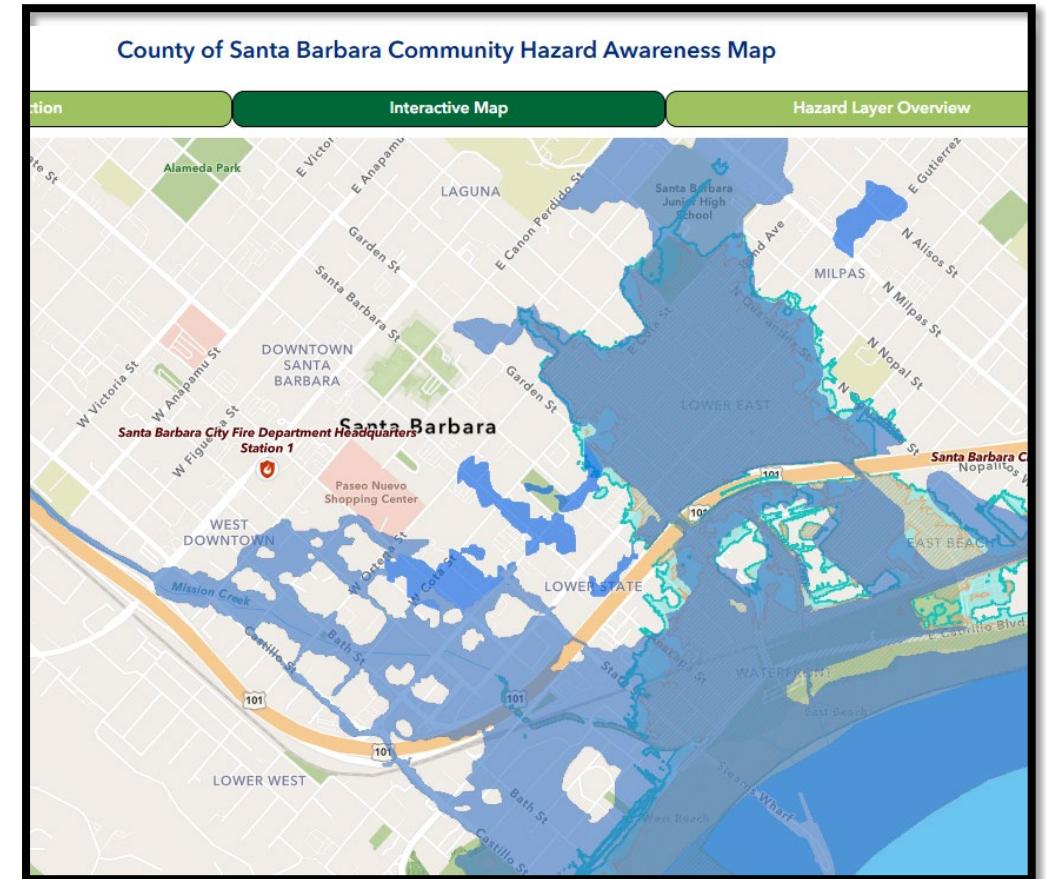
- Community Hazard Awareness Map:
ReadySBC.org/rsbc-maps

2. Make a Plan & Prepare your Home

3. Build an Emergency Kit

4. Stay Informed

- Sign up for ReadySBC Alerts:
ReadySBC.org
- Sign up for City Communications
- SantaBarbaraCA.gov/StormUpdates





Sign Up for ReadySBC Alerts

If we can't reach you,
we can't alert you!

READYSBC.org
SIGN-UP • PLAN • UNDERSTAND



Sign up for City Communications

Social Media



SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Social

Emails



SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Subscribe



THANK YOU



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