



City of
SANTA BARBARA



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

El Niño Preparation Eastside Community Meeting

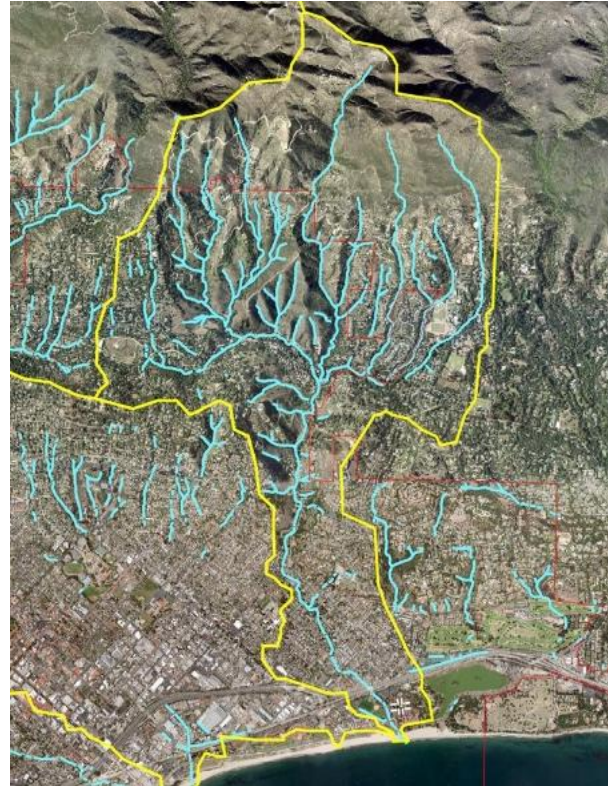
September 24, 2026

Agenda

- Team introductions
- Watershed information
- Capital project updates
- El Niño forecast
- City preparedness
- Questions / Answers

Sycamore Creek Watershed

- Covers 2,600 acres
- Includes 9 miles of creeks
- Upper watershed steep with little development
- Lower portions densely developed along historic floodplain



Present FEMA Flood Zones



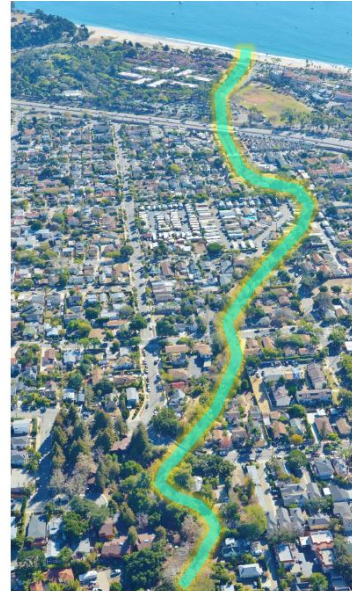
Previous Studies & Planning Efforts

- 2003 Penfield and Smith & 2018 Bengal studies of Sycamore Creek to identify target stream conveyance and Master Plan for future projects



1995 Flood

Sycamore Creek Project Study Report



Prepared for
Santa Barbara County
Flood Control and
Water Conservation
District



Prepared By:



March 7, 2018

Bridge Projects

- 101 Crossing
- Punta Gorda Street Bridge
- Montecito/Yanonali Bridge
- Quinientos Street Bridge
- Cacique/Soledad Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridges
- Carpinteria Street Bridge (construction 2027)



Lower Sycamore Creek Flood Mitigation and Restoration Planning Project

From 101 Freeway to Cabrillo Blvd will include capacity improvements to:

- Creek channel (current capacity 1300-4500 cfs)
- Four bridge crossings (current capacity 1200-1900 cfs)

Coastal Conservancy Grant for \$2,015,000 to:

- Develop 60% channel designs, 30% bridge designs
- Technical studies
- Permitting

Lower Sycamore capacity improvements will allow for future grant applications for constraints upstream.



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

- Monitor weather and coordinate with regional emergency partners
- Conduct pre-event briefings to ensure unified situational awareness
- Increase staffing and pre-position critical storm-response equipment
- Provide timely public updates through Nixle, social media, and city channels
- Assist unhoused and vulnerable populations before and during storm events
- Respond rapidly to flooded roads, downed power lines, landslide-risk areas, and evacuations

Public Works

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



Parks and Recreation

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

Sustainability & Resilience

- Inspect major creeks and remove hazardous debris
- Operate and maintain tide gates at the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge
- Conduct annual creek walks and maintain restoration/water-quality sites
- Replace and maintain catch basin screens; remove dumped items and relocate unhoused individuals from creek areas
- Monitor flooding and shoreline erosion; coordinate Marborg debris removal
- Manage long-term flood and erosion-reduction projects at the 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 through March*
 - *Activated when overnight weather is forecasted (48 hours in advance) to drop below 35° or 50% chance of rain*
- **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 and to community partners.
- **CityNet**- Street outreach provides information and updates to those they engage with during the days before storms are predicted

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

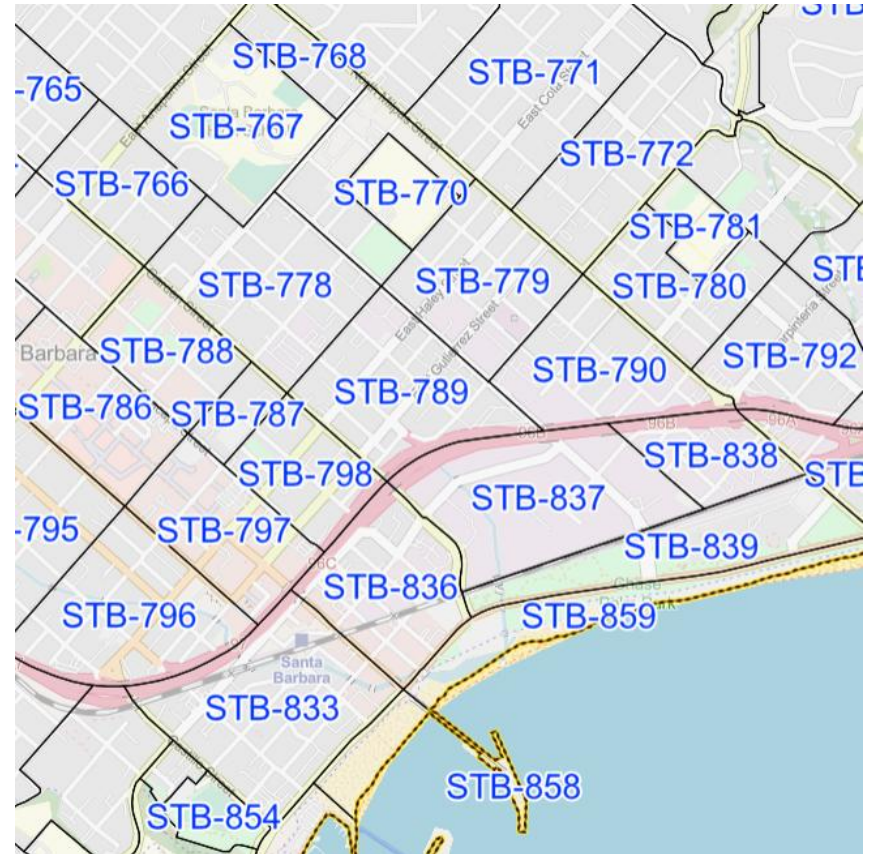
- Field Notifications
- Ready SBC Alerts
- Nixle
- Wireless Emergency Alerts
- Emergency Alert System
- NOAA/NWS Weather Radios

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



Genasys Protect – Known Flood Locations

- “Road Closures” – Prestaged Barricades
- Best practices in a high intensity rain event
- Communication and recovery



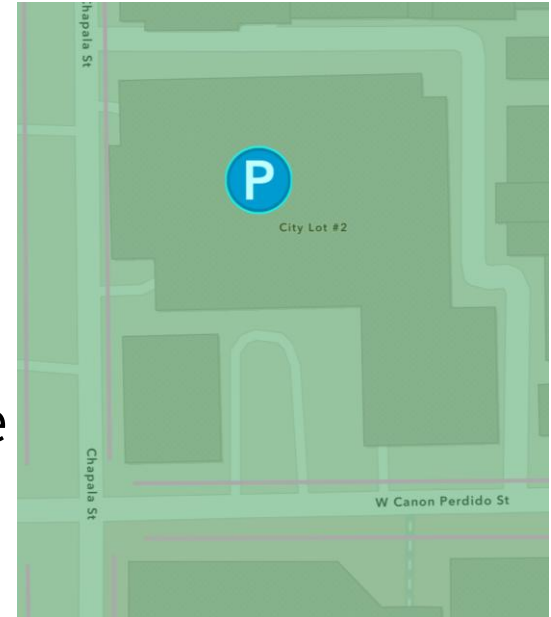
Public Works – Sandbag Information

- 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



Individual Preparedness

1. Know Your Risk

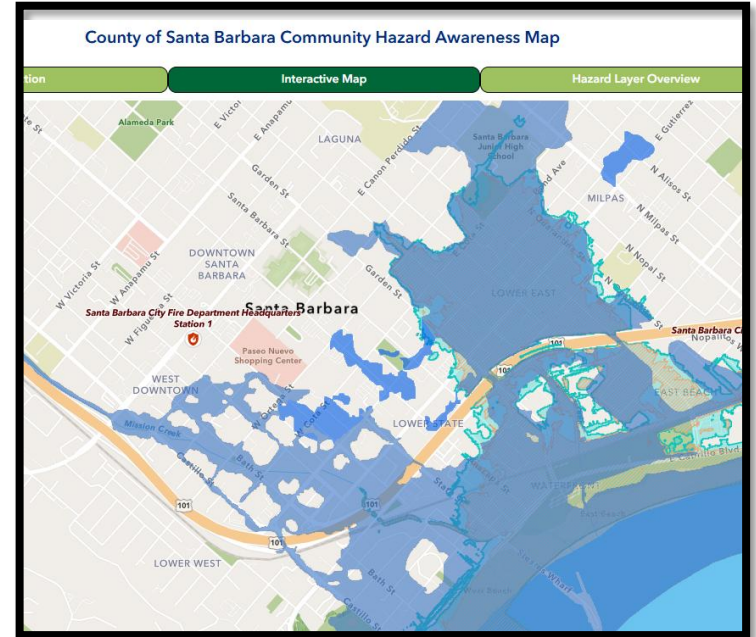
- Community Hazard Awareness Map: ReadySBC.org/rsbc-maps

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.