Dear Neighbor:

With predictions of strong El Niño storms this winter season, your local public agencies are working together to prepare San Francisquito Creek for high flows. In this mailer, you’ll find important information about our preparedness efforts and actions you can take as a resident along the creek and in the flood zone.

Immediate creek improvements

During a creek-walk this fall, we identified short-term improvements to prepare the creek for high flows. Fallen trees and debris will be removed to allow the creek to hold more water during a storm. Eroded creek banks are being filled in and reinforced. We are working to identify locations along the top of the creek bank to add sandbags. The existing shotcrete floodwalls (sandbags covered with concrete) downstream (east) of Highway 101 will be extended and flap gates will be installed at flood-prone storm drains to keep the water from overflowing into the streets.

We’ve also made improvements to our flood prediction and flow tracking technology. The creek level gauges and webcams have been checked and are functioning properly. Additional rainfall and stream flow gauges and an early warning system were installed along the creek west of Highway 280. This technology will provide us with advanced warning of potential flooding and allow both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties to coordinate their planning and flood response activities. A new early warning website will be operational by the end of October at www.sfcjpa.org/floodwarning.

Long-term flood protection project underway

In addition to the short-term creek improvements, we are in the midst of a multifaceted flood protection project. The San Francisquito Creek Flood Protection, Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation project is underway to provide 100-year creek flood protection* to more than 5,700 homes and businesses in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto.

The project is part of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority’s (SFCJPA) comprehensive plan to provide 100-year flood protection from both creek and tidal flooding. The ultimate objective is to remove homes and businesses from the 100-year Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone and eliminate the requirement to purchase flood insurance.

The project is divided into two segments, from the San Francisco Bay to Highway 101 and upstream of Highway 101. Your neighborhood will benefit from the work planned in the upstream of Highway 101 segment. For more information, see the inside of this mailer or visit www.sfcjpa.org.

* A 100-year flood has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year or the likelihood of occurring once every 100 years.
Do you need flood insurance?

Did you know that your basic homeowners insurance does not cover losses from flooding?

The federal government offers disaster assistance in the form of reconstruction loans only in a declaration of a federal emergency. Unlike disaster loans, you won’t need to repay money from flood insurance.

Federal law requires flood insurance if you have a federally regulated mortgage and your building is in an area shown on maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as subject to flooding during a one percent flood event. All communities in Santa Clara County participate in FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program, which means that you can purchase flood insurance to protect your property from the hazards of flooding. Lenders are legally responsible for determining if flood insurance is required for a loan, but your city will provide assistance in reading and interpreting the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map and provide information about FEMA elevation certificates.

There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance takes effect. Contents coverage is separate, so renters and businesses can insure their belongings. Contents coverage is also available to homeowners separately from the required structural coverage. Securing both policies will cover your building and your belongings in case of a flood. Most insurance agents sell both.

Working to lower your rates

In addition to flood protection projects that are designed to remove properties from the flood zone, education and other flood-risk reduction efforts help to lower your insurance premiums through FEMA’s Community Rating System. This is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes communities for implementing practices that exceed the Federal minimum requirements. In exchange for a community’s proactive efforts to reduce flood risk, policyholders can receive reduced flood insurance premiums. Contact your city to learn more about how your flood insurance rates are being reduced.

Filled and unfilled sandbag stations

1. East Palo Alto: City maintenance yard, 150 Tara Rd.
2. Menlo Park: on the median at the intersection of Laurel Ave. and Pope St.
3. Menlo Park: Parking lot at Alma St. and Burgess Dr.
4. Menlo Park: Fire station No. 77, 1467 Chilco St.
5. Palo Alto*: Palo Alto Air Terminal, 1925 Embarcadero Rd.
7. Palo Alto: Mitchell Park, 600 E. Meadow Dr.


Tips on how to fill a sandbag and build a sandbag barrier

A. Work with another person and fill the bag to just one-third full.
B. Fold over the open end of the bag in a triangle.
C. Place a line of bags with the folded side up and facing the direction of water flow. Stomp each bag into place. Like you would bricks, stagger the next layer of bags over the folded tops. Stomp each layer of bags. To give the structure stability, the base should be 1.5 times wider than the height. (Example, 6 ft. wide by 4 ft. high)
D. In locations where water could rise with no current, lay sheeting plastic on the ground and up to the walls, and form a half pyramid of sandbags. Cover doors and vents with plywood.

Did you know...

While the chances seem slim for a flood in the one percent floodplain (the area designated by FEMA that has a one percent chance of flooding in any given year), the real odds of a one percent flood are greater than one in four during the length of a 30-year mortgage.
Flooding can happen during intense rainfalls but typically occurs after several days of heavy rain that saturates the ground. It can strike quickly with little or no warning.

When creeks overbank or flood, the floodwater typically flows swiftly through neighborhoods and away from streams. Dangerously fast-moving floodwaters can flow thousands of feet away from the flooded creek within minutes.

Are You Flood Safe?

Flooding can happen. What to do...

Before
- Designate a family meeting spot and prepare a family disaster plan and emergency kit for your home and car with supplies. Store important documents and valuables in a safe deposit box.
- Seal cracks in your home’s foundation, home exterior walls and small openings around pipes.
- Gather building materials like plywood, plastic sheeting and sandbags.
- Construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Keep rain gutters and drainage channels free of debris. Tarp or seed unvegetated slopes on your property.
- Know your neighborhood streams and drainage channel locations and learn the best route to high ground.
- Learn how to turn off house utilities.
- Keep your car’s gas tank full.

During
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If a flood is imminent, avoid low-lying areas and seek shelter in the highest area possible.
- Tune your radio to 740 AM, 90.1 FM and 106.9 FM for emergency information.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water. Evacuation is easier and safer before floodwaters become too deep.
- Moving water is dangerous. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where it is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you and to aid in balance.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground. A foot of water will cause many vehicles to float. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pick-ups.

After
- Listen for news reports on whether the community’s water supply is safe to drink.
- Never walk, swim, drive or play in floodwater. Oil, gasoline or raw sewage may have contaminated the water. Underground or downed power lines may also have electrically charged the water.
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them to your power company.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Any repairs or improvements greater than 50 percent of a structure’s value need to meet National Flood Insurance Program requirements.

Important numbers
For any emergency call 9-1-1.
To report street flooding or blocked storm drains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menlo Park</td>
<td>650.330.6300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto</td>
<td>650.496.6974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Palo Alto</td>
<td>650.321.1112</td>
</tr>
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www.cityofpaloalto.org/storms

To find out about flood insurance, call 1.888.724.6978 or visit floodsmart.gov to find a local agent.
San Francisco Bay to Highway 101

The SFCJPA is coordinating the first phase of this project to protect East Palo Alto and Palo Alto from flooding along San Francisquito Creek between the San Francisco Bay and U.S. Highway 101. These communities are at high risk of severe flooding, both from flows coming down the creek and from the Bay tides within the creek channel.

This segment of the project is the necessary first step in an overall plan to provide protection to properties located within the flood-prone areas of San Francisquito Creek. Other flood protection efforts, such as bridge replacements upstream (west) of Highway 101, cannot be undertaken until the creek’s capacity has been increased downstream.

The project elements include:
- Excavating sediment built up in the channel over decades
- New Roadwalls
- Channel widening by relocating a levee into the Palo Alto Golf Course

Project milestones
- Environmental review completed

The environmental impacts for the project elements were analyzed and compiled into an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR was certified by the SFCJPA Board of Directors in October 2012.

Permits
Permit applications were submitted to state and federal regulatory agencies in March 2013. Two and a half years into the permit process, the SFCJPA has received a permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and still awaits three permits from other regulatory agencies.

Funding agreement established
An agreement to fund this project among six different agencies was completed in June 2014.

Construction coming soon
Construction is scheduled to begin in 2016, dependent upon the issuance of regulatory permits.

To learn more, visit www.sfcjpa.org or attend a monthly SFCJPA board meeting.

San Francisco Bay to Highway 101

Metas logradas del proyecto
- Revisión completada
  El Informe de Impacto Ambiental (Environmental Impact Report o EIR) para este proyecto fue certificado en octubre de 2012.
- Permisos
  Las solicitudes de permisos se presentaron a los organismos reglamentarios en marzo de 2013. A dos años y medio de haber iniciado el trámite de los permisos, la Autoridad SFCJPA ha recibido un permiso de la Junta del Control de la Calidad de Agua, pero sigue en espera de otros permisos por parte de los organismos reglamentarios.
- Acuerdo de financiación establecido
  En junio de 2014 se concretó un acuerdo para financiar este proyecto entre seis organismos distintos.
- La construcción en breve
  La construcción está programada para comenzar en 2016, dependiendo de la expedición de permisos reglamentarios.

Si desea más información, visite www.sfcjpa.org o asistir a una reunión mensual de la junta SFCJPA.

Para obtener información en español, por favor comuníquese con José Villarreal al 408-630-2879.
The SFCJPA and other partner agencies have been analyzing improvements to provide 100-year creek flood protection for Palo Alto and Menlo Park from flooding along the San Francisquito Creek between Highway 101 and El Camino Real. These communities are at high risk of severe flooding from flows coming down the creek. Existing bridges along the creek have a history of constricting the flows and development along the creek banks has caused erosion.

This segment of the project is the second phase of the overall plan to provide protection to properties located within the flood-prone areas of San Francisquito Creek. The upstream flood-protection efforts cannot be undertaken until the creek’s capacity has been increased downstream, in the Bay to Highway 101 segment. Construction on the Bay to Highway 101 segment is scheduled to begin in 2016, dependent upon the issuance of regulatory permits and the finalization of real estate transactions.

The creek capacity improvements being analyzed include:

- Bridge replacements
- Channel widening and naturalization
- Construction of an upstream floodwater detention basin, underground bypass culvert and/or floodwalls

Each project alternative will include a varying combination of the improvements (detention basin(s), bypass culvert(s), and/or floodwalls), in addition to the necessary elements needed to improve current creek flooding conditions (bridge replacements and channel widening or bottleneck removal).

**Funding Sources**

**Santa Clara Valley Water District**

Through its November 2000 Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection Plan, the water district secured $10.6 million for the planning and design of the 100-year creek flood protection project, stretching from the Bay to Searsville Dam.

In November 2012, Santa Clara County voters also approved the water district’s Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program which included $35.5 million for the construction phase of Bay to Highway 101, as well as funding for construction remedying channel constrictions and modifying bridges at Newell Road and Pope/Chaucer Street.

**San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority**

The SFCJPA received an $8 million grant from the Department of Water Resources for costs related to the design and construction of the Bay to Highway 101 portion of the project.

**Caltrans**

Caltrans is funding the construction of the Highway 101 Bridge replacement, as well as 88 percent of the Newell Road bridge replacement project.

**San Mateo County jurisdictions**

For the Bay to Highway 101 segment, East Palo Alto and San Mateo County are each providing $0.8 million. For projects upstream of Highway 101, East Palo Alto has committed $0.2 million, Menlo Park has committed $0.5 million and San Mateo County has committed $0.7 million.