



**Safe, Clean Water**  
and Natural Flood Protection

PRIORITY E

## Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project

**PRIORITY E** Provide flood protection to homes, businesses, schools, streets and highways  
PROJECT E2

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK



**Safe, Clean Water**

and Natural Flood Protection



*Southern view of the Sunnyvale West Channel towards Caribbean Drive.*

## Project Background

The Sunnyvale East and West Channels were constructed in the 1960s to serve as storm drains in response to flooding caused by a combination of major storm events, land subsidence and inadequate drainage to the San Francisco Bay. Since construction, the channels have experienced flooding during major storm events in 1963, 1968, 1983, 1986 and 1998.

Flooding can result in millions of dollars in damages to nearby homes, businesses, schools and public infrastructure. In addition, disruption to local businesses and transportation networks can result in significant loss of productivity and revenue. The Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project will address these concerns and offer flood protection to the community.

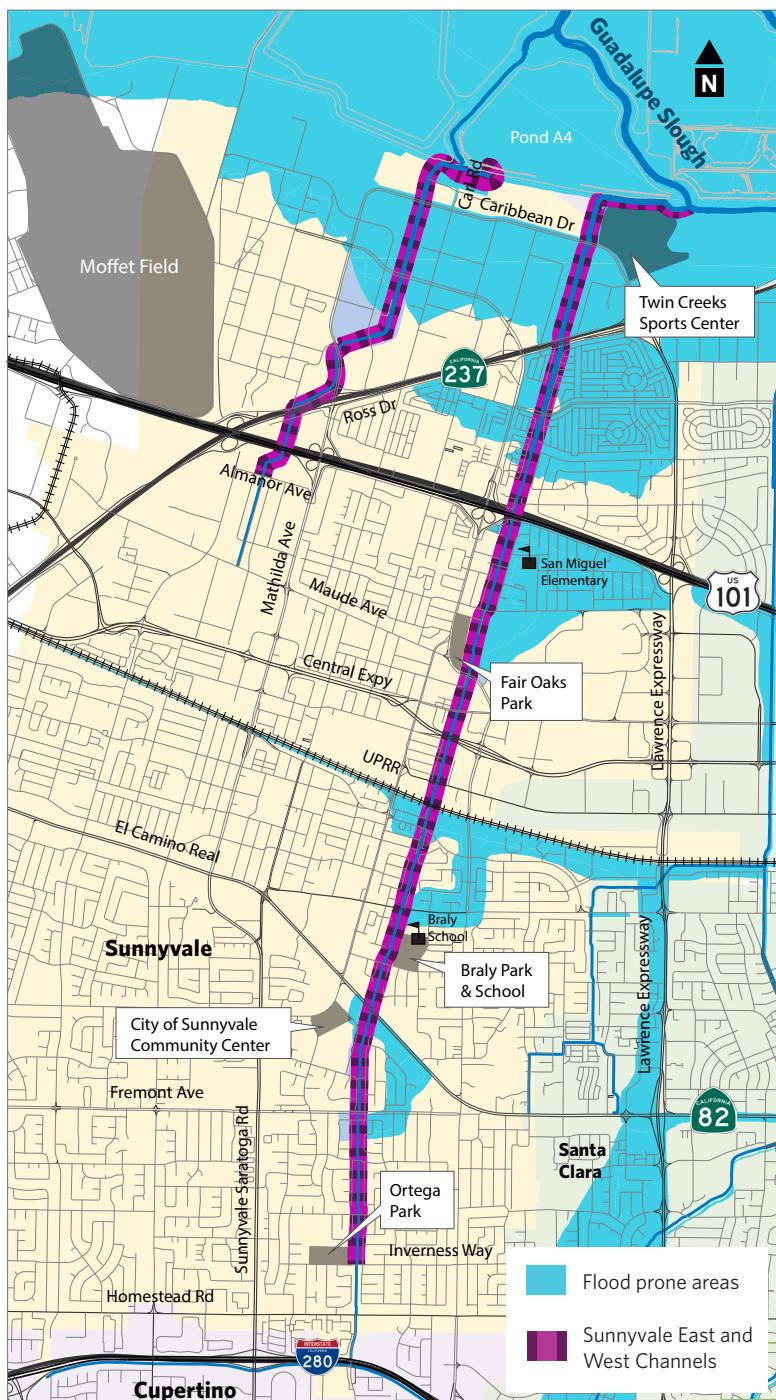
## Protecting people, properties and the environment

Each winter, thousands of households, businesses and schools in Sunnyvale are susceptible to flooding from Sunnyvale East and West Channels during a major storm.

Once completed, the Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project will provide a 100-year flood protection against local flows. A 100-year flood has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.

It will also safeguard approximately 1,600 homes and 47 acres of highly valuable land from flooding—preventing potential flood damages in excess of \$54 million. While the project will offer localized benefits, it will not protect against tidal flooding to some of the properties located along the San Francisco Bay in the northern portion of Sunnyvale. There is a San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with Valley Water, the California State Coastal Conservancy, and regional stakeholders, to analyze solutions to reducing risk from tidal flooding. More details about this project are available online at [valleywater.org](http://valleywater.org).

## Project benefits and features



The Sunnyvale West Channel is approximately three miles long and stretches from Maude Avenue to Guadalupe Slough. The Sunnyvale East Channel is approximately six miles long and stretches from Interstate 280 to Guadalupe Slough.

The project aims to provide flood protection to Sunnyvale residents, schools and businesses. The benefits and features of the project will enhance and improve our environment, community infrastructure and provide for recreational opportunities. They include:

- Providing flood protection for more than 1,600 properties and 47 acres of industrial land bordering approximately 9.4 miles of the Sunnyvale East and West Channels.
- Improving water quality by implementing erosion control measures to decrease sediment, turbidity and buildup within the channels.
- Providing for recreation opportunities by accommodating the City of Sunnyvale's trail plan.
- Fostering a partnership between Valley Water and Google to maximize onsite planting of native plants on Google's West Channel Development Project.
- Replacing existing road under crossings at Carl Road and Caribbean Drive to increase storm water flow capacity.



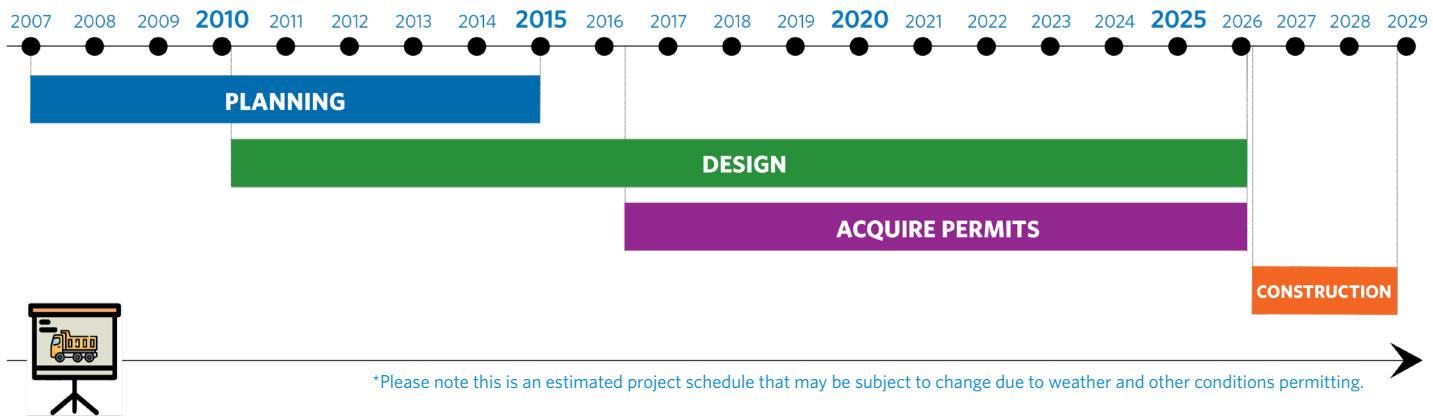
The Sunnyvale East Channel at Caribbean Drive, December 2012.



Aerial view of the Sunnyvale West Channel.

## Project schedule

The Sunnyvale East West Channels Project's planning phase is complete. Valley Water is actively coordinating with state and federal regulatory agencies to acquire the necessary project permits. The construction phase is anticipated to begin in 2026 and be completed by December 2028, pending the issuance of regulatory permits.



Valley Water has made significant progress in preparing the project for construction. To date, the following have been accomplished:

- Design of the construction drawings are 95% complete (state and federal agency permits are pending).
- Completed designs for floodwalls and new culverts at Carl Road (Sunnyvale West) and Caribbean Drive (Sunnyvale East).
- Conducted input meetings with the public and key stakeholders.
- Completed and obtained certification on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- In 2017, Valley Water submitted permit applications to various state and federal regulatory agencies. Permits were placed on hold until Valley Water explored a partnership with Google for on-site mitigation. Valley Water has resubmitted the permit applications and are actively engaged with the regulatory agencies to address comments and expedite issuance of the required permits.
- Valley Water and Google executed an agreement in February 2022 to widen the West Channel upstream of

Caribbean Drive to install native plantings for on-site mitigation and habitat creation.

### Looking ahead

The Sunnyvale East and West Channels flood protection project offers an opportunity to improve flood protection, create recreational opportunities, increase habitat opportunities and improve the quality of the water that reaches the San Francisco Bay.

Valley Water continues to work with state and federal regulators in obtaining the required permits to begin project construction. As with all flood protection projects, the permitting processes can be lengthy, requiring review and approval from various agencies.

Additionally, the approval to collaborate with Google on expanding the West Channel also allows a chance for Valley Water to increase the area available for native vegetation planting, which may be used as onsite mitigation. Regulatory approval is required for the project's proposed mitigation and monitoring plan. Valley Water will continue to engage in this effort.



Southern view of the Sunnyvale West Channel from Java Drive.





A rendering of the Sunnyvale West Channel and the Google campus from West Caribbean Drive.

## Your vote at work

The Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection project is part of the renewed Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program that voters approved in November 2020. The project is estimated to cost \$90 million to plan, design and construct.

## By the numbers

-  **9.4 miles** the Sunnyvale East and West Channels will be updated to provide **100-year** flood protection.
-  **1,618 homes** will be protected and removed from the FEMA flood hazard maps and eliminate the requirements for flood insurance.
-  **47 acres** of industrial and government lands will be protected, including the former Onizuka Air Force Base satellite tracking station.
-  **\$54 million** in potential flood damages will be saved should a flood occur.

## CONTACT US

To find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions or comments, use our **Access Valley Water** customer request system at [access.valleywater.org](https://access.valleywater.org).

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## You're in a watershed

No matter where you are, you're in a watershed. A watershed is the area of land that drains to a common waterway. In Santa Clara County, our creeks catch rain and runoff from storm drains and carry the water north to San Francisco Bay or south to Monterey Bay. Along the way, some of the water is used to fill reservoirs for drinking water, replenish the underground aquifer and create better habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Sunnyvale East and West Channels Flood Protection Project is in the West Valley Watershed, an 85-square-mile area of multiple small-creek watersheds. Characterized by the contrast between the non-natural channelized storm drains and the more natural creeks and small streams in the hillsides, this watershed is the county's smallest.



## Valley Water

Valley Water manages water resources and is a steward for Santa Clara County's five watersheds, 10 reservoirs, hundreds of miles of streams and groundwater basins. Valley Water also provides flood protection throughout the county.

Visit the website at [valleywater.org](https://valleywater.org).

For assistance please visit [valleywater.org](https://valleywater.org) or contact Jiana Escobar at (408) 630-2266 or [Jescobar@valleywater.org](mailto:Jescobar@valleywater.org).

A full list of projects in the **Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program** can be found at <https://www.valleywater.org/safe-clean-water-and-natural-flood-protection-program>.

