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Alta Vista flooding set to be tackled

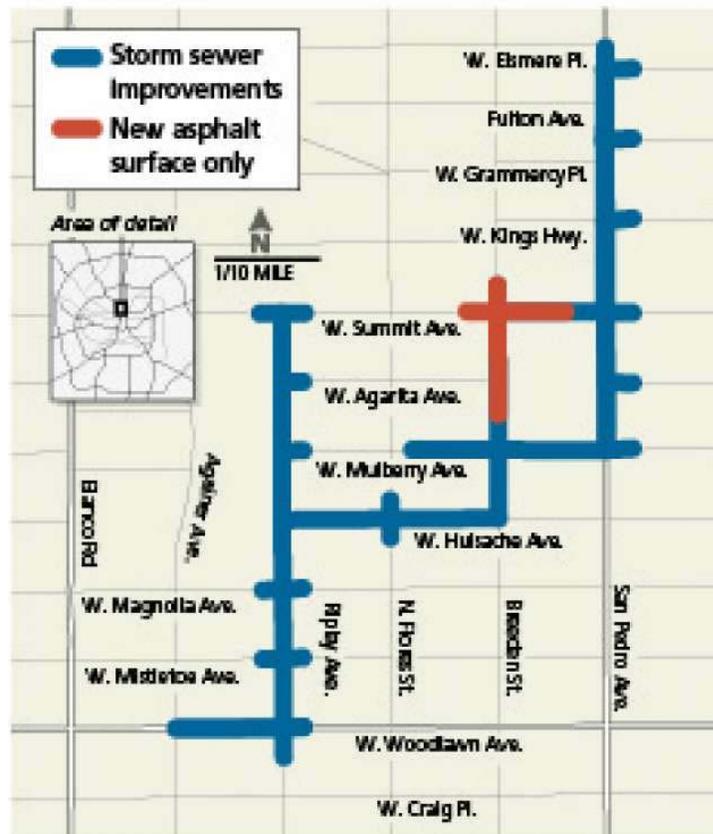
By John W. Gonzalez

Construction project that may take 18 months aims to fix chronic problem for good.

Updated 1:07 am, Tuesday, February 22, 2011

\$11 million flood-control project

Beginning March 14 and going through fall 2012, drainage, utilities and streets will be upgraded in the Alta Vista neighborhood.



EXPRESS-NEWS GRAPHIC

Most people know the drill: If there's heavy rain, don't expect to drive through the low-water crossing on San Pedro Avenue in front of Mark Twain Middle School.

But that perennial annoyance should vanish by late next year, Bexar County flood-control planners contend.

After repeated attempts to fix the situation, the chronic flooding there is about to be addressed again, this time in the form of an \$11 million construction project funded by the county and expected to begin in three weeks. It's an 18-month endeavor that will affect traffic, commerce and everyday neighborhood activities.

At times, disruptions might be unavoidable on several quaint, shady streets in the historic Alta Vista neighborhood. Century-old drains will be replaced, underground water channels will be installed, utilities will be relocated and streets will be rebuilt to replace decades-old infrastructure. Streets and driveways will be blocked in the process.

Wednesday night, the regular monthly meeting of the [Alta Vista Neighborhood Association](#) will provide residents another chance to learn about the inevitable complications of the long-awaited improvements. Since last year, the county's [Infrastructure Services Department](#) has participated in several community meetings to inform residents of the plans.

Aside from addressing flooding on San Pedro at West Summit Avenue, plans call for improving the movement of floodwaters downhill from the Monte Vista and Alta Vista neighborhoods to the San Antonio River just north of downtown.

Much of the flow will be directed to a huge drain at West Woodlawn Avenue and a railroad crossing. The collection point connects to the river watershed via an underground channel that runs from Woodlawn Avenue to a massive flood-control structure on San

Pedro Creek in the Five Points area.

The middle school site is a key part of the flood-control calculation. According to neighborhood lore, the land — formerly a farm — was donated for the school because it was so flood-prone.

Drainage upgrades on the campus several years ago, including construction of a channel that passes under and through the school, proved inadequate, county planners said. As a result, flooding continues on San Pedro during downpours, usually forcing traffic — including first responders and [VIA Metropolitan Transit](#) buses — to detour through Monte Vista.

More Information

San Pedro-Huisache Phase II Project

Alta Vista Neighborhood Association monthly meeting

6:30 p.m. Wednesday

Mark Twain Middle School cafeteria

2411 San Pedro Ave.