

Flooding

Flooding in Alamo Heights poses a serious threat to property and lives. After studying the flood patterns for a number of years, the Flood Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is finalizing the Alamo Heights flood maps. Where once the floodways were contained within the streets and adjacent parking areas, the floodway now encompasses many more businesses and homes. This is a significant issue that must be dealt with immediately and at a comprehensive scale.



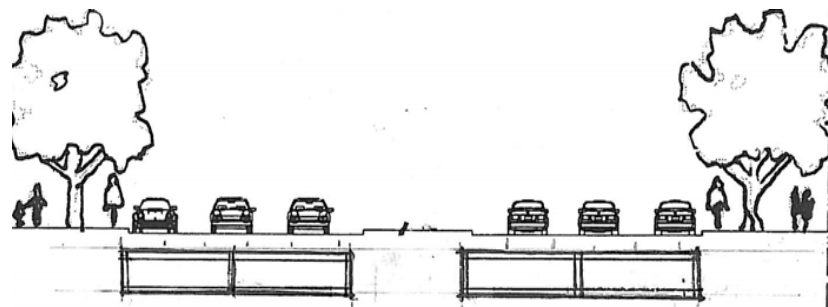
Flooding is not a local issue since watersheds do not follow political boundaries. The flood waters in Alamo Heights are part of a greater regional watershed. If they are to be effectively managed, then Alamo Heights must work with the San Antonio River Authority and Bexar County Infrastructure Services Department and the Watershed Program to solve this problem.

Alamo Heights has two major watersheds: One includes the areas that drain into the Olmos Basin behind the dam. The other, more problematic watershed is known as "SA Watershed #1." This is the watershed that drains to the SA River through Alamo Heights following the old river bed now known as Austin Highway and Broadway. Broadway was originally more aptly called "River Road."

SA Watershed #1 includes the water draining from San Antonio areas immediately to the north, down New Braunfels and Austin Highway, as well as from Terrell Hills to the east. Eldon Road in Terrell Hills is the eastern edge of the watershed. Ultimately, most of the water eventually collects and drains toward Broadway in Alamo Heights.

Awareness that the impact of flood solutions in Alamo Heights will have a profound affect downstream is imperative. If the flood waters are discharged from Alamo Heights at a greater rate than they currently enter the system, it would change the timing of the peak flood conditions downstream, causing flood conditions in both the Mahncke Park and River Road neighborhoods.

Generally, this means that the underground tunnels carrying floodwaters must follow the natural topography of the land. Deep narrow tunnels will increase the slope and, therefore, the speed of the discharge. The drainage tunnels must be flat and narrow to maintain the same rate of flow as currently exists. Because of the large capacity of water, it might also be necessary to build interceptors under Cleveland Court and New Braunfels so that the stormwater volume under Broadway can be reduced. Water retention can also play an important role in the timing of stormwater discharge. Opportunities for water retention in current open space and in underground facilities should be explored. Acquisition of land for such purposes would benefit the public good.



Action Steps

- Implement a comprehensive stormwater study.
- Coordinate with regional partners.
- Implement recommendations recommended by study.