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South Flores bridge to be closed in bid to curtail floods

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Photo: JERRY LARA, SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

Mario Vasquez leaves his stalled car on South Flores and Sixmile Creek on August 16, 2007. The creek flooded with rains from Tropical Storm Erin.

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When the remnants of Tropical Storm Erin struck South Texas Aug. 16, 2007, the deluge of rain dropped as much as 8 inches onto Bexar County within hours.

[David Alexander Diaz](#), a recent [South San Antonio High School](#) graduate, was killed that afternoon when his sport utility vehicle went into the storm-swollen Sixmile Creek near South Flores Street.

Heavy rains have been a problem in the creek for many years, but the county has a plan to alleviate flooding, said officials during a meeting Sept. 28 to discuss the new Sixmile Creek Drainage Improvements project.

“This area has a history of flooding,” said [Martin J. Cristafaro](#), the program manager for the [Bexar County Flood Control CIP](#).

“Neither the South Flores Street or the Roosevelt Avenue bridges have a lot of conveyance beneath them. The creek also goes from concrete to heavy brush in places, and when it rains, water starts to back up and flood onto the area around Roosevelt Avenue.”

The project falls along the Sixmile Creek from the Roosevelt Avenue Bridge west to Interstate 35 South.

[Bexar County Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez](#) said the project will benefit many on the South Side.

“It used to be nothing ever happened for the South Side, that we were always the last ones to get something good,” Rodriguez said. “This project is very important. It starts at South Flores Bridge and goes all the way up Interstate 35 along the floodplain to the North Side.”

The Sixmile Creek project is part of the county's \$500 million plan in

response to flooding in 2002-2003 that claimed Diaz along with other 12 lives. Fifty-six projects around the county, a few already completed, were designed to save lives and property.

As part of the plan, six bridges on the South Side will be replaced and the channel along parts of Sixmile Creek will be widened to reduce the 1 percent chance of a 100-year flood causing damage.

The term “100-year flood” means there is a 1 in 100 chance of such an event occurring each year.

The county will also have to remove 152 structures from the floodplain. Rodriguez said “in the coming year, we will talk with individual property owners about land acquisitions.”

Rodriguez and other officials said they do not anticipate having to acquire entire properties, but rather “strips” of properties that run along Sixmile Creek and the floodplain.

The first bridge that will be shut down and replaced is the South Flores Bridge, at the intersection of South Flores Street and Roosevelt Avenue. The new bridge will be 1.7 feet higher.

Construction will begin in February 2012 and take around 10 months. The project will detour thousands of motorists and cause traffic headaches in the area during construction of the bridges and channel. But Cristafaro said “doing nothing is not an option.”

“People living safely along Sixmile Creek is my main concern, we need to do something,” Cristafaro said.

Other bridges over Sixmile Creek that will be replaced include:

Roosevelt Avenue

Garrett Avenue

Moursund Boulevard

Pleasanton Avenue

Ashley Road

The construction cost for the anticipated planned improvements along Sixmile Creek, including the construction of the South Flores Bridge, is estimated at \$23 million.