

Case Study:

RUSH CREEK PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROJECT, ARLINGTON, TX

Challenge:

In 2010, heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Hermine pushed creeks and rivers past flood stage throughout Arlington, Texas. More than 250 structures were flooded, including 50 structures along the Rush Creek corridor in the Woodland Park area.

Overview/History

This wasn't the first time Arlington experienced flooding. Residents recall at least five other major floods occurring along Rush Creek alone, though none as extensive as the one that hit in 2010.



Credit: NBCDFW

After Hermine, the city decided to mitigate flooding in Woodland Park, where 50 residential structures and 14 condominium complexes were flooded. This region of the city, a FEMA mapped special flood hazard area, contained several properties that suffered damages in previous storms – some had flooded three times since 2004. Many property owners indicated they were tired of the repetitive losses and were skeptical of returning to their homes.

The city council was interested in developing a plan to alleviate the flooding, but didn't think there was a cost-effective way to do it.

Solution

With no feasible means of reducing the flooding impact on properties in Woodland Park, the city created a phased buy out program to move people out of harm's way. After receiving appraisals for the 50 properties that were flooded during Hermine, the city sent the first contracts to homeowners in March, and the first acquisition was signed in April. Ultimately the city was able to acquire and demolish 49 of the 50 residential properties and the condominium complexes.

Funding/Financing

The \$17 million buyout was funded completely with local funds. The funds were part of a 20-year stormwater bond program, and the money is being repaid by stormwater utility revenues. The city chose to use local funds to expedite the acquisition process.

Project Details

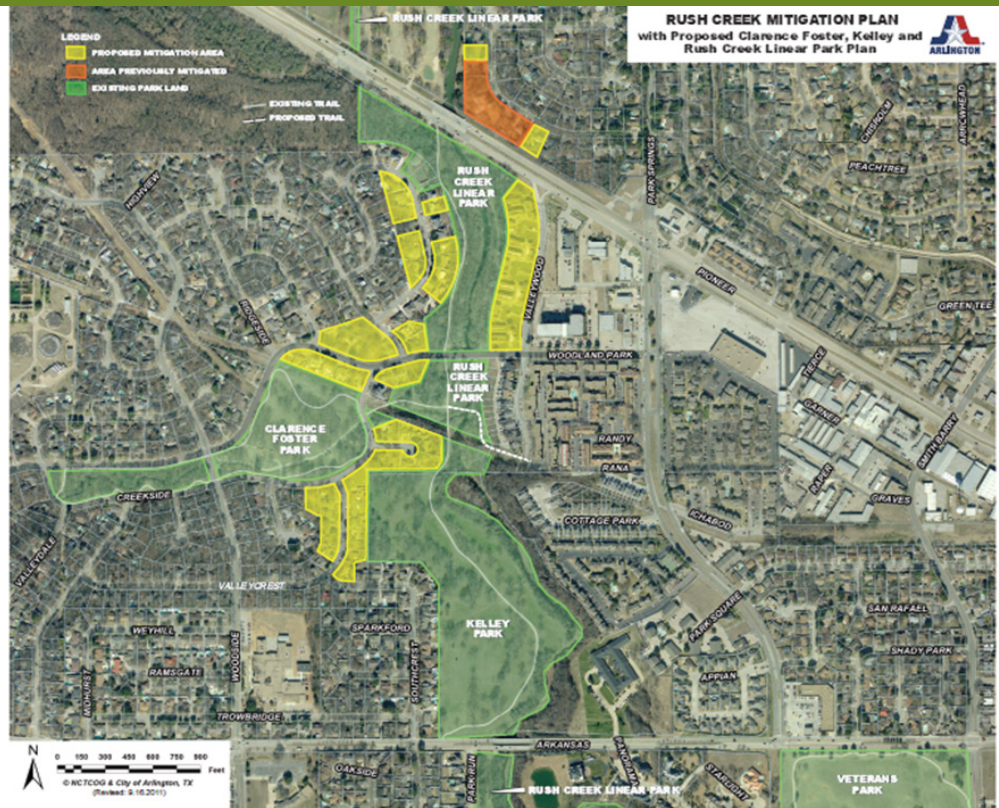
- **Location:** Arlington, TX
- **Population:** 380,000
- **Strategies:** Moving people out of harm's way, Open space acquisition, Waterfront park
- **Cost:** \$17M
- **Benefits:** Prevention of flood damage to structures and increased recreational spaces

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Benefits

The property acquisition program moved people out of harm's way and provided additional recreational space. The 23 acres of newly acquired land, contiguous with three city parks, were used to create an 82-acre park. Risk to first responders was reduced and damages to streets and utilities serving these flood-prone properties was reduced. In addition, open space in the floodplain provides temporary flood storage.



Above is a map of the areas targeted for property acquisition. Areas in yellow and orange show where residential areas were converted to open space to create an 82-acre city park.