Mobility Department
Stormwater Engineering

Lamb Canal Rehabilitation and Flood Relief Project

Public Involvement Report
December 2023

Introduction

The Lamb Canal Rehabilitation and Flood Relief project is being pursued by the City of Tampa to provide relief for frequent and extreme flooding within the watershed during rainfall events and to address uncontrollable bank erosion along the Lamb Canal between Westshore Blvd. and Manhattan Ave. and along the Emerson Ditch between Lamb Ave. and Bay-to-Bay Blvd. Due in part to project design challenges and community feedback regarding the original project design, which resulted in a 20-foot wide sheet-pile lined canal, the City of Tampa began a redesign of the Lamb Canal Rehabilitation and Flood Relief project in April 2023 to reduce impacts to the neighborhood.

Due to the nature of the project and potential impacts to property owners and residents that live along the canal, a comprehensive public involvement process was established and will continue during the completion of design and through construction. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of public involvement activities that have been completed since redesign efforts have begun.

Public Involvement Process

Upon completion of the 30 percent redesign plans, the project team began to engage the community, with a focus on residents/property owners along the project route.

On September 13, 2023, the City of Tampa provided an update on the project to the Sunset Park Area Homeowners Association (SPAHA). A presentation was given by the City's staff to explain the new design options including a reduced width open canal or a closed (box culvert) canal system. More than 25 people, including members and non-members of the homeowners association, attended the meeting. The consensus of the attendees was support for the purpose of the project, with questions related to concerns from property owners/residents that live directly along the project route. The general response from the meeting attendees was that the closed (box culvert) canal option was preferred.

However, after the SPAHA meeting, some concerns were voiced by property owners/residents that live directly along the canal. As part of the design phase of the project and to address concerns that were brought up during and after the SPAHA meeting, the project team conducted one-on-one meetings with residents/property owners that live along Lamb Canal and Emerson Ditch, beginning in September 2023. The purpose of these meetings was to:

1. Share information about the project re-design options.
2. Gain feedback on the project re-design options.
3. Gauge acceptance of tree removal from private property.
4. Identify any potential concerns.
5. Identify challenges that may exist for the project team.

To schedule one-on-one meetings, multiple attempts were made to engage residents that live along the project route. The project team used various communication methods in an

aggressive effort to reach as many residents as possible between September 2023 and December 2023:

- A Postcard Mailer was distributed on August 21, 2023
- Door Hangers were hand delivered between September 25 and October 6, 2023
- Impromptu resident visits were made to those residents for which no response had been received between November 6 and December 8, 2023
- A second wave of Door Hangers were hand delivered between December 4 and December 15, 2023
- Phone calls were placed, and emails were sent to residents if we had contact information from the first round of public engagement activities between December 4 and December 15, 2023

Since the project's inception in 2021, the project team has meet with 38 of the 64 residents/property owners that abut the Lamb Canal and Emerson Ditch. During our most recent public involvement effort in which we conducted the one-on-one meetings from September 2023 to December 2023, we met individually with 26 residents/property owners, that resulted in valuable feedback from those that will be directly impacted by project activities.

Property Owner/Resident Outreach

Below is a list of addresses of the residents/property owners the project team has met with since project inception in 2021. Those that are highlighted are residents/property owners the project team has conducted one-on-one meetings with to discuss the redesign options since September 2023. The remaining property owners/residents provided input to the project's previous design but did not request a follow-up meeting to discuss the new project options.

4509 W. Lamb Ave.
4513 W. Lamb Ave.
4517 W. Lamb Ave.
4601 W. Lamb Ave.
4607 W. Lamb Ave.
4609 W. Lamb Ave.
4611 W. Lamb Ave.
4613 W. Lamb Ave.
4615 W. Lamb Ave.
4617 W. Lamb Ave.
4619 W. Lamb Ave.
4621 W. Lamb Ave.
4627 W. Lamb Ave.

3006 S. Emerson St.
3008 S. Emerson St.
3012 S. Emerson St.
3014 S. Emerson St.
3018 S. Emerson St.
3019 S. Emerson St.
3022 S. Emerson St.
3023 S. Emerson St.
3024 S. Emerson St.
4608 W. Lowell Ave.
4610 W. Lowell Ave.
4620 W. Lowell Ave.
4624 W. Lowell Ave.

4625 W. Lowell Ave.
4626 W. Lowell Ave.
4630 W. Lowell Ave.
3015 S. Schiller St.
3018 S. Schiller St.
3017 S. Keats St.
2902 S. Westshore Blvd.
2906 S. Westshore Blvd.
3007 S. Manhattan Ave.
3009 S. Manhattan Ave.
3109 S. Manhattan Avenue
3117 S. Manhattan Avenue

One-on-One Meeting Summary

General discussion topics by the City during each meeting included the following:

- A brief history of the project, and the reasons the City has narrowed the project to two different options, including an open canal option and closed (box culvert) canal option.

- The improvements related to the project will include flood relief for rainfall events, however flooding due to storm surge will continue to occur as there is no practical solution to storm surge flooding in these low-lying areas.
- Since the closed (box culvert) canal option is a new concept for this project, the City provided advantages compared to the open canal option, which include:
    - The footprint of the closed option would be 17 feet vs. the open option which has a footprint of 25 feet.
    - The closed (box culvert) canal option will provide opportunity for more trees to be saved within adjacent residential property.
    - The closed (box culvert) canal option will greatly reduce routine maintenance for City.
    - The closed (box culvert) canal option would be a final project for the City, as no additional capacity would be needed within the watershed.
- Initial results of the tree survey were provided, and specifics pertaining to private property, or the right-of-way abutment impacts to trees was discussed.
- A tentative project timeline was provided, with an anticipated construction start date of Fall 2024 and the project will take approximately 18-24 months to complete.

While most of the residents understand the need for the project, the consensus of those who own property that directly abut Lamb Canal ranged from some embracing the project as it would clean up the right-of-way and stop bank erosion to others that are content with current conditions or have other concerns. A summary of the recurring concerns is included below:

- Flooding, primarily from storm surge has been an issue for some of the property owners/residents along the canal.
- There is erosion along much of the canal, which has impacted private property in many areas along the canal including fences collapsing, poor drainage in backyards, and low areas along the property line.
- Impact to private property during construction – concerns include restoration of fences, artificial turf, patios, pools, and lighting.
- Potential private property tree removal.
- The volume of water that will be diverted to the Emerson Ditch and Lamb Canal from this project, and whether the project will be able to handle it all.
- The impact to property values once the project is complete.
- If there is access to the right-of-way with the closed option, some property owners and residents are concerned with safety, including vandalism and theft.

These concerns were addressed by City staff in the one-on-one meetings, and many are answered in the project Frequently Asked Questions document posted on the project webpage at https://www.tampa.gov/document/lamb-canal-rehabilitation-flood-relief-fact-sheet-129216.

Conclusion

The public involvement process during the redesign phase at 30 percent plans has provided the City of Tampa with valuable feedback from property owners/residents along the Lamb Canal and Emerson Ditch. The City understands the concerns related to both the open canal and closed (box culvert) canal options.

The information collected will be evaluated by the project team as they move forward with the design and will be addressed to the greatest extent practical in the final construction documents. Below is a summary of responses received from the one-one-one meetings:

- 100 percent of property owners/residents that live along the Lamb Canal and Emerson Ditch were invited to schedule a one-on-one meeting with members of the project team. Notification to schedule these meetings were made through mail, email, phone calls, door hangers, postcards, and impromptu house visits during a 4-month period to December 2023.
- The City met with 60 percent of property owners/resident that live along the Lamb Canal and Emerson Ditch, while the remaining 40 percent did not respond to our meeting requests.
- 90 percent of property owners/residents directly abut along the Lamb Canal indicated they would prefer the closed (box culvert) option over the open canal option, while 7 percent would prefer the open canal option or no improvements. The remaining 34 percent of property owners/residents did not respond to our meeting requests.
- The public involvement effort identified the closed (box culvert) option is preferred.

Active public involvement activities will continue throughout the design phase, as well as during construction to ensure the community is up to date on project progress.

Further information on the Lamb Canal Rehabilitation and Flood Relief Project can be found on the project webpage at https://www.tampa.gov/mobility/stormwater/capital-projects/flood-relief/lamb-canal-rehabilitation-flood-relief. You can also contact the Public Information Consultant, Nicole Miller Hawker, at (813) 784-6907 or nicole@versant-strategies.com.