



**South Howard Flood Relief Project
Neighborhood Forum**
Monday, Feb. 12, 2024

- Date:** Monday, Feb. 12, 2024
- Time:** 6:00 p.m.
- Location:** Kate Jackson Community Center, 821 S. Rome Ave., Tampa
- Attendees:** Vik Bhide, Mobility Director, City of Tampa
Brett Sillman, Project Manager, City of Tampa
Yuan Li, Stormwater Engineering Manager, City of Tampa
Adam Smith, Communications Director, City of Tampa
Joshua Cascio, Communications Coordinator, City of Tampa
Janelle McGregor, Community Engagement & Partnerships Dir., City of Tampa
Elie Araj, Owners Representative for Tampa, Applied Sciences
John Zemina, Vice President, Kimmins
Christine Girardin, Valerin Group
Michelle Robinson, Dialogue Public Relations
Robin Bizjack, Dialogue Public Relations
And approximately 25 Parkland Estates/Hyde Park Residents

Vik Bhide, City of Tampa, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. He introduced the project team members, explaining the team was in early public engagement for this design-build (D-B) project. Vik explained the difference between a progressive D-B project versus other types of construction projects, and how D-B projects have much more accountability with a single firm hired to design, permit, and construct the project.

Vik said the City has learned from missteps with other stormwater projects where the contractor had leeway to do a lot of work at once impacting a large area versus a phased approach, which is how the South Howard Flood Relief Project will be handled. He emphasized that all construction projects have impact to the surrounding neighborhoods, and that they may not be able to resolve every issue; however, this project is needed to alleviate flooding in Parkland Estates. This project has been planned with sea level rise in mind.

He then turned the meeting over to Brett Sillman, City of Tampa project manager, to share details of the project.

Brett Sillman reiterated that Parkland Estates has a history of flooding with heavy rains and that this project will alleviate that problem. He also discussed project benefits beyond flood relief,

including the enhanced streetscape on South Howard; upgraded water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure; undergrounding of TECO power lines; improved water quality discharges to Hillsborough Bay; repaved roads near the project area as part of an “early works” phase; and establishment of a stormwater spine for other neighborhoods to tie into in the future.

Brett shared an overview of the route and alternative segments for the stormwater conveyance system. The South Howard portion of the route is set because two box culverts already exist underneath the CSX railway and Bayshore Boulevard. The project team needs to complete more research to determine the best alternative route at the system’s northern end to connect the South Howard portion of the route to Parkland Estates.

Brett then discussed the City’s design criteria package that outlines requirements that the contractor must include in the scope that becomes part of the contract. Those items include robust public outreach from start to finish, phased construction, stringent staging locations, full-time vehicular access as much as possible and other accommodations when needed (e.g. golf carts), and robust maintenance of traffic plans.

Brett said that the design criteria package specifies that to the greatest extent practical, the D-B team shall construct the project in a manner that will minimize the disturbance and duration of access limitations to residences and businesses during construction. He said that the contractor expects that during the early part of construction, when utilities are being relocated, one lane will be open. During box culvert installation, the full road will be closed by phase. Closures will typically last 5-7 weeks per 500-800 linear feet. He shared a slide with animation outlining the proposed phasing of the work to be done and said segments were divided based on access points to residents and businesses. The City is requiring that a phase be completed and opened to local traffic before construction starts on the next phase. Brett said that per the design criteria package, the contractor must maintain vehicular access, but when it cannot be maintained, the contractor will provide off-site parking and will use a golf cart to shuttle residents.

Brett talked about restoration and stated that disturbed areas must be restored to like or better condition with the exception of trees – trees cannot be put back over pipes or box culverts. Curb and gutter will be added where none exist, granite curb will be replaced with granite to the extent possible, and the Bristol median, if impacted, will be replaced and restored with shrubbery, and the well and artwork will be put back in place.

He explained the streetscape enhancements and said community input will help shape the streetscape. Items to be included are green infrastructure, increased sidewalk coverage, traffic calming measures, expanded street parking, pervious pavers, lighting, and landscaping. The project team has the Hyde Park Streetscape Vision Plan to help inform their initial renderings.

He discussed the early works projects and the schedule, noting that construction is at least a year away. John Zemina, Kimmins, said the size of water distribution pipes is generally 6 to 8 inches in diameter. The box culverts are much larger at 10 feet wide by 5 feet tall.

Brett discussed the project budget and the progressive D-B process. He explained that there would be numerous public meetings. He said once the design is done, then the contractor negotiates the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), then starts construction. He said design is approximately 15 months and construction about 3 years.

Following is a summary of questions and comments received during and after the project team presentation:

What happens with construction if hurricanes make landfall?

The City's protocol before a storm is that contractors secure work zones and take precautions as the storm approaches. Emergency management protocols are in place and will be followed. This will be a difficult, disruptive project, but it will make the neighborhoods more resilient and reduce flooding.

When will the project be finished?

Early work could begin as early as early 2025, major construction is currently slated to begin in summer of 2025 and is estimated to be complete in 2028.

What about bike lanes?

There is not enough room to add bike lanes along Howard Avenue. We are focusing on streetscape and pedestrian aspects on Howard – wider sidewalks, removing utility poles, on-street parking and traffic calming measures. As part of early works, we will work to connect the different parks with walkways.

Where will you put all the equipment?

We are looking at three properties to rent. Space will be tight, and the box culverts are very large, so we'll be taking deliveries almost every day and using them as we go. We don't have room to stockpile the box culverts.

Will you begin all the work at the same time?

Early works will occur first, potentially in early 2025. Utility relocations will start after that as the contractor needs to clear a corridor in the ground for the box culvert. Once utilities have been relocated, the contractor will begin box culvert installation and will work by phase.

Who will be our single point of contact for construction?

Michelle Robinson is the single point of contact until Kimmons is under contract. She has set up a project email and phone number for this purpose. Once construction begins, the phone line and email will transfer to Valerin, who is working with Kimmons. The City will post updates and meeting summaries to the website. The web address, phone number and project email are all listed in the Frequently Asked Questions.

You have multiple alternative routes shown. How will you know what the best route is?

The South Howard portion of the route is set. The route to Parkland Estates, currently the Bristol segment, could change. Bristol was selected after an arborist's field review indicated several grand trees on Lakeview, but additional engineering design work is needed to determine the preferred route. Kimmins will work with its design engineer, AtkinsRéalis, to

evaluate and score all routes and will keep residents apprised of this work. The design phase includes an assessment of the different routes – Swann, Bristol and Morrison.

What is the basis for scoring routes?

We haven't developed the criteria yet; we are still in meetings with residents, and resident feedback will help shape the criteria. The criteria will be as objective as possible, based on technical engineering criteria and other considerations. Trees, cost and traffic will be part of the scoring process.

What kind of trees will you put in as replacements?

There will be some impact to trees given the nature of the project. Should the box culvert be installed down Bristol, the contractor will restore Bristol's median and the two lanes, just as it is now, with the exception of trees, which cannot be planted on the box culvert. Restoration will follow the City's tree policy.

Are you purchasing or renting properties for equipment staging?

The City does not buy the parcels. The contractor will rent the parcels during construction.

Will the box culvert installation require a full road closure for 5-7 weeks?

The City has developed a preliminary phasing plan that breaks up construction into sections. The contractor will be required to open one section or segment before starting work on another. During box culvert installation, the contractor estimates that work will take 5-7 weeks per 500-800 lineal feet, barring unforeseen conditions. The phasing plan is preliminary and subject to updates and improvements. At any given time only one portion of Howard will be closed; routes into Parkland will also be constructed by phase.

Are you moving the power lines all along the route or just Howard Avenue?

Power poles will be removed only on Howard Avenue. TECO will move the power underground only in the work zone because the road will already be opened up for them. When the transformers go underground the boxes between homes in the right of way become larger.

TECO said the poles will not be removed because they hold cable.

The project team is coordinating with other utilities that use the TECO power poles. We will work with these providers to facilitate undergrounding of those utilities as well. Anything that remains on the poles will be moved at a later date, outside this project, and the poles removed at that time.

Is there an arborist report associated with this project?

No. We worked with an arborist for a preliminary review, but no official report has been completed. A formal arborist report will be completed during the design phase and made available to the public.

We heard from an arborist review that will affect approximately five grand oaks. Will that affect which route you take?

The design-build team will do a full review of the potential routes from Howard to Parkland Estates, including an arborist review and report.

We have many old homes. Is the age of the homes taken into consideration for the route you choose?

We'll have to work that in as part of the route criteria.

Where did you get your flood maps? Lakeview and Bristol do not flood.

This floodplain map shown is based on a model that has been calibrated. It shows flooding from a 5-year, 24-hour storm that has an approximately 20% probability of occurring in any year. Additionally, the photos shown are from a storm that occurred in 2015 and flooded eight or nine homes in Parkland Estates.

Are the existing box culverts adequate for this project, especially considering sea level rise?

The box culvert can move millions of gallons of stormwater. The grant that the City received from Resilient Florida includes funds for a sea level rise study. This will be a gravity flow system, so sea level rise will be considered in the design.

Are you using pavers on South Howard for the road?

We may use pervious pavers underneath parking but pavers are not likely to be used in the travel lanes.

Will the design team be open to considering vision plans from the different historic districts?

The project team has the vision plan that was previously put together and is open to considering elements of the plan. Applied Sciences bought Wide Open Office and kept their staff onboard, which developed your vision plans.

How does the public know they are being heard when contractors are already chosen and budgets are made?

We have already been engaging with the public in meetings such as tonight. Having the budget set is a good thing, as the City has the funds to relieve flooding. The design-build approach helps expedite the project timeline to contain costs. Kimmons is putting together a design scope right now and will hold public meetings at 30%, 60% and 90% design completion. The design criteria package requires that the contractor meet with the public.

Some of the funds are restricted. How does that affect the project?

Some funds are restricted to specific parts of the project, such as streetscaping and restoration. Stormwater assessment monies have very narrow parameters for what they can be spent on. Likewise, the Resilient Florida Funds can only be spent on the sea level rise study and stormwater conveyance system construction.

How do we provide input on the route?

The route decision must be made on sound engineering that will route stormwater away from homes. The decision cannot be a popularity contest. The design-build team will look at pipeline length, public inconvenience, permitting and environmental considerations, cost, etc. It's a long list of criteria including scientific data, cost, traffic impacts, etc. that are analyzed to identify the best solution.

How and when will other areas be able to connect to the stormwater conveyance system?

As the project team goes through design, they will look at possible stub-outs to other areas. Once the system is built, it provides opportunities for other areas to connect to the system for improved stormwater drainage.

What is the level of service for the system now?

There is no major stormwater conveyance system down Howard. There are smaller stormwater pipes in some areas, but not a large conveyance system, thus the localized flooding.

What is the current stormwater map? How is water being diverted now?

There is no current system. Water runs along the roads by sheetflow.

We have culverts that we've cleaned out previously. Where does the water in our storm culverts go?

The water in our storm culverts flows by gravity out to Hillsborough Bay. The existing stormwater system within Parkland Estates was modeled and determined to be severely undersized for typical Florida storm events. The capacity of the pipes is insufficient to handle the flow generated from the storms even when fully empty of debris.

What does the future engagement process look like?

We have a couple more one-on-one meetings with neighborhoods and the business alliance. All of the information will be put together into a report for Kimmons and Valerin. If you want brief write-ups for your neighborhood newsletters, we can provide that. There will not be a lot of new information to share until Kimmons is under contract and can begin design, likely in the summer. You will hear from us when we transition to Valerin. Please visit the website for more information.

How do you weigh the feedback from residents versus the business alliance?

We understand it's a community project. No one stakeholder group will have a larger voice than another.

How do we know what the business alliance is asking for?

We are happy to share this information with anyone who would like.

The meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.