

CONCERNS: South Howard Flood Project

1) Scale and cost of the project

- The project cost has escalated from about \$65 million in early estimates to projections approaching \$100 million, without a clear, stable final budget.
- For a project of this size and duration, the City has not convincingly shown that it is the most cost-effective way to address flooding compared to targeted basin fixes and improved maintenance.

2) Uncertain and shifting funding plan

- The City has relied on a complex funding package that includes stormwater funds, state grants, and a proposed THEA contribution, but the exact mix and gaps have shifted over time.
- The City has already missed or lost major funding opportunities totaling tens of millions of dollars, raising concern that taxpayers and local businesses will be left to fill future shortfalls.

3) Discrepancies around THEA's role

- Public summaries reference an \$11 million THEA contribution, while City staff testimony and internal numbers have reportedly suggested far lower amounts; this discrepancy has not been fully clarified in public.
- Until the City publishes a clear, verified funding schedule and written commitments from all partners, SoHo Alliance believes it is premature to proceed and to request easements from adjacent owners.

4) Delayed benefits for key neighborhoods

- Project materials and media reports indicate Palma Ceia Pines and other nearby neighborhoods are part of the broader project concept but may not receive improvements until later phases, potentially many years away.
- Some areas most affected by flooding could be left waiting for relief while enduring years of construction disruption on South Howard Avenue.

5) City admits flooding will still occur

- City information emphasizes “flood relief” rather than flood elimination, and public materials say the design targets specific storm events (e.g., a five-year storm), not complete removal of flooding.

- Residents are being asked to accept major construction impacts and property easements even though City staff have acknowledged that flooding will still occur after the project; the exact level of remaining flooding needs independent verification.

6) Basin needs targeted solutions (including pumps)

- Engineering work referenced by the City and Alliance suggests the basin that includes Parkland Estates may need basin-specific measures, including pumps, rather than just a large conveyance project in the roadway.
- SoHo Alliance is concerned that the City has not fully evaluated or prioritized these targeted basin solutions, especially where they could deliver more direct benefit to flooded homes and businesses.

7) Years of neglected maintenance

- Residents report that basic stormwater maintenance—clearing inlets, cleaning and televising pipes, and repairing known defects—has been inadequate or ignored for many years.
- Professional guidance on municipal pumping and drainage systems shows that systematic maintenance can significantly improve performance and reduce flooding risk, often at far lower cost than major new construction.

8) Maintenance-first alternatives not fully explored

- Preliminary information from engineers suggests that a strong maintenance program and smaller targeted upgrades could reduce flooding by an estimated 60–75% without the current large-scale project; this needs formal engineering verification.
- SoHO Alliance believes the City should publicly compare a maintenance-first alternative against the proposed project before committing nearly \$100 million and locking in years of disruption.

9) Transparency and records concerns

- The SoHo Business Alliance has already filed suit alleging the City withheld or delayed key public records—including alternative analyses, hydraulic models, and cost documents—needed to evaluate the project.
- Decisions of this magnitude should not move forward until all relevant project records are released, reviewed, and discussed openly with affected residents and businesses.

10) Property easements and long-term impacts

- The City is seeking permanent easements and access rights from adjacent property owners before it has resolved funding gaps, clarified engineering alternatives, or proved that this design is the best available solution.

- Easements could limit future property options and value, even though the project does not guarantee elimination of flooding and may not deliver timely relief to all impacted neighborhoods.
-

REQUESTED ACTION

For adjacent property owners

- Do not sign or grant easements or property access agreements to the City for this project at this time.
- Request, in writing, full disclosure of:
 - The complete, current funding plan (including exact THEA contributions).
 - All engineering alternatives evaluated, including maintenance-first and pump-based options.
 - Independent verification of projected flood-reduction percentages and remaining flooding risk.

Contact elected City officials immediately

- Call or email Tampa City Council and the Mayor to express opposition to the South Howard Flood Project as currently proposed and to request a pause until full records and alternatives are reviewed.
- City Council general contact information (phone and central channels):
 - Phone: 813-274-8131 and 813-274-7076.
 - City Council website and contact portal: <https://www.tampa.gov/city-council>.
- Mayor and Council member directory (for finding your district representative and email links):
 - Tampa elected officials list and Council member links:
<https://www.tampabaychamber.com/pages/elected-officials/> (City of Tampa section).

Ask City Council to withhold any further funding approvals and construction authorizations until:

- All requested public records are released and reviewed.
- The funding plan is fully secured and transparent.
- A maintenance-first and basin-specific alternative is publicly compared with the current proposal.
- Independent engineers verify the City's flooding-reduction projections and confirm whether a less disruptive, more cost-effective solution is available.