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## St. Armands receives \$13.5 million to address flooding concerns

The Sarasota County Commission allocates just more than half of the \$24.5 million the city requested for storm mitigation projects on St. Armands Key.

By [Andrew Warfield](#) | 3:00 p.m. December 17, 2025



St. Armands Circle was several feet underwater following hurricanes Helene and Milton.

[File image](#)

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As the hour hand crossed the noon threshold near the end of two-plus hours of lobbying by residents for Resilient SRQ funding, Sarasota County Commission Chairman Joe Neunder pleaded with his colleagues for a brief break.

Still to enter into the agenda items of the marathon Dec. 16 meeting Neunder, a chiropractor, in a twist of irony said he needed to stand and move because, “My back is killing me.”

He was pobably not alone.

Dominating the public comment portion of the meeting were dozens of residents and even some municipal government and elected officers making the case for a share of the \$57 million in available hurricane recovery funds. [A request made by the city of Sarasota for \\$25 million in resilience projects on St. Armands](#) sought the lion’s share of the funding, in the end securing \$13.5 million as commissioners pared the project from the dais.

“I'd like to give as much as we can to St. Armands because I think it's critical,” said Commissioner Teresa Mast. “I wish we had enough for all of that. We don't. I feel like we've tried so hard to address as many areas of our county as we could.”

In all, the commission weighed 25 funding requests ranging from \$178,537 for bypass pumps for Sarasota County lift stations to the city’s bid for \$24.5 million for St. Armands, which Interim City Manager Dave Bullock, in somewhat pointed fashion, reminded commissioners was actually a county, not a city, project.

Under an interlocal agreement, the county is responsible for maintaining stormwater systems in the city. St. Armands, Bullock and others stated, had been neglected for decades as flooding persisted even during non-named heavy rain events. As an economic engine, a highly popular tourist destination and, most importantly, the evacuation route for all of St. Armands Key, Lido Key and at least half of Longboat Key, St. Armands, they argued, should rank among the highest priorities.

There was little debate among commissioners on that point, but their challenge was balancing \$174.7 million in requests against one-third of that amount of available funding.

With the guidance of Stormwater Department Director Ben Quartermaine, commissioners decided to fund what they viewed are the most critical elements of the St. Armands plan. They include retrofitting pump stations and generators to improve reliability and capacity; installing tide check valves to prevent seawater from entering the drainage system during storm surge events; and maybe, if there is enough left over, some permeable pavement in strategic locations.

Gone is installing underground water storage vaults and purchasing deployable flood barriers. To cut costs, Quartermaine volunteered to oversee concept design in-house until the engineering stage, when it would be turned over to a professional hire.

The highest-scoring project on the list at 95 out of 100, the [rebuild of the McBean Boys & Girls Club in Newtown](#), was awarded its \$3 million request.

### Funded projects

Projects receiving Resilient SRQ funding:

- River Road interstate connector: \$15,647,316
- Forest Lakes floodplain mitigation: \$15,611,000
- St. Armands resiliency: \$13,500,000
- Bahia Vista Road flood mitigation: \$6,000,000
- Southgate lift station expansion: \$3,063,147
- McBean Boys & Girls Club rebuild: \$3,000,000
- County bypass pumps sewer lift station: \$178,537

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