

SARASOTA

Sarasota County commits \$30M to major flood projects along city waterways, Celery Fields



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Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Updated Nov. 18, 2025, 5:25 p.m. ET

Key Points

- Sarasota County approved \$30 million for flood prevention projects in Hudson Bayou, Whitaker Bayou, and the Celery Fields.
 - The funding is part of the \$211 million Resilient SRQ program, which uses federal money for hurricane recovery.
 - The projects involve dredging, which is the removal of sediment and debris to clear waterways and increase their depth.
 - The city of Sarasota and Sarasota County are partnering on these initiatives, with additional funding sought from other sources.
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The Sarasota County Commission approved \$30 million in funding for flood prevention projects along Hudson Bayou, Whitaker Bayou, and the [Celery Fields](#) as part of a wide-ranging hurricane recovery effort.

Of the \$211 million Sarasota County received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to disburse as part of the [Resilient SRQ](#) program, \$30 million was earmarked for “Dredging of Major Waterways” projects.

The word “dredging” has been on the lips of many local officials and activists this year – it means the removal of sediment and debris from bodies of water. The National Ocean Service calls it a “routine necessity” for clearing waterways and increasing their depth.

The two dredging projects were [submitted by the city](#) of Sarasota.

One is for Hudson Bayou, which will cost about \$15 million – 91% of that funding will come from Resilient SRQ. The city of Sarasota will cover the rest of the bill. The project aims to remove 80,500 cubic yards of sediment, ease bank erosion, and use “native vegetation to prevent future sediment buildup,” according to a county presentation.

An application for the project obtained by the Herald-Tribune said that “Without intervention, neighborhoods surrounding Orange Avenue, Alta Vista Elementary, and Osprey Avenue will continue to face public safety hazards and infrastructure damage from flooding.”

The Whitaker Bayou dredging project will cost about \$20 million, half of which will come from Resilient SRQ. The city is trying to secure the rest of the funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but will not receive confirmation until spring 2026 on whether that money is secured.

That project aims to remove 118,000 cubic yards of sediment.

The city of Sarasota and Longboat Key are also seeking \$25 million to shore up flood protections at St. Armands, which the county commission will deliberate on in December.

The Celery Fields project is a county initiative and will cost about \$6.3 million – nearly all of which will come from federal funds. It will excavate the central cell of Celery Fields to reduce flood levels by one-third of a foot over a 1-mile radius, reducing flood risk for nearby neighborhoods.

The county is partnering with the Sarasota Audubon Society for input on the project.

Sarasota County approved about \$14.5 million in October to immediately dredge the damaged portions of Phillippi Creek, which was walloped by historic flooding

from Hurricane Debby.

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