

CLOSING THE LOOP

Q2 2026 TOWN HALL
Stormwater 101 and Storm Preparedness

BACKGROUND

In 2025, during the City's Brand Refresh surveys and broader community engagement efforts, residents were invited to share feedback not only about the City's visual identity, but also about how they prefer to receive information and engage with their local government.

While many comments focused on branding, residents also expressed interest in better understanding City services, infrastructure and how to prepare for local challenges.

After reviewing that feedback, four key engagement themes emerged and directly shaped the City's 2026 Community Engagement Plan. As a result, a structured Town Hall series was developed to address those interests.

The 2026 Town Halls are designed to move beyond one-way presentations by creating opportunities for transparency, clarity and meaningful public conversation.

This approach reflects the City's commitment to listening first and building engagement opportunities around the topics residents told us matter most.



TOWN HALL SUMMARY

On May 20, 2026, the City of North Port hosted a Town Hall titled "Stormwater 101 & Storm Preparedness." This session was designed to demystify how stormwater moves through the community and provide residents with a clearer understanding of the City's stormwater system, flood management approach and preparedness responsibilities.

The presentation walked through the lifecycle of stormwater, beginning with how water enters and moves through swales, pipes, retention areas and regional water systems. It then outlined the City's role in stormwater management, the shared responsibilities between residents and government, how infrastructure is maintained and coordinated and the actions residents can take before, during and after storm events.



PARTICIPATION

Questions and Answers

The presentation was followed by a live Q&A session, where residents had the opportunity to ask questions directly and engage in open dialogue with City leadership.

To uphold our commitment to transparency and “Closing the Loop,” we are sharing the questions and answers in full below. By documenting and publishing this discussion, we aim to ensure that every resident (whether in attendance or not) has equal access to the information shared.

Stormwater management appears to rely heavily on staff expertise. What redundancy and knowledge-sharing processes are in place to ensure continuity if key staff members are unavailable?

Public Works emphasizes that effective stormwater management is built on team knowledge rather than any one individual. Over time, the Department develops extensive operational understanding of North Port’s stormwater system through hands-on experience, data monitoring and active management of local conditions.

That knowledge is intentionally shared across the team. Operations leadership and field staff regularly discuss water levels, system performance and operational strategies to build redundancy and maintain continuity. Team members (especially new hires) are actively involved in stormwater planning, decision-making and preparedness activities to strengthen institutional knowledge across the department.

Public Works also highlights the expertise of field crews who operate and maintain the City’s water control structures. These teams routinely make real-time operational decisions, such as adjusting gates to manage water levels and support maintenance activities throughout the city.

The Department’s approach focuses on cross-training, collaboration and continuous knowledge transfer to ensure staff are prepared to support stormwater operations and respond during severe weather events.

As residents prepare for storm season and clear yard and garden debris, what should they do with that material if burning is not allowed?

Residents are encouraged to dispose of yard and garden debris through the City’s yard waste collection service rather than burning or placing debris in swales or drainage areas.

Yard waste can be placed curbside in a pile on scheduled yard waste collection days for pickup by the City’s Solid Waste team. Residents also have the option to purchase a dedicated yard waste tote for collection. The tote requires a one-time fee and provides an additional way to contain and manage yard debris.

Proper disposal of yard waste helps reduce stormwater blockages and supports community storm preparedness efforts. Contact Public Works for more information by calling **941 240-8050**.

What can residents do if stormwater collects on nearby vacant private lots and begins affecting their property?

The City's stormwater system is designed to manage water that enters the public right-of-way and associated public infrastructure. Water that collects on vacant lots or other private property is generally considered a private property matter and the City is not authorized to perform drainage work on privately owned land.

If standing water on a neighboring property begins impacting a resident's property, residents may consider contacting the property owner to discuss solutions. Property ownership information can typically be found through the Sarasota County Property Appraiser website by searching the parcel on the interactive map. The website can be found at: [SC-PA.com](https://www.sc-pa.com)

In situations where water movement affects private property, residents may also wish to consult a qualified professional to evaluate grading or drainage options on their own property, where appropriate and in compliance with applicable requirements.

The City recognizes that localized ponding can be frustrating, particularly in areas with vacant lots, but management of stormwater on private property remains the responsibility of the property owner.

What should residents do if debris is being dumped into culverts, drainage areas or stormwater infrastructure?

Residents are encouraged to report debris dumping in culverts, drainage areas or other stormwater infrastructure so City teams can investigate and coordinate cleanup where appropriate.

Illegal dumping can negatively impact drainage performance and create maintenance concerns for surrounding properties. While signage alone has historically not been an effective deterrent, the City works to address recurring problem locations through operational monitoring and coordination across departments, including support from law enforcement when needed.

If residents observe repeated dumping activity, continued reporting helps staff identify patterns, respond more effectively and support efforts to reduce future occurrences.

What does the Floodplain Administrator do and how does that role support flood protection in North Port?

The Floodplain Administrator reviews development proposed within designated Special Flood Hazard Areas to ensure projects comply with City regulations and the Florida Building Code.

This review process includes requirements related to building elevations and floodplain compensation to help reduce flood risk and improve community resilience. Current standards require new construction in regulated flood areas to be built with finished floor elevations at least one foot above the Base Flood Elevation, often referred to as freeboard.

Because flood maps and regulations evolve over time, some older homes may not reflect current standards. New development is reviewed to ensure it meets applicable floodplain and building requirements.

Firstly, what vegetation treatments are used in drainage ditches and waterways, and do they affect drinking water or nearby plants? Secondly, can I contact the City to find out what was sprayed (and when) on, or close to my property?

The City uses state-approved herbicides to manage vegetation within drainage areas and waterways where permitted. Applications are completed by licensed staff, and products are selected based on the type of vegetation being treated.

Many of the herbicides used are designed to work through direct contact with the targeted plant and then move through the plant system to eliminate growth to the root. The City notes that these products are selected and applied in accordance with environmental requirements and are not intended to create long-term residual impacts to surrounding areas.

Additional safeguards are in place to protect water quality. Vegetation treatments are restricted in certain locations near water supply intake areas, and the City does not spray within protected areas around drinking water collection points. Water quality testing is also conducted as part of the treatment process.

The City maintains detailed spray logs documenting where treatments occur, what products are used and quantities. Residents with questions about activity near their property may contact the City to request information about recent applications. The City also maintains permits that identify approved vegetation management products and practices. Contact Public Works for more information by calling **941 240-8050**.

To protect aquatic ecosystems, vegetation management may occur in phases rather than treating an entire area at once. This approach helps maintain oxygen levels in the water and reduces impacts to fish and wildlife.

Can residents request a seasonal water shutoff when leaving their home for an extended period or during storm season?

Yes. Residents who plan to leave their home for an extended period may contact Utilities to request a seasonal water shutoff. Utilities can arrange for staff to turn water service off at the meter as an added protective measure while the property is unoccupied.

Residents are also encouraged to shut off water inside the home using the property's internal isolation valve, typically located where the main water line enters the house. Turning off water at both locations can help reduce the risk of water loss or interior flooding if plumbing issues occur while the home is vacant.

The close coordination between water operations and stormwater management supports both community flood management and the City's ability to continue treating and delivering potable water to residents. Maintaining appropriate water levels across the system helps balance flood protection and water supply needs.





What are the different utility pipes currently being installed along Price Boulevard and what do they do?

The utility construction along Price Boulevard includes multiple types of infrastructure, each serving a different purpose. Light blue pipe: Potable water infrastructure used to deliver drinking water to homes and businesses. Green pipe: A large wastewater force main that transfers wastewater through the system to the treatment plant located on Pan American Boulevard. Concrete pipe: Stormwater infrastructure designed to collect and move stormwater through the drainage system.

Each system serves a different function but works together to support water delivery, wastewater management and stormwater operations across the community.

Are there household preparedness tips residents can use to protect important items and check whether refrigerated food remains safe after a power outage?

Yes. Residents can take simple steps to help protect household items and reduce uncertainty after a storm-related power outage.

One preparedness tip is to place important documents or items that need to stay dry inside a dishwasher. Because dishwashers are designed to seal water in during operation, they may provide an additional layer of protection for certain items if stored inside and secured before a storm.

Another commonly shared preparedness tip is the “quarter in the freezer” method. Residents can freeze a cup of water and place a quarter on top of the ice before leaving or before a storm. If power is lost and the freezer fully thaws, the quarter will sink as the ice melts. If power later returns and the water refreezes, the position of the quarter can help indicate whether food may have thawed during the outage and should be checked before consumption. Additional information noted during the presentation can be found here:

- North Port Emergency Management: [NorthPortFL.gov/EmergencyManagement](https://www.northportfl.gov/emergencymanagement)
- Sarasota County Evacuation Level: [SCGov.net/KnowYourLevel](https://www.sarasotacounty.net/knowyourlevel)
- Emergency Alert Sign Up: [AlertSarasotaCounty.com](https://www.alertsarasotacounty.com)

What should residents do if they believe drainage infrastructure, roadside ditches or water conveyance areas are not functioning as expected in their neighborhood?

The City recognizes that localized flooding and prolonged standing water can be frustrating and may create concerns about infrastructure performance and neighborhood conditions.

Public Works notes that drainage conditions can vary based on rainfall intensity, storm conditions, topography, existing infrastructure and whether water is located within public systems or on private property. The City also notes that maintenance and restoration activities have occurred in portions of the slough system and surrounding drainage areas over recent years to improve conveyance and system function.

When residents believe conditions do not reflect expected performance, the City encourages them to continue reporting concerns and sharing location-specific information, photos and observations so staff can review conditions directly in the field. During the Town Hall, Public Works offered to meet with the resident onsite to better understand the concern and evaluate conditions in the area.

The City remains committed to reviewing reported concerns and continuing dialogue with residents about neighborhood-specific drainage conditions.

Does prolonged standing water impact septic systems or create health concerns for residents living near the slough? Many of us are concerned that this water may impact the safety of the water in our wells and septic systems?

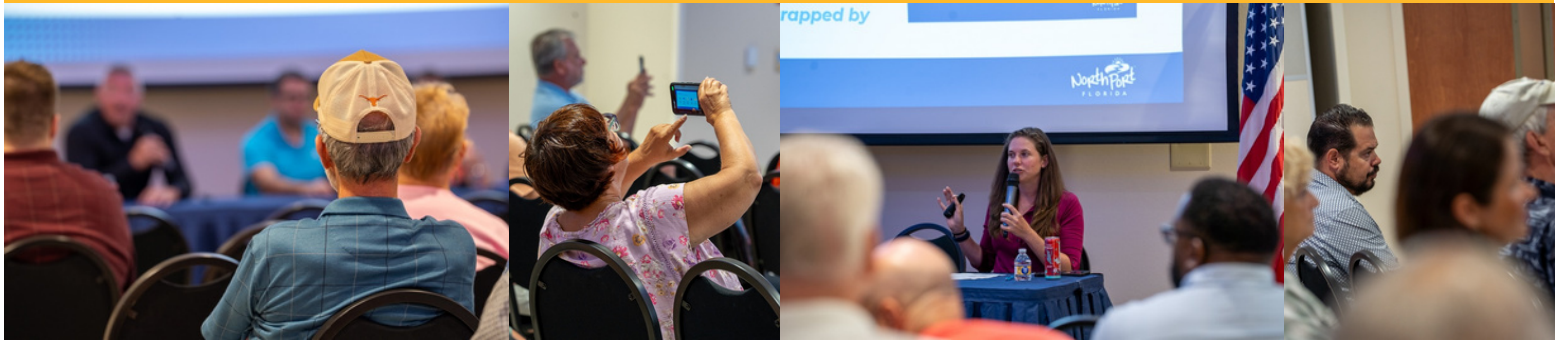
Septic system design, operation and health-related impacts fall outside of its area of expertise and the City does not provide technical guidance on whether standing water affects septic system performance or public health outcomes.

Because septic systems are regulated separately from stormwater infrastructure, residents with questions about septic functionality, permitting requirements or potential health impacts are encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory or environmental health authority for guidance specific to their system type and property conditions. The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota can be emailed at:

DOHSarasotaInfo@FLHealth.gov

The City recognizes these concerns are important to affected residents and encourages continued reporting of drainage concerns where standing water appears unusual or persistent so conditions can be reviewed through the appropriate channels.





CLOSING THE LOOP

Thank you for engaging with us. Government works best when it operates in the open and when residents feel informed, heard and respected. This “Closing the Loop” report is part of our ongoing effort to ensure transparency; not only in decision-making, but in how we communicate about it.

This report reflects our commitment to transparency. By documenting the questions asked and the answers provided, we aim to ensure that the conversation remains accessible to all residents and not just those who were able to attend. Please note that questions included in this report have been adapted from live verbal discussion to improve readability and clarity. Effort has been made to preserve the original intent, context and key points raised, however wording may not appear exactly as spoken during the event.

We recognize that trust is built over time through consistent communication, accountability and follow-through. That is the purpose of our “Closing the Loop” reports: to demonstrate that engagement does not end when the meeting adjourns.

We encourage you to stay involved. Attend future Town Halls, participate in surveys, review public meeting materials and continue sharing your perspectives. Your voice matters, and it plays a meaningful role in shaping North Port’s future.



"Excellent job! I really enjoyed getting to know some of the leaders in the various departments. I appreciated learning some of those statistics and would love to see more of that information incorporated to keep building upon us already being presented."



Town Hall Attendee