



# Roadmap: Enhancing Delivery of City Services in New Orleans

City Services Coalition

March 10, 2025



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# FOREWORD

## A Call to Action

It's time to take stock of New Orleans city government.

Over the decades, the city's population has fallen from 627,000 to 384,000—and keeps dropping. Citizens are increasingly unhappy with basic services. Neighborhoods suffer and local residents are leaving. Too few of our young people can find a future in their hometown.

Polls show big majorities of city residents—Black and White voters, young and old, women and men—agree that city government isn't working and change is needed.

New Orleans must do better, and can do better.



# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## Looking to the future

As New Orleans faces city elections this fall, big questions must be answered:

- Are we prepared for the future?
- Can the city deliver basic services more efficiently and equitably?
- Can we streamline government and create a new management culture?
- Can we compete with other places for jobs and opportunity?
- Can we fix pot holes and modernize drainage?
- Can we pick up trash and keep public places clean?
- Can we learn from other cities?

The answer to these questions must be “yes,” which is why the City Services Coalition—a *diverse, nonpartisan group of local citizens*—came together. (See steering committee members on page 4.) It was time to take a hard look at New Orleans government—not the politics or personalities, but the structure and management.

This isn’t about placing blame, but winning the future.

## FOREWORD: A Call to Action

The City Services Coalition is working to overhaul city government to make it work for the entire city—to make New Orleans safer, cleaner and more prosperous. To do this, it's going to take a combination of structural changes and management improvements. But, in the end, it will be the people who run the city—elected officials, department heads, and city employees—who will determine whether these goals are met.

We believe it can be done. We believe it must be done.

### Methodology

The City Services Coalition's study process was driven by diverse, widespread community input. It was based on the collection and validation of facts, through multiple and independent sources, to understand (a) public perceptions of city services and (b) current and former city employees' perceptions of management successes and failures.

The City Services Coalition didn't just go to national experts for advice and ideas. We went into the community and talked to people across the city from every walk of life. We asked about *their* hopes and dreams. We got *their* advice.

# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## Five Basic City Services

The City Services Coalition put together this Roadmap to enhance the delivery of city services. It's full of fresh, innovative, practical ideas that focus on Five Basic City Services:

- Crime and public safety
- Streets and infrastructure
- Drainage and water management.
- Trash pick-up and clean public spaces
- Licensing and permitting

The City Services Roadmap is about improving the delivery of basic services. It's based on a simple premise: *If we can't do the basics right, how can we do anything else?*

If city government isn't able to deliver core services, it's unlikely it can ever successfully tackle more complex problems—such as creating more good jobs with good wages; providing more affordable housing; solving the homeless problem; improving education; reducing poverty; encouraging local business start-ups; and keeping tourism and the convention business alive.

# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## What it Means to You

To be sure, these are big goals and dreams. But what does the City Services Roadmap mean for you and your family?

- It means *you will start getting your money's worth for the taxes you pay*. When you have a problem in your neighborhood or on your street, the city agency involved must take responsibility for fixing it, quickly and competently. A recent citywide survey shows 83% of New Orleans voters do not now believe that they're getting their money's worth.
- It means *you will get a better quality of life*—this includes keeping you and your family safe; making sure your water is clean, and your streets are smooth and dry; attracting new business and economic opportunities; and keeping more of our young people here at home. Only 23% of residents believe New Orleans is *a safe place* to live; only 16% of residents 18-44 years old believe New Orleans is *a good place to find good jobs and career advancement*; only 32% of residents 45 and older believe New Orleans is *a good place to retire*.

We have to do better. As citizens, we need to demand better.

*Whack-a-mole* policymaking is a dead end; it never works. Priorities need to be set and consistently driven to implementation without distraction.

# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## Summary of recommendations

Here's how the Coalition proposes to do better for New Orleans:

1. *Streamline the structure and management of city government* to improve and modernize the delivery of services, as illustrated in the proposed *Organization Chart* (page 72.)
2. *Overhaul the Sewerage & Water Board*, making it a national model of excellent customer service, management, and technology. (See page 130.)
3. Give the *Chief Administrative Officer clear authority and responsibility to manage day-to-day operations* of city government. (See page 73.)
4. *Reform the civil service system* so that department managers have the flexibility to administer and reorganize their agencies to ensure the most efficient delivery of city services. We propose *a new hybrid personnel system* that combines the best elements of the current nonpolitical, merit-based hiring of city employees with new in-house HR management that's not shackled with red tape and bureaucratic holdups. City government won't ever be competitive in the personnel market without these changes. (See page 210.)
5. Make *the City Attorney the City's lawyer*, not just the Mayor's lawyer. (See page 76.)

# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## Summary of recommendations

6. *Strengthen coordination of city agencies and officials* in two key areas: *public safety* and *infrastructure*. Making the city safer and modernizing infrastructure are critically important goals. Meeting them will require better coordination, collaboration, teamwork, and execution. It will require that everybody have a seat at the table. It's time to *break down the silos and institutionalize cooperation* throughout city government. (See page 209.)

7. *Require transparency in city government*, which would give average citizens more information about public works and city services so they have a bigger voice in the planning and management of these items. City administrations must adopt and publish a high-level vision for the city's future and back it up with granular work plans and sequenced stages of execution. (See page 203.)

8. *Upgrade and centralize technology and innovation* in city government. The Coalition proposes to expand technology and innovation capabilities in city government by creating a governing structure centered on a Chief Innovation and Technology Office. (See page 195.) The latest technologies must be used to track daily activities and measure the performance of city agencies. As former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has said, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

9. *Improve the city's issuance of building permits*, which is crucial if we're going to attract more businesses and create jobs in a modern, competitive economy. We can learn by looking at case studies from other cities where they do better than we do and make the changes necessary. (See page 135.)

# FOREWORD: A Call to Action

## Summary of recommendations

10. Create a *new management culture in city government*. Good ideas have often been discussed, but execution is often lacking. City officials and employees must share a commitment to make real improvements, large and small. They must be held *accountable* for implementing promised plans. City employees must help each other learn and improve continually—and they must be rewarded for high performance. People, culture, structure, strategies and systems must all be aligned, moving in the same direction. Each department and individual in city government must commit to teamwork, breaking down silos that destroy cooperation and coordination. We’ve seen what happens—the painful consequences when this is not done.

While it will take talented and capable city leaders to implement these recommendations, only voters can make that happen. The next Mayor or City Council—whoever gets elected—will need a streamlined governmental structure that is conducive to good management, accountability, and performance. Bottlenecks and barriers to the effective delivery of services must be removed, and it needs to happen as soon as possible. It’s also important for city government to focus on a limited number of priorities to foster timely and effective implementation of policy proposals.

You want *details* on how all of this should be done? *We have them*. The following pages of recommendations, research, and case studies provide a Roadmap for current and future city leaders to move New Orleans forward.



# PUBLIC OPINION ANALYSIS

## Voters' Overview of City Services

The survey was conducted December 16-21, 2024, and based on a representative sample of completed interviews with **600 voters in the City of New Orleans**. Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews; 82% were conducted via cell phones; and 18% on landlines. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3.99%. Fifty-four percent of the survey sample was composed **of African Americans, 37% of Whites, and 9% of other races, which reflects the city's current voter registration**. Comparisons with previous polling are made when possible.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Perceptions of quality of life in New Orleans

- A **strong majority** of New Orleans voters (65%) believe the city is off on the wrong track, while 28% believe it's moving in the right direction. **Substantial majorities** of Blacks, Whites, men, women, younger and older residents agree that it's off on the wrong track.
- Quality of life in New Orleans is rated **negatively** by 69% of city voters, and 30% rate it positively. Looking at demographics: 70% of Blacks, 65% of Whites, 75% of residents 18-44, and 65% of residents 45 and **older rate quality of life negatively**.
- Over the next five years, 53% of voters say they expect to stay in New Orleans; another **11% expect to move out of New Orleans but stay in Louisiana**; and another **29% expect to move out of Louisiana**. Looking at demographics: 61% of Whites, 49% of Blacks, 43% of 18-44-year-olds, and 61% of those 45 and older expect to stay in New Orleans.
- Only 19% say the local quality of life has improved over the past several years; 43% say it's stayed the same; and 37% say it's gotten worse. Only 18% of Blacks and 19% of Whites say it's improved.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Perceptions of quality of life in New Orleans (Continued)

- Among voters, 12% expect the quality of life to be much better over the next several years, 41% say it will be a little better and 32% say it will be the same. Only 15% of Blacks and 8% of Whites say it'll get much better.
- **Only 23% rate the city positively as a “safe place to live”** (24% among Blacks, 21% among Whites). The 23% is up 10 points since May 2023.
- Only 16% of 18-44-year-olds rate the city positively as a “place to raise a young family” (11% among Blacks, 23% among Whites).
- Only 20% of 18-44-year-olds rate the city positively as a “place to find good jobs and career advancement” (20% among Blacks, 18% among Whites). The 20% among all voters is down 2 points since May 2023.
- Among those 45-years-old and older, 30% rate the city positively as a “place to open and operate a new business” (35% among Blacks, 23% among Whites).
- Among those 45-years-old and older, 32% rate the city positively as a “place to retire” (33% among Blacks, 32% among Whites).

# Survey's Key Findings

## Rating city government, management

- A solid majority of New Orleans voters (65%) have an **unfavorable** view of city government, and fewer than three in ten have a favorable view (29%). Majorities of all major demographic groups rate city government **unfavorably**.
- Only 9% rate management of city government positively, and an overwhelming 88% rate it **negatively**. (That's virtually unchanged since May 2023, when it was 8%/90%.) Only 15% of Blacks and 5% of Whites rate city government management positively.

## Major changes needed

- **67% of voters say the basic structure of city government needs “major changes”**; that's up 4 points since May 2023. More Blacks (69%) than Whites (65%) say so. In addition, 26% say “minor changes” are needed, and only 3% say “no change” is needed.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Handling of issues

- More than 90% of New Orleans voters **negatively rate** city government's handling of the following issues: Maintenance of sidewalks • Drainage and water systems • Homelessness • Street repair and maintenance • Stopping political corruption • Removing blight and abandoned buildings.
- Between 70% and 89% of New Orleans voters **negatively rate** city government's handling of the following issues: Crime and public safety • Creation of new jobs and economic opportunity • Issuance of city permits and licenses • Affordable housing for low-income residents • Providing convenient housing for people who work in the city.
- Only “managing events such as the Super Bowl and major concerts” rated more positive (72%) than negative (28%).

## Transparency of city work

- An **overwhelming 94%** say city government should have a public website that shows all the work being done to fix specific problems dealing with streets, drainage, parks, playgrounds, and trash collection so that work being done is transparent and citizens can track progress being made.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Cooperation and coordination

- When it comes to working together to reduce crime, **only 10% of voters say the New Orleans Police Department, the District Attorney's office, Orleans Parish Prison, Juvenile Services and Criminal Courts are doing a good job coordinating efforts**; another 54% say they're doing a fair job; 34% say they're doing a poor job.
- When it comes to planning, coordinating, and managing public works projects—such as drainage, streets, and other infrastructure—**only 2% say city departments are now doing a good job coordinating efforts**.

## Money's worth for taxes paid

- Only 15% of voters say they're getting their money's worth in exchange for the tax dollars they pay in New Orleans, and an **overwhelming 83%** say they're not getting their money's worth. **Big majorities of all demographic groups** believe they're not getting their money's worth.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Property tax base: Who should pay?

- 66% of voters say nonprofit colleges, universities, hospitals, and religious organizations that own property in Orleans Parish should pay property taxes just as homeowners and commercial property owners do; 28% disagree.

## Next mayor's focus: Improving basic services

- **61% of voters would like the next mayor to focus on improving the delivery of basic services**, while 20% favor the next mayor focusing on expanding social services; 15% volunteer the next mayor should do both. Majorities of Blacks and Whites prefer a focus on basic services.

## Reforming civil service

- **55% of voters support changing the civil service system to give city department heads more authority and flexibility in the management of their own agencies**; majorities of Blacks and Whites support the change.



# Survey's Key Findings

## Chief Administrative Officer

- Among city voters, **71% support requiring higher standards of experience and qualifications for all future Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs)** of New Orleans city government even if it means paying the person who has the job more money. Majorities of Blacks and Whites support doing this.
- An even larger majority (78%) support having the City Council appoint all future CAOs; only 15% want the Mayor to do so.
- A still larger **80% think the Mayor and also the City Council should be able to fire the CAO**; only 11% think that only the Mayor should have the power to fire the CAO.

## City Attorney

- Only 8% want the City Attorney to work primarily for the mayor; 84% want the City Attorney to be independent and to work for the entire city government.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Sewerage & Water Board

- **80% of voters say the basic structure of the Sewerage & Water Board needs “major” changes.** Big majorities of Blacks (81%) and Whites (78%) agree on this question. In addition, 15% say “minor” changes are needed, and only 2% say “no change” is needed.
- **52% of voters say the Sewerage & Water Board should be “abolished and replaced”** with a new entity; 35% say it shouldn't be. Nearly identical majorities of Blacks (53%) and Whites (52%) say the S&WB should be abolished and replaced.
- 48% of voters say city water rates should be set by the Louisiana Public Service Commission, 24% by the City Council; 18% by the Sewerage & Water Board itself. Looking at demographics, 50% of Blacks and 45% of Whites want the PSC to regulate the rates.
- On governance, 31% say the Sewerage & Water Board should be an agency of city government; 12% say it should be an agency of state government; and 48% say it should be an agency of both city and state government.
- **A majority of 57% support taking the Sewerage & Water Board out of civil service** and 30% oppose doing so.

# Survey's Key Findings

## Sewerage & Water Board (Continued)

- An overwhelming **88% support regionalizing water purification**, and only 9% are opposed. Support was contingent on saving money and safeguarding water quality.
- To modernize the drainage system, 38% favor a new stormwater management fee, and 55% oppose it. Of those who oppose the fee, 48% would consider supporting it if the Sewerage & Water Board fixes its billing, management, and customer service problems. Of those who support the fee, 79% would consider opposing it if the fee would increase residential water bills by \$30 per month.

## Key department ratings

- The **NOPD's** favorable rating is 54%, up a substantial 15 points since May 2023. The police department is now 61% favorable among Blacks and 45% favorable among Whites. (Note: This latest poll was conducted before the Bourbon Street terror attack.)
- The **Sewerage & Water Board's** favorable rating is 19%, down 1 point since May 2023. Its **unfavorable rating is now 78%**. The Sewerage & Water Board is now 20% favorable among Blacks and 15% favorable among Whites.
- The city department that handles **street repairs** has a favorable rating of 12% and an unfavorable rating of 85%.

# A READER'S GUIDE

There's a lot to digest in this Report. Here's how to consume it, one bite at a time.

The **Introduction** summarizes the project's *scope and process* followed by six sections describing *reforms*.

**Section I Governance Structure** illustrates structural changes in an Organization Chart (page 72) accompanied by *rationales* that support recommended changes. Throughout, a star ( ★ ) signifies *structural reforms* and also often signals a cross-cutting theme of *coordination and collaboration* among public and private sector actors.

**Section II Five Basic City Services** analyzes problems and proposes solutions in each service area, including case studies and best practices. If this wealth of information seems daunting, start with the first pages of Sections A-E presenting a **Synopsis & Strategies for Success**; read selectively thereafter for deeper insights into a service area of interest; and do not neglect the **Appendix**, where valuable research documents are preserved for a still deeper dive.

**Section III Cross-Cutting Themes** considers strategies that can be deployed across a broad range of city services.

**Section IV Obstacles & Opportunities** confronts challenges to change and opportunities for reform. All are important to the city's long-term progress.

**Section V Implementation Schedule** suggests a timetable for launching reform initiatives.

**Section VI Political Milestones 2025** identifies dates for bonds, ballot propositions, and election to municipal offices.

# INTRODUCTION

## System Change in City Services

David Marcello | Editor & Policy Director

This project arose in a moment of widespread dissatisfaction with the delivery of city services. Survey results reported in June 2023 showed that 90% of voters, Black (87%) and White (94%) alike, rated delivery of city services negatively.

In response, the City Services Coalition asked a question: **“What can be done to improve and sustain the effective delivery of basic city services?”** One obvious answer is, **“Elect the right leadership!”** But that does not always happen, so the City Services Coalition accepted *both challenges*: How best to **“improve and sustain”** effective delivery of city services from one administration to the next?

This Report seeks systemic solutions to enhance the delivery of city services and recommends improvements that will survive, even when the city’s elected leadership changes.

# Introduction

## Project Scope and Process

Early on, the Coalition confronted the question, “*How to define ‘basic’ city services?*” Coalition members decided to focus on these **Five Basic City Services**:

- Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance
- Drainage & Water Management
- Permitting
- Public Safety & Justice
- Trash & Clean Public Spaces

We recruited two successful ex-Mayors to assist us: **Tom Murphy** from Pittsburgh and **Anthony Williams** from Washington, D.C. We contracted with **Ron Faucheux** to conduct polls and counsel the Coalition on public opinion. We enlisted **Glenda McKinley** of GMC Advertising, **Jacques Morial**, and **Norman Robinson** to engage the community in a dialogue about improving the delivery of city services.

Our steering committee secured community input through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and a public opinion survey. We reviewed multiple iterations of this Report and approved its recommendations, which we hope will inform the dialogue among voters and candidates for election to municipal office in this 2025 campaign year.

# Introduction

## Project Scope and Process

These **Cross-Cutting Themes** will enhance the effective delivery of city services if properly deployed:

- Technology
- Transparency
- Data-Based Performance Evaluation
- Culture Change: Empowering Employees for High Performance
- Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking
- Coordination and Collaboration

We identified major **Obstacles and Opportunities** that demand attention from the next generation of elected leaders:

- Civil Service
- Pension Obligations
- Transit
- Increased Bond Capacity
- Parks, Recreation, & the Tree Canopy



# Introduction

## Project Scope and Process

The need for increased **Coordination and Collaboration** led the Coalition to recommend several new coordinating entities: a **Capital Cabinet**, the **Public Safety & Justice Council**, and a **Regional Water Purification Facility**. All will foster collaboration among city and parish officials, community-based organizations (CBOs), public utilities, and regional stakeholders.

We addressed the City's **Governance Structure** with proposals to:

- Make the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) responsible and accountable for effective delivery of city services.
- Assure independent legal representation for the City of New Orleans (CNO) by the City Attorney.
- Empower a Chief Information Officer (CIO) to coordinate Technology for city and parish offices.
- Establish a Deputy Mayor for City Futures who will be responsible for envisioning and implementing major development projects.

We recommended reorganizing the Sewerage & Water Board and separating the employee grievance and human resource functions in Civil Service.

The Report's Sections I-VI are summarized in the remainder of this Introduction.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Objectives

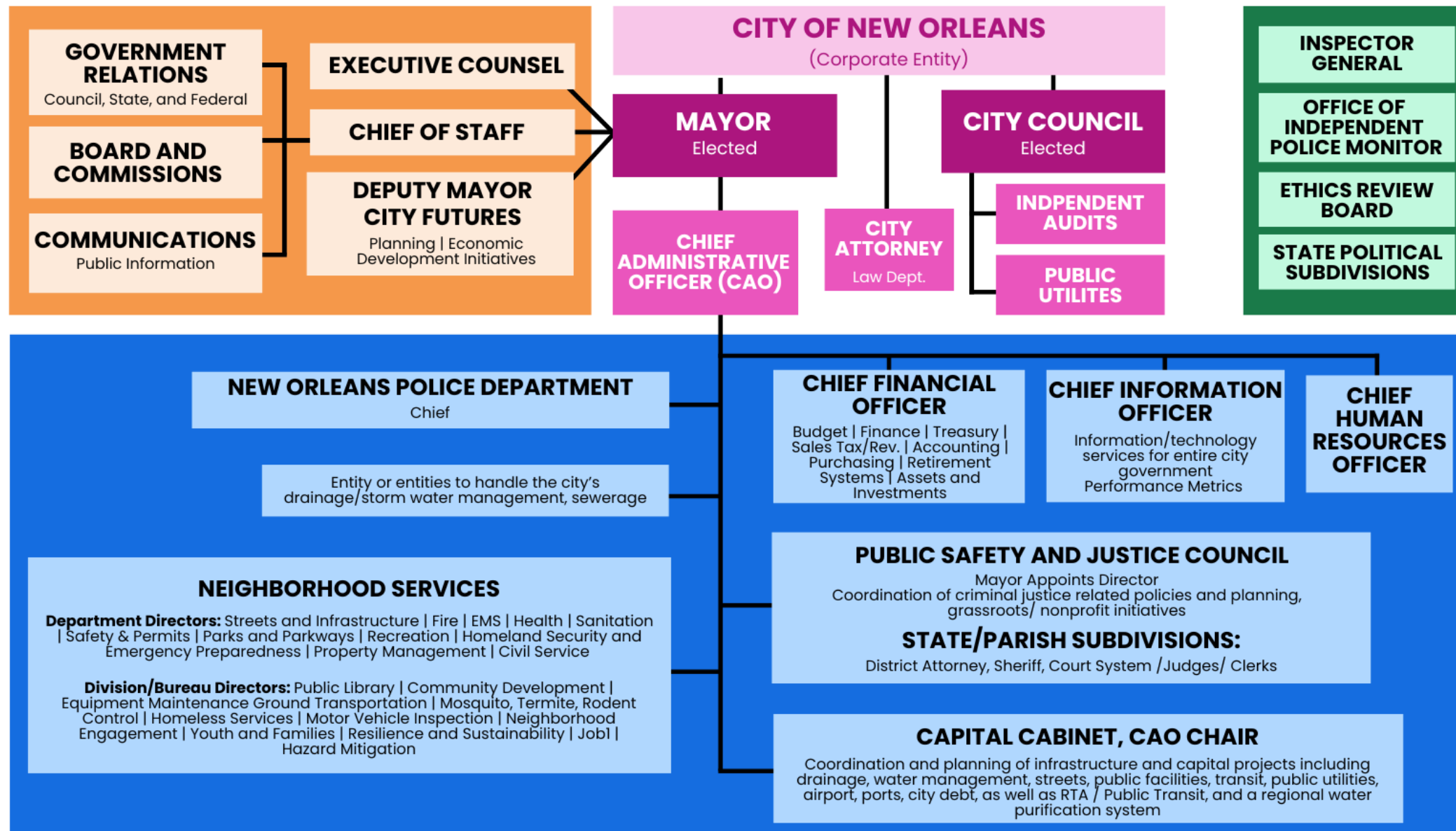
## Section I. Governance Structure

**Section I Governance Structure** presents an Organization Chart and describes Home Rule Charter (HRC) changes and the underlying rationale that supports recommended structural reforms.

The Coalition's proposed reforms to CNO's Governance Structure serve the following objectives:

- Make the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) responsible *and accountable* for the effective delivery of city services.
- Safeguard *independent legal advice* from the City Attorney and Law Department in representing their client, which is a corporate body—the City of New Orleans (CNO).
- Foster *coordination and collaboration* among municipal and parochial officials (e.g., the District Attorney, the Sheriff, and Courts), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and other governmental entities in the region.
- Enhance the use of technology by *empowering a Chief Information Officer (CIO) to coordinate systems* in local government.
- Establish a Deputy Mayor for City Futures to *plan and implement major economic development* initiatives.
- Use *training* to instill a customer-friendly culture that incentivizes city employees to strive for excellence and that rewards them or holds them accountable based on *data documenting their performance*.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Organization Chart



# Introduction: Summary Overview | CAO

## Section I. Governance Structure

### B. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Residents are deeply dissatisfied with the management of city government. In a December 2024 survey, 88% of respondents, both Black (82%) and White (92%), rated the management of city government negatively. *Residents want change, but who's accountable for achieving it?*

The City Services Coalition recommends Home Rule Charter changes that will identify the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) as the city official who is responsible and accountable for efficient delivery of city services. (See Coalition research and analysis in working papers on the CAO reforms in Appendix A.)

We also recommend increased transparency: *You can't hold someone accountable for what you cannot see.*

The proposed HRC changes will: (i) identify the CAO as *responsible and accountable* for effective delivery of city services; (ii) require the CAO to *establish a data-gathering system* and to *post metrics-based performance evaluations on a public dashboard*; (iii) *delete the requirement of Mayoral approval* if the CAO decides that it is necessary to remove a department head, but *require the CAO to give written reasons* for the removal.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | CAO

## Section I. Governance Structure

### B. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) (Continued)

*Increased compensation* can strengthen the CAO position by attracting top-tier talent, whether local or national. The Coalition recommends that the CAO's compensation be benchmarked to national standards for top talent who have experience in managing an entity of comparable size, which may require adjusting salaries for other top talent in city government.

The Coalition also recommends strengthening the CAO's capacity by creating *three Deputy CAO positions*, each responsible for identifying a limited set of priorities within their assigned subject area and taking the necessary steps to achieve alignment on those priorities with the Mayor and the Council:

- (A) The Chief Human Resources Officer will manage human resources functions for city departments.
- (B) The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will be responsible for managing fiscal and revenue services for the city.
- (C) The Chief Information Officer (CIO) will be responsible for managing technology acquisition and services and for coordinating the needs of municipal and parochial offices. Shared IT systems, security protocols, and procurement processes will save money. Additional personnel will be required, but avoiding a security breach or a single ransomware attack would save millions of dollars. (See pages 195-202 for a detailed description of Tech/CIO.)

# Introduction: Summary Overview | City Attorney

## Section I. Governance Structure

### C. City Attorney and Law Department

The City should *never settle for less* than the best when receiving legal advice. We recommend *an independent City Attorney and Law Department* whose advice and counsel will consistently guide city personnel toward compliance with the law and diminish opportunities for corruption in local government.

Current Home Rule Charter provisions direct the City Attorney and the Law Department to represent a corporate body, the City of New Orleans (CNO). The Home Rule Charter (HRC) should be amended to include an explicit requirement that the City Attorney and lawyers in the Law Department must *adhere to the Rules of Professional Conduct governing lawyers who represent a corporate body*.

Voters approved a significant amendment by adding HRC Sec. 4-106(4) to require Council confirmation of department heads, including the City Attorney. The City Council should use its confirmation hearings to *establish a clear understanding that the City Attorney and Law Department owe duties of loyalty to CNO*, the corporate body. (See Appendix B for research regarding the professional obligations of counsel for a corporate body.)

# Introduction: Summary Overview

## Section II. Five Basic City Services

**Section II Five Basic City Services** takes a deep dive into each of five color-coded service areas.

This Introduction summarizes Sections A-E, which contain the Coalition's recommendations for each service area and the underlying reasons that supported those recommendations.

The *Synopsis & Strategies* pages that begin each Section give a good summary of the principal recommendations and reasons supporting them. Readers can then review *Background and Data* and *Best Practices* for in-depth information about each of these Five Basic City Services:

- A. Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance
- B. Drainage & Water Management
- C. Permitting
- D. Public Safety & Justice
- E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces



# Introduction: Summary Overview

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### A. Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

Residents are understandably frustrated when streets get torn up multiple times for no apparent reason. Every repetitive and disruptive street project feeds perceptions of inefficiency, wasted funds, and project delays, eroding public trust in city government. The Coalition recommends using regularly scheduled meetings and technology to establish a system that improves interagency coordination in repair and maintenance projects for the City's streets and aging infrastructure.

Improved contract management and procurement procedures will assure that street and infrastructure projects are addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible. Those procedures must be properly promulgated in accordance with Sec. 4-107(3) of the Home Rule Charter to attain legal force that imparts stability and sustains reforms in the transition from one administration to the next.

Internal improvements must be accompanied by external communications through a dashboard that provides accurate and timely public updates about the status of repair and maintenance projects.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Capital Cabinet

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### A. Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance | ★ Capital Cabinet

A Capital Cabinet, chaired by the CAO, will convene Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance agencies, Drainage & Water Management personnel, independent and quasi-independent entities (e.g., the Regional Transit Authority, New Orleans Aviation Board, Port of New Orleans, Board of Liquidation of City Debt), and Public Utility operators (e.g., Cox, Entergy, AT&T/BellSouth Telecommunications) to *coordinate and plan* for major capital projects and expenditures. When asked, 65% of voters said the City was doing a “*poor job*” of coordinating infrastructure projects; 30% said a “*fair job*”; only 2% saw the City as doing a “*good job*” in *coordination of infrastructure work*.

Capital Cabinet meetings will be governed by the Open Meetings Act, and records will be public unless covered by an exception to the Public Records Act. Thus, the Capital Cabinet will provide *a forum for public scrutiny* of coordination and planning activities by agencies that often have a disruptive impact on the city’s residents.

The CAO’s responsibility to *gather and post data on a public dashboard* extends to the Capital Cabinet and will enable the public to monitor progress on infrastructure projects from start to finish.

The Capital Cabinet may also *champion creation* of new entities—for example, the development of a Regional Water Purification Facility located sufficiently upriver to avoid the problem of saltwater intrusion.

# Introduction: Summary Overview

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management

The City's "Drainage & Water Management" problems pose an *existential threat* to New Orleans. Neighborhood flooding, "boil water" advisories, and annual saltwater intrusion scares have eroded public trust. The Coalition's response to these challenges is informed by new state legislation and by best practices from other cities.

*Act 783 of 2024* mandates Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEA's) among city, parish, and state governmental entities to address groundwater management, coastal protection, and a regional urban flood prevention plan. The Coalition supports these initiatives to improve coordination and collaboration. We recommend an additional collaborative venture: a Regional Water Purification Facility at an upriver location that is owned by the City and is less likely to be affected by saltwater intrusion. The new facility could be established by cooperative endeavor agreements among pertinent municipal and parish governments or by statute creating a political subdivision.

The Coalition recommends a major overhaul of the current Sewerage & Water Board governance structure and presents its model at pages 130-133 for consideration by the public, the press, current S&WB board members and staff, the candidates for municipal office, and other stakeholders.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Sewerage & Water Board

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management | ★Sewerage & Water Board Reorganization

The Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB) needs “major changes” according to 80% of New Orleans voters in a December 2024 survey. The S&WB’s operational problems have been painfully public for many years: disruptive and repetitious roadwork projects, “boil water” advisories, “saltwater intrusion” threats to water quality, pump failures, poor stormwater management, neighborhood flooding, workforce deficiencies, inaccurate billing, inadequacies in service delivery, insufficient maintenance of old and crumbling infrastructure.

The S&WB’s governance structure contributes to its problems. Its status as a hybrid of city and state law makes it difficult to assign responsibility. The Board has authority over S&WB operations, but the Mayor’s role as President can confuse or obscure how decisions are made and who should be held accountable for deficiencies in the delivery of services. Board members lack the authority to generate much-needed new revenue, and elected City Council members who have that authority may lack the political will to exercise it. Reforms that require state legislation can only be taken up annually, and sessions are sometimes limited as to subject matter.

Solutions to the S&WB’s problems must address both the *governance structure* and *operational challenges*, because *restoring voters’ trust* is essential in *garnering voters’ support* for reform.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Sewerage & Water Board

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management | ★Sewerage & Water Board Reorganization

In 2023, the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) recommended strengthening the S&WB's governance structure "as a stand-alone utility that operates separately from City government or replacing it with a municipal utility that functions as part of City government."\* Either approach would require voter-approved legal changes.

The Coalition recommends focusing on the S&WB's three core services: (i) water purification, (ii) drainage and stormwater management, and (iii) maintenance and construction projects to repair the city's aging infrastructure. The Regional Water Purification Facility would benefit water uses in four parishes and relieve the S&WB of water purification responsibilities. A new electrical supply system will help prevent pump failures that have contributed to flooding and precipitated frequent "boil water" advisories. A new Capital Cabinet (page 109) will foster coordination in planning and executing street improvement projects, which should ease residents' frustrations.

Progress on these initiatives would reduce the S&WB's remaining responsibility for maintenance and construction projects to a more manageable size, creating options for governance reform that would currently prove politically impossible because of the public's deep distrust of the agency.

\* BGR, Waterworks in Progress: Reassessing the Sewerage & Water Board's Governance Problems and Potential Paths to Long-Term Improvement, May 2023.  
<https://www.bgr.org/report-index/waterworks-in-progress-reassessing-swb-governance-problems-and-reform-options/> <https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/BGR-report-sewerage-and-water-board-governance-051723.pdf>

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Sewerage & Water Board

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management | ★Sewerage & Water Board Reorganization

For example, BGR’s proposal for “a municipal utility that functions as part of City government” would be very challenging at a time when *92% of voters rate the city’s handling of drainage and water systems negatively*—and an even larger *93% have negative views of “street repair and maintenance.”* If a new city administration improves municipal government operations sufficiently to win back credibility and trust among voters, however, a changed political environment could make BGR’s proposal of a municipal entity a more realistic option.

In 2024 the City Council appropriated money for an arbitration program to resolve disputed bills. Since then, the SW&B’s backlog of bill disputes has been diminishing. An additional “small disputes” mediation program could prove helpful in resolving minor contested claims where arbitration costs may exceed the amounts involved in disputed small bills. Future problems with billing should diminish as new “smart meter” technology makes data collection less susceptible to human error—another opportunity to restore public trust.

S&WB workforce challenges point to a need for reforming civil service, which has long been perceived as a problem in city government. The Coalition’s recommendations for civil service reform are found on page 210.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | New Orleans Water Authority

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management | ★New Orleans Water Authority (NOWA)

The Coalition proposes a “New Orleans Water Authority” (page 131) to be overseen by a Water Authority Transition Committee that would, after a one-year transition, become the NOWA Management Board on a permanent basis. Transition Committee members would be appointed as follows: two by the Mayor, one each by Council at-large members, two by the Governor, one each by Orleans House and Senate legislative delegations. Members would also include management and engineering professionals whose professional qualifications would be spelled out in statutes.

Working with NOWA, the proposed Transition Committee will be expected to recommend an appropriate rate-setting mechanism. The Transition Committee will also grapple with revenue challenges, including a possible trade-off between property tax millages dedicated to drainage and a stormwater management fee. For a deeper dive into S&WB reforms, see the “SWBNO Research and Recommendations” memorandum in Appendix C.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Regional Water Facility

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### B. Drainage & Water Management | ★Regional Water Purification Facility

Safe drinking water for Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard—and sometimes, even Jefferson Parish—periodically faces challenges from saltwater intrusion. The Coalition recommends a Regional Water Purification Facility to be located at an upriver site that will not be affected by saltwater intrusion.

The facility could be implemented through several possible strategies that might include:

- State legislation creating a political subdivision; or
- Cooperative endeavor agreements establishing an intergovernmental compact among the participating parishes and municipalities.

In the 1950s, the City purchased an east bank site 12 miles upriver in St. Charles Parish. The land is located on the next step of the continental shelf and is beyond the reach of the saltwater wedge, which makes it a prime location for the facility.



# Introduction: Summary Overview | Permitting

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### C. Permitting

The Coalition recommends *eliminating unnecessary application requirements* that slow the review and approval of permits without adding value to the integrity of the permitting process.

The streamlined application process should be *technologically integrated into a standardized communication* between applicants and the department.

An *online checklist* should be made available to help applicants complete the required submissions *on their first try*.

A central person (a permits “concierge”) should be responsible for managing active licenses from the permit application stage and assisting them to completion by coordination with approval processes of other agencies.

The Safety and Permits Department must be managed by an individual with extensive experience in the building and construction trade, as an engineer, contractor, architect, or construction superintendent. That experience must include *managing large construction-relation projects*. See Appendix D for an example of Qualifications.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Public Safety & Justice

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### D. Public Safety & Justice

The Coalition recommends development of a New Orleans 360 program modeled after the successful Omaha 360 Violence intervention and Prevention Model, which is a community-based approach to reduce gun violence by direct intervention and addressing root causes. Its nationally recognized strategy uses community engagement to build stronger police-community relationships. Its core components are collaboration, prevention, intervention, enforcement, reentry, support services, and sustainability. The 360 model is described on page 174.

The New Orleans Data-Informed Community Engagement (NODICE) system currently operates in only two neighborhoods, Central City and the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward. NODICE relies on data-driven, equitable decision-making with a focus on public safety, quality of life, and economic development to direct resources toward areas of greatest need. NODICE makes conditions on the ground less conducive to criminal activity by optimizing community engagement. The objective is to extend the benefits of NODICE to under-resourced neighborhoods citywide.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Public Safety & Justice Council

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### D. Public Safety & Justice | ★Public Safety & Justice Council

The Public Safety & Justice Council will provide a public forum for *coordination and collaboration* among municipal, parochial, and private sector entities that impact public safety and justice in New Orleans—the NOPD, District Attorney’s Office, Orleans Parish Sheriff, Criminal Courts, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and the NOLA Coalition, which invests business and philanthropic resources in proven youth service organizations to help grow their impact and drive community change. The Council will oversee both New Orleans 360 and the New Orleans Data-Informed Community Engagement (NODICE) program.

New Orleans 360 is modeled after a similar program with a track record of success in Omaha, Nebraska that engages local CBOs to ameliorate the ill effects of crime and poverty in neighborhoods. Omaha’s 360 Violence intervention and Prevention Model is a community-based approach to reduce gun violence by direct intervention and by addressing root causes. Its nationally recognized strategy focuses on community engagement to build stronger police-community relationships. The core components of 360 are collaboration, prevention, intervention, enforcement, reentry, support services, and sustainability.

NODICE uses modern technology (“Risk Terrain Modeling”) and data-driven, equitable decision-making to channel resources toward areas of greatest need. The Council will lead efforts to expand it citywide.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Trash & Clean Public Spaces

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

### E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces

**Unreliable Trash Collection:** Labor shortages during the pandemic caused unreliability in trash pick-ups, leaving residents frustrated and angry. The Coalition recommends that Sanitation develop a recruitment and retention strategy including hiring bonuses, improved compensation and benefits, and pathways for career advancement to stabilize the workforce. (See the One Clean Houston Initiative on page 191.)

The Coalition recommends a *dashboard that gives the public real-time updates on disruptions* in scheduled collection services. Sanitation should use *texts, emails, and website updates* to reach out actively to residents.

**Illegal Dumping and Litter:** Overcoming the blight of illegal dumping and litter requires a multi-front strategy. New Orleans should do as Dallas did and adopt a *data-driven approach* to identify waste “hot spots” (page 190), then deploy code enforcement officers and clean-up crews to targeted areas. Dallas installed cameras to *deter illegal dumping* and *capture video evidence* for use in enforcing the law. New Orleans can do the same and should also create an *online reporting tool* so residents can easily report illegal dumping. Blight is a cancer that poses threats to public health and safety, property values, homeownership, and *degrades everyone’s quality of life*.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Trash & Clean Public Spaces

## Section II: Five Basic City Services

New Orleans should follow a “Best Practice” from San Rafael, CA, using *mini-grants as incentives* for businesses and property owners located near chronic dump sites to partner with the city in installing *nighttime lighting, surveillance cameras*, and *barriers* that prevent access to illegal dumping sites (page 192).

Some people engage in illegal dumping because they’re not aware of alternatives, such as recycling, bulk item pickups, and drop-off sites. The Coalition recommends a *multi-lingual public information campaign using social media, radio, and local TV* to raise awareness about the ill effects of illegal dumping and inform residents about waste disposal alternatives.

**Enforcement:** As with many other service delivery problems, *better coordination* is the key to *better enforcement*. New Orleans can follow One Clean Houston’s model (page 191) by coordinating responsibilities among Sanitation, the NOPD, and Code Enforcement and giving each agency a defined role in dealing with illegal dumping. *Regular interagency meetings* will assure ongoing coordination.

New Orleans should also follow Houston’s model by establishing a specialized code enforcement team to deal with heavy trash in the public right-of-way (page 193). These code enforcement personnel will investigate and enforce actions against illegal dumping pursuant to the administrative adjudication procedures in R.S. 13:2575.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Technology (CIO)

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

**Cross-Cutting Themes** can all be applied to improve delivery across a broad range of city services.

### A. Technology

Technology moves at the speed of light, and change is its constant companion. Cities that do not master the challenges and maximize opportunities presented by technology will fall behind. New Orleans needs a plan. We have one: See “Why New Orleans City Government Needs a Cross- Organizational CIO” at pages 195-203.

A new **Chief Information Officer (CIO)** needs the responsibility and authority to overcome fractured IT operations by bringing parish and municipal entities into a coordinated and collaborative system of shared IT resources. A **shared Chief Security Officer (CSO)** will provide guidance governing how multiple public agencies must secure their data. The coordinated system will also save money through central procurements across all agencies.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Technology (CIO)

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### A. Technology (Continued)

The proposed changes would require approximately 15 new staff members (costing about \$2M annually) and would enable shared IT resources, centralized security functions, and professional oversight of system implementation across agencies, while maintaining individual agencies' ownership of their systems and data.

Implementation has a three-step roadmap: first establish an IT Advisory Panel; then develop a central IT Advisory Panel; then develop a central IT strategy with stakeholder buy-in. Finally, build upon these implementation steps to create a streamlined procurement system for IT vendors.

AI has an important role to play in the next CIO's office's work and can help simplify things. But the issue a CIO probably must tackle first is that we have entirely too many systems already; "zombies" that were supposed to be "turned off" are still lingering, costing the City money, staff time, and focus. Tackling that issue ought to be Job One for the next CIO.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Transparency

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### B. Transparency

Right now, in this third decade of the Third Millennium, we are long overdue for improving access to public information by **posting public information online**. The Public Records Law explicitly defines “*public record*” to include “*electronically stored information or information contained in databases or electronic data processing equipment.*” La. R.S.

44:1(A)(2)(a). We live in a digital age when most public records are produced electronically and can easily be uploaded to the web. Legally, public records *must be disclosed* to members of the public, and online disclosure is easiest. To borrow a phrase, “*One Click. That’s it!*”

Public records requests have become an agony for all concerned—for members of the press and public who must suffer through a weeks or months-long process before getting the requested documents, and likewise for public employees who must drop their essential other duties to gather copies of the requested materials, which are then often delivered in hard copy at considerable cost to the requester and at environmental costs to the forests consumed. City government can *avoid these costs*—and *conserve personnel for the delivery of city services*—by posting online all information that the public is already legally entitled to access under the public records doctrine. As a further benefit, *transparency builds public trust in government!*



# Introduction: Summary Overview | Transparency

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### B. Transparency (Continued)

The City must harness “Technology” as described above to implement *online posting of public information* by all city agencies, boards, commissions, and departments. The City can save money, enhance delivery of services, and build trust with the public by routinely posting public information on the city’s website, where it can be viewed by all without the burdens and delay of a public records request.

The CAO must work with the Chief Information Officer (consulting with the Law Department if necessary to resolve close legal questions) and *post public records online* for all agencies, boards, commissions, departments, and other municipal instrumentalities.

The Coalition supports online access to public information and *looks to the CAO as the city official responsible* for making it happen.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Data-Based Evaluation

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### C. Data-Based Performance Evaluation

The City should embrace “Technology” and “Transparency” to create *publicly available dashboards that provide real-time access to information* by which the press and public can evaluate the performance of city departments and the department heads who lead them. “Metrics” visible to everyone will help to identify shortcomings and successes in the operations of city government.

In 1999, former Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C. pioneered the collection of data for performance-based evaluation of city departments and department heads. Martin O’Malley implemented similar systems during his tenure as Mayor of Baltimore and Governor of Maryland, and most recently as Director of the Social Security Administration. O’Malley has written persuasively about the use of technology in government in *Smarter Government: How to Govern for Results in the Information Age* (2019). The Coalition recommends the O’Malley model of “smarter government.”

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Data-Based Evaluation

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### C. Data-Based Performance Evaluation (Continued)

Under New Orleans' Home Rule Charter, the *CAO is responsible for operational efficiency* in delivering city services. Data-based performance evaluations will strengthen the CAO's capability—and *accountability*—to assure efficient delivery of city services. If a unit of city government is demonstrably deficient, the CAO will be responsible for improving that unit's performance; a CAO who fails to do so will be criticized by the press and public and could be subject to removal by the City Council under HRC Sec. 4-106

Dashboards exert an uncomfortable (but useful) pressure on city officials. Accordingly, the Coalition recommends protecting them with multiple safeguards: a *mandate in the Home Rule Charter*, an *ordinance establishing the framework* for such systems, and *properly promulgated regulations* to implement the requirements.

We expect dashboards to endure in city government from one administration to the next. The CAO is responsible for creating and sustaining these valuable sources of public information.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Culture Change

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### D. Culture Change: Empowering Employees for High Performance

Technology, Transparency, and Data-Based Performance Evaluation can move the needle—but only so far. At bottom, success depends upon employees who are empowered and incentivized to embrace a culture of high performance in city government.

A key strategy in provoking culture change is providing training, support, and feedback to ensure that employees are *capable* of performing successfully. Next steps involve tracking progress, addressing resistance, taking corrective action, and celebrating successes to *maintain momentum*.

The cities that have succeeded in creating performance-oriented organizations prioritize empowerment, innovation, and achieving results. They work to embed principles of a high-performance organization in city government through rules, procedures, systems, and cultural norms that will promote desired changes and that will align organizational design with those principles. The Coalition recommends designing and providing training programs for employees soon after the inauguration of newly-elected leaders on January 12, 2026.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Rulemaking

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### E. Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking

*“Marc was the first mayor to really bring police reform in, and he admitted on his way out that his biggest mistake was not institutionalizing the reforms he made under Richard Pennington, because it backslid.”*

Clancy Dubos in “Behind the Headlines with Clancy Dubos”  
The Times-Picayune (December 26, 2024).

Mayor Marc Morial’s successful 1994-95 Charter Revision initiative introduced for the first time in city government a procedure by which police reforms could have been institutionalized. Under HRC Sec. 4-107(3), all departmental policies must be promulgated through notice-and-comment rulemaking—a public participation process that ends with City Council review of proposed rules and a vote approving or rejecting them. Once adopted as a rule, policies cannot be revoked or revised without following the same public participation and Council approval process, thereby imparting *institutional stability* to agency reforms.

These same procedures could protect police reforms accomplished under the NOPD consent decree. After federal monitors and the U.S. District Court end oversight of police practices, policies implemented under the consent decree will nonetheless endure if they are properly adopted through notice-and-comment rulemaking.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Rulemaking

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### E. Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking (Continued)

The Coalition supports notice-and-comment rulemaking for three good reasons:

1. It's **required under the Charter**. Departmental policies that have not been promulgated as required under HRC Sec. 4-107(3) lack the force of law: “No such regulation shall become effective until approved by resolution of the Council.”
2. It's entirely **consistent with the Council's role** as the legislative branch of city government that the Council review and approve proposed regulations before they attain the force of law.
3. It's also appropriate that the **public has an opportunity to comment** on proposed regulations before they are adopted, revised, or revoked.

Notice-and-comment rulemaking serves democratic values and sustains reforms in city government. The city administration and its legislative branch—the Mayor and the Council—have a shared responsibility to assure all proposed regulations are presented for public comment and Council approval before they attain the force of law.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Coordination and Collaboration

## III. Cross-Cutting Themes

### E. Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination solves so many problems; the lack of it creates them. When recently repaired streets get torn up again by another agency; when poorly-integrated components of the criminal justice system slow down case processing times and defendants linger in jail; when technological systems exist in separate silos and cannot communicate with one another—all of these shortcomings yield inefficiency, injustice, and expense.

On matters of coordination and collaboration, the voters have spoken emphatically. For example, only 2% of voters say city departments are doing a good job of coordinating their efforts on public works projects such as streets and drainage. Only 10% say the NOPD, DA, Orleans Parish Prison, Juvenile Services, and Criminal Courts are doing a good job of coordination; 54% say “fair”; and 34% say they’re doing a poor job.

Multiple Coalition recommendations apply this cross-cutting theme across a broad range of city services: e.g., a “concierge” in permitting to coordinate progress through various agency approvals, mini-grants to fund public-private collaboration in fighting the blight of illegal dumping. We recommend creation of three new coordinating entities: a Capital Cabinet, a Public Safety & Justice Council, and a Regional Water Purification Facility. City government needs increased coordination and collaboration to excel in the delivery of city services.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Civil Service

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

**Obstacles and Opportunities** invite discussion with candidates for municipal office, who must address these issues, because if elected, *they will be addressing them during the next four years*. The city's future depends on it.

### A. Civil Service

Civil Service manages two aspects of the municipal workforce: human resources (HR) and employee grievances. The Civil Service Commission has been very active in protecting employee's rights, affording aggrieved individuals a structured appeal from questionable employer practices. Its human resources operations, however, have been criticized for bureaucratic rigidity and a lack of incentives to elicit high performance by city employees.

The Coalition supports relocating HR functions from civil service to a Deputy COA for HR or to each department, giving more control in staffing their workforce. Appeals to civil service should continue to protect employees from wrongful termination with a remedy of retroactive compensation and severance pay rather than reinstatement. Civil service should continue to prohibit and to protect employees from politically motivated dismissals.

The Coalition addresses *needed reforms in civil service* at page 210. Further information is found in Appendix E.



# Introduction: Summary Overview | Pension Obligations

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

### B. Pension Obligations

Pension plans serving municipal employees and firefighters face major financial challenges. The New Orleans Municipal Employees Retirement System (NOMERS) has assets covering only 59% of promised benefits, while the New Orleans Fire Fighters Pension and Relief Fund (NOFF New Fund) is one of the most underfunded large pension systems in the country, with assets worth only 15% of promised benefits. Each plan requires substantial annual employer contributions of \$29.6 million for NOMERS, and an astounding \$68.3 million for NOFF—almost half of the entire Fire Department budget of \$133 million (based on the most recent actuarial valuation reports).

Paying for these contributions falls on the city's General Fund budget and ultimately on taxpayers. City leaders should consider structuring future retirement benefits to tailor a competitive total compensation package that attracts and retains talented employees while keeping costs fair for taxpayers. They should consider whether hiring and retention challenges can be met with targeted, cost-effective, and sustainable compensation solutions instead of across-the-board pension increases. They should also explore the potential appeal to new hires of alternatives to defined benefit plans, such as defined contribution or hybrid plans, that shift some risk from employer to employees in exchange for greater portability and control of their retirement savings.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Transit

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

### C. Transit

An inadequate transit system is an obstacle to strengthening the New Orleans economy. It limits local residents in their access to affordable housing, jobs, healthy nutrition options, medical services, recreational opportunities, and scores of other services that should be available to everyone. The burdens of an inadequate transit system fall with disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable members of a community (<https://famvin.org/en/2023/08/24/public-transportation-convenience-hassle-or-lifeline-2/>).

Regional transit is an appropriate goal, but recent movement has been in the opposite direction. With Jefferson Parish withdrawing as a member of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), decreasing revenue may drive up fares and exacerbate inequities in the transit system. To better serve the needs of New Orleanians and transit riders in surrounding parishes, the Coalition recommends *sustained efforts* to renew regional service, which will first *require demonstrably improving* transit operations in Orleans Parish.

How will the public know if demonstrable improvement is achieved? The answer is *transparency* in the form of a *publicly available dashboard*.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Transit

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

### C. Transit (Continued)

Management must establish a system of standard operating procedures linked to meeting key performance indicators (KPI), including on-time performance, miles between road calls, a reliable operating fleet, a mandated spare ratio of buses, spare parts, a proper ratio of drivers and maintenance personnel for every vehicle, training, and other measurable data points. These KPI's must be made available to the press and public in dashboards that will foster efficiency and accountability in RTA operations.

RTA's operations, fixed bus, paratransit, rail, and ferry services must all work in concert for the RTA to provide safe, effective transit service. The RTA must also have personnel, systems, equipment, and an experienced management team to deliver on that objective.

If any level is failing, then the system will not serve the best interests of the public.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Increased Bonding Capacity

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

### D. Increased Bonding Capacity

Over the next five years, New Orleans will see regular increases in its bonding capacity, which creates unparalleled opportunities to address urgent needs in the city's crumbling infrastructure.

The Board of Liquidation is responsible for issuing bonds for the City and ensuring the bond covenants are properly administered and timely paid. Over the last few years, the Board of Liquidation has voted to reduce the City's taxes, first from 22.5 millages to 19.5 millages and more recently from 19.5 millages to 16.5 millages. The tax reductions mean the City's capacity to bond for new projects has grown. See Appendix F for further information about servicing the city's bond debt.

In the near term, the current Administration has proposed a potential new bond issuance close to \$500 million for infrastructure improvements. The City's bonding capacity will continue to grow from there. Current and future bond capacity should be part of a comprehensive plan combining state and federal funds to fuel infrastructure investment that will put public dollars to work where they can do maximum good for our City's residents.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Parks, Recreation, & Trees

## IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

### E. Parks, Recreation, & the Tree Canopy

Audubon and City Park protect expansive reserves of open space, precious resources in an urban environment. Numerous smaller parks and playgrounds form part of the fabric of neighborhoods all across the city. New Orleans' parks contribute immeasurably to the *health and well-being* of the city's residents, affording opportunities for exercise and providing recreational sites that are of particular value to the city's youth. The Coalition supports implementing the *Big Green Easy Plan* for protection and expansion of parks.

Our treasure trove of live oaks and other majestic trees contribute mightily to the city's international profile, attracting visitors from all across the globe. The tree canopy has been steadily diminishing, however, from 32.9% coverage in 2005 to just 18.5% in the last 20 years. We do not compare favorably with other cities in the region: Atlanta (47%), Austin (38%), and Memphis (37%). New Orleans is on par with Houston (18%). In September 2024, the Louisiana Landmarks Society identified the *New Orleans Tree Canopy as #1 on its list of Nine Most Endangered Sites* in the city.

Inadequate City Code provisions to protect trees were enacted in 1956—and have not been amended since. The Coalition recommends a *meaningful update of the City Code* in 2025 to require public notice before work on major trees, protection for landmark trees, penalties for violations, enforcement procedures, and a comprehensive tree management plan. The Coalition recommends implementing the *New Orleans Reforestation Plan* that was approved by Council Resolution in January 2023.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Implementation Schedule

## V. Implementation Schedule

The city's needs are urgent. We can begin making progress immediately by pursuing implementation of the following tasks in 2025.

The Coalition recommends that a ballot proposition be presented to voters in 2025 amending the Home Rule Charter to accomplish the following:

- A. Identify the CAO as the municipal official who is responsible for efficient delivery of city services and who must establish a system of data-gathering and performance evaluation that is available for review on a public dashboard.
- B. Repeal the requirement of Mayoral approval for a CAO to remove a poorly-performing department head.
- C. Require that the City Attorney and all Law Department attorneys adhere to the Model Rules of Professional Conduct governing lawyers who represent a corporate entity and acknowledge explicitly that their client is the municipal corporation, the City of New Orleans.

# Introduction: Summary Overview | Political Milestones 2025

## VI. Political Milestones 2025

These dates and deadlines for bond and charter propositions and for NOLA’s primary and runoff elections in 2025 are important political milestones.

### Municipal and Parochial Elections

### October 11

### November 15

- Proposition Deadline
- Qualifying Dates
- In-Person/Mail Registration Deadline
- Geaux Vote Online Registration Deadline
- Mail Ballot Request Deadline
- Deadline for Receipt of Mail Ballot
- Early Voting Begins
- Early Voting Ends

### Primary:

- by June 11
- July 9-11
- September 10
- September 20
- October 7
- October 10
- September 27
- October 4

### Runoff:

- by September 22
- October 15
- October 25
- November 12
- November 14
- November 1
- November 8

# PROJECT FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES

## Shaping Priorities With Community Insight

In response to widespread dissatisfaction, **the City Services Coalition engaged the community directly by conducting interviews and commissioning a series of public focus groups to understand the concerns and priorities of our residents.** Diverse participants from neighborhoods across the city, representing a wide range of ages, professions, and community organizations, voiced their frustrations, shared personal experiences, and identified key areas where city services are falling short.

**Residents highlighted systemic issues with basic services.** Public safety, drainage, trash collection, and permitting were all cited as major pain points. Infrastructure projects, including street and sidewalk repairs, were described as incomplete or long overdue. Many participants raised concerns about **the inequitable delivery of services**, sharing their perception that some neighborhoods consistently receive fewer resources and slower responses than others.

**The analysis and recommendations that follow in this report are directly shaped by the concerns and feedback expressed by the community.**



# Project Framework

## Pairing Operational Change with Transformational Leadership to Better Serve the People of New Orleans

**High-quality city services are crucial not only for fostering support and among existing residents but also for attracting new residents and businesses.**

Improving the delivery of city services will **require meaningful operational and procedural changes at granular levels.** Focusing on practical, actionable steps can enhance the quality of services that residents rely on daily. **These operational changes cannot succeed in isolation, however; they will also require strong, transformational leadership from City Hall that champions the vision for a better New Orleans.**

**Transformational leadership means fostering a culture of accountability and excellence within city departments.** Leadership from the Mayor and the Council must ensure that departmental teams are equipped, motivated, and fiscally supported to implement those actionable steps.

**Leadership must extend beyond city government to include collaboration with external partners, such as business leaders and community organizations.** Community leaders can support government efforts by mobilizing public support and resources to enhance the reach and impact of city initiatives.

# Project Principles

## Premise for Recommendations

Our efforts to enhance the delivery of Five Basic City Services will be assisted across the board by support from the following *Cross-Cutting Themes*.

- **Technology** can assist city government in tracking priorities with metrics that ensure service delivery focuses on the most critical areas and addresses the most pressing needs of the community.
- **Transparency** in sharing progress will encourage collaboration, build confidence that funds are being used where they are needed most, and strengthen support from external stakeholders.
- **Data-driven** decision-making and performance evaluations will help in holding the City accountable for ensuring a high quality of work and that service improvement goals are being consistently met.
- **Investing in City Employees** is key to assuring that they are executing well in the delivery of city services and will require changes in workforce management (including talent retention and attraction), employee training for continued improvement, and improved facilities to afford them a better working environment.
- **Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking** fosters executive and legislative branch collaboration, assures public participation in promulgating departmental policies, imparts stability to regulatory law, and builds trust in a city government that operates in accordance with the rule of law.
- **Coordination and Collaboration** will be enhanced through new entities and positions in city government.

# I. Governance Structure

The following principles guided design of the proposed Organization Chart:

- The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) must be the *primary official in city government who is responsible and accountable for the effective delivery* of city services.
- The City Attorney and Law Department must *render independent legal advice to their client: the municipal corporation* that is the City of New Orleans.
- Two new entities (a *Public Safety & Justice Council* and a *Capital Cabinet*) will serve as a *public forum for coordination and collaboration* among municipal and parochial officials (the District Attorney, the Sheriff, the courts), community-based organizations (CBOs), and cities and parishes in the region.
- Training to incentivize excellence among city employees should be accompanied by *data documenting their performance*, rewarding those who succeed and holding accountable those who do not.

## A. Organization Chart

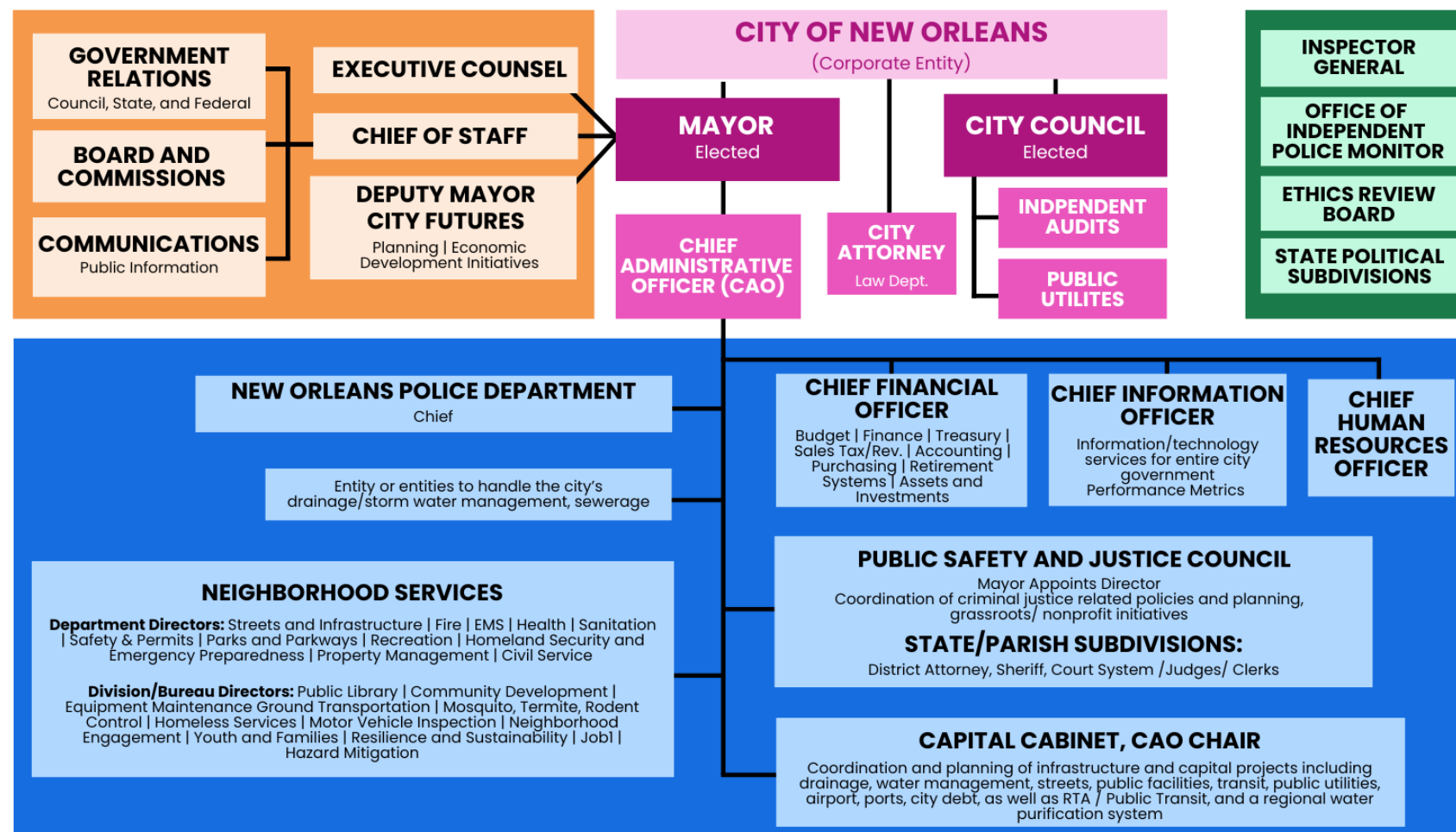
The Coalition's proposed Governance Structure reforms are embodied in an Organization Chart that places the CAO at the center of responsibility and accountability for effective delivery of city services. The Law Department is shown in a direct line of representation to the municipal corporation, City of New Orleans, as its client. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) **will coordinate technology services and will report to the CAO.**

# Governance Structure

## A. Organizational Chart

### Principles:

- The City Attorney and Law Department represent a corporate body, the City of New Orleans.
- The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible and accountable for the delivery of city services.
- The Capital Cabinet and the Public Safety & Justice Council provide a public forum for planning and coordination among city and parish officials.



# Governance Structure | Chief Administrative Officer

## B. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

The City Services Coalition recommends that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) be identified in the Home Rule Charter (HRC) as the city official who is *responsible and accountable for efficient delivery* of city services.

The Coalition recommends strengthening the CAO's responsibilities with changes in the HRC to: (i) establish the CAO as the supervisor who is *accountable for the operation of city departments and agencies that provide neighborhood services*; (ii) require the CAO to *establish and maintain a system of data gathering and metrics-based performance evaluations publicly available on a dashboard*; and (iii) *delete the requirement of Mayoral approval* when the CAO decides that it is necessary to remove a department head, but require written reasons for the removal.

The Coalition also recommends strengthening the CAO's capacity through *the creation of Deputy CAO positions*, including a Deputy CAO for Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and a Chief Information Officer (CIO). All will report to the CAO.

*Increased compensation* will strengthen the CAO position by attracting top-tier talent, both local and national. The Coalition recommends *CAO compensation benchmarked to national standards* for top talent who have managed an entity of comparable size. Compensation for other top talent may also need adjustment.

# Governance Structure | Chief Administrative Officer

## B. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Continued

Early in its discussions, the City Services Coalition identified a need to assign clear responsibility for operational tasks in city government and **agreed that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) should be the responsible city official who is accountable for assuring the efficient delivery of city services.** (See Appendix A for research and analysis of the CAO reforms in working papers of the Coalition.)

The Coalition considered alternatives to current procedures for appointing, confirming, or removing a CAO:

1. Home Rule Charter (HRC) Sec. 4-208 authorizes the Mayor to appoint the CAO. The Coalition recommends *no changes to appointment procedures.*
2. HRC Sec. 4-106(4) **requires City Council confirmation** of the Mayor's appointment "to head any executive branch department established by Article IV of the Charter," **which includes the Mayor's appointment of a CAO.** (See HRC Sec. 4-102, establishing in the Executive Branch "the Administrative Office, of which the Chief Administrative Officer shall be the head".) The Coalition recommends *no changes to the confirmation process.*
3. HRC Sec. 3-125 permits the Council to remove "any person appointed to the unclassified service" after notice and a full due process hearing "by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership of the Council," which includes the CAO. The Coalition recommends *no change to this removal process.*

# Governance Structure | Chief Administrative Officer

## B. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Continued

The Coalition considered and decided to recommend *no change in the requirement that a CAO's appointment of department heads is "with the approval of the Mayor,"* but the Coalition does **recommend deleting the requirement of Mayoral approval for the CAO to remove a department head**. If the CAO is to be regarded as the primary point of responsibility and accountability for management and operations of city services, *the CAO should have the authority to remove a poorly-performing department head.*

The Coalition recommends *strengthening the CAO's capacity* by creating Deputy CAO positions that can be implemented through a CAO Policy Memorandum:

1. Create Deputy CAO positions for (i) a Chief Financial Officer (CFO); (ii) a Chief Human Resources Officer; (iii) a Chief Innovation Officer (CIO); and (iv) if desired, a Chief of Neighborhood Services.
2. Make each Deputy CAO responsible and accountable for creating a limited set of priorities within their assigned subject areas and for taking the necessary steps to achieve alignment on priorities among the Mayor and members of the City Council.

# Governance Structure | City Attorney & Law Department

## C. City Attorney & Law Department

The Coalition supports *increased independence in the City's chief lawyers*, which will enhance legal compliance by city personnel and diminish opportunities for corruption within local government.

The HRC currently requires—in conformity with the Rules of Professional Conduct—that the City Attorney and the Law Department serve the interests of a corporate body, the City of New Orleans (CNO). See HRC Sec. 4-401(1): “The Department of Law, headed by a City Attorney, shall: (1) Direct and supervise the legal affairs of the City.”

That legal directive has often not described practical reality, however. The City Attorney historically represented the interests of the Mayor, because of the Mayor’s selection and removal powers over the City Attorney: HRC Sec. 4-106(1) says that “The City Attorney shall be appointed and may be removed by the Mayor.” Practical reality placed many City Attorney appointees in an untenable ethical situation, where duties of loyalty to the public official who appointed them conflicted with their professional duties of loyalty to the corporation, the City of New Orleans. Unlike King Louis XIV in 17<sup>th</sup> Century France (“*L’etat, c’est moi!*”), “the Mayor” is not “the City.”



# Governance Structure | City Attorney & Law Department

## C. City Attorney & Law Department (Continued)

The Coalition recommends a *Home Rule Charter change to expressly require that the City Attorney and lawyers in the Law Department adhere to the Rules of Professional Conduct governing lawyers who represent a corporate entity. See Appendix B regarding the professional responsibilities of counsel for a corporate body.*

Voters recently approved a significant Home Rule Charter amendment by adding Sec. 4-106(4) to require Council approval in appointing department heads, which includes the City Attorney. The Council now plays an important role in the City Attorney's assumption of office. At the City Attorney's confirmation hearing, *Councilmembers can and should establish a clear understanding that the City Attorney and Law Department serve as counsel to the City of New Orleans and owe duties of loyalty to the corporate body, not primarily to the Mayor.*

Louisiana Rule of Professional Conduct 1.13 governs a lawyer's duties regarding an "Organization as Client": "A lawyer employed or retained by an organization **represents the organization** acting through its duly authorized constituents." (Emphasis added.) The City of New Orleans is established as a corporate body in Home Rule Charter (HRC) Sec. 1-101 ("Incorporation"). The City Attorney and other lawyers in the Law Department all serve as counsel for the City of New Orleans and must comply with the pertinent rules of professional responsibility.

# Governance Structure | City Attorney & Law Department

## C. City Attorney & Law Department (Continued)

The Council's ability to exercise removal power under HRC Sec. 3-125 exerts a further incentive for the City Attorney and Law Department to exhibit greater independence than has traditionally been the case in New Orleans.

**The Coalition supports this movement toward greater independence in the City's chief legal counselors.**

Some of the most important responsibilities of the City Attorney are established in HRC Sec. 4-101(5): "Prepare or approve as to form and legality all contracts, documents and instruments creating any legal or conventional obligation affecting the City." This language is certainly broad enough on its face to encompass "contracts, documents and instruments" related to procurements.

Some Coalition members have suggested adding "procurements" explicitly to the provision; others believe the current language is sufficient. If necessary, the Charter could be amended to make this responsibility even more explicit.

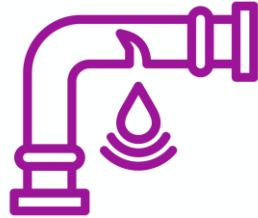
## II. Five Basic City Services

The Five Basic City Services below were identified as the most prominent areas needing improvement based on resident feedback.



### Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

How the city sequences maintenance and repairs on its streets and communicates proactively with affected members of the public.



### Drainage & Water Management

How the Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans mitigates flooding while providing reliable water and sewer services to residents and businesses.



### Permitting

How the city handles the building inspection and permitting process for applicants, balancing development with regulatory oversight.



### Public Safety & Justice

How the city manages its criminal justice system, including policing, courts, and incarceration, to ensure public safety and equitable treatment.



### Trash & Clean Public Spaces

How the city manages waste collection and ensures public spaces remain clean and well-maintained to support a healthy urban environment.

# Summary Recommendations: Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

Recommendations	Actions
Ensure proactive, real-time public communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhaul the RoadWork website to include a comprehensive catalogue of projects, types and lengths of disruptions, and a dashboard that illustrates explicit priority metrics for repair projects by geography.</li> <li>Provide accurate, real-time and proactive updates on street closures and maintenance through email or text blasts, especially to major employers and schools.</li> </ul>
Centralize capital planning, coordination, and project management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create, by ordinance, a centralized Capital Cabinet, a dedicated authority to oversee and prioritize infrastructure projects citywide with representation from all relevant city departments.</li> <li>Create, by ordinance, a centralized and publicly available database that tracks all capital projects and planning.</li> <li>Task the Capital Cabinet with creating a procurement forecasting log that gives contractors advance notice of upcoming contracting opportunities to encourage more contractor competition.</li> <li>Ensure that there are dedicated project managers and staff devoted to large-scale, one-time programs, especially within the Project Delivery Unit.</li> <li>Work with Civil Service to bring job skills requirements and expectations in line with national norms for both the Department of Public Works and SWBNO.</li> <li>Explore options to improve recruitment and retention of highly skilled talent for both the Department of Public Works and SWBNO.</li> </ul>
Centralize procurement responsibilities and complete rollout of BRASS system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all staff are fully trained on BRASS and aware of all its functionalities.</li> <li>Ensure that the Project Delivery Unit switches over from QuickBase to BRASS.</li> <li>Explore options to integrate vendor project management systems, like Procure, with BRASS.</li> <li>Include all department invoice approvals in BRASS to better track and monitor timeliness and meet 30-day payment requirements.</li> <li>Centralize all procurement staff within all the different departments under the Office of Procurement.</li> </ul>

# Summary Recommendations: Drainage & Water Management

Recommendations	Actions
Launch an “Earn Your Trust” Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the rollout of automated meter reading technology.</li> <li>• Maintain user-friendly customer data platform, including water usage history, trends, and real-time leak alerts.</li> <li>• Launch user-friendly data dashboard with system-wide performance metrics.</li> <li>• Complete the EPA’s “Efficient Utility Management” (EUM) diagnostic and share the results publicly.</li> <li>• Launch a public information campaign to reintroduce the agency to ratepayers and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Prioritize Groundwater and Stormwater Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, by state legislation or cooperative endeavor agreements, a comprehensive groundwater management approach jointly with the other actors responsible for flood prevention in Southeast Louisiana.</li> <li>• Include outstanding recommendations from the <i>2014 Green Infrastructure Plan</i> and the <i>2016 Resilient New Orleans Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Present rising groundwater salinity metrics in a manner that fosters public awareness.</li> <li>• Accelerate the encumbrance of capital funds related to surface water storage and usage, including the \$141 million awarded but unspent National Disaster Recovery Challenge grant monies.</li> <li>• Implement a stormwater retention credit.</li> <li>• Create and maintain public-facing dashboards to track implementation activities.</li> </ul>
Overhaul the organization’s financial structure to better align with mission and equity goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a rigorous multi-year financial planning effort. The goal should be alignment between the organization’s mission, as reaffirmed by Act 763, its expenditures, and its revenue streams. Analysis must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An affordability benchmark study to determine the realistic potential for revenue generation from ratepayers.</li> <li>• An equitable yet aggressive fee structure to replace the current millage tax structure.</li> <li>• The viability of stormwater management credits to advance infrastructure upgrades on private property.</li> <li>• The costs and benefits of outsourcing discrete organizational functions (e.g. billing; contractor management), including implications for service quality, transparency, accountability, and cost.</li> <li>• The merits of joint debt issuance capacity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Summary Recommendations: Permitting

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Right-size application requirements and ensure consistency and transparency of application needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish by ordinance an ongoing task force of Department of Safety and Permits staff and developers to address permitting process barriers and to recommend changes for implementation.</li> <li>• Eliminate unnecessary application requirements or reviews where appropriate.</li> <li>• Promulgate application requirements and ensure application completeness prior to starting review.</li> <li>• Elicit ongoing feedback from developers to determine what problems persist. This can be done either through customer service surveys, interviews, or periodic focus groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Streamline application review process and improve customer service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the one-stop shop and centralize permitting review and expedite applications.</li> <li>• Assign a central point person to oversee each application from start to finish and address any issues promptly.</li> <li>• Establish via notice-and-comment rulemaking clear review periods and notification requirements based on permit types.</li> <li>• Publish real-time application review status on the permitting website.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve staff capacity, training, and quality control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen recruitment and hiring processes to increase capacity and reduce staff burden.</li> <li>• Update and enforce Safety &amp; Permits policies and procedures via promulgation or regulations to ensure quality control.</li> <li>• Implement stricter oversight and regular audits of third-party inspectors to prevent misconduct.</li> <li>• Provide periodic training and resources to enhance the expertise and service of permit reviewers.</li> </ul>

# Summary Recommendations: Public Safety & Justice

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an operational team with clear mandates and goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the Public Safety &amp; Justice Council through ordinance and cooperative endeavor agreements with parochial officials to ensure representative membership from the Courts, Jail, District Attorney, and Police.</li> <li>Ensure that the Council has clear mandates including enacting a plan for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerating Court processing times;</li> <li>Eliminating inefficiency in return of lab results as a barrier to the release of low-risk individuals; and</li> <li>Introducing automatic population triage to efficiently manage and jail populations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen jail diversion and recidivism interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train NOPD and other policing entities operating in NOLA to fully leverage jail diversion resources.</li> <li>Develop and invest in recidivism programs and interventions that address the root causes of re-offense and improve long-term public safety.</li> <li>Expand on municipal bail ordinance to create stronger alternatives to jail for first offenders facing lower-level, nonviolent charges.</li> <li>Strengthen partnerships via cooperative endeavor agreements between NOPD and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) providing core mental health services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop court-approved list of jail alternatives and diversion programs to increase visibility of effective programs and ensure consistency across the courts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Improve NOPD working conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake careful data-driven peer benchmarking and budgetary projections in advance of pay plan negotiations and implementation.</li> <li>Increase on-hand inventory of supplies and accelerate internal supply management processes.</li> <li>Prioritize capital and janitorial maintenance to improve working conditions and facility upkeep for officers.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus police time on core police functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition mental health crisis response to health professionals.</li> <li>Transition crime lab, fleet management, and records management to civilian experts.</li> <li>Set up through ordinance independent entities for crime lab, fleet management, and records with representation from CBOs and across the criminal justice system to ensure accountability and specialized oversight.</li> </ul>

# Summary Recommendations: Trash & Clean Public Spaces

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Strengthen prevention initiatives and civic education on trash services and illegal dumping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a publicly accessible trash and waste services dashboard that includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A breakdown of city versus resident spending on trash collection services;</li> <li>• Contracting information for trash vendors by geography; and</li> <li>• Procurement timelines for new contracts with trash vendors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide accurate, real-time updates on trash pick-up service disruptions.</li> <li>• Design and launch an effective anti-litter public education campaign.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve education and awareness on proper waste disposal and support accessible opportunities for affordable and convenient waste management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Improve rapid cleanup response and interagency coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a data-driven approach to determine illegal waste “hot-spots” and improve monitoring of the sites for quicker deployment of response teams.</li> <li>• Improve routing of illegal dumping complaints and ensure that relevant agencies have clear and defined roles, including the Department of Sanitation, NOPD, and Code Enforcement.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene regular cross-departmental meetings to better coordinate on trash and waste services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attract and retain staff in the Department of Sanitation, especially those responsible for general litter pick-up and solid waste drivers who handle illegal waste response.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop better enforcement strategies for illegal dumping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand high-visibility video surveillance programs.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design partnerships with local businesses embodied in cooperative endeavor agreements to implement crime reduction strategies including increasing nighttime light, constructing barricades, and installing video surveillance cameras.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create a team of code enforcement inspectors who are specifically responsible for responding to violations of heavy trash in public-rights-of-way.</li> </ul>



# Spectrum of Implementation Strategies

When implementing a new recommendation in city government, mechanisms range from departmental initiatives to charter changes (see table below), each striking a different balance in flexibility and permanence. The choice of approach determines on the recommendation’s durability from one administration to the next, level of managerial discretion, and the need for accountability and adaptability for executive branch offices.

Seeking a “higher” level of approval may be beneficial to legislative offices but, it can reduce nimbleness and hinder the City’s ability to changing circumstances. Choosing the appropriate approach requires balancing discretion, accountability, and continuity.

Choosing an implementation strategy can also impact the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of city government. For example, department initiatives and executive directives by the Mayor or CAO may preserve a substantive.

More Flexible		Departmental Initiative	Executive Directive	Council Approval	Voter Approval	Charter Change	More Permanent		
		A focused effort by a specific department to address a goal, and improve processes is usefully flexible to test a concrete strategy and can easily be removed with changes in leadership or in staff commitment to the initiative.	Carries authority of the executive and typically outlines actions, timelines, and responsible parties for execution, but can be changed with the stroke approved by the incumbent or incoming administration.	Council approval yields more permanent solutions and requiring Council buy-in often yields a better tested product. Requiring council approval to promulgate department policies under HRC Sec. 4-107(3) imparts stability to regulatory law.	Can bypass direct municipal involvement. Typically involves gathering signatures to place the proposal on a ballot, followed by a public votes that determine whether the initiative will become law.	Amendment to the City’s foundational governing document. These strategies are most permanent but require the longest review process and are hardest to pass.			

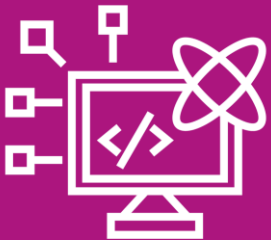
# Cross-Cutting Themes

While Coalition recommendations are categorized by service area, they also reflect larger cross-cutting themes that will enhance delivery of city services. The cross-cutting themes described below are organized on the next slide to show recommendations linked to closely-related themes.



## Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

The City currently lacks cohesive systems to track interagency performance and hold departments accountable to clear, measurable goals. A stronger focus on performance management across different entities is essential, including the establishment of transparent performance metrics on a dashboard to facilitate cross-departmental accountability.



## Technology, Automation, and Data-Gathering

The City must improve the integration and use of technology and automation to enhance delivery of city services. Better leveraging existing and new tools can streamline processes, reduce inefficiencies, and improve responsiveness to residents' needs. By adopting integrated systems for real-time data collection and analysis, departments can make informed, data-driven decisions that directly impact service delivery.



## Customer Experience, Public Accountability, and Transparency

The City needs to strengthen public accountability for agencies by soliciting customer service experiences and transparently sharing with the public how staff and systems have responded to resident feedback. Improved channels of communication for residents to understand progress, challenges, and setbacks are essential to regain public trust in City government.



## Investing in Staff Experience and Success

The City needs to enhance investment in the success and experiences of City staff to improve overall service delivery. By prioritizing comprehensive training and development programs, the City can equip employees with essential skills. Collaborating with civil service to ensure competitive salaries will help attract and retain top talent. Strengthening recruitment efforts, streamlining onboarding processes, and implementing initiatives to improve employee skills will further enhance workforce efficiency and morale.

# Recommendations by Cross-Cutting Themes

Themes	Recommendations
Interagency coordination and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an operational team with clear mandates and goals</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen jail diversion and recidivism interventions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize capital planning, coordination, and project management</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize groundwater &amp; stormwater management</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhaul the organization’s financial structure to better align with mission and equity goals</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve rapid cleanup response and interagency coordination</li> </ul>
Technology, automation, and data gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize procurement responsibilities and complete rollout of BRASS system</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop better enforcement strategies for illegal dumping</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch an “Earn Your Trust” initiative</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline application review process and improve customer service</li> </ul>
Customer experience, public accountability, and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus police time on core police functions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure proactive, real-time public communication</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve rapid cleanup response and interagency coordination</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right-size application requirements and ensure consistency and transparency of application needs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline application review process and improve customer service</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen prevention initiatives and civic education on trash services and illegal dumping</li> </ul>
Investing in staff experience and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve NOPD working conditions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus police time on core police functions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve staff capacity, training, and quality control</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve rapid cleanup response and interagency coordination</li> </ul>

**Legend:**

Criminal Justice

Streets & Pipeline

Water Management

Building Permitting

Trash Collection

*\*Note that some recommendations are represented across multiple cross-cutting themes*

# Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

## *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

**Improved Communications:** The city's infrastructure agencies (DPW, SWBNO, and others) speak to two external audiences—the **Public** and **Contractors**. Each has its own interests and needs its own tools.

**The Public** needs *communication about traffic flow disruptions* due to street closures and maintenance projects. Currently, RoadWork NOLA does not provide timely information. **The Solution:** A *user-friendly dashboard* that shows all infrastructure projects and is *regularly updated* with information about project status, expected completion date, and an interactive map revealing which areas are prioritized for repairs based on population density, historical neglect, or proximity to essential services such as schools and hospitals. See as a “Best Practice” the NYC Capital Projects Dashboard at page 104.

**The Public** needs *proactive outreach* from city agencies communicating real-time information about current or upcoming traffic disruptions. **The Solution:** Send *email and text alerts* to schools, hospitals, and major employers so they all can in turn notify their constituencies. See as a “Best Practice” DC 311 (page 103), which enables interaction between a 24/7 call center and residents via email, texts, an app, online service requests, and X (formerly Twitter).

**Contractors** need information about *opportunities to bid* on infrastructure projects. **The Solution:** *Centralize procurements* in an Office of Procurement and establish a *procurement forecasting log* that gives contractors advance notice on upcoming contracting opportunities, encouraging more contractor competition and fostering more equitable distribution of contracts.

# Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

## *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

### Improved Management and Use of Technology

**Contractors** need *reliable processing of invoices* and *better management* of their contracts and change orders. Problems with the “Timeliness of Vendor Payments” (LA Legislative Auditor 2024) explains why some potential bidders choose not to bid, which limits competition and undermines the quality of proposals the city receives.

**The Solution:** The Business Resource and Administrative Support System (BRASS) can streamline and modernize the city’s cumbersome processes, but is challenged by *legacy systems* and by *inadequate acceptance* among employees, who need *better training and support in using BRASS*. Technology personnel need to integrate Quick Base, Procore, and invoicing systems and then assist staff in understanding and using BRASS.

### Personnel Problems

**Delayed Street Repair:** Projects languish for lack of focused leadership and support. **The Solution:** *Dedicated project managers* in the Project Delivery Unit (PDU) must devote consistent attention to projects from start to finish.

**Civil Service:** DPW, S&WB, and other infrastructure agencies say that civil service limits their ability to hire skilled project managers. **The Solution:** *Work with Civil Service to align job skills and higher pay with national norms*, making project management positions more marketable. Beyond tweaks within the existing system, *place Human Resources* under a Deputy CAO for HR or return HR responsibilities to the departments (or both in a “hybrid” format).

# Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance

## *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

**Coordination and Collaboration:** This *Cross-Cutting Theme* shows up repeatedly—and as a consequence, problems show up in multiple city agencies when coordination is lacking. Here, we encounter the Coalition’s first *coordinating entity*, a *Capital Cabinet* established to avoid disruptive and repetitive construction projects.

**The Problem:** Everyone in New Orleans has experienced the phenomenon—streets torn up and repaired over weeks or months, followed soon after by another protracted construction project on the same streets.

**The Solution:** A Capital Cabinet chaired by the CAO will bring all infrastructure agencies and stakeholders together for *improved planning and coordination* of projects. A short-term model was deployed with success when public and private sector personnel convened in regular meetings to coordinate preparations during the months-long run-up to Super Bowl LIX in February 2025. The Capital Cabinet will *institutionalize coordination and collaboration* by stakeholders as an ongoing feature in the infrastructure process.

# A. Streets & Infrastructure Maintenance: Priority Challenges

## Delayed Street Repair and Protracted Closures

**Drivers and Root Causes:** Various inefficiencies hinder the City's ability to operate effectively and promptly. This challenge is primarily driven by a lack of interagency coordination, which exacerbates issues when unanticipated repair needs arise mid-project, potentially implicating other government entities. Additionally, the City faces difficulties within its procurement process and hurdles in approving and commencing work with contractors. These delays not only compromise road safety but also create significant inconveniences for residents and businesses, including increased traffic congestion, longer commute times, and diminished access to essential services.

## Inadequate Public Communications

**Drivers and Root Causes:** There is a lack of timely, clear, and accessible information about upcoming repairs and the status of ongoing projects. This absence of effective communication leads to frustration and confusion as residents navigate closed streets and construction zones. The public is often left inadequately informed about project schedules and completion dates. Furthermore, there is often insufficient explanation for stop-work delays, exacerbating the communication gap and complicating the public's ability to navigate infrastructure challenges effectively. These challenges are primarily driven by the fact that public announcements frequently overpromise what the City can achieve, 311 requests often disappear into a "black hole" with unclear timelines and lack of follow-up on issues, and there is a lack of proactive messaging around street closures.

## Poor Contract Management

**Drivers and Root Causes:** Poor contract management impedes the effective maintenance of street and pipeline infrastructure due to several interrelated factors. The City struggles with delayed funding allocation and ability to handle the influx of federal funding, resulting in missed opportunities for critical improvements. Protracted procurement processes, particularly for contract modifications, create inefficiencies that delay necessary adjustments. These issues have led high-capacity national service providers to decline submitting proposals, further limiting the City's options for qualified contractors. Additionally, the failure to monitor costs in real time contributes to budget overruns and ineffective resource allocation.



# Background & Data: Delayed Street Repair and Protracted Closures

## Unanticipated Repair Needs Discovered Mid-Project

Unanticipated repair needs contribute significantly to delays in street repairs, particularly when these issues arise mid-project and are not covered by existing funding sources. For instance, during FEMA-funded street repaving initiatives following Hurricane Katrina, many underlying infrastructure problems were discovered, such as deteriorating water and sewer pipes-necessitating additional repairs, that fell outside the original funding scope. Similarly, various projects managed by the SWBNO frequently encounter unexpected issues with aging or failing utility lines, further complicating repairs. A notable example is the street reconstruction on St. Claude Avenue, where crews found extensive damage to underground utilities that required urgent attention, extending the project timeline. When funding limitations prevent the City from addressing these newly identified needs, critical infrastructure improvements are postponed.

## Inefficient Procurement Processes

Despite the implementation of the Business Resource and Administrative Support System (BRASS) procurement system in New Orleans, several inefficiencies continue to plague the procurement process. BRASS is designed to streamline and modernize the procurement process and transition the City away from manual paperwork but has yet to be fully operationalized. User adoption has been a significant challenge, with many city employees and vendors struggling to adapt due to insufficient training and support. Integration issues with legacy systems have created inconsistencies in data management and workflows. Communication gaps between departments involved in procurement hinder interagency coordination. These challenges underscore the need for continued reform of the procurement processes to fully leverage the capabilities of the BRASS system.

## Inadequate Interagency Collaboration

The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining New Orleans' streets and road surfaces, while responsibility for subsurface drainage, sewer, and water infrastructure – much of which lies just beneath the roadways – falls to SWBNO. Failure to coordinate road and utility project schedules results in highly visible inefficiencies and waste as the same street is dug up, patched, and repaved by different agencies.



# Background & Data: Inadequate Public Communication

## Unrealistic Expectations Announced to the Public

Public announcements regarding capital infrastructure projects often create unrealistic expectations among residents, as press releases tend to overpromise what the City can achieve with the available funding. These announcements, issued through various channels including press releases from the Mayor's office and the City Council, frequently provide overly specific details about which projects will be funded and their anticipated timelines. For example, announcements related to FEMA-funded street repair projects led residents to believe that rapid improvements would occur, yet many projects encountered unforeseen challenges that prolonged completion times. Around 68 out of 273 projects set to be completed through the Joint Infrastructure Recovery Request are currently on hold awaiting additional funding.

## Lack of Proactive and Accessible Information and Updates

Despite the existence of the Roadwork NOLA website, many residents remain unaware of its resources, and the information provided is often not timely or comprehensive. Effective communication strategies, such as campaigns that acknowledge ongoing construction activities and their impacts, are critical for raising public awareness; however, such initiatives are often lacking. Additionally, there is a notable absence of proactive outreach methods, such as text blasts or notifications about road closures and project updates, which could help keep residents informed. When work is halted, there is typically a lack of explanations or estimated timelines for when projects will resume, leaving residents in the dark about potential disruptions to their daily routines. These gaps in communication not only foster frustration and confusion but also diminish trust in the city's ability to manage infrastructure projects effectively.

## Poor Follow-Up From 311 Requests

Residents report that after submitting requests for issues such as potholes, streetlight outages, or updates on construction projects, they receive little to no follow-up communication regarding the status of their requests. This lack of timely responses fosters belief that their concerns are not being prioritized or adequately addressed by city officials. Moreover, the absence of follow-up can lead to confusion and frustration, as residents remain unaware whether their reported issues are being resolved or if additional steps are required. This inefficiency not only hampers effective street maintenance but also diminishes community engagement and satisfaction with city services.

# Background & Data: Poor Contract Management

## Delayed Funding Allocation

The City of New Orleans faced major challenges with the allocation and management of National Disaster Resilience (NDR) funds. By 2015, only 1% of the funds had been spent, prompting the city to rush the issuance of large contracts to meet federal deadlines. This haste led to contracts that exceeded the capacity of local contractors, resulting in mismanagement, delays, and inefficiencies in critical infrastructure projects. A 2022 HUD audit further highlighted these issues, revealing that poor planning, inadequate staffing, and oversight failures led to minimal progress on infrastructure initiatives.

## Insufficient Capacity to Handle Large Influx in Federal Funding

The City has struggled to manage large influxes of federal funding, which has hindered its recovery and infrastructure improvement efforts. The management of the \$2 billion Joint Infrastructure Recovery Response (JIRR) project serves as a case study in these challenges. A 2019 assessment of the program released by CSRS, a multidisciplinary consulting firm based on Louisiana, reveals multiple challenges that stakeholders say still are pertinent today. These issues include inadequate project management culture, limited staffing capacity, and insufficient interagency coordination. These deficiencies have resulted in significant mismanagement, delays, and cost overruns.

## High-Capacity National Service Providers Decline to Submit Proposals

The City of New Orleans struggles to attract high-capacity service providers for contracts, primarily due to lengthy procurement processes and inefficiencies in its invoicing system. According to the "Timeliness of Vendor Payments" audit by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor in 2024, The City cannot accurately determine how long it takes to pay vendors. While policy requires the City to pay invoices within 30 days, the City fails to track the entire invoice approval workflow, leading to significant delays. These cumbersome processes discourage potential bidders, ultimately limiting competition and the quality of proposals submitted for city contracts.

## Failure to Monitor Costs in Real Time

The City has faced challenges in monitoring project costs in real time, leading to significant budget overruns and funding issues. Without effective oversight, project expenses can spiral beyond initial estimates, complicating financial planning and resource allocation. This lack of real-time tracking not only strains the city's budget but also undermines the successful execution of infrastructure projects.

# Recommendations Summary

Recommendations	Actions
Ensure proactive, real- time public communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhaul the RoadWork website to include a comprehensive catalogue of projects, types and lengths of disruptions, and a dashboard that illustrates explicit priority metrics for repair projects by geography.</li> <li>Provide accurate, real-time, and proactive updates on street closures and maintenance through email or text blasts, especially to major employers and schools.</li> </ul>
Centralize capital planning, coordination, and project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create, by ordinance, a Capital Cabinet dedicated to overseeing and prioritizing infrastructure projects citywide with representation from all relevant city departments.</li> <li>Create, by ordinance, a centralized database that tracks all capital projects and planning.</li> <li>Task the Capital Cabinet with creating a procurement forecasting log that gives contractors advance notice of upcoming contracting opportunities to encourage more contractor competition.</li> <li>Ensure that dedicated project managers and staff are devoted to large-scale, one-time programs, especially within the Project Delivery Unit.</li> <li>Work with Civil Service to bring job skills requirements and expectations in line with national norms for both the Department of Public Works and SWBNO.</li> <li>Explore options to improve recruitment and retention of highly skilled talent for both the Department of Public Works and SWBNO.</li> </ul>
Centralize procurement responsibilities and complete rollout of BRASS system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize all procurement staff within all the different departments under the Office of Procurement</li> <li>Ensure that all staff are fully trained on BRASS and aware of all its functionalities.</li> <li>Ensure that the Project Delivery Unit switches over from QuickBase to BRASS.</li> <li>Include all department invoice approvals in BRASS to better track and monitor timeliness and meet 30-day payment requirements.</li> <li>Explore options to integrate vendor project management systems, like Procure, with BRASS.</li> </ul>

## Recommendation: Proactive, Real-Time Communications

The Department of Public Works (DPW) must overhaul the RoadWork website to serve as a centralized hub for timely, accurate, and actionable updates on infrastructure projects across New Orleans. Currently, RoadWork is the City's primary tool for sharing information about road and infrastructure repairs, but it falls short in providing the comprehensive, user-friendly experience residents and businesses need to plan their daily activities. While the platform includes general information about ongoing and completed projects, it lacks critical details about project timelines, impacts, and progress metrics.

The revamped RoadWork website should include a **comprehensive catalog of infrastructure projects** that provides detailed descriptions of disruptions, including their type, location, and expected duration. The current platform features a static list of awarded and completed projects with limited details; this information should be transformed into an interactive tool. The tool must offer regular updates on the status of each project, expected completion dates, and project phases. This transparency will empower residents to make informed decisions and will increase public trust.

To further enhance usability, the updated site should feature a dashboard with an interactive map, highlighting infrastructure projects and **explicit priority metrics by geography**. For instance, users should be able to see which areas are prioritized for repairs based on factors like population density, historical neglect, or proximity to essential services such as schools and hospitals. Drawing on examples such as the NYC Capital Planning Explorer (see slide 102) would make the City's decision-making process clearer and help demonstrate fairness and accountability in resource allocation.

In addition to a robust website, the Department of Public Works must provide **accurate, real-time, and proactive updates on street closures and maintenance**. Residents, major employers, schools, and other stakeholders should be notified of upcoming disruptions through email or text alerts. These updates should include project details, timelines, and detour suggestions, ensuring that disruptions are communicated effectively before they occur. Such proactive outreach will minimize frustration, foster goodwill, and encourage greater public cooperation.

# Recommendation: Proactive, Real-Time Communications

Finally, the City needs to better integrate infrastructure repair requests submitted via 311 into the RoadWork website. While NOLA 311 allows residents to report infrastructure issues, the lack of visibility into the status of these repairs creates frustration and a sense of inaction. Using programs like DC 311 (see slide 103) as a benchmark, the revamped RoadWork platform should include a dedicated emergency repair section that tracks infrastructure-related 311 requests. This feature should display specific locations and report dates, incident types, and estimated repair timelines. Incorporating these details into the interactive map will enhance public transparency and accountability while empowering residents to monitor progress on their reported issues.

**How to set in motion:**    **Executive Directive**

The CAO directive should require the Department of Public Works to redevelop and implement RoadWork as a comprehensive public-facing dashboard that has real-time updates for planned and emergency infrastructure projects.

**How to sustain:**    **City Council Budget Priorities**

City Council members should ensure that the City's next operating budget prioritizes the IT infrastructure upgrades necessary for the Roadwork revamp.

## Recommendation: Centralize Capital Planning

The City of New Orleans needs to create a Capital Cabinet. This centralized Capital Cabinet will **serve as a dedicated authority to oversee and prioritize infrastructure projects citywide, with representation from all relevant departments**. Currently the City has a Capital Projects Administration that is responsible for managing projects from the conceptual and design phases through project completion. While this Administration consults the leaders of other City agencies, agency leaders need to be structurally embedded into the Cabinet's organization to ensure adequate representation.

The Cabinet then needs to create a **centralized database that tracks all capital projects and planning efforts city-wide**. The City recently announced the development of a cloud-based asset management system that will centralize the management of City assets across Public Works, Property, Parks and Parkways, Sanitation, and the New Orleans Recreation Development (NORD) Commission among others. As the City builds out this database, they should include relevant details such as project cost, expected completion date, leading department, and a project description. Metrics are already collected for the City's yearly Capital Improvement Plan and should be accompanied by the phase of implementation and confirmed completion date (where applicable) when they are entered into the database.

Like the Capital Planning Cabinet in Seattle, WA (see slide 105), ensuring this database has a component that is a publicly facing, interactive, map-based tool will allow residents to gain insight on all public capital and infrastructure projects and planning initiatives city-wide. The database will also enable departments to streamline efforts, since awareness of real-time decision-making in a centralized, easily accessible location encourages collaboration.

Additionally, the Cabinet should create a **procurement forecasting log that gives contractors advance notice on upcoming contracting opportunities to encourage more contractor competition**. Currently, the City uses a database that shows open bids, in many instances giving contractors less than a month from the time the bid opens to collect their materials and apply. By managing a capital procurement forecasting log, the Administration can ensure a more equitable and competitive contracting process.

# Recommendation: Centralize Capital Planning

The Cabinet also needs to ensure that there are dedicated project managers and staff devoted to large-scale, one-time programs, especially within the Project Delivery Unit (PDU). The PDU is currently responsible for overseeing all accounting and for processing financial transactions, contracts, and procurement routing among other essential functions throughout a project life cycle. Managing such projects requires strong leadership for the duration of a project and the ability to execute tasks on schedule and with diligence.

The guidelines set by Civil Service cause difficulty in hiring skilled project managers, and consequently, projects suffer. The Department of Public Works and SWBNO need to work with Civil Service to bring job skills requirements and expectations in line with national norms, allowing both agencies to offer higher pay and make their project management positions more marketable. Additionally, both the Department of Public Works and SWBNO should explore options to improve recruitment and retention of highly skilled talent for each agency. Having a highly skilled and centralized Capital Cabinet will streamline and coordinate city-wide capital planning efforts.

How to set in motion:	<b>Executive Directive</b>  The directive should shift the Capital Planning Administration to a Capital Cabinet where City department heads are also staffed in the Cabinet. There should also be a directive to create a public-facing capital planning dashboard.
How to sustain:	<b>City Council Budget Priorities</b>  City Council members should ensure that the Cabinet's next operating budget sets aside funding to develop the capital project dashboard and to enhance the electronic bidding system.



## Recommendation: Centralize Procurement

The City's multiple procurement staff located within different departments must be centralized under the Office of Procurement, similar to the Cross- Departmental Procurement Excellence Committee in Tulsa, OK (see slide 107) . Currently the City's procurement process is experiencing inefficiencies as the disconnect between agencies has caused a silo effect into which there is no cross-department visibility. The disconnect between agencies has also made the relatively recent roll-out of newer project management systems more difficult to fully implement, such as BRASS in 2019 and Procore in 2022. By centralizing staff, the Office of Procurement can **ensure that all staff are fully trained on BRASS and aware of all its functionalities** while also encouraging visibility through proximity.

Additionally, the Office of Procurement needs to **ensure that the Project Delivery Unit switches over from QuickBase to BRASS**. QuickBase has been used to track dates regarding the invoice-approval process and to manage components of the project that occur prior to BRASS. However, QuickBase is notorious for causing project manager delays without clearly explaining or noting the delays within the system. By integrating the pre-BRASS work from QuickBase into BRASS, the City can track the timeliness, identify delays, and pinpoint direct cause of delays. If the delay is related to a project manager inefficiency, internal training tools can be used to provide better guidance. If the delay is caused by a vendor, the procurement staff can quickly resolve their issue. With proper training, shifting from QuickBase to BRASS will remove some of the administrative and procedural burdens experienced by all parties.

To further streamline the procurement process, the Office of Procurement **should include all department invoice approvals in BRASS to better track and monitor timeliness and meet 30-day payment requirements**. Using this platform as a city-wide initiative will encourage cross-departmental efficiency, reduces idle time, and shorten timelines within which vendors are paid.



# Recommendation: Centralize Procurement

Regarding external project management systems, the Office of Procurement should **explore options to integrate vendor project management systems, like Procore, with BRASS**. Integrating vendor management Procore with BRASS would reduce inaccuracies caused by manual data entering, as updating in one system would automatically update in the other. This would also give increased visibility across the procurement staff and vendors as they’d have a real-time view into project and procurement data and would know exactly when vendors get paid.

Integration of Procore with BRASS will also encourage more responsiveness from the procurement staff to vendors and vice versa. By having access to the same data and tools, teams can work together more cohesively to ensure that procurement activities align with project needs and timelines. This integration will allow for all parties to quickly identify bottlenecks and will encourage operation efficiency and data accuracy through centralized and automatic procurement processes.

How to set in motion:	<b>Executive Directive</b>  The CAO directive should mandate a city-wide training on BRASS and consolidate all procurement staff across departments into the Office of Procurement.
How to sustain:	<b>City Council Budget Priorities</b>  City Council members should ensure that the City's next operating budget includes the cost of switching from other project management systems to BRASS, also the cost of BRASS training resources if necessary.

# Best Practice: Proactive Public Communication

Create a centralized database that tracks all capital projects and planning

## New York City, New York: NYC Capital Planning Explorer

To increase public planning transparency while encouraging collaboration across government departments and sectors, New Orleans should introduce a tool like the NYC Capital Planning Explorer. Launched as a beta program by the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), the NYC Capital Planning Explorer is an interactive online resource that was designed to promote better and more collaborative planning through data and technology. Unlike the NYC Capital Projects Dashboard (see slide 104), which is a public-facing work-monitoring system, the Capital Planning Explorer is a visionary planning tool that will evolve to allow for more time-sensitive analysis.

The DCP's Capital Planning Division was created in 2014 in response Bytes of the Big Apple project, a DCP initiative to pioneer open data. In its beta form the Capital Planning Explorer has been launched as a planned public facilities explorer which complements other data and maps produced by the DCP and includes projects reported to the School Construction Authority (SCA), housing developments, existing facilities and program sites, planning area boundaries, zoning boundaries, administration boundaries, flood hazards, and transportation routes.

The data features on the NYC Capital Planning Explorer can be downloaded from the NYC Capital Projects Database alongside additional data points published by other NYC City agencies. Most of the data points have been pulled from the Capital Commitment Plan published each fiscal year by the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget and will be updated accordingly. The Capital Planning Explorer was built in-house by the Capital Planning Division within the DCP using free and open-source software and low-cost web services.

# Best Practice: Real-Time Public Communication

Provide accurate, real-time and proactive updates on street closures and maintenance

## Washington, District of Columbia: DC 311

The government of Washington D.C. offers a responsive and transparent platform that allows users to request city services or report incidents while receiving real-time updates. Through DC311, residents can easily report missed trash collection, sanitation enforcement problems, necessary pothole repairs, and other incidents of the like through a 24/7 call center, text, an online service request center, an app, and even through X (formerly Twitter). Once the service has been requested, the requester is given a request ID that can be tracked to show real-time updates with an expected resolution date. The platform also features an interactive map to see all other *open*, *closed*, and *cancel* service requests in real time.

DC311 is managed by the Office of Unified Communications (OUC). This department handles all things related to 311, 911, and all non-police public safety support and data. In July 2001, the OUC began as the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC), which opened in response to the mayor's vision of improved service and an acknowledged need for improved technology and coordination among public safety departments. Seeing a need to treat infrastructure-related emergencies with the same diligence as public safety emergencies, in October 2004 the PSCC incorporated 311 to become the OUC.

While the OUC is a one-stop-shop that sends work tickets to various District department on behalf of the requester, each department has both budget and staff for preservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation. Effectively planning for emergencies in this manner has allowed for quick case resolution. Through DC 311, the OUC leads the region by providing centralized, District-wide coordination and management of public safety technology and other public communication resources to District government agencies and several local, state, and federal partners.

# Best Practice: Real-Time Capital Project Monitoring

Create a centralized database that tracks all capital projects in real time.

## New York City, New York: NYC Capital Projects Dashboard

The NYC Capital Projects Dashboard provides public transparency into infrastructure projects currently underway such as bridges, sewers, sanitation, and buildings. The dashboard is hosted by the Mayor's Office of Operations and features data published by other City agencies. Users can track projects using metrics listed in the table shown on the right.

Users of the Dashboard have access to schedule information maintained in an agency's project management systems and budget information updated in the City's Financial management System (FMS).

Although all the information featured on the dashboard was previously publicly available, the Dashboard presents the data in a way that is user-friendly and easily accessible. The City previously used the Capital Project Detail Data (CPDD) but shifted to the Dashboard after an April 2024 report revealed that about half of the City's total project inventory, amounting to roughly \$73.9 B, was excluded from the report for various reasons. The Dashboard offers a cohesive understanding of the City's entire capital project portfolio. The Dashboard's biggest limitation is that as of April 2024 it had not yet been updated to the level of historic detail as found in the CPDD. But this has been identified as a typical challenge resulting from shifting systems.

The Dashboard is updated three times a year, in conjunction with the January, May, and July budget and schedule reports mandated by the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget. The reporting schedule will eventually incorporate projects that don't fall within this cadence, making this tool a comprehensive capital portfolio tracker.

Metrics Tracked on NYC Capital Projects Dashboard	
Project and Managing Agency's Name	Project and Managing Agency's Name
Amount of Budget Spent to Date	Percentage of Budget Spent to Date
Current Phase of Implementation	Date that Current Phase Began
Forecasted End of Current Phase	Forecasted Completion Date

# Best Practice: Capital Project Oversight

## Create a centralized Capital Cabinet

### Seattle, Washington : Capital Planning Cabinet

Seattle's Capital Planning Cabinet, established by Executive Order 04-04, was designed to streamline capital planning across various departments. The Cabinet brings together key city leaders and stakeholders to align priorities, optimize resource allocation, and ensure strategic oversight of infrastructure investments. By centralizing decision-making, the Cabinet fosters collaboration among different city agencies with overarching goals, creating a cohesive approach to tackling large-scale projects. Project focus is set at the citywide-scale for major planning, neighborhood-scale for context-specific impact, and place-based scale to promote equitable development. This unified structure helps Seattle manage its capital investments more efficiently, avoiding the common pitfalls of siloed operations and fragmented project management.

The Cabinet's approach involves regular meetings where department heads review project progress, resolve conflicts, and adjust plans as needed. This proactive, transparent, and collaborative model has led to more predictable project outcomes and has built greater public trust in the city's ability to deliver on infrastructure promises.

# Best Practice: Minimize Disruption to Constituents

Explore options to integrate vendor project management systems

## Boston, Massachusetts: Road Resurfacing Contracts

The Boston Public Works Department's contracts for road resurfacing were overly focused on achieving mileage targets to the detriment of other key goals, such as maintaining steady workflows and minimizing inconvenience to constituents. The city engaged a consultant team to reorient the roadway resurfacing contracts around a holistic set of goals, providing vendors with incentives to meet these goals and increasing flow of performance data enabling the Department to correct issues in real-time.

After surveying the local vendor community and key city staff, the consultant team found that a lack of visibility into departmental data and operations made it difficult to pinpoint challenges in the resurfacing process. Once these challenges were identified, the team rewrote the model contract for road resurfacing to address common sticking points in the process and to draw a stronger connection between program goals and vendor performance. Highlighting this connection provided vendors and city staff with specific benchmarks to assess vendor performance, ensuring consistency across service delivery.

The City restructured a two-step payment and incentive plan to increase overall quality of work. To reduce unnecessary impact on constituents, the City defined "progression of work" targets to specify how each phase of the resurfacing process should impact constituents. As incentive to meet these targets, vendors were eligible for up to \$15,000 in bonuses. The City expanded quarterly performance reviews to include quality of work and progression toward targets. Those who receive high marks are eligible to win the right to expand their seasonal contracts.

As a result, the city has seen increased consistency in vendor performance and a more substantial flow of data about vendor performance. Increased consistency translated to better experiences for constituents. These strategies proved so successful that the city adopted a similar contract management process in all its yearly capital programs.

# Best Practice: Efficient Contract Processing

Ensure that there are dedicated project managers and staff devoted to large-scale, one-time programs

## Tulsa, Oklahoma: Cross-Departmental Procurement Excellence Committee

In Tulsa, few city staff understood the procurement process well, and some vendors felt overwhelmed or confused about how to do business with the City. With help from the Harvard Government Procurement Lab, Tulsa created the Procurement Excellence Steering Committee (PESC), a 16-member cross- departmental body that regularly identifies pain points in procurement processes, develops solutions, and aligns practices across departments.

PESC-led projects included creating process maps to identify pain points and implementing fixes to improve the vendor experience and save time (e.g., consolidating required forms, digitizing vendor registration, and shifting the time in the process when review by the Legal team took place). The process- mapping process creates shared understanding among the department and offers areas for input from key stakeholders. The PESC also conducted a contract inventory, producing a comprehensive collection of the city's purchasing activity which allowed visibility into key insights and cost-saving opportunities. These insights include where to purchase in bulk, contracts that were unnecessarily duplicated, and a shared understanding of typical contract pricing to compare to peer cities.

They also looked externally and issued a vendor survey that gave firms the opportunity to share feedback on the procurement process. In another effort to improve user experience, PESC redesigned the purchasing homepage to allow easier access to FAQs. The PESC also tracks and shares key performance indicators to ensure efficiency across the department.

Now, city staff have renewed engagement and interest in making procurement a vibrant, strategic function, and cycle times have recently been reduced by nearly one month due to a streamlined procurement process.

## Works Cited

- Timeliness of Vendor Payments, Louisiana Legislative Auditor (2024)
- What is Procurement Excellence?, Harvard Kennedy Government Performance Lab
- Driving Better Outcomes for Road Repair and Maintenance in Boston, Massachusetts, Harvard Kennedy Government Performance Lab (2018)
- After More Than 6 Years, The City of New Orleans' National Disaster Resilience Project Activities Had Made Little Impact on Resilience, U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (2024)
- Implementing the Joint Infrastructure Recovery Request, CSRS (2019)
- Timeliness of Vendor Payments, Louisiana Legislative Auditor (2024)



A Capital Cabinet, chaired by the CAO, will convene Streets and Infrastructure Maintenance agencies with Drainage and Water Management personnel as well as independent and quasi-independent entities such as the Regional Transit Authority, New Orleans Aviation Board, the Port of New Orleans, Board of Liquidation of City Debt, and Public Utility operators (e.g., Entergy, Cox, AT&T/BellSouth Telecommunications) to coordinate and plan for major capital projects and expenditures.

As a public body, the Capital Cabinet's meetings will be governed by the Open Meetings Act, which requires public notice in advance of regular or special meetings and publication at the beginning of each year of the annual schedule for all regular meetings. Its records will be public unless covered by an exception to the Public Records Act. The Capital Cabinet will thus provide *a forum for public scrutiny of coordination and planning activities* among these agencies that often exert such a disruptive impact on the city's residents.

The CAO's responsibility to *gather data and post it on a public dashboard* will extend to the activities of the Capital Cabinet, fostering accountability for the progress of infrastructure projects that are monitored from start to finish.

The Capital Cabinet may also occasionally exercise its authority by suggesting a need for new entities—for example, a political subdivision or intergovernmental compact of cooperative endeavor agreements to develop a *Regional Water Purification Facility* sufficiently upriver to avoid the threat of saltwater intrusion.

## B. Drainage & Water Management

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

New Orleans' Drainage and Water Management challenges are *existential*: the sea is rising; the city is sinking; S&WB pumping capacity cannot stem the tide of floodwaters that regularly inundate neighborhoods. Saltwater intrusion threatens water quality annually, and “boil water” advisories are all too frequent. Finances to fix these problems remain insufficient, and a complex governance structure obscures accountability for these shortfalls. Public trust is at its nadir.

The Coalition recommends increased *coordination and collaboration* to address myriad problems in drainage and water management. Act 783 of 2024 (approved unanimously by the House and Senate) mandates remedies that are in keeping with this strategy:

- The S&WB will enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the City and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) to expedite expenditure of \$141.3 million to *improve surface water storage*.
- The S&WB will sign a CEA with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) to *manage capital projects over \$100 million*.
- S&WB and LaDOTD will prepare and update a capital improvement plan encompassing *maintenance and a cost-benefit analysis* of future projects.
- S&WB will develop, along with several governmental entities in the region, a *multi-agency urban flood prevention plan* to meet the southeast region's needs for proper drainage, to model and predict storm damage, and to plan for emergency response priorities.

## B. Drainage & Water Management

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

The Coalition supports these initiatives and recommends an additional one that builds upon the foregoing *multi-agency collaboration* among the S&WB, CNO, and Public Works Departments in Jefferson, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parishes. A *Regional Water Purification Facility* built upon land that the City already owns would be sufficiently far upriver to eliminate the threat of saltwater intrusion (page 134). All four parishes would benefit from reduced costs in supplying water to their residents as an outgrowth of this consolidated response.

The S&WB's billing problems that generated considerable public animosity will be diminished by the installation of "smart meter" technology, but *unresolved bill disputes* have continued to be a source of frustration. In August 2024 the Council authorized Hammerman & Gainer, LLC to resolve the backlog of disputed bills via arbitration. The Coalition recommends that S&WB consider addition of a "small claims" mediation program that might resolve modest amounts without incurring the costs of an arbitration.

**S&WB Reorganization and Reform:** Voters' responses in a December 2024 public opinion survey spoke forcefully in support of "major reform" at the S&WB (80%); an additional 15% favored "minor changes"; only 2% said "no change" was needed. The Coalition agrees that major changes are needed now.

The Coalition recommends a New Orleans Water Authority (NOWA) to replace the S&WB.

## B. Drainage & Water Management

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

**New Orleans Water Authority:** The Coalition's recommendation is informed by the experience of our two ex-Mayor advisers, Tom Murphy and Anthony Williams, who oversaw the successful conversion of their water systems in Pittsburgh, PA, and Washington, D.C., into independent water authorities.

The NOWA conversion will take place under supervision of a Water Authority Transition Committee with a minimum one-year lifespan. Full implementation would require City Council approval. The NOWA Transition Committee will consist of members appointed by the Mayor, City Councilmembers At-Large, the Governor, and the Orleans House and Senate legislative delegations, as well as management and engineering professionals.

The NOWA Transition Committee will determine:

- A legal, legislative, and administrative implementation plan for the changes;
- A merit system of hiring and firing by a Human Resources department in NOWA;
- A formula rate plan administered by the City Council or the Louisiana Public Service Commission;
- A fair and equitable stormwater management fee to replace property tax millages that are currently dedicated to drainage; and
- A new Customer Ombudsman to receive—and act upon—complaints.

The Transition Committee will become NOWA's permanent Management Board when the transition period expires.

## B. Drainage & Water Management : Priority Challenges

### Loss of Public Trust

**Drivers and Root Causes:** The SWBNO has struggled for decades to provide users with consistent, high-quality service. Public trust has eroded due to perceived organizational unresponsiveness coupled with high visibility infrastructure break downs. Inaccurate and unpredictable customer billing has resulted in mounting frustration, compounded by a cumbersome dispute resolution process. Though efforts are actively underway to clear the backlog of contested bills and prevent the reoccurrence of mass billing errors in future, public trust in the organization is at an all-time low.

### Growing Flood Risk

**Drivers and Root Causes:** New Orleans' increasing vulnerability to flooding is already evident. Though some contributing factors are beyond the City's control, such as climate change and increasingly severe storm events, there are an abundance of human causes that could be addressed, including marshland drainage, groundwater pumping, and the system's maximum drainage capacity. The City is sinking below sea level at an ever-increasing pace and yet, despite the severity of the potential impacts for New Orleanians, consensus on the actions needed, and the receipt of over \$141 million in Federal monies for implementation, little progress has been made.

### Infrastructure Needs Eclipse Financial Capacity

**Drivers and Root Causes:** New Orleans' water distribution infrastructure has a backlog of deferred maintenance needs amounting to over \$2.5 billion over the next 10 years. A system redesign – which would be necessary if the goal were to increase system capacity – would require \$15 billion, an unrealistic cost. SWBNO's revenue raising capacity is limited by political barriers and affordability concerns, leaving the organization with only 50% of the revenues that it would need to operate an effective water management system.

### Governance Structure Impedes Performance

**Drivers and Root Causes:** By separating operational responsibility from funding control, the current governance structure encourages political posturing at the expense of difficult but necessary generation-level decision-making. The result is reduced accountability and effectiveness.

# Background & Data: Loss of Public Trust

## Wildly inaccurate customer billing linked to outdated equipment

SWBNO equipment infrastructure is antiquated. Until recently, residential water meters averaged 14 years old and required manual data entry, a feature conducive to human errors that leads to unpredictable and inaccurate water bills. To circumvent these problems in the future, SWBNO began replacing existing meters with “smart” meters in September 2023. In anticipation of the citywide conversion to smart meters, an ordinance adopted by Council in August 2024 gives residents the option of electing fixed-rate billing starting in September 2024 and sunsets estimated billing practices no later than January 2025. That said, according to SWBNO’s Chief Customer Service Officer, Rene Gonzalez, it is not clear whether the citywide deployment of smart meters will be complete in time to meet the dates stipulated in the ordinance.

## History of inadequate responses to documented errors and system failures

SWBNO has been unable to demonstrate that it is capable of correcting errors in a timely manner once they become known. From acute storm system failures related to power and pumps, to cracked pipes and water loss affecting particular neighborhoods, to individual customer bill corrections, SWBNO has repeatedly struggled to remedy acknowledged problems once identified. Sub-par system performance led to a consent decree in 1998, which was subsequently modified in 2010, 2013, and 2014. Customers face a dispute process that can take months if not years to resolve, an unacceptable reality that City Council sought to circumvent in August 2024 by temporarily granting arbitration responsibility to Hammerman & Gainer. The cumulative effect of the organization’s repeated failure to act has been deep-seated public distrust in the organization’s competence, which in turn undermines the viability of solutions that hinge upon voter- approved supplemental funding or expansion of responsibilities.

## Failures documented, solutions proposed, but without implementation capacity

Both the City and State have published reports and passed ordinances and legislation to address public distrust of the SWBNO. In January 2019, the City of New Orleans published their findings from the Task Force on New Orleans Sewerage, Water, and Drainage Utilities while the State published their findings from their respective SWBNO Task Force in March 2024. The diagnosis of issues and the solutions proposed were similar, but neither report lead to an allocation of the funding necessary to implement study findings.

# Background & Data: Growing Flood Risk

## **Drainage system not designed for 21<sup>st</sup> century weather patterns**

At least once a year, a rainstorm hits New Orleans with enough precipitation to overwhelm the drainage infrastructure, which even when operating at peak efficiency can evacuate only 1 inch of rain during the first hour of a storm and ½ inch of rain every hour thereafter. The result is rapid flooding, particularly in the most low-lying neighborhoods constructed on former swampland. Meteorologists have shown that the frequency and severity of such storm events are increasing, indicating that inundation depth and duration will only worsen over time.

## **New Orleans is sinking rapidly, with potentially devastating consequences**

In 2016, NASA reported that the New Orleans region was sinking at a faster rate than previously observed. The neighborhoods most severely affected include those built on former marshland (Metairie, Upper and Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward), industrial areas (Norco, Michoud), and the Bonnet Carré Spillway, which sank by approximately 2 inches each year between 2009 and 2012.

The destructive consequences are already evident in ruptured water and sewer lines as well as saltwater intrusion threatening drinking water supplies (see the September 2023 emergency declaration). Unless the trends are reversed, New Orleans faces soil salinity levels damaging to trees and other plant life as well as greater vulnerability to coastal erosion, levee breaches, and severe flooding.

## **Inadequate progress on groundwater management and subsidence remediation**

SWBNO could delay or even reverse these trends if it restores wetlands and ceases pumping groundwater – the 2016 cessation of pumping at the Michoud plant has already reversed sinking in the area. Several concrete measures were proposed in the City's 2014 Green Infrastructure Plan and the 2016 Resilient New Orleans plan, which received \$141.3 million in federal National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) monies in 2017 to fund implementation. Disappointingly, a 2024 report by the HUD Office of the Inspector General found that little progress has been made. Of the 11 projects reviewed, only one had made progress while two were slated for cancellation and the remaining 8 are still in the design phase.



# Background & Data: Financial Sustainability

## Significant Maintenance Needs

New Orleans' water distribution infrastructure has a massive backlog of deferred maintenance needs, many of which go beyond repair or replacement and into the realm of system redesign. Two-thirds of the system predates 1960; some equipment is too old to effectively connect with Entergy New Orleans, leaving SWBNO to self-generate power to satisfy its total electric load. Water losses are extremely high, but rapid response to breakages is hampered by a lack of advanced system monitoring technology as well as the difficulties in maintaining an accurate conditions assessment for such an extensive system. SWBNO's 10-year capital improvement plan includes more than \$2.5 billion in projects deemed "necessary," "urgent," or "critical."

Note: any noticeable increase in the stormwater system's storage capacity would require a total system redesign, at a cost that far exceeds any capital investment the City has ever contemplated (rough estimates are \$15 billion).

## Limited Revenue Raising Capacity

SWBNO has limited ability to increase its rate structures due to both legal constraints and affordability concerns. Unlike water boards elsewhere in the country, SWBNO's rates are capped under the Louisiana constitution; any increases are subject to approval from state lawmakers. Following eight years of 10% per year across-the-board rate adjustments, the last of which went into effect in 2020, the average single-family residential bill has reached \$130, a concerning figure given the substantial number of customers below 200% of the poverty line. In its ratings decisions regarding SWBNO's 2021 bond issuance, S&P articulated its view that SWBNO has "limited headroom" to increase revenue through its rate structure, given the city's 26% poverty rate.

The drainage system is funded not by user fees but by a millage tax, from which 40% of New Orleans properties are exempt. The system has not gained a new revenue source since 1982, and in 1991 it lost a dedicated millage. Twice during the last 30 years, in 1985 and 1998, SWBNO unsuccessfully proposed supplementing its funding by implementing drainage fees. A recent study found that the millage tax generates only 50% of the total revenues needed for adequate drainage operations and maintenance.



# Background & Data: S&WB Governance Structure

Split responsibility for drainage is ineffective. In 2019, a Task Force that included representation from the Mayor's Office, City Council, the Board of Liquidation, and SWBNO's Executive Director (among others) admitted that it *"struggled with untangling the complex web of State enabling legislation, City Charter requirements, and administrative rules"* that determine who wields what decision-making authority over various aspects of the sewer, water, and drainage utilities in Orleans Parish. This complexity means that no single individual or entity is able to sanction the actions necessary for organizational reform. Worse, diffuse responsibility makes it impossible to hold anyone accountable for inaction.

For example:

- SWBNO's bylaws are controlled by the Louisiana legislature, meaning change rests in the hands of lawmakers with no connection to New Orleans and can be considered only at set times in sync with the annual legislative calendar.
- The Mayor's prominent role as president of the SW&B Board of Directors blurs the lines of accountability by creating uncertainty in the public's mind as to whether the Mayor or the Board should be accountable for the utility's performance.
- The quality of service delivery is the responsibility of SWBNO's board and executive leaders, but these entities have no control over the funds needed to accomplish the task.
- The authority to set rates for service falls to City Council but that body's input extends only to a simple approval or denial. City Councilmembers lack the necessary information, the prerogative to offer a counter-proposal as they do in response to the Mayor's annual budget proposal, or sufficient political cover to countermand constituent pressure to keep rates and taxes low.
- There is no single entity responsible for implementation of the Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan and its green infrastructure and groundwater management strategies, to the detriment of public accountability.
- Under the existing process, there is no specified way for ratepayers to involve themselves other than attending regular public hearings.

This flawed governance structure makes it difficult for even capable leaders to achieve successful outcomes that the public needs.

# Background & Data: How Act 763 Will Change SWBNO

On June 19, 2024, after unanimous approval from both the State House and State Senate, Governor Landry signed Act 763 into law. Once implemented, the measure will bring substantial changes to SWBNO's mission, governance, operations, and funding systems. Key components include:

- Affirmation that **all responsibility for New Orleans' public water, sewage, and drainage systems falls to the SWBNO**, including construction, maintenance, operation, and control of those system. Drainage maintenance operations that until now have been the responsibility of the City Dept. of Public Works are to be transferred to SWBNO, along with the associated equipment, personnel, and funding streams.
- To **accelerate the spend-down of the \$141.3 million federal NDRC monies**, SWBNO is directed to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the City of New Orleans.
- To **improve the execution of contracting responsibilities**, including procurement, quality assurance, and timeliness of vendor payment, SWBNO is directed to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) for the management of special capital improvement projects over \$100 million.
- SWBNO and LADOTD are jointly directed to create and update annually **a capital improvement plan**, encompassing both maintenance and a cost-benefit analysis of future projects.
- SWBNO is directed to develop a **multi-agency urban flood prevention plan for the southeast Louisiana region** jointly with LADOT, the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and the Public Works Departments of Jefferson Parish, Saint Bernard Parish, and Plaquemines Parish. These seven entities are to meet quarterly and present an updated plan to the New Orleans City Council every year on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the multi-agency collaboration and plan is to identify areas that need to be addressed to allow **for proper drainage ; model and predict storm drainage** throughout the region; and **anticipate emergency response priorities**.
- The SWBNO board seat previously reserved for the Chair of City Council's Public Works, Sanitation and Environment Committee or an appointee can now be granted to an individual with a background in engineering, law, or consumer advocacy selected by the Council President with the consent of the City Council.

# Recommendations Summary

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Launch an “Earn Your Trust” Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the rollout of automated meter reading technology.</li> <li>• Maintain user-friendly customer data platform, including water usage history, trends, and real-time leak alerts.</li> <li>• Launch user-friendly data dashboard with system-wide performance metrics.</li> <li>• Complete the EPA’s “Efficient Utility Management” (EUM) diagnostic and share the results publicly.</li> <li>• Launch a public information campaign to reintroduce the agency to ratepayers and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Prioritize Groundwater and Stormwater Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop by state legislation or cooperative endeavor agreements a comprehensive groundwater management approach jointly with the other actors responsible for flood prevention in Southeast Louisiana.</li> <li>• Include outstanding recommendations from the <i>2014 Green Infrastructure Plan</i> and the <i>2016 Resilient New Orleans Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Present rising groundwater salinity metrics in a manner that fosters public awareness.</li> <li>• Accelerate the encumbrance of capital funds related to surface water storage and usage, including the \$141 million awarded but unspent National Disaster Recovery Challenge grant monies.</li> <li>• Implement a stormwater retention credit.</li> <li>• Create and maintain public-facing dashboards to track implementation activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Overhaul the organization’s financial structure to better align with mission and equity goals.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a rigorous multi-year financial planning effort. The goal should be alignment between the organization’s mission, as reaffirmed by Act 763, its expenditures, and its revenue streams. Analysis must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An affordability benchmark study, to determine the realistic potential for revenue generation from ratepayers.</li> <li>• An equitable yet aggressive fee structure to replace the current millage tax structure.</li> <li>• The viability of stormwater management credits to advance infrastructure upgrades on private property.</li> <li>• The costs and benefits of outsourcing discrete organizational functions (e.g., billing, contractor management), including implications for service quality, transparency, accountability, and cost.</li> <li>• The merits of joint debt issuance capacity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Recommendation: Launch an “Earn Your Trust” Initiative

To begin repairing the deep-seated public distrust of the SWBNO, the agency needs to **complete the rollout of automated reading technology**. In the last year, the SWBNO has installed 60,000 of the nearly 135,000 targeted smart meters which reflects commendable progress, but still falling short of their mandated early 2025 completion date. To accompany the ongoing incorporation of smart technology, the SWBNO also recently launched an online portal for customers who have been upgraded to automated meters; it **includes water usage history, trends, and real-time leak alerts**. SWBNO must demonstrate the agency’s ability to fully implement automated readers and **maintain the customer data platform** to restore public trust in their ability to provide accurate billing. The My ATX Water dashboard should be used as a benchmark (see slide 126).

The SWBNO can also rebuild public trust by implementing a **user-friendly data dashboard with system-wide performance metrics**. Currently the agency website features a dashboard with key performance indicators which include meter read accuracy data , average speed of answering customer service calls, and the billing escalations received to resolved ratio. However, these metrics are sporadically updated, and don’t provide a clear benchmark to show agency improvement. The SWBNO needs to regularly maintain this dashboard, provide context regarding the implications of the datapoints they’re featuring, and add in more meaningful datapoints. This will provide helpful insight and transparency into the organization’s improvement.

The SWBNO seems to have full awareness of their challenges with public trust and is beginning to take appropriate measures to resolve this. The most important part of their approach to providing transparency with these digital tools will be consistency in implementation. The SWBNO needs to make sure they have the internal capacity to fully roll-out and maintain the platforms in addition to providing responsive customer support, or else they will be of little use.

# Recommendation: Launch an “Earn Your Trust” Initiative

To achieve cohesive, measurable, and targeted growth, the SWBNO must **complete the EPA’s “Efficient Utility Management” (EUM) diagnostic and publicly share the results**. In 2022, the SWBNO published the *2022-2027 Strategic Plan*, the first strategic plan produced by the agency. The strategic plan includes the SWBNO’s values, goals, mission, and action items, much of which the EUM framework outlines. But the strategic plan is missing two key elements of the EUM framework: an initial self assessment and a path forward for ongoing self assessment.

The purpose of the self assessment is to acknowledge operational flaws, draft solutions, and to commit to an analysis of comparing agency progress to their initially established benchmark. The SWBNO must revise their strategic plan to incorporate the EUM framework to demonstrate accountability and encourage transparency. Austin Water serves as a successful case study outlining the process of creating and maintaining an EUM (see slide 127).

After implementing the outlined digital tools and completing the EUM framework, the SWBNO can then **reintroduce the agency to ratepayers and stakeholders through by launching a public information campaign**. Repositioning themselves as a competent regional leader is especially necessary as the agency seeks support for new funding streams to cover current and future organization costs.

How to set in motion:	<div>SWBNO Executive Director Charge</div> <div>The Executive Director (ED) of the SWBNO should spearhead the initiatives outlined in the “Earn Your Trust” campaign including the creation of a new public-facing dashboard, receiving approval from the SWBNO Board of Directors to replace the updated EUM Framework in place of the agency’s executive plan.</div>
How to sustain:	<div>SWBNO Budget Priorities</div> <div>The SWBNO Board of Directors (Board) need to approve a rate increase to cover both current and future operational costs. The ED of the SWBNO can set aside funding for a new dashboard in the next budget.</div>

# Recommendation: Prioritize Groundwater & Stormwater Plans

To function effectively both independently and collectively with other organizations, **the SWBNO must develop a Comprehensive Groundwater Management Approach jointly with other actors responsible for flood prevention in Southeast Louisiana**. This was in part done in the organization's *Green Infrastructure Plan* (2014), which placed the SWBNO at the center of facilitating relationship and initiatives between many different public, private and non-profit actors within the state. The City of New Orleans' *Resilient New Orleans Plan* (2016) also outlined city-wide water recommendations led by the SWBNO. In the development of a comprehensive groundwater management plan, SWBNO **needs to include outstanding recommendations from the 2014 Green Infrastructure Plan and the 2015 Resilient New Orleans Plan**.

The SWBNO must also **accelerate the encumbrance of capital funds related to surface water storage and usage, including the \$141 million awarded but unspent National Disaster Recovery Challenge grant monies** for the City's *Reshaping the Urban Delta* plan. This plan features a clear pathway to implementing rainwater capture systems, leveraging underutilized lots to mediate street inundation, and establishing a plan for public education to build public trust. **Yet despite receiving the funding to execute this plan, only \$26M of the total grant monies have been spent in the 8 years since receiving the award**. While this project falls into the SWBNO's scope of stormwater management, this project is being managed by the Stormwater & Green Infrastructure team in the City of New Orleans. As the new regional water management leader, the SWBNO should take ownership of monitoring the implementation of such projects to ensure award money is maximized in a timely manner. This is especially relevant as the SWBNO includes initiatives like *Reshaping the Urban Delta* in their comprehensive groundwater planning, and the City already has funding for implementation.

As New Orleans grapples with inundation, subsidence, and other extreme challenges resulting from climate change, the SWBNO will also need to include the secondary and tertiary impacts of flooding into comprehensive water management planning. One of the most pressing ramifications is saltwater intrusion.

While the SWBNO, the City of New Orleans, USACES, and other actors are addressing increasing salinity, these actions are disjointed and ad hoc. Being the regional water management leader, the SWBNO can position themselves as spearheading all water and related issues, such as salinity. To receive voter-approved funding for implementation, the SWBNO needs to **present rising groundwater salinity metrics in a manner that fosters public awareness**. The SWBNO can leverage data collected for their daily saltwater measurement dashboard with initiatives launched by other agencies to get public buy-in to this more robust water management strategy.

# Recommendation: Prioritize Groundwater and Stormwater Plans

The SWBNO should also work with the City of New Orleans to provide credits for implementing green infrastructure, as seen in the Washington D.C. Stormwater Retention Credit (see slide 128) case study. By leveraging both public and private dollars, the SWBNO can accomplish the implementation of comprehensive flood mitigation infrastructure while navigating around current funding gaps.

To manage the execution of the agency’s new comprehensive approach to groundwater management, the SWBNO **needs to create and maintain public-facing dashboards to track implementation activities**. This will be a regularly updated schedule that shows where projects are in the pipeline, which agency has ownership of them, and the expected completion date. Providing this dashboard encourages transparency for the public regarding water management actors. Having visibility across all water management projects can encourage efficiency, eliminate the silo effect of having agencies acting independently on similar tasks, and reduce redundancies.

How to set in motion:	SWBNO Executive Director Charge
	The ED of the SWBNO should create a working group consisting of water authorities, other government agencies, and public organizations across the Orleans Parish to create a regional comprehensive stormwater management plan. This plan will then be approved by the Board. The ED should also commission the creation of an implementation activity tracker.
How to sustain:	SWBNO Budget Priorities
	Dependent on a rate increase, the SWBNO Board should incorporate into the annual budget creation of a regional groundwater management plan, in addition to funding for an implementation dashboard.



## Recommendation: Overhaul Financial Structure

The SWBNO must undertake a rigorous multi-year financial planning effort to effectively identify funding gaps and areas in which the organization is underutilizing its available financial resources. This initiative must align the organization's mission, its expenditures, and its revenue streams.

The first necessary analysis is an **affordability benchmark study** to determine the realistic potential for revenue generation from ratepayers, which the SWBNO has done. In the agency's 2023 Annual Comprehensive report, SWBNO found that that income generated by water and sewer rates covers obligatory debt service, the cost of day-to-day operations, and maintenance. However, **there is inadequate funding to support the agency's ten-year capital improvement projects**. Without additional revenues, **the current rates won't be sufficient to fully recover system costs in future years**. As the organization explores adjusted and additional funding sources, the SWBNO must conduct further analysis to determine:

- A fee structure that replaces the current millage tax structure in a manner that balances equity and affordability with the organization's dire need to appropriately fund projects.
- The viability of implementing a stormwater management credit program to advance green infrastructure upgrades on private, underutilized property.
- The costs and benefits of outsourcing discrete organizational functions (e.g. billing; contractor management), including implications for service quality, transparency, accountability, and cost.
- The merits of joint debt issuance capacity.



# Recommendation: Overhaul Financial Structure

The need for overhauling the agency’s current financial structure is documented through years of public reporting, along with the more recent Act 763. The SWBNO must restructure their financial structure to adequately support current programming, manage their increased responsibility as a result of regaining ownership of all drainage, and to have the financial capacity to lead and implement a comprehensive groundwater management plan.

How to set in motion:	<div>SWBNO Board of Directors Charge</div> <div>The Board of the SWBNO should commission each of the necessary studies outlined to best prepare for implementing a rate increase that is equitable while providing the company with adequate operating revenue.</div>
How to sustain:	<div>SWBNO Budget Priorities</div> <div>The Board should take their findings to appropriately overhaul the agency’s financial structure.</div>

# Best Practice: Launch an “Earn Your Trust” Initiative

Complete the rollout of automated meter reading technology

## Austin, Texas: My ATX Water

Through Austin Water, the City of Austin has set out to upgrade all water meter infrastructure via My ATX Water. This program is a city-wide smart meter campaign that replaces analog meters with electronically read meters that are connected to a wireless network. Austin Water plans to replace more than 250,000 over the next four years after completing a pilot implementation phase in 2021.

The infrastructure upgrades will be accompanied by the introduction of an online customer portal with near real-time water use data, updated within 24 hours of consumption. This portal will notify customers when water use increases, or when possible, leaks are detected. My Water ATX is an important strategy designed to achieve water conservation goals as outlined in Austin Water's 100-year water plan.

Although Austin Water is rolling out the implementation of this program, the meter installation has been contracted out to Aclara Smart Grid Solutions. My ATX Water is being funded primarily through low interest loans secured from the Texas Water Development Board. As of July 2023, more than half of the analog meters have been replaced with over 125,000 My ATX Water digital meters. Additionally, nearly 3.5M portal communications have been sent out since October 2021 to more than 33,000 customers enrolled in the portal. The Continuous Use alerts provided through My ATX Water's customer portal has saved an estimated 227M gallons of leak savings for customers since the pilot phase in 2021.

# Best Practice: Setting Performance Priorities

## Effective Utility Management (EUM) Framework: Performance Scorecards and Dashboards

### Austin, Texas: Austin Water

In 2016, Austin Water adopted their first Effective Utility Management (EUM) based on the EPA's effective water utility management framework. While Austin Water utilized generic frameworks prior to 2015, creating a EUM allowed the organization to address water utility-specific operational needs while participating in a performance-oriented planning and budget process. Austin Water conducted an initial self assessment where they identified their Focus Four EUM priorities – Customer Satisfaction, Employee and Leadership Development, Infrastructure Stability, and Stakeholder Understanding and Support including Affordability. This first self-assessment resulted in the team developing a three-year roadmap and deliverable timeline focused on each of the Focus Four Attributes. There was a consistent and frequent cadence of meetings for staff of varying levels to encourage accountability of implementation for the three-year roadmap.

In 2019, the three-year roadmap had proven to be successful in each of the Focus Four Attributes. Some of the highlighted accomplishments were:

- The establishment of the Employee Leadership Development Assistant Director position.
- The establishment of a new infrastructure risk framework that defined standards for probability and consequences of asset failure.
- No rate increase for customers in 2019 and was projected to remain unchanged in 2020 and 2021.
- Enhanced funding for affordability programs to assist low-income customers in the Customer Assistance Program.

The adoption and successful implementation of the EUM gave Austin Water the capacity to expand their focus to programmatic planning, which included the introduction of the My ATX Water Plan and a Monthly Performance Dashboard. The Dashboard highlights key performance measures and strategic initiatives related to the Four Focus Attributes. The EUM included a second self assessment in 2020 and has also allowed for Austin Water to better align with the City of Austin's government. The organization released Austin Water 2023: A Strategic Plan which built upon recent planning efforts and complemented Austin's Strategic Plan.

# Best Practice: Prioritize Groundwater & Stormwater Management

## Innovative Financing of Stormwater Projects

### Washington, D.C.: Stormwater Retention Credit (SRC)

In Washington D.C., many organizations participate in planning initiatives related to flooding, stormwater, and groundwater management as a whole. Regarding the implementation of green infrastructure (GI), the District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) has identified a creative funding solution. Leading the district in all matters related to energy and environmental issues, the DOEE operated on a budget of about \$10M/year in 2013 around the time that a study revealed that the cost of GI implementation was about \$7B. Recognizing the importance of GI while grappling with funding restrictions, the DOEE decided to adopt Stormwater Retention Credit (SRC).

The SRC encourages third-party implementation of green infrastructure by allowing people to generate and sell credits to earn revenue for projects that reduce stormwater runoff. Between the program launch in 2013 and 2020, over 15 acres had been retrofitted with green infrastructure with another 9.6 acres in design, permitting, or construction phases. This increased the city's GI retention capacity by 466,000 gallons. The DOEE also created a Price Lock Program to offer revenue certainty financed by its stormwater impervious surface fee which was backed by an \$11.5M commitment by the city in 2017. This gave credit participants the security to set and control their rate.

The SRC program is used by both individual property owners and aggregate business owners. The DOEE also maintains a directory that pairs buyers with sellers and sellers with buyers, features an active map of GI projects in the region, and identifies interested participants such as maintenance providers, investors, engineers, and service providers or the like.

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The City Services Coalition supports overhauling the city’s drainage and water management systems. This complex task will require a range of structural, legal, legislative, and administrative changes. Despite that complexity, it must be done without unnecessary delay and should be seen as a major task for city officials elected this fall to new four-year terms.

In a December 2024 survey of New Orleans voters conducted for the Coalition, 80% of respondents said the S&WB needs “major” changes; an additional 15% said it needs “minor” changes. Only 2% said “no change” is needed. Big majorities of Black voters (81%) and White voters (78%) agreed on the need for major changes.

The Sewerage & Water Board’s current status as a multi-headed hybrid of city, state, executive, and legislative entities—often called a “management nightmare”—makes it difficult to assign responsibility for widely-reported problems in its management, billing, maintenance, and construction projects. Reforms that require state legislation can only be taken up annually, and sessions are sometimes limited as to subject matter.

It’s also difficult for the citizens of New Orleans to hold public officials accountable. The Board has authority over S&WB operations, but the Mayor’s service as its President can confuse or obscure how decisions are made and who should be held accountable for deficiencies in the delivery of services. Board members lack the authority to generate much-needed new revenue, and elected City Council members who have that authority may lack the political will to exercise it.

Our two former mayors, Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C. and Tom Murphy of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, both overhauled their city’s water systems. Lessons learned from their experiences, as well as from other cities across the nation, have informed our recommendations.

# New Orleans Water Authority

The Coalition recommends replacing the current Sewerage & Water Board structure with a new entity called the “New Orleans Water Authority” (NOWA) that would handle all matters related to drainage, pumps, pipes, water quality, sewerage, and disposal.

To transition from the current S&WB model to the new NOWA model, we recommend creation of a Water Authority Transition Committee, with a maximum one-year lifespan, to oversee the changeover. Full implementation would be made during this period and would require City Council approval.

The NOWA Transition Committee would have representatives appointed by the Mayor, City Council-at-Large members, the Governor, the New Orleans state legislative delegation, as well as management and engineering professionals who could be selected in accordance with statutory requirements similar to those governing the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities (R.S. 33:330.1). The Committee would elect its own chair and appoint NOWA’s top leadership team—a Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Engineer.

Once the transition period expires, the Transition Committee would become the NOWA Management Board and oversee the agency on a permanent basis. The director of NOWA will be part of a new Capital Cabinet proposed by the Coalition to coordinate all New Orleans infrastructure needs with every part of city government (Streets, etc.) and all public utilities (Entergy, Cox, etc.). It would also coordinate with federal state, and regional authorities, as needed.

The NOWA Transition Committee would determine:

- How proposed changes can be implemented legally, legislatively, and administratively, and whether changes to the Louisiana Constitution or the New Orleans Home Rule Charter are required. We believe that, to the extent possible, recommended changes must be combined into a coherent package that the people of our city can evaluate as a whole.
- While NOWA should be structured as a public agency under city control, we recommend that the NOWA Transition Committee (and its successor NOWA Management Board) should consider the option of contracting out certain services. This option should only be considered if it will (a) save money for New Orleans residents and businesses, (b) safeguard and sustain a high quality of management and customer service, (c) provide maximum protection for the city and its people, and (d) be implemented pursuant to full transparency, strong oversight, and public engagement. While the Coalition sees contracting out services as a possible option, the Coalition is not recommending privatizing NOWA (i.e., selling its assets to a private company for profit).

For public functions and operations that would remain part of the NOWA governmental structure, the Transition Committee would determine:





# New Orleans Water Authority

- How a Human Resources department can be created for NOWA that would operate outside of the existing civil service bureaucracy, which in many ways has become an impediment to streamlined management. The Transition Committee would establish NOWA's own merit hiring and firing process that would guard against political hiring and firing. This approach would give NOWA's leadership flexibility, authority, and responsibility for efficient human resource management and personnel administration. Existing employees of the S&WB would be able to reapply for their current or modified positions.
- How water rates will be set using a “formula rate plan” wherein all operating costs (personnel, materials, equipment, improvements, pensions, debt service, etc.) are totaled and submitted to a designated entity (such as the New Orleans City Council or the Louisiana Public Service Commission) that would be responsible for determining a fair and equitable rate for the customer base.
- How to institute a fair and equitable stormwater management fee to replace current property tax millages that are now dedicated to drainage.
- How a new Customer Ombudsman should be structured so that city residents and businesses can easily contact NOWA with service complaints—and expect helpful, immediate responses.
- How transparency, technology, management, employee training, contractual safeguards, and purchasing can be accomplished according to “best practice” standards.

Big change only works when it's handled competently and efficiently. The Coalition believes that it's now time to take action to create a new model with streamlined management, sensible structure, and full public transparency.

# ★ Regional Water Purification Facility

Safe drinking water for New Orleans and surrounding parishes is periodically challenged by saltwater intrusion. The Coalition recommends a Regional Water Purification Facility and proposes an east bank site that is located 12 miles upriver in St. Charles Parish, that is *already owned by the City*, and that *will not be affected by saltwater intrusion*.

A collaboration among Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parishes would offer safe drinking water for their residents, free them from the threat of saltwater intrusion, and afford economies of scale by consolidating water purification services. New Orleans *voters overwhelmingly support regionalizing water purification* by 88%.

The facility could be implemented through the following strategies:

- State legislation creating a political subdivision; or
- Cooperative endeavor agreements establishing an intergovernmental compact among the participating parishes and municipalities.

## C. Permitting

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

The Department of Safety and Permits has been well studied by Matrix Consulting Group and by the Office of Inspector General. The Coalition's recommendations are informed by their work.

We agree with these recommendations to improve departmental operations:

- Streamline the application process to *eliminate unnecessary tasks*.
- *Assure completeness* of the application before it is filed.
- Create a *task force of departmental personnel and developers* to identify choke points in the permitting process and devise solutions.
- Assign *a single staff person* to oversee a permit's progress through the process from start to finish.
- Establish an *online real-time permit tracking tool* that enables applicants to apply online and follow their permit through the process, which will save time for applicants and staff by reducing follow-up inquiries.
- Develop a *detailed checklist and mandate* its use for every inspection.
- Regularly *audit inspections and checklists for compliance* by in-house and third-party inspectors.

Several of these recommendations resonate with Cross-Cutting Themes that the Coalition has identified.

## C. Permitting

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

**Coordination and Collaboration:** The task force enables *structured collaboration* between public and private sector stakeholders. Assignment of a single person to serve as a “concierge” for permit applicants will provide *coordination among the multiple city offices* involved in permit reviews.

**Transparency:** The online tracking tool will serve *transparency* and build *public trust* in the permitting process. But contracting services out to third party inspectors can create problems with transparency; the department must address this problem by writing *transparency requirements* into those same contracts.

**Technology:** By moving services online, technology will ease the burdens on staff and applicants. But staff need *training and compliance monitoring* to use the available technology—for example, LAMA, where inspectors frequently fail to upload the required documentation. Noncompliance causes delay—and worse, sometimes facilitates and conceals corruption. Technology can assist in *monitoring compliance*.

**Personnel Problems:** Noncompliance speaks ultimately to personnel, which in turns raises questions about civil service as an obstacle to agency performance. The department needs greater control over human resources to develop recruitment and retention policies, align compensation with marketplace norms, and respond to high employee turnover and vacancy rates with an expedited hiring process. These needs lend additional weight to *recommended reforms in civil service* (page 210). Implementation should be informed by “Best Practices” such as Riverside, California’s One Stop Shop (page 148) and New York City’s “City of Yes” program (page 147).

## C. Permitting: Priority Challenges

The Matrix Consulting Group recently completed and released the *Evaluation of Permitting and Code Operations* report, a review of the City's permitting, code enforcement, and adjudication operations and processes. This report includes a detailed evaluation of current permitting review and code enforcement operations, as well as a roadmap to enhance services. We have reviewed this report and agree with the primary findings and recommendations presented. The content that follows in the Building Permitting Process section supports Matrix's findings and aims to elevate priority challenges and recommendations surfaced in our independent research and assessment.

### Lengthy and Overcomplicated Application Process

**Drivers and Root Causes:** The One Stop Shop is designed to provide a centralized point of contact for applicants to submit, track, and pay for permits online. Despite this, it faces several challenges that hinder its ability to effectively streamline application processes. Staff lack the knowledge and authority to provide meaningful assistance, often having to refer applicants to other divisions that are frequently unresponsive. There is no single person responsible for overseeing the entire permitting process, leading to a lack of accountability, particularly in cases where permits require approval from multiple departments. Additionally, permit technicians spend significant time on bureaucratic tasks, such as verifying contract details, which are not directly relevant to the core permitting mission, adding unnecessary delays and frustration for applicants. These issues contribute to inefficiencies and a fragmented experience for those navigating the city's permitting system.

A high attrition rate among staff and inadequate training programs result in a critical lack of technical expertise among reviewers. This turnover and insufficient training contribute to ineffective permit evaluations, delayed processing times, and an increased risk of errors and oversight. The shortage of experienced personnel undermines the department's ability to maintain consistent and accurate review standards, ultimately compromising the efficiency and reliability of the permitting process and impacting the city's development and building safety efforts.

### High Variability for Reviewing and Misconduct

**Drivers and Root Causes:** The permit application process suffers from a severe lack of standardization and an overreliance on staff discretion, leading to significant variability in review standards and inconsistent requirements for different applications. This inconsistency complicates the process for applicants and introduces opportunities for misconduct and corruption, as discretionary decisions can be manipulated. Additionally, weak oversight of third-party contractors responsible for inspections exacerbates these issues, allowing for potential abuses and undermining the integrity of the process.

# Background & Data: Lengthy & Overcomplicated Application Process

## Decrease in Permit Issuances

Between 2015 and 2019, the city consistently issued over 29,000 building permits annually, generating more than \$12 million in revenue per year. However, following staffing changes in 2020 within the permitting office (senior staffers who were terminated due to accusations of misconduct) permit issuance dropped below 23,000, between 2021 and 2022 and revenues dropped by more than \$1.4 million.

## Long Average Processing Times

The average processing times for permits have increased significantly from 2020 to 2023 compared to previous years. The average wait for a permit in the city is around 6 to 8 weeks.

## Understaffed Department of Safety and Permits

Contractors and builders say the problem isn't a lack of work but an epidemic of projects awaiting construction permits going on across the city, driven by an overwhelmed and understaffed Safety and Permits Department at City Hall. The department has faced significant staffing challenges, including high vacancy rates and the impact of corruption scandals, which have further strained its ability to process permits efficiently. The department has turned to external third-party inspection services to cover the understaffing issue, which has caused variability in quality and decreased oversight over the permitting process.

## Fragmented Processes

More than 70% of survey respondents said the City does not "speak with one voice" regarding permitting, which Matrix said is "an extremely strong negative finding for any city." Permitting is challenging in many cities since it tends to involve many different departments, Matrix said, but it is exceptionally bad in New Orleans.

# Background & Data: High Variability for Reviewing and Misconduct

## Inadequate and Inconsistent Inspection Practices

City inspectors did not perform in-person inspections for 20% of the inspections selected for review. 40% of the inspections observed for this audit were completed in ten minutes or less, indicating a lack of thoroughness. City inspectors also failed to upload required documentation into LAMA, violating S&P policies and procedures. In a sample of more than 3,000 inspection reports, 17% of them lacked any photographs. The auditors reviewed GPS data from inspectors' vehicles to determine that, in half the cases they looked at, staffers failed to park within 1,000 feet of an inspected site on the day of the inspection. Although this is not conclusive proof that an inspection was faked, it is significant cause for concern.

## Evidence of Misconduct and Bribery

The Morgan Lewis, an outside law firm hired to investigate City inspectors, interviewed 25 current or former city inspectors and the report says nearly every one of them alleged that other inspectors were involved in "bribery activity." Following the crash of a commercial construction project that killed three workers, the department received yet another external audit. This report found that inspection reports for this building had been falsified and that widespread falsification of reports was a common issue in the city.

## Lack of Oversight and Accountability

In 2020, 62% of all building inspections in the city were conducted by third-party inspectors, raising significant concerns about the integrity and oversight of these inspections due to the City's limited capacity to supervise them effectively. This lack of oversight not only compromises the quality of inspections but also exacerbates transparency issues, as privatizing essential functions like permitting and inspections can obscure accountability and public trust.

Without strong mechanisms to ensure third-party inspectors adhere to consistent and rigorous standards, the City risks undermining openness and fairness in its processes. An internal audit further revealed that residents perceive the permitting department as disjointed and inconsistent in both its operations and communication. These shortcomings foster distrust and reinforce an unfavorable experience for those striving to invest in and grow the community through building and development.

# Recommendations Summary

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Right-size application requirements and ensure consistency and transparency of application needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an ongoing task force of Department of Safety and Permits staff and developers to address permitting process barriers and recommend changes to implement.</li> <li>• Eliminate unnecessary application requirements or reviews where appropriate.</li> <li>• Promulgate application requirements via rulemaking and ensure application completeness prior to starting review.</li> <li>• Elicit ongoing feedback from developers to determine what problems persist. This can be done through customer service surveys, interviews, or periodic focus groups</li> </ul>
<b>Streamline application review process and improve customer service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the one-stop shop and centralize permitting review to expedite applications.</li> <li>• Assign a central point person to oversee each application from start to finish and address any issues promptly.</li> <li>• Establish via notice-and-comment rulemaking clear review periods and notification requirements based on permit types.</li> <li>• Publish real-time application review status on the permitting website.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve staff capacity, training, and quality control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen recruitment and hiring processes to increase capacity and reduce staff burden.</li> <li>• Update and enforce Safety and Permits policies and procedures via promulgation of regulations to ensure quality control .</li> <li>• Implement stricter oversight and regular audits of third-party inspectors to prevent misconduct.</li> <li>• Provide periodic training and resources to enhance the expertise and service of permit reviewers.</li> </ul>



# Recommendation: Right-Size Application Requirements and Ensure Consistency and Transparency of Application Needs

Stakeholders have stated that the City's permitting process may be burdened by excessive application requirements and unclear application needs. Additionally, the 2024 Matrix Permitting report calls out specific areas where application requirements can be eliminated or right-sized to fit certain application types. For example, the report recommends eliminating the requirement for a copy of the contract for building permit applications and to create a list of building permit types that do not require zoning or Department of Public Works review.

To create a comprehensive plan and approach to right sizing application requirements for specific application types and ensuring there are no excess application requirements that may slow down the review process, the City should consider **convening a task force of Department of Safety and Permits staff and developers to better understand barriers permitting process and recommend changes to implement** modeled after New York City's City of Yes initiative (see slide 147). The task force will be with recommending feasible changes to application requirements where there is either redundancy or where requirements do not significantly contribute to safety or compliance. **Eliminating unnecessary application requirements** can reduce the burden on applicants and expedite the approval process.

Furthermore, **promulgating clear and comprehensive application requirements** via rulemaking is essential for fostering transparency and trust. It is important to make these requirements publicly available and easily accessible, ensuring that applicants have a clear understanding of what is needed before they begin the review process. The City should also **ensure that applications are checked for completeness upon submission** but before they move on to review. New York City's permitting process includes these types of checks during the "pre-application" stage where informational meetings are held with the applicant before they enter formal review. Incomplete applications should be rejected with a notification detailing missing elements. This approach will streamline the process and support reviewers in expediting their review process.

## Recommendation: Right Size Application Requirements and Ensure Consistency and Transparency of Application Needs

Finally, the City should **elicit ongoing feedback from developers to identify and address persistent challenges** in the permitting process. This can be achieved through customer service surveys, interviews, or periodic focus groups, providing valuable insights into areas for improvement and ensuring the process evolves to meet the needs of its users. Regular feedback loops will not only help refine application requirements but also build trust and collaboration between the City and its stakeholders.

<b>How to set in motion:</b>	<b>Executive Directive</b>
	The CAO should establish a Permitting Process Task Force consisting of Department of Safety and Permits staff, developers, and other stakeholders. The task force will identify redundant or burdensome application requirements, such as contract copies for building permits, and recommend updates modeled after New York City's "City of Yes" initiative.
<b>How to sustain:</b>	<b>City Council Approval of Regulations</b>
	The City should formally adopt revised application requirements through agency rulemaking approved by the Council, publish them online in a clear format, and implement a pre-application completeness check system.

# Recommendation: Streamline Application Review Process and Improve Customer Service

To streamline application review processes and enhance customer service, it is essential to **strengthen the City's one-stop shop** by refining its operations and centralizing permitting review. Stakeholders have noted that the one-stop shop has become less effective in recent years. The 2024 Matrix report highlights significant issues, including inadequate staffing and insufficient expertise to handle technical inquiries about the city's zoning code, building standards, or inspector availability. These deficiencies often result in calls being forwarded to other departments, which may not respond in a timely manner. Furthermore, once an application is routed to other divisions for review, one-stop shop staff are no longer involved, leaving applicants responsible for tracking their application's status across multiple entities.

While New Orleans' one-stop shop is similar in structure to Riverside's One Stop Shop Permitting Center, it can learn from Riverside's operational practices to improve customer service and efficiency. Riverside's model brings all city departments involved in the permitting process under one roof, providing applicants with easy access to services through features such as an express elevator and a concierge-style system. New Orleans should enhance its model by adopting operational improvements from Riverside, such as **assigning a central point person to oversee each application** from start to finish. This role would ensure consistent communication with applicants and help resolve issues quickly, regardless of the application's stage or the department handling it.

Additionally, New Orleans can draw from New York City's Zoning Help Desk to address the issue of limited technical expertise. New York's model provides applicants with on-call, knowledgeable staff who can triage zoning, building code, and permitting questions without forwarding requests to other departments. Implementing a similar system in New Orleans would improve the responsiveness and efficiency of the one-stop shop.

# Recommendation: Streamline Application Review Process and Improve Customer Service

**Setting clear review periods and notification requirements based on permit types** is crucial for managing expectations and enhancing transparency. By defining specific timeframes for each type of permit, applicants will know exactly how long the review process should take, reducing uncertainty and frustration. For example, New York City permit reviewers track how long application review is in their hands (versus in the hands of the applicants) and has set targets for the number of days each review should take. Additionally, **publishing real-time application review statuses on the permitting website** is a powerful tool for transparency and customer satisfaction. By providing applicants with up-to-date information on the status of their submissions, the city can reduce the number of inquiries and follow-up calls, freeing up staff to focus on processing applications.

## How to set in motion: Executive Directive and Regulations

The CAO should issue an executive directive and the department should promulgate regulations to implement improvements to the one-stop shop, such as centralizing all permitting functions under one roof, assigning a central point person to oversee each application, hiring knowledgeable professionals to handle technical inquiries without unnecessary referrals, and recommendations from the 2024 Matrix Report. The directive should also set clear expectations for collaboration between departments and improved customer service standards.

## How to sustain: City Council Budget Priorities

The City Council should prioritize funding in the annual budget to invest in the one-stop shop's operations, staffing, and technology, including resources for comprehensive staff training, the implementation of real-time application tracking systems, and other technological improvements.

## Recommendation: Improve Staff Capacity, Training, and Quality Control

The City should create a recruitment and retention strategy for the Department of Safety and Permits to ensure that compensation and benefits are competitive with market rates. The City should also ensure that the hiring process is streamlined and that new hires have a swift and seamless onboarding process. By attracting, onboarding, and retaining highly qualified personnel, the department can **increase its capacity and reduce the burden on existing staff**. This involves not only hiring more permit reviewers but also ensuring that new hires possess the necessary skills and experience to perform their duties effectively. The City should also keep track of each permit reviewer's workload and projected workload to make informed decisions about the allocation of responsibilities and targeted review timelines.

**Updating and enforcing safety and permit policies and procedures** is essential for ensuring quality control. Clear, comprehensive guidelines must be established and consistently applied to all inspections and permitting activities. This includes developing detailed inspection checklists and mandating their use for every inspection. Regular training sessions should be conducted to keep staff updated on any changes to policies and procedures, ensuring that all employees are well-versed in the latest standards and practices. Additionally, **implementing stricter oversight and regular audits of third-party inspectors** will help prevent misconduct and ensure that all inspections are conducted with integrity and accuracy. The Office of the Inspector General's 2022 Department of Safety and Permits Audit points out that while there are standards in place for third party inspectors, there is a lack of central oversight, enforcement, and accountability mechanisms.

# Recommendation: Improve Staff Capacity, Training and Quality Control

**Providing periodic staff training and resources** is vital for enhancing the expertise and customer service skills of permit reviewers. Ongoing professional development opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and online courses, should be made available to all staff members. The 2024 Matrix report outlines the need for additional training in zoning and development process expertise, especially for those staffed in the one stop shop. The report also recommends conducting a technology skills need assessment to identify current technology training needs and create a program to address these needs. These trainings will not only improve staff's technical knowledge but also equip them with the skills needed to provide excellent customer service. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, the department can ensure that its staff remains competent, motivated, and capable of delivering high-quality services to the community.

How to set in motion:	<b>Executive Directive</b>  The CAO should issue an executive directive to develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for the Department of Safety & Permits. This directive should include streamlining the hiring process, ensuring compensation and benefits are competitive, and creating a seamless onboarding program. The directive should also mandate improved oversight and accountability standards for inspectors, including third-party inspectors, through regular audits and enforcement mechanisms to uphold integrity and quality control.
How to sustain:	<b>City Council Budget Priorities</b>  The City Council should allocate funding to support competitive compensation, ongoing staff training, and updated policies and procedures for the Department of Safety & Permits. Investments should prioritize resources for enforcing oversight and accountability standards for all inspectors, including audits and clear reporting mechanisms for misconduct.

# Best Practice: Right-Size Application Requirements and Ensure Consistency and Transparency of Application Needs

Convene a task force of S&P staff and developers address permitting process barriers

## New York City, New York: “City of Yes” Permitting Task Force

In New York City, the "City of Yes" initiative was launched to create a more responsive and efficient permitting process, aimed at fostering economic growth while addressing pressing urban challenges. The initiative encompasses several key goals, including streamlining regulatory processes, simplifying application requirements, and enhancing the overall user experience for businesses and developers. By identifying and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, the program seeks to encourage investment and development across various sectors, particularly in housing and infrastructure.

Central to the success of the "City of Yes" initiative is the task force convened by the Department of City Planning. **This task force includes representatives from multiple city agencies involved in the permitting process, as well as a diverse group of developers and industry stakeholders.** This collaborative body was tasked with examining the current permitting framework to pinpoint inefficiencies and redundancies. The task force had firsthand insights into the challenges faced by applicants and by city staff, enabling it to recommend practical solutions that can be implemented to streamline review processes.

By focusing on right-sizing application requirements, the initiative has led to the **reduction of excessive documentation** and expedited review times for permit applications. Enhanced digital tools also have been introduced, allowing applicants to submit their materials online and track their progress in real time. Additionally, clearer guidelines and centralized resources have improved communication and transparency, making it easier for developers to understand what is required of them.

# Best Practice: Streamline Application Review Process and Improve Customer Service

Publish real time application review statuses on the permitting website.

## Riverside, California: One Stop Shop Permit Center

To enhance New Orleans' One Stop Permitting Shop, the city could draw inspiration from Riverside, California, which undertook significant reforms to improve its permitting system. Riverside discovered that a lack of data on wait times obscured underlying issues, such as confusing instructions and prolonged call wait times. In response, they launched an eight-month initiative to gather data and implement new metrics for accountability.

A dedicated seven-person committee now oversees Riverside's program, which **operates an in-person One Stop Shop on a single floor of city hall**. This approach allows for a streamlined experience where a designated staff member triages each visitor, guiding them to the appropriate department and setting clear expectations regarding wait times. By employing queue management software, Riverside can effectively manage customer flow and minimize frustration.

In addition to their physical infrastructure, Riverside has invested in a robust digital platform called the Public Permit Portal, powered by the POSSE Land Management System. This portal enables users to submit applications, pay fees, schedule inspections, and track their progress remotely, available 24/7. Notably, **it provides live updates on wait times, comprehensive guides for various permits**, and user tutorials to facilitate navigation. To improve its permitting process, New Orleans should consider implementing a similar dual approach. Live wait times are a critical tool to help manage citizen experiences and to increase trust in the permitting department. Tutorials also provide a needed assist to those trying to navigate the permitting process. By adopting these best practices from Riverside, New Orleans can tackle its permitting challenges head-on, reduce wait times, and create a more transparent, efficient, and user-centric system that better serves its community.



# Best Practice: Streamline Application Review Process and Improve Customer Service

Strengthen the one-stop shop and centralize permitting review and expedite applications.

## New York City, New York: Zoning Help Desk

In addition to the applicant portal run by New York City's Buildings division, the Department of City Planning houses the Zoning Help Desk, a multi-service in-person office, phone line, website, and FAQ's page. The Help Desk **offers dedicated staff who can provide comprehensive zoning-related services** while the department's online presence answers many commonly-asked questions, effectively extending the department's capacity and creating a more understanding experience for residents.

Anticipating resident needs is a highly valuable tactic to improve the permitting experience. By identifying and answering commonly-asked questions, the Zoning Help Desk saves the city time as residents do not have to call or make an in-person visit to receive their information. New Orleans could **extend department capacity** and positively impact customer experience by adopting a similar model.

## Works Cited

- Evaluation of Permitting and Code Enforcement Operations, Matrix Consulting Group (2024) [[LINK](#)]
- Department of Safety and Permits Inspections Audit, New Orleans Office of Inspector General (2022)
- City of New Orleans Office of Business and External Services Permitting and Licensing Case Load Dashboards

# D. Public Safety & Justice

## Synopsis and Strategies for Success

The Coalition's recommendations for public safety and justice reforms fall into four silos:

- Coordination and Collaboration
- NOPD Working Conditions
- Reducing Jail Population
- Civilianizing NOPD Activities

**Coordination and Collaboration:** Parochial and municipal officials, such as the DA and NOPD, work together with Judges in the state court system toward a shared goal: a well-administered criminal justice system. But they do not always “work together” in pursuit of that goal. *Coordination* is an essential element in the Coalition's plan for public safety and justice reforms.

The Public Safety and Justice Council will be central in fostering collaboration among public sector officials and private sector stakeholders (e.g., nonprofits and community-based organizations). The Council could be guided by Best Practice in Montgomery County, Maryland (page 168). The Council must set clear mandates for the NOPD to *produce quicker lab results* and for the courts to *accelerate processing times*.

The Council should also take responsibility for coordinating efforts to *divert appropriate individuals from incarceration into treatment* by law enforcement and mental health services such as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program and Mobile Crisis Intervention Unit (MCIU) (page 167). NOPD officers need *mandatory training sessions* about the proper use of these jail diversion resources.

## D. Public Safety & Justice

### Synopsis and Strategies for Success

Coordination in the realm of technology is also important. The Coalition has recommended that the City's Chief Information Officer (CIO) be responsible for *integration and functionality of computer systems across municipal and parochial agencies* (page 210).

**NOPD Working Conditions:** For more than a decade, New Orleans has suffered grievous declines in the number of police officers—for example, a 24% reduction in force from 1200 officers in 2018 to 917 in 2023. Since 2021, the NOPD has been losing more officers than it gets in new hires. Correspondingly, NOPD response times grew from an average of 80 minutes during 2014-2020 to 146 and 130 minutes in 2022 and 2023. The Coalition recommends *improving retention* of officers by *improving their working conditions*, ranging from improvements in the troubled physical infrastructure where officers work and extending to improved benefits on the job.

When asked in a survey, officers identified their *four top desired benefits* as: 2% longevity pay, annual step increases, equipment upgrades, and sick pay days paid one for one-for-one at retirement, all seemingly appropriate and achievable. In addition, the department could *transform costs that officers typically pay out-of-pocket and get reimbursed into direct benefits provided by the department*, such as uniform allowances.

Prioritizing *capital and janitorial maintenance* is also crucially related to improving working conditions and facility upkeep. Broken air conditioning, sealed windows that prevent proper ventilation, and infestations of rats and roaches degrade morale. The NOPD should also *increase the inventory of essential supplies* and *streamline internal supply management processes* to keep stations in good working order.

## D. Public Safety & Justice

### Synopsis and Strategies for Success

These recommendations to improve benefits and facilities must be accompanied by fully-informed discussions about pay plan adjustments. The City should undertake *data-driven peer benchmarking and budgetary projections* in advance of such sessions.

**Reducing Jail Population:** New Orleans’ steadily increasing jail population (2022: 967, 2023: 1120, 2024: 1448—well beyond the City Council’s maximum of 1250) owes much to inadequate use of assessment risk tools. When administered the Public Safety Assessment (PSA), nearly 60% among those being held on violent charges in the Orleans jail rated risk levels of 1 or 2—the lowest ratings for risk, but nonetheless still behind bars. In 2023, 22% of the jail population did not even receive a PSA assessment. New Orleans might take instruction from neighboring Jefferson Parish and its Code 6 program (page 169), which has an *automatic triage system*.

Bail policies also play a role in jail overcrowding. The City Council’s approval of a Municipal Bail Ordinance in 2017 made desirable changes. It’s time for a further bail reform to *include minor felony offenses*, and the new Mayor in 2026 should *propose an appropriate amendment* to the City Council.

**Civilianizing NOPD Activities:** Every law enforcement function transferred to a civilian means one more police officer on the streets. Both Baltimore (page 171) and Houston (page 172) have had exemplary success in transitioning former police jobs into a civilian workforce—notably, *crime lab, fleet maintenance, and records management functions*. The Coalition recommends a similar approach in New Orleans.

# D. Public Safety & Justice

## Synopsis and Strategies for Success

New Orleans' crime lab has struggled with accreditation and a large backlog of untested rape kits. Its distressing 6.75% clearance rate on rape cases falls far short of even the disappointing national averages of 33-38% and is near the bottom of comparably-sized cities in clearance of rapes. The crime lab should be considered for "civilianization."

Houston's "Crime Lab" has become its *Forensic Science Center*, a change in more than name only since the newly independent entity is populated with subject matter experts who focus on purely forensic tasks. The Center no longer has a conflict of interest where its results might be influenced by investigative pressures from law enforcement. The members of its Board of Directors are a diverse group of professionals from the public sector, community organizations, health care centers, and academic institutions. New Orleans can learn from Houston's model.

New Orleans 360 is modeled after the successful Omaha 360 program that engages local CBOs to ameliorate the ill effects of crime and poverty in neighborhoods. Omaha's 360 Violence intervention and Prevention Model is a community-based approach to reduce gun violence by direct intervention and addressing root causes. Its nationally recognized strategy focuses on community engagement to build stronger police-community relationships. Its core components are collaboration, prevention, intervention, enforcement, reentry, support services, and sustainability.

The New Orleans Data-Informed Community Engagement (NODICE) system currently operates in two under-resourced neighborhoods. NODICE relies on data-driven, equitable decision-making with a focus on public safety, quality of life, and economic development to direct resources toward areas of greatest need.

## D. Public Safety & Justice: Priority Challenges

### Overcrowded Jails

**Drivers and Root Causes:** The criminal justice system faces inefficiencies driven by high violent crime rates, slow court processing times, and weak coordination between the jail and other components of the system. Overcrowded jails are largely a result of harsh bail practices and an overreliance on pre-trial detention, keeping many in custody without timely resolution. The court system, plagued by case backlogs and insufficient resources, exacerbates these delays.

Compounding the issue, poor communication and data sharing between the Orleans Parish jail, courts, and DA lead to prolonged detention and inefficiency in managing cases. Despite NOLA's Criminal Justice Committee's mandate to oversee and reform the criminal justice system, the Committee has struggled with transparency and efficient resource allocation. Additionally, there is a notable disconnect between the Committee, the District Attorney's office, the Police Department, and community organizations, leading to fragmented efforts and delayed reforms. This lack of cohesive strategy and collaboration has hindered the City's ability to implement comprehensive and effective criminal justice reforms.

### Insufficient Police Response

**Drivers and Root Causes:** Poor working conditions and outdated infrastructure, driven by years of underinvestment, have led to low morale and high turnover among officers. The Department's budget allocation is significant, with over half of the Criminal Legal system's \$335.6 million budget in 2025 going to police, but these resources are not being effectively utilized. The Department's challenges stem less from a shortage of funds and more from inefficiencies in deploying them to properly support its workforce. This ineffective use of resources leaves remaining officers overburdened. Under the federal consent decree, the Department has made substantial strides toward reforming its practices, achieving reductions in serious use-of-force incidents, and other improvements. As it enters a critical two-year sustainment period, the NOPD must continue this progress, ensuring sustained compliance to build a more accountable and effective policing model.

Additionally, the Department is utilizing its personnel inefficiently, with sworn officers performing tasks that could be handled by civilians, thereby reducing their availability for critical street duties. Hiring to fill these roles is hindered by slow and cumbersome civil service processes, making it difficult to bring in the specialized talent needed to support the Department's operations more effectively.

# Background & Data: Overcrowded Jails

## Jail Population Surpasses City Council Imposed Limit

The jail's population swelled past its maximum capacity under a City Council-imposed limit of 1,250. As of September 2024, there were 1,448 people in Sheriff's Office custody, according to the City of New Orleans' jail population dashboard. Incarcerations rates in New Orleans are consistently higher than national averages.

## Harsh Pre-Trial Detention Practices Contribute to Jail Population Increase

In 2023, the average daily jail population was 1,120, representing a nearly 15% increase from 2022, when it was 976. This surge in incarceration is largely attributed to the system's heavy reliance on pre-trial detention, where individuals are held in custody for extended periods before their cases are resolved. This inefficiency is compounded by New Orleans' bail practices, which disproportionately affect those charged with non-serious offenses.

## Decline in Jail Turnover Rate Suggest Slow Court Operations

The decline in the jail turnover rate highlights another dimension of inefficiency. In 2023, the average weekly jail turnover rate was 27%, compared to 31% in 2022 for jails of comparable size. The turnover rate measures the "flow" of people in and out of the jail; lower turnover rates suggest that individuals are being held for longer periods without resolution. This slow movement of cases exacerbates overcrowding, leading to inefficiencies in jail operations and contributing to the overall sluggishness of the criminal justice system.



# Background & Data: Overcrowded Jails

## Lack of Streamlined Processing

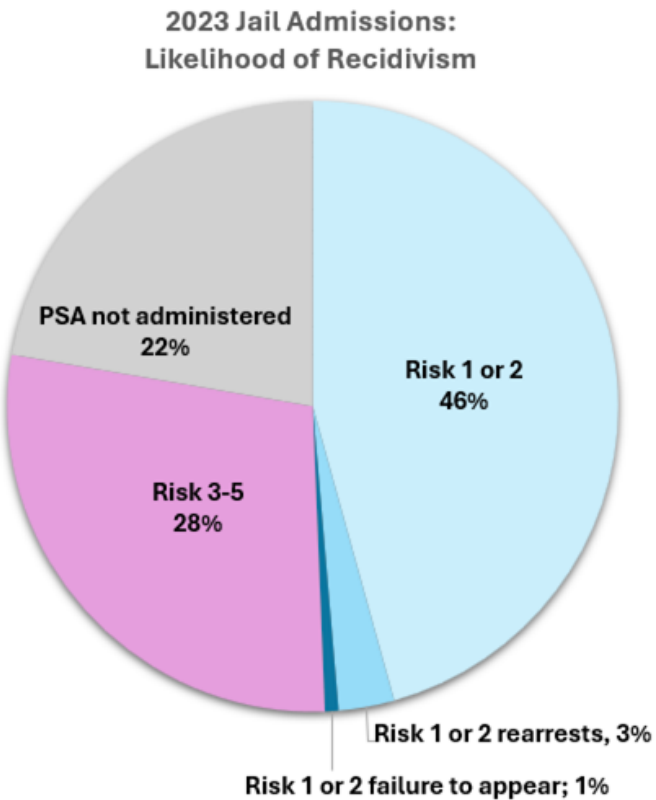
The Public Safety Assessment (PSA) is a data-driven tool designed to evaluate the risk levels of individuals arrested, and their likelihood of reoffending or failing to appear in court if released pretrial. In 2023, the PSA indicated that nearly 60% of individuals held in the Orleans Parish Jail on violent charges were categorized as 'Risk Level 1' or 'Risk Level 2'—the lowest levels of risk in the PSA model. Despite facing serious charges, these individuals were assessed as posing a minimal threat to public safety (see chart on the right).

It is important to distinguish between the severity of the charge reported at booking—a metric that can be subjective and may involve discretionary decisions—and an individual's actual likelihood of recidivism or failure to appear in court. The PSA assessment is specifically designed to identify individuals who, regardless of the severity of the charge against them, are unlikely to be arrested on new charges or to miss their court dates. This objective risk evaluation provides a more accurate indication of public safety risks than charge severity alone.

The continued detention of low-risk individuals is contributing significantly to the overcrowding of the Orleans Paris Jail. As the 2023 data indicates, 42% of the jail population was held on violent charges, yet the PSA rated a substantial portion of these individuals as low risk. Additionally, only 3% of those arrested throughout the year had been rearrested after release, underscoring that most individuals with low-risk assessments do not reoffend, regardless of the charges they face.

Also importantly, note that the PSA was not administered for 22% of the jail population in 2023, meaning nearly a quarter of detainees did not receive a structured risk assessment. This lack of assessment may contribute to the detention of individuals who could otherwise be deemed low risk and safely managed outside of jail, further straining jail resources and exacerbating overcrowding.

This accumulation of low-risk individuals, alongside those who have not undergone risk assessment, highlights a pressing challenge: resources are being allocated to detain individuals who, based on PSA data, could potentially be managed pretrial in the community. The current approach of housing low-risk individuals awaiting trial adds strain to an already overburdened system, inflating both the population numbers and the operational demands on the jail.



# Background & Data: Insufficient Police Response

## Increased Average Response Times

The average police response times in 2022 and 2023 were 146 minutes and 130 minutes, respectively. These times are a significant increase from prior years. The average response time from 2014-2020 was no greater than 80 minutes.

## Decline in Police Force

The NOPD has experienced a significant decline in its police force. As of April 30, 2023, the force size stood at 917 officers, which represents a 24 percent decrease from approximately 1,200 officers in 2018. Since 2021, the NOPD has consistently lost more officers to retirement, termination, or separation than it has been able to replace with new hires. Between May 1, 2021, and April 30, 2023, the NOPD lost a total of 287 officers.

## Ineffective Recruitment and Training

The lack of adequate resources and an outdated infrastructure impairs the NOPD's ability to train its recruitment staff effectively. Not all recruitment staff receive training on hiring a qualified and diverse workforce, including essential knowledge of employment law. Additionally, the NOPD has not established specific recruitment-related performance measures, which can hinder its ability to attract and retain quality officers.

## Officers Unavailable for Duty

The current on-board level of NOPD officers is the smallest in decades. Among the remaining officers, some are unavailable for law enforcement duties due to administrative requirements and training, light duty status, leave due to injuries, or other issues. As of May 19, 2023, 72 officers were either unavailable for duty or on limited duty.

As officers become unavailable for duty, the need to civilianize other roles in the department becomes greater. Sworn officers are often performing tasks that could be handled by civilians. This inefficiency reduces their availability for critical street duties. Slow and cumbersome civil service processes hinder the creation of new civilian positions within the NOPD. While civilian hiring may be quicker than hiring police officers, it is still more time-consuming than hiring for many other jobs.

# Recommendations Summary

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an operational team with clear mandates and goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the Public Safety &amp; Justice Council via ordinance and through cooperative endeavor agreements to ensure representative membership from the Courts, Jail, District Attorney, and Police.</li> <li>Ensure that the Council has clear mandates including enacting a plan for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerating Court processing times;</li> <li>Eliminating inefficiency in return of lab results as a barrier to the release of low-risk individuals; and</li> <li>Introducing automatic population triage to efficiently manage and reduce jail populations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen jail diversion and recidivism interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train NOPD and other policing entities operating in NOLA to fully leverage jail diversion resources.</li> <li>Develop and invest in recidivism programs and interventions that address the root causes of re-offense and improve long-term public safety.</li> <li>Expand on municipal bail ordinance to create stronger alternatives to jail for those people facing lower-level charges.</li> <li>Strengthen partnerships between NOPD and CBOs providing core mental health services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a court-approved list of jail alternatives and diversion programs to increase visibility of effective programs and ensure consistency across the courts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Improve NOPD working conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake careful data-driven peer benchmarking and budgetary projections in advance of any collective bargaining agreement negotiations.</li> <li>Increase on-hand inventory of supplies and accelerate internal supply management processes.</li> <li>Prioritize capital and janitorial maintenance to improve working conditions and facility upkeep for officers.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus police time on core police functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition mental health crisis response to health professionals.</li> <li>Transition crime lab, fleet management, and records management to civilian experts.</li> <li>Set up via ordinance independent entities for crime lab, fleet management, and records with representation from CBOs and across the criminal justice system to ensure accountability and specialized oversight.</li> </ul>

# Recommendation: Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an Operational Team

To address the inefficiencies and lack of coordination within New Orleans' criminal justice system, the City should **convert the Criminal Justice Committee into a Public Safety and Justice Council with clear mandates and goals**. The Public Safety and Justice Council should serve as a central body guiding the Mayor's, Sheriff's and Public Defender's offices, the Orleans Parish Jail, the City Council, and external stakeholders. Coordination among all these entities is crucial for a modernized and effective criminal justice system. Communication by the jail, courts, and District Attorney's office in a shared entity representing the criminal legal system as a whole can ensure consistency in service provision and can help identify trends that might be causing unfair outcomes or contributing to inefficient performance in each individual sector, as well as inefficiencies in the system more broadly.

**Operational team:** Currently the Committee serves as an advisory body and consists of 5 City Councilmembers. Drawing on best practices from places like Montgomery County, the City should charge the Council to coordinate more effectively among key criminal justice actors and to develop actionable recommendations informed by their shared expertise. The Public Safety and Justice Council should function as a coordinating body among municipal and parochial officials as well as external stakeholders.

**Clear mandates:** The Public Safety and Justice Council should be charged with a specific set of tasks. Among their priorities should be the following:

- Create a plan to upgrade shared technology across the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), the Orleans Parish Jail, and the courts that will enhance their capacity to perform basic functions in a coordinated manner. A primary objective should be a plan to **accelerate court processing times** and improve accuracy. Technological modernization is crucial for creating a more efficient and transparent system.
- Devise a plan for recruiting best-in-class civilians to perform roles related to evidence processing, particularly within the Crime Lab, which would professionalize these critical functions. Civilianizing these roles can facilitate specialized and efficient handling of evidence, ultimately supporting more accurate and timely investigations and prosecutions. The primary objective of this strategy should be to **eliminate inefficiency in return of lab results as a barrier to the release of low-risk individuals**. The Council should be held accountable for speeding up the return of lab results.

# Recommendation: Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an Operational Team

Implement a better management strategy for the jail population and handle overcrowding through an **automatic population triage system**. Drawing inspiration from Jefferson Parish’s Code 6 program, New Orleans should implement a risk-based triage system to manage the jail population more effectively. The Code 6 program’s utility lies in its risk-based approach, where detainees’ criminal histories are carefully examined and inmates are assigned a numerical score reflecting their risk level. High-risk detainees are recommended for maximum security, while low-risk individuals are either sorted into the jail or released under specific conditions.

The City IT department headed by the CIO should lead the infrastructure and core technology layers of the Criminal Justice System, leveraging the City’s Azure-based Cloud Platform as the foundational "home" for agency systems. While agencies may manage their own systems, the City IT's infrastructure can provide the most reliable and efficient platform, ensuring integration and functionality across agencies. To succeed, this role must be supported with appropriate budgets, aligning responsibility with resources.

**How to set in motion:**    **Executive Directive**

A CAO directive or an ordinance should explicitly update the charge, composition, expectations, and mandate of the Public Safety & Justice Council.

**How to sustain:**            **City Council Budget Priorities**

City Council members must ensure that the City's next operating budget prioritizes IT infrastructure upgrades necessary for real-time data sharing among the courts, DA, Sherrieff, and NOPD.

## Recommendation: Strengthen Jail Diversion and Recidivism Interventions

The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, Mobile Crisis Intervention Unit (MCIU), and Municipal Bail Ordinance in New Orleans represent significant strides in addressing the complex issues of jail diversion and recidivism. LEAD allows police officers to redirect low-level offenders engaged in drug activity or prostitution to community-based services instead of jail, while MCIU provides a rapid response to mental health emergencies, aiming to reduce criminal justice involvement for individuals with mental illness. However, the current framework for LEAD, which is limited to three districts, relies on police discretion to identify eligible individuals and call a caseworker, a decision often shaped by the DA's criteria. This process excludes public health perspectives, potentially limiting the program's reach and effectiveness.

The City can build on existing momentum by expanding LEAD citywide and incorporating public health experts into the decision-making process for diversion eligibility. This broader approach would ensure that decisions are informed by behavioral health and social needs, reducing bias and increasing access to diversion programs. LEAD has demonstrated success, moving 15 clients into permanent housing and facilitating 262 connections to substance use, mental health, and medical treatment. Prioritizing consistent funding and expanding both LEAD and the MCIU program would amplify their impact and provide a more equitable system. Continuing support for the MCIU's Community Advisory Board will ensure that entities within the legal criminal legal system continue to collaborate to expand alternative crisis response.

To strengthen these programs further, it is crucial to **train the NOPD and other policing entities to fully leverage jail diversion resources**. Expanding mandatory training sessions for all NOPD officers on the LEAD program and MCIU would assist in identifying eligible individuals and in understanding the benefits of diversion and the procedures for making referrals. **Developing and investing in recidivism programs** that address the root causes of re-offense— mental health issues, substance abuse, and socioeconomic factors—can significantly improve long-term public safety. **Strengthening partnerships between the NOPD and community-based organizations** providing mental health services will ensure an integrated approach to addressing behavioral health crises. Additionally, **publishing a list of approved jail diversion programs** for courts to reference will increase trust and make referrals a more comfortable option, advancing the City's broader goals of reducing recidivism and improving public safety.

# Recommendation: Strengthen Jail Diversion and Recidivism Interventions

**Creating alternative bail options for lower-risk individuals facing lower-level charges** can reduce unnecessary pretrial detention, ensuring that jail space is reserved for higher-risk individuals. Drawing from best practices like New York City’s Supervised Release Program (see slide 86) can support jail diversion and jail population management. In 2017, the City Council passed the "Municipal Bail Ordinance"-an amendment to Chapter 54 Sec. 23c of the City Code that eliminates bail for low-level offenders, allowing them to await their trial outside of the jail. The city could consider expanding this process to include minor categories of felonies, so that those awaiting trial can do so under community supervision rather than being held in jail.

**How to set in motion:**      **City Ordinance Amendment**

The Municipal Bail Ordinance, enacted in 2017, eliminated bail for most nonviolent municipal offenses. To expand this ordinance to include minor felony offenses, the Mayor should propose an amendment to the City Council, initiating collaboration to draft and pass the necessary legislation.

**How to sustain:**              **Budgetary Commitment**

To ensure the sustainability of diversion programs like LEAD and the MHCU, the Mayor should prioritize their inclusion in the proposed executive budget. The Mayor must work closely with the City Council’s Budget, Audit, and Board of Review Committee to secure consistent funding and integrate these programs into the City’s annual budget.



# Recommendation: Improve NOPD Working Conditions

To address the pressing issues of morale and retention within the NOPD, the City should **undertake careful data-driven peer benchmarking and budgetary projections in advance of any collective bargaining agreement negotiations**. The City should explore opportunities for upgrading the NOPD's benefits package. One upgrade should include converting reimbursable expenses into a comprehensive benefits package. This means transforming costs that officers typically pay out-of-pocket and then get reimbursed for into direct benefits provided by the department. Instead of officers having to front the money and wait for reimbursement, the department would cover these expenses upfront as part of their benefits package.

In responses to a survey, officers identified their top four desired benefits related to benefits packages: 2% longevity pay, annual step increases, sick pay paid out one-for-one at retirement, and equipment upgrades. By exploring the potential to offer these benefits, the department can enhance job satisfaction and loyalty. New city leadership should undertake careful data-driven peer benchmarking and budgetary projections to understand NOPD's capacity to meet the priorities mentioned by officers above.

Another critical strategy is to **increase the on-hand inventory of essential supplies and streamline internal supply management processes**. The NOPD has faced significant challenges with inventory management, including inadequate security and disorganization of evidence and property. Ensuring that officers have ready access to necessary equipment and resources can prevent delays and frustrations that arise from supply shortages.

**Prioritizing capital and janitorial maintenance** is also vital for improving working conditions and facility upkeep. The condition of NOPD facilities has been a longstanding issue, with reports of broken air conditioning, sealed windows preventing proper ventilation, and infestations of rats and roaches. Investing in the maintenance and modernization of police facilities can create a safer, more comfortable, and more professional environment for officers. Regular upkeep of buildings, equipment, and common areas will not only boost morale but also demonstrate the department's commitment to its workforce. Clean, well-maintained facilities can reduce health risks and create a more pleasant work atmosphere, which is essential for maintaining high levels of engagement and performance among officers.



# Recommendation: Improve NOPD Working Conditions

Finally, the City should prioritize the renovation of the NOPD Crime Lab, which has struggled with accreditation and significant backlogs, particularly in DNA testing. These challenges have been compounded by limited staff and inadequate funding. Renovating the Crime Lab with updated equipment, better infrastructure, and a more efficient workspace will improve its ability to process evidence, enhance case resolution times, and support public safety. A modernized and well-functioning Crime Lab will also help civilianize critical evidence-processing functions, freeing up sworn officers for other duties while improving the quality and efficiency of forensic investigations. These renovations should be accompanied by efforts to secure sustainable funding and staffing to maintain high performance and accreditation standards.

**How to set in motion:**     **Executive Budget Proposal**

The CAO should include funding for facility upgrades, the benefits package expansion, and inventory management improvements in the proposed executive budget. This proposal should be presented to the City Council supported by data demonstrating the operational and morale benefits of these investments, to secure their approval for budgetary allocations.

**How to sustain:**     **Capital Improvement Plan**

The City should integrate renovations to the NOPD Crime Lab and police facilities into its long-term capital improvement plan. This should include phased funding for infrastructure upgrades, equipment modernization, and actions to address health and safety issues, such as poor ventilation and pest infestations, while ensuring minimal disruption to ongoing operations.

## Recommendation: Focus Police Time on Core Police Functions

To ensure the NOPD can focus on core police functions, **transitioning mental health crisis response to health professionals** is crucial. The NOPD has already made significant progress with its Mobile Health Crisis Unit (MHCU) program, which integrates licensed mental health professionals, certified peer specialists, and crisis workers into the 911 system. By adopting a model similar to New York City's B-HEARD program (see slide 87), NOPD can further enhance this initiative. Deploying specialized and integrated teams of EMTs, paramedics, and mental health professionals to handle non-violent behavioral health emergencies not only provides appropriate care for individuals in crisis but also reduces the burden on police officers, allowing them to concentrate on law enforcement duties. Extensive training and public education campaigns can further enhance the effectiveness of these teams, ensuring the community understands when and how to utilize their services. Additionally, fostering close collaboration among various health professionals within these teams can provide more effective and holistic responses to behavioral health emergencies.

Additionally, the NOPD's civilianization program has made progress in transitioning non-sworn personnel into critical roles, such as evidence processing and administrative functions. As of 2023, the department had hired 45 civilians across various units, reflecting its commitment to reallocating resources more effectively. Expanding civilianization efforts to by **transitioning roles such as crime lab, fleet management, and records management to civilian experts** can significantly optimize NOPD's resource allocation.

Civilianizing these functions will allow sworn officers to be redeployed to critical patrol and investigative roles. Baltimore's police department has successfully implemented a similar civilianization plan, transitioning roles like crime scene technicians and internal affairs to civilian professionals, which has set a national standard for staffing allocations in law enforcement agencies (see slide 88). They have also piloted programs in which civilians respond to non-violent crime, further freeing up police time to essential functions.

# Recommendation: Focus Police Time on Core Police Functions

**Establishing independent entities for these functions**, with representation from across the criminal justice system, can ensure accountability and specialized oversight. This structure promotes transparency and efficiency, leveraging the expertise of civilian professionals while maintaining rigorous standards and accountability. The City can draw inspiration from places like Houston that created independent crime labs with great success (see slide 89).

By implementing these strategies, NOPD can enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that both mental health crises and administrative functions are managed by the most qualified professionals. This holistic approach not only improves service delivery but also fosters a safer and more responsive community.

<b>How to set in motion:</b>	<b>Executive Directive</b>
	The Mayor should issue an executive directive prioritizing the expansion of the Mobile Health Crisis Unit (MHCU) and the civilianization of administrative and mental health crisis response functions within the NOPD. The directive should establish clear goals and timelines for these transitions to civilian professionals.
<b>How to sustain:</b>	<b>City Ordinance and Budget Approval</b>
	The City Council should pass ordinances to create and define the structure of an independent crime lab, including its funding and operational requirements. To ensure sustainability, the Mayor’s Office must propose a budget that includes resources for establishing and operating the lab, working closely with the City Council to secure approval during the annual budget process.

# Best Practice: Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an Operational Team

Ensure representative membership with clear mandates

## Montgomery County, Maryland: Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission

The Montgomery County Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission is a multidisciplinary body tasked with **promoting the orderly coordination and communication of criminal justice policies among the county's multiple criminal justice and law enforcement agencies**. The Commission provides analysis and information to support the activities of these multiple independent agencies, as well as evaluating the adequacy and organization of law enforcement and the administration of justice in Montgomery County. **The commission's membership is a representative cross-section of the criminal justice system, bringing together key stakeholders from various sectors**. These sectors include but are not limited to multiple municipal police departments within the county, the County Sheriff's office, County Council, the County's District Court, County Public Defender, Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of Parole and Probation in the State Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the State Department of Juvenile Justice, and 7 members of the public, one of whom must be a member of the Maryland bar who practices law in the County.

The Commission is charged with several key tasks that are designed to evaluate the functioning of various policies and procedures within the criminal legal system, as well as to advise these stakeholders on actions to improve performance and outcomes for the community. The Commission also facilitates coordination and communication between county and municipal law enforcement and between county and state law enforcement. Additionally, they complete community education modules on crime prevention, reentry processes, and other criminal justice issues as well as promoting community engagement in law enforcement and other appropriate components of the criminal legal system. The highly representative and multidisciplinary nature of this Commission is one of its strongest features, as it allows for **effective and consistent communication across municipal departments and among multiple sectors within the criminal legal system**.

# Best Practice: Convert the Criminal Justice Committee into an Operational Team

Introduce automatic population triage to efficiently manage and reduce jail populations.

## Jefferson Parish, Louisiana: Code 6

Findings from the PSA analysis in New Orleans reveal its potential to enhance pretrial decision-making and reduce jail populations while maintaining public safety. However, the PSA has been underutilized in its current form. Integrating the PSA into a structured triage system similar to Code 6 would enhance its effectiveness. Jefferson Parish operates a program that can be adapted to address some of the challenges faced in the Orleans criminal justice system. **The Code 6 program is a risk-based triage system designed to manage jail populations effectively.**

When individuals are brought into the jail, they undergo a thorough screening process. This initial assessment informs decisions about whether they should be booked into the jail or released. The screening criteria include various factors, such as the nature of the charges, bond considerations, and the overall jail population. Overcrowding is a critical concern that the program addresses.

The utility of the Code 6 system lies in its risk-based approach. Detainees' criminal histories are carefully examined. Each inmate is assigned a numerical score on a scale from 1 to 20. This score reflects the individual's risk level to public safety. High-risk detainees (those scoring 15 or higher) are recommended for maximum security. These individuals require close supervision due to their potential danger. **Low-risk detainees (those with lower scores) are sorted into the jail or released under specific conditions.** By doing so, the program optimizes resource allocation and prevents unnecessary detention.

**By automatically assessing an individual's criminal history and risk profile, the program streamlines decision-making.** Someone who poses minimal risk, can be promptly released, freeing up jail space for those who genuinely require maximum security. Overcrowding often results from lengthy case processing times. The Code 6 model addresses this by ensuring that low-risk individuals are not needlessly held.

# Best Practice: Strengthen Jail Diversion and Recidivism Interventions

Create an alternative bail for lower risk people facing lower-level charges

## New York City, New York: Supervised Release Program

The Supervised Release Program is a **court-ordered program and non-monetary condition that provides community-based supervision and support for individuals with pending cases** in New York City Criminal or Supreme Court. SR's unique model employs experienced non-profit agencies to provide community-based supervision and support for individuals awaiting trial. Supervision is focused on engagement, ensuring that participants return to court and avoid arrest, and connecting individuals with resources and support systems in their communities they can use beyond the duration of a criminal case. Individuals can be entered into SR based on a Judge's referral. These are individuals charged with a crime who might otherwise be detained pretrial or who are deemed a risk to fail to appear in court without the program's supervision and services.

Since its inception, **the Supervised Release Program has diverted over 50,000 individuals from jail**, making it a national model for non-enforcement-based pretrial diversions.

NOLA can adapt this risk-based assessment to prioritize pretrial release for those who pose minimal risk. By doing so, the city can reduce overcrowding and reserve jail space for serious offenders.

# Best Practice: Focus Police Time on Police Core Functions

Transition crime lab, fleet management, and records management to civilian experts

## Baltimore, Maryland: Baltimore Police Department Civilianization Plan

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has recognized the need to optimize its limited sworn personnel resources while maintaining effective law enforcement services. As of January 1, 2022, state law mandates that the department must be composed of no fewer than 20% civilian employees. In response, the BPD has implemented a **comprehensive civilianization plan as part of its staffing vision**.

One of the key areas benefiting from this initiative is the **BPD's Forensic Laboratory Section**, which plays a critical role in criminal investigations. By civilianizing certain positions within this section, the department achieved several significant benefits. Civilian experts in forensic science are now responsible for analyzing biological samples, latent fingerprints, and drug evidence. Their specialized expertise not only enhances the efficiency and accuracy of forensic analyses but also frees sworn officers from administrative tasks, allowing them to concentrate on core policing duties.

**Additionally, as of 2022 BPD hired 35 civilian investigators.** Baltimore Mayor and BPD hired these investigators to free up police time and better focus the attention of sworn detectives. These civilians do not carry guns or have arrest powers, and they go through less time intensive training than sworn officers. Also in Baltimore, **civilian experts manage vehicle maintenance, repairs, and logistics**. BPD also employs civilians to handle records management responsibilities. Civilian staff are responsible for maintaining and organizing various types of records, including incident reports, arrest records, and other critical documentation. This strategic allocation of responsibilities ensures that sworn officers are not burdened with fleet or records management tasks, further enabling them to focus on their primary law enforcement roles.

## Set up independent entities for crime lab, fleet management, and records management

### Houston, Texas: Houston Forensic Science Center

Before becoming an independent entity, the Houston Police Department (HPD) crime lab was plagued by serious problems, including mismanagement, underfunding, and outdated equipment. Forensic work was often unreliable, with poor quality control and a massive backlog of unprocessed evidence. Scandals involving faulty DNA testing led to wrongful convictions, eroding public trust in the lab.

In 2012, the **Houston City Council approved a plan to separate the crime lab from the police department**. This move came after years of pressure from the public and advocacy groups demanding reform. The transformation was backed by city leadership, including then-Mayor Annise Parker, who played a key role in advocating for the lab's independence and ensuring that it operated separately from law enforcement to eliminate conflicts of interest. This structural reform required political will from local leaders and collaboration among various city departments to ensure a smooth transition and secure the necessary resources.

After being restructured as the Houston Forensic Science Center (HFSC) in 2014, the crime lab saw transformative improvements. Independence from HPD allowed it **to hire subject-matter experts and focus on purely forensic tasks**. HFSC's Board of Directors **reflected a diverse range of professionals, public sector representatives, community organizations, healthcare centers, and academic institutions**. Freed from the operational and budgetary constraints of law enforcement, HFSC could prioritize investments in up-to-date technology and proper training. With a singular focus on forensic science, HFSC implemented robust quality control systems, significantly reducing backlogs, becoming more transparent, and restoring public confidence.

**The lab's independence also allowed it to address bias and conflicts of interest**, ensuring that forensic results were not influenced by investigative pressures from law enforcement. This separation of functions not only professionalized the lab's operations but also set a standard for accountability and transparency in forensic science. Publicly available reports on performance, turnaround times, and case backlogs further reinforce its commitment to transparency and accountability, proving how effective independent governance can be in reforming dysfunctional crime labs.



## Works Cited

- Annual Jail Population Report, New Orleans Office of Criminal Justice Coordination (2023)
- NOPD Recruitment and Retention Public Release, New Orleans Office of Inspector General (2023)
- New Orleans City Council Public Safety Dashboards (2023)
- New Orleans City Council January Meetings Minutes (2017)
- NOPD Operations Manual, Chapters 1.2.6 and 1.2.7



The Public Safety & Justice Council will provide a public forum for planning and coordination among municipal, parochial, and private sector entities that impact public safety and justice in New Orleans: for example, the NOPD, District Attorney's Office, Orleans Parish Sheriff, Criminal Courts, Police & Justice Foundation, NOLA Coalition, Metropolitan Crime Commission, New Orleans 360, and community-based organizations (CBOs). The Council will oversee impact programs such as New Orleans 360 and New Orleans Date-Informed Community Engagement (NODICE).

The Coalition recommends implementing New Orleans 360, modeled after a similar program with a track record of success in Omaha, Nebraska. The program will engage local CBOs such as Communities of Hope in a coordinated effort to ameliorate the ill effects of crime and poverty in neighborhoods. Omaha's 360 Violence intervention and Prevention Model is a comprehensive, community-based approach to reduce gun violence by direct intervention and by addressing root causes. Its cross-sector collaboration unites: the residents of areas most impacted by violence and poverty; leadership from the Mayor's Office, Health Department, Police, and other law enforcement agencies including juvenile justice and probation services; schools; neighborhood associations; CBOs; churches; businesses; foundations; and others. Its nationally recognized strategy focuses on community engagement to build stronger police-community relationships and systemic changes to create measurable change. The core components of 360 are collaboration, prevention, intervention, enforcement, reentry, support services, and sustainability.

The Coalition recommends implementing and expanding the NODICE system that uses modern technology ("Risk Terrain Modeling") to identify vulnerable areas and the most pressing community needs. NODICE relies on data-driven, equitable decision-making with a focus on public safety, quality of life, and economic development to direct resources toward areas of greatest need. NODICE makes conditions on the ground less conducive to criminal activity by optimizing community engagement. NODICE is currently deployed in two neighborhoods but should be expanded to encompass disinvested neighborhoods citywide.

# E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces

## *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

The Department of Sanitation manages challenges in four discrete areas:

- Trash Pick-Up
- Employee Recruitment and Retention
- Illegal Dumping and Litter
- Enforcement

**Trash Pick-Up:** Contractors' *labor shortages* during the pandemic caused *unreliability in trash pick-ups*. Complaints about missed or delayed collections averaged *1446 monthly in 2022*. Residents were also angered by *reductions in service* from twice to once a week while paying the same amount in sanitation fees.

The City and its contractors responded to the problem of unreliable pick-ups by *modernizing equipment* (including trucks with GPS tracking technology) and by *a fairer revenue stream to help contractors stabilize their workforce*. Complaints about pick-ups declined in 2024 to *an average of 636 per month*—a reduction in improved reliability in collection services of nearly 56%.

The City could do even more to respond to residents' frustrations. The Coalition recommends creating a *dashboard that gives the public real-time updates on disruptions* in scheduled collection services. Sanitation should also use *texts, emails, and website updates* to reach out actively to residents.

## E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

Finances continue to be a problem, with a projected \$24 million deficit in 2024 between revenues generated by sanitation fees and the actual cost of collection—a deficit that must be covered from the City’s general fund.

**Employee Recruitment and Retention:** The Coalition recommends that Sanitation develop a recruitment and retention strategy, using as its model a “Best Practice”: the One Clean Houston initiative (page 191). Sanitation’s recruitment and retention plan could include hiring bonuses, improved compensation and benefits, and pathways for career advancement. The department may work within current civil service constraints to accomplish these goals or might in the future benefit from the Coalition’s recommended civil service reforms (page 210).

**Illegal Dumping and Litter:** Successfully overcoming the blight of illegal dumping and litter requires a multi-front strategy that includes data gathering, community engagement, and public education.

Dallas adopted a *data-driven approach* to identify waste “hot spots” (page 190), then deployed code enforcement officers and clean-up crews to targeted areas. Using predictive data analytics, Dallas installed cameras to *deter illegal dumping* and to *capture video evidence* for use in enforcing the law against violators. New Orleans should do the same and should create an *online reporting tool* so that residents can easily report illegal dumping.

A “Best Practice,” San Rafael, CA, used *mini-grants as incentives* for businesses and property owners located near chronic dump sites to partner with the city in installing *nighttime lighting, surveillance cameras*, and barriers (page 192). These measures discouraged dumping and *fostered a sense of shared responsibility* among residents.

## E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces

### *Synopsis & Strategies for Success*

Insufficient public education may partially explain why some people engage in illegal dumping—because they’re not aware of alternatives, such as recycling, bulk item pickups, and drop-off sites. The Coalition recommends a *multi-lingual public information campaign using social media, radio, and local TV* to raise awareness about the ill effects of illegal dumping, educate the community about alternatives, and foster personal responsibility. Community cleanup events give residents an opportunity to participate directly in cleaning up litter.

Fort Worth, TX, launched its anti-litter campaign (page 189) with a litter survey followed by public engagement with community cleanup events. A 2017 study by Texans for Clean Water found cities spending less on public education and community outreach *paid more in abatement costs*—a powerful message about responsible stewardship.

**Enforcement:** As with many service delivery problems, *better coordination* is the key to *better enforcement*. One Clean Houston (page 191) assigned specific responsibilities to its Department of Neighborhoods, Solid Waste Management, and the Police Department, giving each agency a defined role in dealing with illegal dumping. The *311 system* was trained to route complaints directly to the appropriate agency. *Regular interagency meetings* assured ongoing coordination. New Orleans can model this “Best Practice” to coordinate responsibilities among Sanitation, the NOPD, and Code Enforcement.

Houston also established a specialized code enforcement team to deal with heavy trash in the public right-of-way (page 193). New Orleans should establish a similar team of code enforcement personnel dedicated to enforcement actions against illegal dumping pursuant to the administrative adjudication procedures authorized by R.S. 13:2575.

## E. Trash & Clean Public Spaces: Priority Challenges

### Varying Trash Service Quality

**Drivers and Root Causes:** The varying quality of trash service in New Orleans stems from a combination of *procurement issues*, *labor shortages*, and *changes in service frequency*. The Department of Sanitation's variety of contracts among multiple vendors has led to *inconsistent service*, with some areas experiencing significant delays, especially following extreme weather events. Like other low-wage service sector employers, trash collection vendors faced acute labor shortages during the Covid-19 pandemic and were unable to service assigned pick-up areas in a timely way. The City's reliance on different contractors in separate service areas has exacerbated these inconsistencies. A shift from *twice-weekly to once-weekly curbside pickup* aimed to stabilize services, but it caused dissatisfaction among residents who are paying the same fees despite reduced service frequency.

Moreover, while the city subsidizes part of the sanitation contract through its general fund, budgetary constraints and high operational costs continue to challenge the system. Adding to the discontent, many residents are unaware of how trash services are financed, which leads to misconceptions about the adequacy and value of the services provided. This lack of understanding contributes to frustration, as residents expect that their fees should correspond to the level of service they receive.

### Littering and Illegal Trash Dumping

**Drivers and Root Causes:** New Orleans has struggled with enforcing littering and dumping regulations and cleaning up illegal waste, primarily due to *a shift away from NOPD's quality-of-life officers*, who once handled sanitation-related citations. Staffing shortages within the police force and an inability to reestablish the program have left the city *without proper enforcement*. An attempt to deputize city staff to issue citations failed, as violators refused to accept citations from non-police personnel. The city has yet to identify a viable long-term solution.

# Background & Data: Varying Degrees of Trash Service Quality

## Procurement Issues and Labor Shortages

New Orleans' trash collection issues are heavily influenced by the same procurement challenges discussed in earlier sections. Bidding and services are impacted by labor shortages among vendors. The nationwide worker shortage during the pandemic has been cited by waste collection contractors as a key factor impacting sanitation workforce availability and has persisted to date. Wages for sanitation workers, which are relatively low, have made it difficult for vendors to attract and retain staff. This labor shortage has led to *missed pickups and prolonged service disruptions* in certain areas of the city.

## The Use of Multiple Collection Services and Contract Management Issues

New Orleans relies heavily on various contractors for trash and recycling collection, resulting in significant inconsistencies in service quality. The City has divided its sanitation responsibilities among multiple vendors, with IV Waste managing Service Areas 1 and 2, Waste Pro overseeing Service Area 3, and Richard's Disposal responsible for Service Area 4. Additionally, the French Quarter and Central Business District operate under a separate contract held by Kellermeyer Bergensons Services LLC, which was extended in December 2023 for a year as the city sought a new contractor. The city must oversee and enforce quality standards with these contractors, but a lack of effective contractor management has led to varying degrees of service quality, causing some areas to experience more frequent delays and missed pickups than others.

## Lack of Sustainable Funding Leading to Service Changes

The lack of a sustainable funding source for sanitation services in New Orleans has necessitated significant changes in trash collection, notably the transition from twice-weekly to once-weekly curbside pickup. This shift aimed to stabilize services amid rising operational costs and budgetary constraints. However, the move has sparked widespread dissatisfaction among residents who are still paying the same fees for reduced service frequency. While recent adjustments have led to a reduction in 311 complaints, many residents feel their financial contribution does not reflect the level of service provided. Additionally, the city grapples with ongoing financial challenges, relying heavily on *general fund revenues to bridge the gap between sanitation costs and fee revenues*.

# Background & Data: Littering and Illegal Trash Dumping

## Lack of Enforcement of Penalties

Despite the introduction of *stricter penalties for illegal dumping* in New Orleans, enforcement remains inconsistent and largely ineffective. The City Council recently passed an ordinance that says anyone found guilty of illegally dumping may have to forfeit their car, along with paying all towing and storage fees of up to \$500, along with any other costs involved. However, many violators escape punishment due to the *lack of dedicated personnel to oversee these regulations*, cultivating a culture of impunity. The City committed to improving its systems for tracking litter offenses and set up measures for issuing warnings, fines, and summonses to habitual offenders, including businesses and residents. Nonetheless, community leaders reported that litter frequently remains unaddressed because *the city does not monitor litter unless it is reported by a resident*.

## NOPD and Department of Sanitation Staffing Shortages

*Staffing shortages* faced by the NOPD and Department of Sanitation critically limit the city's ability to monitor and respond to illegal dumping effectively. As discussed in earlier sections, the *NOPD has struggled with recruitment and retention*, leaving many areas underserved when it comes to enforcing anti-litter laws. Attempts to delegate citation powers to non-police personnel were ineffective, as violators often refused to accept citations issued by city staff. Department of Sanitation staff handle general litter pick up, but *insufficient funds and staff capacity* limit the City's ability to provide sufficient service levels.

## Lack of Public Awareness on Proper Waste Removal

A significant factor contributing to illegal dumping in New Orleans is the lack of public awareness regarding proper waste disposal options. Many residents remain uninformed about the resources available for responsible waste management, including *recycling programs, bulk item pickups, and designated drop-off sites*. This gap in knowledge is compounded by *inadequate public education campaigns*, which fail to sufficiently communicate the importance of proper waste disposal and the potential consequences of illegal dumping. As noted by local leaders, residents may resort to improper disposal methods simply because they are unaware of the alternatives.



## Recent Progress on Trash Services

Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve trash collection services by addressing many of the longstanding issues that previously plagued the system. New contracts procured in 2022 for Service Areas 2 and 3 and in 2024 for Service Areas 1 and 4 have been pivotal in stabilizing operations. These contracts introduced *fairer vendor payment rates, modernized equipment* with GPS tracking and 360-degree cameras, and implementation of *updated service standards*. The results have been clear: complaints about missed or delayed collections have dropped dramatically, from a monthly average of 1,446 in 2022 to 636 in 2024—a *nearly 56% reduction*.

Furthermore, the strategic decision to *transition to once-weekly trash collection* has provided value to the City without compromising service quality. While this adjustment initially caused dissatisfaction among some residents, it has allowed the City to balance increasing operational costs with fiscal sustainability, given *the \$24 million projected deficit between collected sanitation fees and actual service costs* in 2024.

Despite these improvements, challenges remain that warrant further proactive strategies and investigation. The following sections explore key issues raised during stakeholder interviews and highlight underlying conditions that contributed to previous problems, some of which persist today. These include *gaps in enforcement of littering and illegal dumping regulations*, ongoing *budgetary constraints*, and the need for *improved public awareness* around how trash services are funded and delivered. Addressing these factors is essential to sustaining progress, ensuring equitable service delivery, and fostering trust between residents and the City.

# Recommendations Summary

Recommendations	Actions
<b>Strengthen prevention initiatives and civic education on trash services and illegal dumping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a publicly accessible trash and waste services dashboard that includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A breakdown of city versus resident spending on trash collection services;</li> <li>• Contracting information for trash vendors by geography; and</li> <li>• Procurement timelines for new contracts with trash vendors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide accurate, real-time updates on trash pick-up service disruptions.</li> <li>• Design and launch an effective anti-litter public education campaign.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve education and awareness on proper waste disposal</li> <li>• Support accessible opportunities for affordable and convenient waste management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Improve rapid cleanup response and interagency coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a data-driven approach to determine illegal waste “hot-spots,” and improve monitoring of these sites for quicker deployment of response teams.</li> <li>• Improve routing of illegal dumping complaints and ensure that relevant agencies have clear and defined roles, including the Department of Sanitation, NOPD, and Code Enforcement.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene regular cross-departmental meetings to better coordinate on trash and waste services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Attract and retain staff in the Department of Sanitation, especially those responsible for general litter pick-up and solid waste drivers who handle illegal waste response.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop better enforcement strategies for illegal dumping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand high-visibility video surveillance programs.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design partnerships with local businesses to implement crime reduction strategies including increasing nighttime light, constructing barricades, and installing video surveillance cameras.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create a specialized and dedicated team of code enforcement inspectors, specifically responsible for responding to violations of heavy trash in public-rights-of-way.</li> </ul>

# Recommendation: Prevention and Civic Education

The City should launch an **interactive, user-friendly dashboard** that provides residents with comprehensive information about trash collection and waste services. This dashboard should include:

- A breakdown of *city versus resident spending* on trash collection services to improve transparency around how funds are allocated.
- Contracting information for *trash vendors by geography*, detailing which vendors service specific neighborhoods to clarify service responsibilities.
- *Procurement timelines for new contracts* with trash vendors, providing the public with visibility into the process and timelines for improvements.
- This dashboard will enhance *transparency, accountability, and public trust* while enabling residents to stay informed about trash services in their area.

Alongside this, the City should adopt a **proactive communication strategy** to notify residents of trash pickup delays or disruptions through *text, email, or website updates*. This system would include details about *expected delays and alternative schedules*, as well as giving relevant contact information for further inquiries. Implementing this system will minimize frustration, improve customer satisfaction, and reduce complaints.

New Orleans can draw inspiration from Fort Worth, Texas, where success with the “Stop It! Report It! Pick It Up!” litter campaign reduced litter and fostered community engagement. Following this model, New Orleans should launch a multi-platform **public education campaign** using *social media, radio, and local TV* to raise awareness about litter’s impact and promote personal responsibility. A campaign complemented by *community engagement initiatives, such as neighborhood clean-up events and partnerships with local businesses to sponsor clean streets*, will encourage participation from residents and stakeholders. New Orleans should *develop a reporting tool so residents can easily report litter “hot spots” and instances of illegal dumping*.

# Recommendation: Prevention and Civic Education

The City should **develop materials and resources to educate residents on proper waste disposal methods**, including recycling, bulk trash, and hazardous waste management. These materials should be made available in multiple languages and formats to ensure accessibility for all residents. Additionally, the City should provide information on affordable and convenient waste disposal options, such as bulk pickup days and neighborhood drop-off locations. By supporting residents with accessible education and affordable waste disposal options, the City can reduce illegal dumping and improve overall compliance with waste management policies.

How to set in motion:	<div>Executive Directive</div> <p>The CAO should issue an executive directive to launch a comprehensive anti-litter campaign based on Fort Worth’s “Stop It! Report It! Pick It Up!” initiative. This directive should <i>mandate the creation of a publicly accessible dashboard</i> to track litter and waste management efforts. Additionally, the directive should outline a multi-platform <i>public education campaign</i> and require the development of <i>a reporting tool</i> for residents to identify litter “hot spots” and illegal dumping. Once the dashboard and reporting have been successfully implemented and tested in operation, they should be established via regulatory promulgation to secure long-term implementation.</p>
How to sustain:	<div>City Council Budget Priorities</div> <p>The City Council should allocate annual funding to support development and maintenance of the litter and waste management dashboard, the anti-litter campaign, and the reporting tool. Funding should also support community engagement initiatives such as neighborhood clean-up events and partnerships with local businesses to promote clean public spaces.</p>

# Recommendation: Improve Rapid Clean-Up Response

To effectively address illegal dumping and improve trash and waste services, New Orleans should adopt a multi-faceted strategy modeled on best practices from Dallas and Houston. These strategies focus on leveraging data-driven approaches, streamlining interagency coordination, and investing in workforce recruitment and retention to build a more effective and efficient waste management system.

New Orleans can learn from Dallas's Code Compliance Strategic Illegal Dumping Plan, which uses **data analytics to identify illegal dumping hotspots** and deploy resources efficiently. By analyzing complaint data, geographic patterns, and predictive analytics, New Orleans can create a heat map of illegal dumping areas to guide rapid response efforts. This approach would enable the City to allocate monitoring resources, such as cameras, to identified hotspots and prevent dumping before it escalates. A similar system would reduce response times and ensure quicker cleanup operations, creating a cleaner and safer environment for residents.

Houston's One Clean Houston Initiative serves as a strong model for **improving interagency coordination** by streamlining processes and establishing clear accountability. Through this initiative, Houston assigned specific responsibilities to the Department of Neighborhoods, Solid Waste Management, and the Police Department, ensuring that each agency played a defined role in addressing illegal dumping. A centralized 311 system was implemented to route complaints directly to the appropriate agency, eliminating delays and confusion. **Regular cross-departmental meetings** allowed agencies to share updates, align priorities, and address challenges collaboratively, leading to faster and more efficient responses.

New Orleans can adopt this approach by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of Department of Sanitation, NOPD, and Code Enforcement in the illegal dumping response process. Streamlining 311 complaint routing and introducing recurring cross-departmental meetings will enhance communication, improve accountability, and ensure consistent progress tracking. By fostering better collaboration and leveraging a unified framework, New Orleans can significantly reduce response times and create a more effective system for managing waste and illegal dumping.

# Recommendation: Improve Rapid Clean-Up Response

Houston’s success in recruiting and retaining solid waste drivers highlights the importance of competitive hiring incentives. New Orleans should **develop a recruitment and retention strategy for Department of Sanitation staff** that includes offering *hiring bonuses, improving compensation and benefits, and creating pathways for career advancement*. Investing in the workforce will ensure adequate staffing levels, enabling the City to respond promptly to illegal dumping and maintain regular trash collection services.

How to set in motion:	<b>Executive Directive</b>  The CAO should issue an executive directive to improve interagency coordination on illegal dumping by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of Department of Sanitation, NOPD, and Code Enforcement. The directive should also <i>mandate the creation of a centralized system for routing 311 complaints</i> to the appropriate agency and require the establishment of regular cross-departmental meetings to share updates, align priorities, and resolve challenges collaboratively.
How to sustain:	<b>City Council Budget Priorities</b>  The City Council should allocate funding to support the infrastructure needed for centralized 311 complaint routing and interagency coordination efforts, such as updated technology systems and resources for staffing and training. Dedicated funding should also support Department of Sanitation recruitment and retention efforts by offering competitive compensation, hiring incentives, and career advancement opportunities for staff responsible for litter pick-up and illegal dumping response.

## Recommendation: Develop Better Enforcement Strategies

New Orleans should significantly **increase the deployment of high-visibility surveillance cameras** in illegal dumping hotspots by *fostering partnerships with local businesses*, following the model of San Rafael's Environmental Design Mini-Grant Program. San Rafael engaged businesses and property owners to *co-fund and install surveillance cameras*, improving coverage of chronic dumping areas. These partnerships not only increased the number of cameras but also fostered a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders. In New Orleans, businesses can partner with the City to install cameras, *improve nighttime lighting*, and *construct physical barriers* to prevent unauthorized access to high-risk areas. This approach would enhance monitoring, deter illegal dumping, and create a cleaner, safer environment for all.

Building on the success of San Rafael's partnerships, New Orleans should **formalize collaborations with local businesses** to implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. In addition to installing cameras, these partnerships focused on funding and implementing increased nighttime lighting and physical barriers in areas prone to illegal dumping. By working closely with local stakeholders, the City can expand its resources, increase surveillance coverage, and *foster community involvement in combating illegal dumping*.

Inspired by Houston's Solid Waste Management Department Code Enforcement Team, New Orleans should **establish a specialized team within its Code Enforcement Department to address violations related to heavy trash in public rights-of-way**. This dedicated team would take on responsibilities previously managed by NOPD, freeing law enforcement to focus on other priorities while ensuring that illegal dumping and heavy trash violations are addressed by trained code enforcement professionals. In Houston, this model has proven effective in streamlining operations, improving efficiency, and ensuring heavy trash violations are promptly addressed. Implementing a similar team in New Orleans would enhance the City's enforcement pursuant to *administrative adjudication procedures in LA R.S. 13:2575*, ensure consistent application of penalties, and allow other code enforcement officers to focus on broader neighborhood nuisances, creating a cleaner and safer community.



# Recommendation: Develop Better Enforcement Strategies

**How to set in motion:    Executive Directive**

The CAO should issue an executive directive to establish a specialized team within the Code Enforcement Department focused exclusively on addressing heavy trash violations in public rights-of-way. This directive should clearly outline the team’s responsibilities, emphasize the transition of these duties from NOPD to Code Enforcement, and ensure alignment with other departments such as Department of Sanitation.

**How to sustain:            City Council Budget Priorities**

The City Council should allocate funding to support the recruitment, training, and ongoing operations of the specialized code enforcement team. This includes investing in tools and technology such as *handheld devices for field reporting* and *mobile cameras* to document violations. Sustained funding would also enable regular performance reviews and enhancements to ensure the team’s long-term success in addressing heavy trash violations and improving waste management citywide.



# Best Practice: Prevention and Civic Education

## Design and launch an effective anti-litter public education campaign

### Fort Worth, Texas: “Stop It! Report It! Pick It Up!” Litter Campaign

Fort Worth’s “Litter: Stop It! Report It! Pick It Up!” campaign is an exemplary model for cities aiming to launch *effective anti-litter public awareness* initiatives. This campaign has successfully *mobilized the community* to tackle litter and illegal dumping through a combination of strategic planning, community engagement, and enhanced enforcement measures. By setting an ambitious goal and surpassing it—collecting 19.9 million pounds of litter and debris in 2023—the campaign has demonstrated the power of clear objectives and robust execution. The city’s efforts to clean up 7,842 illegal dumpsites and 742 illegal campsites highlight the comprehensive approach to address litter issues at their source.

The city conducted a *community litter survey* to gather insights from residents and businesses, which helped prioritize areas of need and shape future initiatives. These engagement efforts and collaborations were crucial in identifying problem areas, installing surveillance equipment, and maintaining vigilance. Moreover, the campaign has effectively used public events and volunteer programs to foster a sense of *community ownership and responsibility*. Initiatives like the Cowtown Great American Cleanup and the Neighborhood Litter Stomp have mobilized hundreds of volunteers, raised awareness, and encouraged citizen participation in keeping the city clean.

By integrating these community-driven efforts with strategic enforcement and surveillance, Fort Worth created a sustainable and impactful anti-litter campaign. Additionally, a 2017 Texans for Clean Water study found that *cities spending less on education and outreach paid proportionately higher abatement costs*. This finding underscored the importance of Fort Worth’s investment in public awareness and community engagement as a cost-effective strategy for managing litter and illegal dumping.

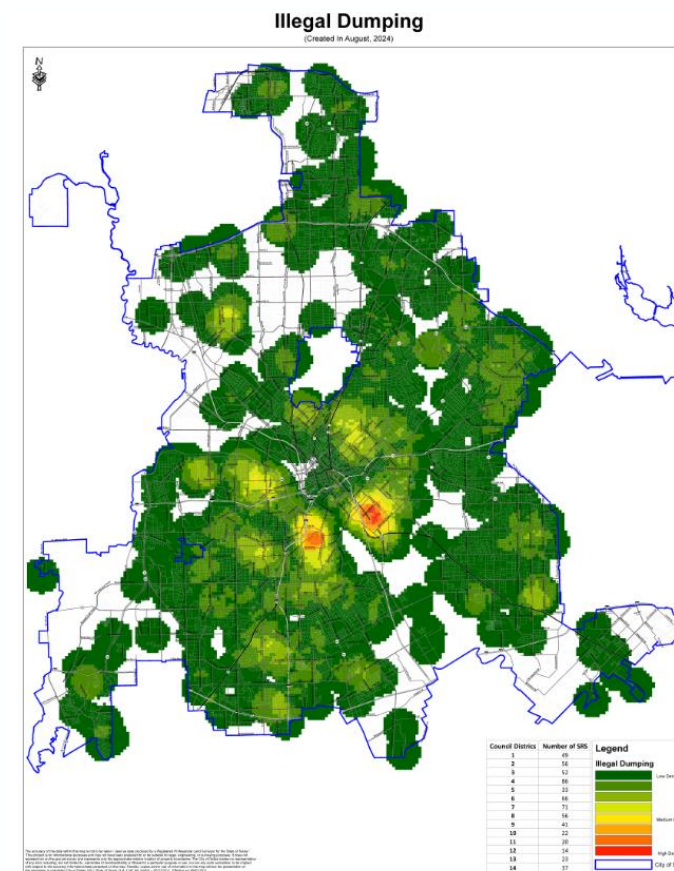
# Best Practice: Improve Rapid Cleanup Response

## Develop a data-driven approach to determine illegal waste “hot-spots”

### Dallas, Texas: Code Compliance Strategic Illegal Dumping Plan

The City of Dallas improved its rapid cleanup response to illegal dumping by adopting a data-driven approach to identifying waste “hot spots.” By leveraging data analytics, the city can now pinpoint areas with high incidences of illegal dumping more accurately. This strategic use of data allows for the efficient deployment of code officers and cleanup crews to the most affected areas, ensuring timely and effective responses. The implementation of predictive data analytics has been particularly impactful, enabling the city to anticipate and address illegal dumping before it escalates. According to the city’s Illegal Dumping Strategic Plan, this proactive approach has led to quicker response times and more efficient cleanup operations.

Additionally, the city enhanced its surveillance and monitoring capabilities by deploying additional resources such as cameras in identified hot spots, which not only improved the ability to catch and deter illegal dumpers but also provided valuable data to further refine the city’s response strategies. The heat map available on the city’s Code Compliance Department website (shown on the right) visually represents these hot spots, guiding the rapid response efforts. Through these initiatives, Dallas not only improved the efficiency of its cleanup operations but also fostered a cleaner and safer environment for residents.



# Best Practice: Improve Rapid Clean-Up Response

## Improve complaint routing, interagency coordination and staff recruitment

### Houston, Texas: One Clean Houston Initiative

The City of Houston, through its One Clean Houston Initiative, significantly enhanced the efficiency of trash complaint routing and *interagency coordination*. By clearly defining roles and streamlining the processing of 311 service requests, the City ensured quicker and more effective responses to illegal dumping and neighborhood nuisances. The initiative fostered better collaboration between the Department of Neighborhoods, Solid Waste Management, and the Houston Police Department, leading to more coordinated efforts in addressing community concerns. Increased coordination and collaboration between these departments strengthened the response to environmental hazards in the city. Houston has substantially overcome its prior struggles with response times. In 2018, 65% of illegal trash site cleanup complaints went overdue. Since implementing the One Clean Houston Initiative in 2023, 96% of heavy trash responses have been addressed on time, under or within 25 working days.

In addition to improving interagency coordination, One Clean Houston has focused on *staff retention and recruitment*, particularly for solid waste drivers. The city allocated \$200,000 to increase hiring incentives, making the positions more attractive and competitive. This investment helped to address the shortage of solid waste drivers, ensuring that the city can maintain efficient waste collection services. By offering better incentives and creating a more supportive work environment, Houston has retained experienced staff and attracted new talent.

# Best Practice: Develop Better Enforcement Strategies

## Expand high-visibility video surveillance programs

### San Rafael, California: Environmental Design Mini-Grant Program

The City of San Rafael's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Mini-Grant Program stands out as a best practice in developing effective enforcement strategies for illegal dumping. This program provides grants to local businesses to implement environmental design strategies that enhance safety and deter criminal activities. A key component is the installation of *high-visibility surveillance cameras*. These cameras serve a dual purpose by acting as *a powerful deterrent to potential illegal dumpers* and providing *crucial evidence for enforcement actions*. By strategically placing dozens of hidden cameras at chronic dumping sites, San Rafael has significantly increased its ability to monitor and address illegal dumping incidents.

High-visibility surveillance cameras are a significant factor in increased enforcement of illegal dumping laws in many cities. The cameras not only *discourage illegal dumping by making potential offenders aware of being watched*; they aid law enforcement in *identifying and prosecuting violators*. The footage captured by these cameras provides *powerful evidence that can be used in court*, leading to higher conviction rates and stronger deterrence. This approach has transformed chronic dumping sites into monitored areas, reducing the frequency of illegal dumping and improving the overall cleanliness and safety of communities.

Crucial to the success of the program has been the formation of *partnerships with businesses and property owners*. By engaging local stakeholders, the city fostered *a sense of shared responsibility and community involvement*. Businesses and property owners are not only beneficiaries of the mini-grants but also *active participants* in the effort to combat illegal dumping. Their collaboration has been instrumental in identifying problem areas, installing surveillance equipment, and maintaining vigilance.

# Best Practice: Develop Better Enforcement Strategies

## Creation of new team of code enforcement inspectors

### Houston, Texas: Solid Waste Management Department Code Enforcement Team

The City of Houston improved the enforcement of heavy trash violations by creating *a new code enforcement team* within the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD). This team of inspectors, previously part of the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), is now specifically tasked with handling violations related to heavy trash on public rights-of-way. By transferring these responsibilities to SWMD, the City aims to streamline processes and enhance the efficiency of enforcement efforts. This strategic move allows DON Code Enforcement Officers to focus on other neighborhood nuisances, such as dangerous buildings and weeded lots, thereby improving the overall quality of life in Houston's communities. The new team is responsible for identifying and responding to violations of Chapter 39 of the City's Code of Ordinances, ensuring that heavy trash issues are addressed promptly and effectively.

In conjunction with the efforts of the new code enforcement team, the Houston Police Department (HPD) plays a vital role in investigating illegal dumping activities. HPD's Environmental Crimes Unit has expanded its video surveillance program, installing both high-visibility and covert cameras at chronic dumping sites across the city. These cameras provide critical evidence that supports enforcement actions and helps in identifying and prosecuting offenders. Additionally, HPD has launched *an overtime program for the Environmental Crimes Unit*, funded with \$100,000, to increase the number of investigations and enforcement actions. This collaborative approach between SWMD and HPD ensures a coordinated and effective response to trash violations, contributing to a cleaner and safer Houston.

## Works Cited

- City Council Budget Hearing, Department of Sanitation (2023)
- “New Orleans awards new waste collection, recycling contracts,” Recycling Today (2024)
- “Garbage pickup problems: See which New Orleans neighborhoods have the most complaints,” NOLA.com (2021)
- “City Council passes measure on illegal dumping,” NOLA.com (2024)
- Trash Collection Services, NOLA.gov (2024)

# III. Cross-Cutting Themes

The **Cross-Cutting Themes** described in Section III will improve delivery across a broad range of city services, if properly deployed.

## A. Technology | Background

Starting in the early 2000s with the Nagin administration, the City began having Chief Information Officers (CIO). This was in line with the general business climate change that started to see “Computers” writ large as less of a technician role and more as a participant in facilitating the business functions of organizations.

A senior executive with the experience necessary to lead Information Technology and interface with multiple departments with different missions is beyond the cost and organizational capabilities of most City-aligned agencies, which is why we have a City CIO but not a Criminal Court CIO or a Parks & Parkways CIO.

Of all of the municipal agencies, the City of New Orleans has the budget and internal expertise to run its own data center or cloud infrastructure. In the past under Sherriff Foti, this kind of expertise and budget existed in-house, but for the last 20+ years that has not been the case (which is why we had no successor to DocketMaster until the recent Justice Modernization Project).

These circumstances highlight a major issue—the fracturing of Information Technology operations into multiple factions. Everyone wants “their own” data and “their own” operations. This may seem to serve the short-term interests of individual politicians and their public offices, but it is not in the interest of those same offices long-term—not is it in the interests of the public at-large.



## A. Technology | Concerns Going Forward

Whether it involves migrating municipal information to the “Cloud,” deploying Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public functions, or hardening public assets from a Cyber-security standpoint, our publicly-owned Information Technology operations have never needed high-level leadership more.

With next year’s transition from one administration to the next, our community must address this issue from both a budgetary and an organizational standpoint. Various governmental offices in Orleans Parish, from the Recorder of Mortgages to the Sherriff, are exposed to budgetary, security, and operational risk from short-term “fixes” as well as the lack of long-term vision and budget. We also have many “zombie” systems in various places in municipal government that were “almost” turned off when they were replaced. Each of these can be retired if the CIO is empowered to help in doing so.

For example, if we were to replace the system for tracking recorded mortgages or sales of homes, we might expect that the Clerk’s office would coordinate with the City’s IT group to figure out how to address best practices, security concerns, and operational needs. After all, the City’s IT office has significantly more resources than the Clerk does. But this would only happen if the Clerk or someone in their office happened to think about leveraging City IT to help them in the transition. Additionally, a City CIO might only help if they affirmatively decided to get involved; there is no formal expectation that the City’s CIO is the go-to person or group for these things.

Sometimes this type of coordination and sharing of practices occurs, but just as often it does not. We could play that scenario out for any of the systems used by a City-aligned agency. Consider the boondoggle that the Hexagon project ended up being for everyone involved, which was with the Orleans Parish Communications District that is closely aligned with City IT because they share Criminal Justice data. In that instance, millions of dollars were literally wasted and large amounts of time.



# Cross-Cutting Themes | Technology

## A. Technology | How to Address the Issue

The solution is to structure the role of the next Chief Information Officer of the City of New Orleans differently from its current structure. This role should be not just for City-operated systems and networks but should be a center-node for all of the agencies that operate with public money.

This approach would allow for shared IT resources such as Cloud Infrastructure and systems capacity. It would allow for a shared Chief Security Officer (CSO) who would provide guidance and rule how systems across public agencies are required to secure data. It would allow for greater expertise in IT to be present for RFP writing, issuance, and award for systems across all agencies.

Obviously, this approach would require more budget for personnel in the CIO's office. You can't do what is discussed in this document with the existing Org Chart in the CIO's office. Discussions with the current CIO indicated approximately 15 people would be needed that do not currently exist in the budget—a cost of about \$2 million.

Importantly, other elected officials must not see this office as a challenge to their legal responsibilities. The agencies need to continue to “own” the systems in terms of responsibility, requirements, and security authorizations governing who can receive data from them. But the City's CIO should be the center-node for all infrastructure and play an advise-and-consent role for new systems to be brought on-line.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Technology

## A. Technology | What would the payback be for these changes?

The first and most important benefit from changing the CIO's role is not money but efficiency, which ultimately saves money. A cross-organizational CIO could seek solutions that would benefit every stakeholder agency. For example, centralized security functions (such as edge-security devices and intrusion detection systems) could be more easily rolled out to all agencies in this model. Avoiding a single breach of security or ransomware attack would save millions

The scale of IT infrastructure means that new systems added to the existing Azure Cloud and existing City data center will cost incrementally more. But the base of this infrastructure is already paid for. The concept is similar to the way we can fly many airlines and lots of different planes off the same runway and tower system at the airport.

The largest saving is early involvement of senior Information Technology leaders in the process of replacing systems. A CIO and senior technical people may not be regarded as knowledgeable about how an agency runs, but they will have implemented many systems over their careers. The particulars of an agency's business model may not be native to them, but questions about picking replacement systems have more to do with knowledge of IT than knowledge of a business.

At the state-level we see this in the way bids for new systems are handled: the agencies "own" the procurement, but the technical parts are judged and usually written by or in coordination with the State CIO's office.

# Cross-Cutting Themes |Technology

## A. Technology | How can Agencies outside of City Government “own” the outcomes in this model?

An issue that comes to the forefront from the preceding section is, “How can an Agency like the District Attorney or the Mosquito, Termite & Rodent Control Board (to name two very different examples) have ownership of outcomes if they don’t own the infrastructure their systems run on and have to consult the CIO’s office to make IT purchases for their agency?”

Additionally, “How can we avoid perverse incentives that make the CIO’s office the ‘City of NO,’ where ideas and new initiatives go to die?” Key here is how the CIO’s office and the City’s technology infrastructure are involved. What are the rules of engagement? What is the CIO’s office responsible for, and maybe more importantly, what is it not responsible for?

Setting security practices and policies and running broad-based software like Active Directory, Data Warehouses, Intrusion Detection, and Antivirus should belong to a centralized IT group. Likewise, provisioning and overseeing server-level instances of software as well as externally-facing APIs and such also fall squarely in the purview of this office. But determining how many instances an agency needs or what runs on them probably isn’t.

Having been at the mercy, on occasion, of the State Data Center when working on State projects, we know firsthand that strong Service Level Agreements are critical to keeping the CIO’s office “honest” and incentivizing them to say “Yes” as often as practical to new software and new ideas. It’s easy to say “Yes” to an AI system that would read 311 tickets and link related ones to each other. But because that AI would have to read the whole 311 system and probably other system data to do its job, this feature is a potential security risk. Thus, we often get a “no” instead of the needed “yes” because it’s risky for a tech person to say “yes” to a system that’s newly developed and may not yet be well understood by the tech person. We will need to incentivize and celebrate innovation in the CIO’s office and defend them from cheap attacks while simultaneously holding them accountable.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Technology

## A. Technology | How can Agencies outside of the City Government itself “own” the outcomes in this model?

The suggested solution to this issue, based on conversations with the current CIO, is to create an “IT Advisory Board” to help the new CIO and Mayor craft these policies, give the CIO a group of technical leaders to bring new ideas into play, and allow the public to have a voice in some of these discussions. Obviously, this advisory board would have to be just that – advisory. The CIO should report to the CAO and does not need a new boss.

How that advisory board would function is beyond the scope of this short write-up but there are similar advisory boards in other cities that we can learn from, then take from them what is good and works well for us.

## A. Technology | What does this cost? How long does it take?

The age-old questions in every IT endeavor are “How long?” and “How much?” The good news is that the infrastructure to be leveraged already exists, and the City pays for it already. Incremental costs per system are the primary driver for additional expenditures but will be much less than the actual cost of any new system for almost any department we’ve seen. To use the airport analogy, one new gate doesn’t drive costs at the airport since you have already built the terminal and many other gates.

In terms of timing, the goal would be to move systems that can easily be moved to the existing infrastructure. These should be outlined in a project to identify all of the systems that exist and to take a census of what they require, when they should be updated or changed, and so forth.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Technology

## A. Technology | What does this cost? How long does it take?

All new systems should start with the assumption that they are going to be on the shared infrastructure and costs, and SLAs should be negotiated for those as part of their procurement process. A standard MOU will need to be crafted that outlines the relation between the City CIO and the other agencies so that this process can be expedited going forward.

The 15 staffers that the current CIO thought would be needed adds approximately \$2 million per year in payroll and related expenses based on the CIO office's current pay rates. Costs beyond that will require more details as to everyone's intended roles and responsibilities in order to estimate costs.

## A. Technology | What is the Roadmap or Order of Operations? What step goes first if the City decides to implement this plan?

Any plan's success hinges on how it is implemented. Execution can make up for bad planning to some degree, but bad execution will destroy even the best plans. Below is a proposed order in which the elements discussed above should be implemented.

### 1. *Advisory Panel*

- a. Create advisory panel – determine expectations and feedback mechanisms
- b. Work with CIO to determine metrics and costs for how the City's Azure platform can be scaled out for other agencies.
- c. Ongoing:
  - i. Budget support for CIO
  - ii. Updates re: technology landscape

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Technology

## A. Technology | What is the Roadmap or Order of Operations? What step goes first if the City decides to implement this plan?

The Advisory Panel should be created first because these individuals will help provide comfort to other agencies and the City Council. It's also the first step because the second and third steps rely on many assumptions being fleshed out by the panel.

### 2. *Central IT Strategy and Funding*

- a. Secure commitment by all appropriate agencies
- b. Define relationship between City's Azure platform and "owned" systems of other Agencies
- c. Thoroughly re-examine existing reporting systems (Microsoft Power BI) and its suitability to the broader needs; secure commitment by all stakeholders

This second step in our Roadmap involves the specifics of implementation and should be informed by discussions with the agencies regarding their needs and with the Advisory Panel regarding other organizations' experiences.

### 3. *Procurements*

- a. Devise pre-clearance system for IT vendors similar to state contracting in Louisiana and elsewhere, enabling purchases via Task Order rather than RFP
- b. Re-compete every two years

The State did a similar "staff augmentation" contract and has done several hardware and software agreements. The City is not nearly as large a purchaser as the State, but this system still should be viable and will make it easier to implement the overall project.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Transparency

## B. Transparency

Currently, **public records requests are an agony for all concerned**—for members of the press and public who suffer through weeks or months of delay before getting requested documents, and likewise for public employees who must drop their essential other duties to gather copies of the requested materials, which are then often delivered in hard copy at considerable cost to the requester and at environmental costs to the forests consumed. City government can avoid these costs—and conserve personnel for the delivery of city services—by **posting online any information that the public is already legally entitled to access** under the public records doctrine.

The state's Public Records Law explicitly includes “electronically stored information or information contained in databases or electronic data processing equipment” as a “public record” that must be disclosed upon request to members of the public. La. R.S. 44:I(A)(2){a}. We live in a digital age when most public records are produced electronically and can easily be uploaded to the web. To borrow a phrase, *One Click. That's it!*

The CAO must harness “Technology” as described above by working through the Chief Innovation Officer (with consultation by the Law Department where necessary to resolve close legal questions about public records) to **post public information online by all city agencies, boards, and commissions**. The city can save money, enhance the delivery of services, and build trust with the public by routinely posting public information on the city's website, where it can be viewed by all without the burdens and delay of a public records request.

Right now, in this third decade of the Third Millennium, we are long overdue for improving access to public information by posting public information online. The Coalition supports online access to public information and looks to *the CAO as the city official responsible for making it happen*.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Data-Based Evaluation

## C. Data-Based Performance Evaluation

In 1999, former Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington, D.C. pioneered the collection of data for performance-based evaluation of city departments and department heads. Martin O'Malley implemented similar systems during his tenure as Mayor of Baltimore and Governor of Maryland, and most recently as Director of the Social Security Administration. He wrote persuasively about the use of technology in government in *Smarter Government: How to Govern for Results in the Information Age* (2019). We recommend the O'Malley model of "smarter government."

The Coalition recommends embracing "Technology" and "Transparency" **to create publicly available "dashboards" that provide real-time access to information** by which the press and public can evaluate the performance of city departments and the department heads who lead them. Making these "Metrics" visible to everyone will *identify shortcomings and successes* in the operations of city government and enable us to *hold city personnel accountable* for the capable delivery of city services.

Under New Orleans' Home Rule Charter, the *CAO is responsible for operational efficiency in delivering city services*. Data-based performance evaluations will strengthen the CAO's capability—and *accountability*—to assure efficient delivery of city services. If a unit of city government is demonstrably deficient, the CAO will be responsible for improving that unit's performance; a CAO who fails to do so will be justifiably criticized and could be subject to removal by the City Council under HRC Sec. 4-106.

Dashboards exert an uncomfortable (but useful) pressure on city officials. Accordingly, the Coalition **recommends protecting dashboards with a mandate in the Home Rule Charter, an ordinance establishing the framework for such systems, and properly promulgated regulations to implement the requirements**. These legal protections will enable dashboards to endure in city government from one administration to the next.



# Cross-Cutting Themes | Culture Change

## D. Culture Change: Empowering Employees for High Performance

Technology, Transparency, and Data-Based Performance Evaluation can move the needle—but only so far. At bottom, success will only be assured if employees are *empowered and incentivized to embrace a culture of high performance* in city government.

A key strategy in provoking culture change is *providing sufficient training, support, and feedback* to ensure that employees are *capable* of performing successfully. The next steps involve *tracking progress, addressing resistance, taking corrective action, and celebrating successes* to maintain momentum.

Good ideas are often discussed inside and outside New Orleans city government—ideas to move the city forward and to improve the delivery of core city services. But *timely, competent, and focused implementation* is too often lacking. Over decades, a culture of paralysis, excuses, and red tape has developed. It's threatening the city's future. It's time to listen to the people of New Orleans and to make needed changes.

Quick fixes are few and far between. City officials, employees, influencers, and voters must share a commitment to make real improvements, large and small. The responsible officials in city government must be held accountable to execute promised plans.

Personnel who operate city government, who do the jobs that keep it running, will learn the most productive work habits by doing and building competence every day. They need to become subject-matter experts in their own areas with a strong grasp and deep knowledge of the public services they provide.

City employees must help each other to learn and improve continually. That's true, as well, about department heads. This is the only way the city's governance structure, and its incentives to improve performance, will deliver what the people of the city have a right to expect. This must be the beating heart of a more productive management culture.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Culture Change

## D. Culture Change: Empowering Employees for High Performance (Continued)

It takes a sequence of small steps to make big progress. It also takes constant measurement of progress. Progress must be tracked; metrics must be made public. "Whack-a-mole" policymaking is a dead end; it never works. Priorities need to be set based on data and then must consistently be driven to implementation without distraction.

People, culture, structure, strategies, and systems must be aligned, all moving in the same direction. Each city department, team, and individual in New Orleans government must commit to teamwork and breaking down silos that destroy cooperation and coordination. We've seen the painful consequences of what happens when this is not done. The City Services Coalition urges the next administration to adopt and publish a high-level vision for the city's future and to back it up with granular work plans and sequenced stages of execution.

Cities that have been successful in championing performance-oriented organizations prioritize empowerment, innovation, and achieving results. They work to embed principles of a high-performance organization in city government through the adoption of rules, procedures, systems, and cultural norms that will promote the desired changes, and they align organizational design with those principles. The Coalition recommends an early and serious look at training programs for city employees soon after the inauguration of newly-elected leaders on January 12, 2026

The City Services Coalition is working to overhaul city government to make it work for the entire city—to make New Orleans safer, cleaner and more prosperous. It's going to take a combination of structural changes and management improvements. In the end, it will be the people who run the city—elected officials, department heads, and every city employee—who determine whether these goals are met. We believe it can be done. We believe it must be done.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Rulemaking

## E. Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking

*"Marc was the first mayor to really bring police reform in, and he admitted on his way out that his biggest mistake was not institutionalizing the reforms he made under Richard Pennington, because it backslid."*

Clancy Dubos in "Behind the Headlines with Clancy Dubos" | The Times-Picayune (December 26, 2024)

Mayor Marc Morial's successful 1994-95 Charter Revision initiative introduced for the first time in city government a procedure by which police reforms could have been institutionalized. Under HRC Sec, 4- 107(3), **departmental policies must be promulgated through notice and-comment rulemaking—a public participation process that ends with City Council review of proposed rules and vote to approve or reject them**. Once adopted as a rule, policies cannot be revoked or revised without following the same public participation and Council approval process, thereby lending **institutional stability to agency reforms**.

These same procedures applied in a contemporary context could protect police reforms accomplished under the NOPD consent decree. After federal monitors and the U.S. District Court cease their oversight of police practices, policies implemented under the consent decree will nonetheless endure if they are properly promulgated through notice-and comment rulemaking.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Rulemaking

## E. Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking (Continued)

The Coalition supports notice-and-comment rulemaking for three good reasons:

- **It's required under the Charter.** Departmental policies that have not been promulgated as required under HRC Sec. 4-107(3) lack the force of law: *"No such regulation shall become effective until approved by resolution of the Council."*
- It's entirely **consistent with the Council's role** as the legislative branch of city government that the Council review and *approve proposed regulations before they attain the force of law.*
- It's also appropriate that **the public has an opportunity to comment** on proposed regulations before they are *adopted, revised, or revoked.*

Notice-and-comment rulemaking serves democratic values and sustains reforms in city government.

The city administration (Mayor) and the legislative branch (Council) have a shared responsibility to assure that all proposed regulations are presented for public comment and Council approval *before* they attain the force of law.

# Cross-Cutting Themes | Coordination and Collaboration

## F. Coordination and Collaboration

On coordination and collaboration, the voters have strong opinions, and they are not favorable. Only 2% say city departments are doing a good job of coordinating public works projects, such as streets and drainage. Only 10% say the NOPD, DA, Orleans Parish Prison, Juvenile Services, and Criminal Courts are doing a good job of coordinating their activities; 34% say they're doing a poor job.

Multiple Coalition recommendations have applied this cross-cutting theme of coordination and collaboration to a broad range of city services:

- In Permitting, we recommended a “concierge” to coordinate the progress of permit applications through various agency approvals (page 136).
- In Trash & Clean Public Spaces, we recommended mini-grants (page 176) to fund public-private collaboration between government and businesses or homeowners in fighting the blight of illegal dumping by installing nighttime lighting, surveillance cameras, and barriers that block access to dumping “hot spots.”
- We've recommended creation of three new coordinating entities—a Capital Cabinet, a Public Safety & Justice Council, and a Regional Water Purification Facility.

City government needs increased coordination and collaboration to excel in the delivery of city services. These and other recommendations will help move us in the right direction, fostering cooperation and cutting costs.

# IV. Obstacles and Opportunities

Candidates for municipal office must address these **Obstacles and Opportunities** in 2025, because *If elected, they will be addressing them in the next four years.*

## A. Civil Service

Civil Service needs an overhaul; the current system is not working well. Its bureaucratic rigidity and lack of incentives to elicit high performance by city employees remains a major obstacle to efficient management of city services.

The Coalition seeks Civil Service reforms that will (a) attract and retain top talent in a competitive marketplace, (b) reward high performers for exceptional work ,and (c) streamline an outdated classification system that fails to align specific jobs with the actual work needing to be done. The City should also consider dormant provisions in HRC Art. VIII and LA Const. Art. X, Sec. 1(B).

The Coalition strongly supports nonpolitical merit selection of city employees, which the civil service system provides. We recommend relocating human resource functions from Civil Service to city departments or reposing HR responsibilities in a Deputy CAO or a “hybrid” of the two. This new model would give agency heads the flexibility and responsibility to make management decisions, and to make them nimbly, while still protecting city government from political hirings and unfair firings of its personnel.

Management assessments of the Sewerage and Water Board have shown a strong need to modernize civil service. The Sewerage and Water Board is currently exploring alternatives to civil service as part of its People Plan process. Its effort may provide a useful case study. Whatever the outcome, the Coalition recommends a new human resources model for citywide implementation.

The next Mayor and City Council must act on civil service reforms to support efficient delivery of city services. One of their options may be to activate HRC Art. VIII and establish a City Civil Service system. For more research and readings, see Appendix E.

# Obstacles and Opportunities | Pension Obligations

## B. Pension Obligations

Pension plans serving New Orleans municipal employees and firefighters have major financial challenges. The New Orleans Municipal Employees' Retirement System (NOMERS) has assets covering only 59% of promised benefits, while the New Orleans Fire Fighters' Pension and Relief Fund (NOFF New Fund) is one of the most underfunded large pension systems in the country, with assets worth *only 15% of promised benefits*. Each plan requires substantial annual employer contributions of \$29.6 million for NOMERS, and *an astounding \$68.3 million for NOFF, almost half of the entire Fire Department's \$133 million annual budget* (based on their most recent actuarial valuation reports).

The burden of paying these contributions falls on the city's General Fund budget and ultimately on taxpayers. City leaders should consider the structure of future retirement benefits in the context of shaping a competitive total compensation package to attract and retain talented employees, while keeping costs fair for taxpayers. They should consider whether hiring and retention challenges can be met with targeted, cost effective, and sustainable compensation solutions instead of across-the board pension increases. They should also explore the potential appeal to new hires of alternatives to defined benefit plans, such as defined contribution or hybrid plans, that shift some risk from employer to employees in exchange for greater portability and control of their retirement savings.

# Obstacles and Opportunities | Transit

## C. Transit

An inadequate transit system is an obstacle to strengthening the economy of New Orleans. It limits local residents in their access to affordable housing, jobs, healthy nutrition options, medical services, recreational opportunities, and scores of other services that should be equally available to everyone. The burdens of an inadequate transit system fall with *disproportionate impact* on the most vulnerable members of a community. See, for example: <https://famvin.org/en/2023/08/24/public-transportation-convenience-hassle-or-lifeline-2/>.

Regional transit is an appropriate goal, but recent movement has been in the opposite direction. Jefferson Parish's withdrawal from the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) may decrease revenue and increase fares, exacerbating inequities in the transit system.

To better serve the needs of transit riders in New Orleans and surrounding parishes, the Coalition recommends sustained efforts by the RTA to *renew regional service*, which will first require demonstrably improving transit operations in Orleans Parish.

How will the public know if *demonstrable improvement* is achieved? The answer is **transparency** in the form of **a publicly available dashboard**. Management must establish a system of *standard operating procedures linked to meeting key performance indicators* (KPI). These KPI's would include on-time performance, miles between road calls, a reliable operating fleet, a mandated spare ratio of buses, spare parts, a proper ratio of drivers and maintenance personnel for every vehicle, training, and other data points. The operating plan should drive service levels on the street and respond to demand for public service among riders.

RTA's operations, fixed bus, paratransit, rail, and ferry services must all work in concert for the RTA to provide safe, effective transit service. The RTA must also have personnel, systems, equipment, and an experienced management team to deliver on that objective. If any level is failing, then the system will not serve the best interests of the public.



# Obstacles and Opportunities | Increased Bonding Capacity

## D. Increased Bonding Capacity

Over the next five years, New Orleans will see regular increases in its bonding capacity, which creates unparalleled opportunities to address urgent needs in the city's crumbling infrastructure.

The Board of Liquidation is responsible for issuing bonds for the City and ensuring the bond covenants are properly administered and timely paid. Over the last few years, the Board of Liquidation has voted to reduce the City's taxes, first from 22.5 millages to 19.5 millages and more recently from 19.5 millages to 16.5 millages. These tax reductions mean the City's capacity to bond for new projects has grown. See Appendix F for further information about servicing the city's bond debt.

In the near term, the current Administration has proposed a potential new bond issuance close to \$500 million for infrastructure improvements. The City's bonding capacity will continue to grow. Current and future bond capacity should be part of a comprehensive plan combining state and federal funds to fuel infrastructure investment that put public dollars to work where they can do maximum good for our City's residents.

# Obstacles and Opportunities | Parks, Recreation, & Trees

## E. Parks, Recreation, and the Tree Canopy

Audubon and City Park are expansive reserves of open space, precious resources in an urban environment. Numerous smaller parks and playgrounds form part of the fabric of neighborhoods all across the city. New Orleans' parks contribute immeasurably to the *health and well-being of the city's residents*, affording opportunities for exercise and providing *recreational sites that are of particular value to the city's youth*. The Coalition recommends that we *implement the Big Green Easy Plan* for protection and expansion of parks.

Our treasure trove of live oaks and other majestic trees contribute mightily to the city's international profile, attracting visitors from all across the globe. The tree canopy has been steadily diminishing, however, from 32.9% coverage in 2005 to just 18.5% in the last 20 years. We do not compare favorably with other cities in the region: Atlanta (47%), Austin (38%), and Memphis (37%). New Orleans is on par with Houston (18%). In September 2024, the Louisiana Landmarks Society identified the New Orleans Tree Canopy as *#1 on its list of Nine Most Endangered Sites* in the city.

Inadequate City Code provisions to protect trees were enacted in 1956—and have not been amended since. The Coalition recommends *a meaningful update of the City Code in 2025*, requiring notice before work on major trees, protection for landmark trees, penalties for violations, and effective enforcement procedures.

The Coalition also recommends implementing the *New Orleans Reforestation Plan* that was approved by Council Resolution in January 2023.

# V. Implementation Schedule

The Coalition recommends that a ballot proposition be presented to voters in 2025 to amend the Home Rule Charter and accomplish the following:

Identify the CAO as the municipal official who is responsible for efficient delivery of city services and who must establish a system of data-gathering and performance evaluation that is available for review on a public dashboard.

Repeal the requirement of Mayoral approval for a CAO to remove a poorly-performing department head.

Require that the City Attorney and all Law Department attorneys adhere to the Model Rules of Professional Conduct governing lawyers who represent a corporate entity and acknowledge explicitly that their client is the municipal corporation, the City of New Orleans.

# VI. Political Milestones In 2025

These dates and deadlines for bond and charter propositions and for NOLA’s primary and runoff elections in 2025 are important milestones.

Municipal and Parochial Elections →

October 11

November 15

Primary

Runoff

Proposition Deadline	by June 11	by September 22
Qualifying Dates	July 9-11	
In-Person/Mail Registration Deadline	September 10	October 15
Geaux Vote Online Registration Deadline	September 20	October 25
Mail Ballot Request Deadline	October 7	November 12
Deadline for Receipt of Mail Ballot	October 10	November 14
Early Voting Begins	September 27	November 1
Early Voting Ends	October 4	November 8

# Appendix

Appendix A: Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Appendix B: City Attorney and Law Department

Appendix C: Sewerage & Water Board Analysis

Appendix D: Permitting Qualifications

Appendix E: Civil Service Challenges and Responses

Appendix F: Bond Debt Service

## Chief Administrative Officer: Appendix A

The City Services Coalition identified a need to assign clear responsibility for operational tasks in city government and **agreed that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) should be the responsible city official accountable for assuring the efficient delivery of city services.**

The Coalition considered alternatives to current procedures for appointing, confirming, or removing a CAO:

1. Home Rule Charter (HRC) Sec. 4-208 authorizes the Mayor to appoint the CAO. The Coalition recommends no changes to appointment procedures.
2. HRC Sec. 4-106(4) requires City Council confirmation of the Mayor's appointment "to head any executive branch department established by Article IV of the Charter," which includes the Mayor's appointment of a CAO. (See HRC Sec. 4-102, establishing in the Executive Branch "*the Administrative Office, of which the Chief Administrative Officer shall be the head*".) The Coalition recommends no changes to the confirmation process.
3. HRC Sec. 3-125 permits the Council to remove "any person appointed to the unclassified service" (which includes the CAO) for cause and after notice and a due process hearing "by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership of the Council." The Coalition recommends no change to the HRC's removal provision.

**Increased compensation** would strengthen the CAO position by attracting top-tier talent, whether local or national. The Coalition recommends that the CAO's compensation be benchmarked to national standards for top talent in a comparable position, recognizing that compensation for other positions in city government may also need to be reviewed and perhaps adjusted as well.

The Coalition recommends **strengthening the CAO's responsibilities with the following changes in the Home Rule Charter:**

- (1) Establish explicitly in the HRC that the CAO is the primary point of responsibility and accountability for management and operations of city services.

- (2) Assign responsibility to the CAO to establish and maintain a system of data gathering and metrics-based performance evaluations and to make the evaluations available to the public on a dashboard.
- (3) Retain the requirement that a CAO's appointment of department heads is "with the approval of the Mayor," but remove the requirement of Mayoral approval if the CAO decides to remove a department head. The CAO's decision to remove a department head should be explained with written reasons.

The Coalition also recommends **strengthening the CAO's capacity** through the following reforms, implemented through a CAO Policy Memorandum:

- 1. Create Deputy CAO positions for (i) a Chief Financial Officer (CFO); (ii) a Chief Human Resources Officer; (iii) a Chief Innovation Officer (CIO); and (iv) a Chief of Neighborhood Services.
- 2. Each Deputy CAO will be responsible and accountable for creating a limited set of priorities within the assigned subject area and for taking necessary steps to achieve alignment on priorities among the Mayor and the Council.

Here are the pertinent Charter provisions, edited for brevity and with emphasis added.

### **Section 3-125. - Removal of Unclassified Appointees.**

The Council may bring charges against any person appointed to the unclassified service for lack of qualifications, incompetence, neglect of duty, failure to comply with a lawful directive of the Civil Service Commission or gross misconduct in reference to that person's duties. . . . the Council may order a public hearing thereon, at which the accused and the appointing authority shall have the right to be heard, to be represented by counsel, and to require the attendance of witnesses and the production of relevant books and papers. If, after hearing, the accused be found guilty as charged, the accused may be **suspended or dismissed from the City service by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership of the Council.**

- **Section 4-106. - Appointment and Removal of Department Heads.**

(1) The City Attorney shall be appointed and may be removed by the Mayor.

(2) All other department heads shall be appointed and may be removed by the Chief Administrative Officer *with the approval of the Mayor*, except where other appointing authority is designated by this Charter or by applicable State law.

(3) \* \* \*

(4) Appointments to **head any executive branch department established by Article IV of the Charter**, when made by the Mayor or by the Chief Administrative Officer, shall **require confirmation** by the Council, in accordance with a confirmation process to be established by Council rule. The Council may, by ordinance, require Council confirmation of any appointment to head any other department, office or unit to which executive powers have been assigned or transferred in accordance with [Sections 4-105](#) or [9-201](#)(2) of the Charter.

(5) \* \* \*



## City Attorney and Law Department: Appendix B

Louisiana Rule of Professional Conduct 1.13 governs a lawyer's duties regarding an "Organization as Client": "A lawyer employed or retained by an organization **represents the organization** acting through its duly authorized constituents." (Emphasis added.) The City of New Orleans is established as a corporate body in Home Rule Charter (HRC) Sec. 1-101 ("*Incorporation*").

The HRC currently requires—in conformity with the Rules of Professional Conduct—that the City Attorney and the Law Department serve the interests of that corporate body, the "City." See HRC Sec. 4-401(1): "*The Department of Law, headed by a City Attorney, shall: (1) Direct and supervise the legal affairs of **the City.***" (Emphasis added.)

But that legal directive is not descriptive of practical reality. The City Attorney has historically represented the interests of the Mayor, because the Mayor selects the City Attorney under HRC Sec. 4-106(1): "*The City Attorney shall be appointed and may be removed by the Mayor.*" Practical reality has placed City Attorney appointees in an untenable ethical situation, where duties of loyalty to the public official who appointed them conflicted with their professional duties of loyalty to the corporation, the City of New Orleans.

Recently, voters added a significant new requirement in HRC Sec. 4-106(4): "*Appointments to head any executive branch department established by Article IV of the Charter, when made by the Mayor or by the Chief Administrative Officer, shall require confirmation by the Council, in accordance with a confirmation process to be established by Council rule.*" The Council now plays an important role in the City Attorney's assumption of office. At a City Attorney's confirmation hearing, Councilmembers should establish a clear understanding that the City Attorney and Law Department serve as counsel to the City of New Orleans and owe duties of loyalty to the corporate body, not primarily to the Mayor.

The Council's ability to exercise removal power under HRC Sec. 3-125 will exert a further incentive for the City Attorney to operate a Law Department that exhibits greater independence than traditionally was the case in New Orleans.

The Coalition supports this movement toward greater independence in the City's chief legal officer.

Some of the most important responsibilities of the City Attorney are established in HRC Sec. 4-101(5): "Prepare or approve as to form and legality all contracts, documents and instruments creating any legal or conventional obligation affecting the City." This language is certainly broad enough on its face to encompass "contracts, documents and instruments" related to procurements. Some Coalition members have suggested adding "procurements" explicitly to the provision; others believe the current language is sufficient. If necessary, the Charter could be amended to make this responsibility even more explicit.

## SWBNO Research and Recommendations: Appendix C

The Sewerage and Water Board needs “major changes” according to 80% of New Orleans voters in a December 2024 survey. The S&WB’s operational problems have been painfully public for too many years: billing disputes, “boil water” advisories, neighborhood flooding, endless and repetitious roadwork projects.

The S&WB’s governance structure has contributed to its problems. The S&WB’s status as a hybrid of city and state law makes it difficult to assign responsibility. While the Board has authority over S&WB operations, the Mayor’s service as President can confuse or obscure how decisions are made and who should be held accountable for deficiencies in the delivery of services. Board members lack the authority to generate much-needed new revenue, and elected City Council members who have that authority may lack the political will to exercise it. Any reforms that require state legislation can only be taken up annually, and sessions are sometimes limited as to subject matter.

Solutions to the S&WB’s problems must address both the *governance structure* and *operational challenges* such as water purification, stormwater management, workforce deficiencies, inaccurate billing, and inadequacies in service delivery and the maintenance of an old and crumbling infrastructure.

### S&WB’s Current Governance Structure

The presence of elected officials on the S&WB diminishes its independence in multiple ways. Serving as Board Chair, for example, enables the Mayor to control committee appointments and set the Board’s agenda. Additionally, as BGR has observed, “The presence of the city’s most powerful elected official can also discourage the free-flowing exchange of ideas on the board, limiting the board’s effectiveness.”<sup>1</sup>

Similar problems arise with the presence of City Council members on the Board—and worse still, their presence creates a conflict of interest, as BGR observed:

The council member must act in the best interest of the S&WB, which includes ensuring that rates and taxes are set at sufficient levels to properly

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<sup>1</sup> BGR, *Waterworks in Progress*, p. 6.

fund operations, maintenance and capital improvements for the water, sewer and drainage systems. At the same time, the council member is responsible for overseeing actions personally taken as a board member and representing constituent interests as a member of the full council. These could include a political desire to keep S&WB rates and taxes low. The presence of a City Council member on the board is also unusual. Of the 22 other public water utilities serving large cities that are governed by a board of directors, only three include a city council member on the board.<sup>2</sup>

For the S&WB to function as a truly independent agency, elected officials should be removed from board membership. The Board should select its own Chair from among the membership, which would allow for a freer exchange of views and information. It would also liberate the Mayor from responsibilities that must be challenging in light of other demands of office and would place the responsibility for board actions clearly in the hands of the Board itself.

Currently, the non-elected SW&B members include two members of the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, and seven citizen appointees. The seven citizen members are appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the City Council; the Mayor must select from among nominees proposed by an independent selection committee.<sup>3</sup> At least one citizen member comes from each of the five Council districts. Citizen members must have experience in architecture, environmental quality, finance, accounting, business administration, engineering, law, public health, urban planning, facilities management, public administration, science, construction, business management, community or consumer advocacy, or other pertinent disciplines. Two of the citizen members must be consumer advocates.

### Reforming the S&WB's Governance Structure

In 2023, the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) recommended “either strengthening the S&WB as a stand-alone utility that operates separately from City government or replacing it with a municipal utility that functions as part of City government.”<sup>4</sup> Either approach would require voter-approved legal changes

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> BGR, *Waterworks in Progress: Reassessing the Sewerage & Water Board's Governance Problems and Potential Paths to Long-Term Improvement*, May 2023. <https://www.bgr.org/report-index/waterworks-in-progress->

and would require significant implementation time. It's very clear that S&WB governance reform is essential, and equally clear that it will demand high-priority and focused leadership from New Orleans' new Mayor and Council in 2026.

In March 2024, Governor Landry's Sewerage & Water Board Task Force recommended changes to the board's governance structure.<sup>5</sup> Their proposed structure is compared below to the current structure:

<b>Current Membership</b>	<b>Landry Task Force Proposal</b>
The Mayor	1 Mayoral Appointee from NO Business Council
1 Councilmember or designee	1 City Council Appointee from GNO, Inc.
2 consumer advocates	1 Council President Appointee: consumer advocate 1 Orleans Parish DA Appointee: Lawyer*
2 members, Bd. of Liquidation	1 Orleans House Delegation: Civil Engineer* 1 Orleans Senate Delegation: Constr. Contractor*
District A resident	1 Public Service Appointee: LA Elec. Co-ops Assn.
District B resident	Legislative Auditor or a designee
District C resident	CPRA Commissioner or a designee
District D resident	DOTD Secretary or a designee
District E resident	DEQ Secretary or a designee

\* See the proposal for more details on selection: <https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/2024-Extras/SWB-2024/SWBO-Final-Report.pdf>

The Task Force's proposal appears to have gained little traction, which leaves reform of the current board membership open to consideration.

The City Services Coalition has called for the creation of a "New Orleans Water Authority" to replace the S&WB and to be assisted by a Water Authority Transition

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[reassessing-swb-governance-problems-and-reform-options/ https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/BGR-report-sewerage-and-water-board-governance-051723.pdf](https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/BGR-report-sewerage-and-water-board-governance-051723.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Task Force Report to Governor Jeff Landry March 27, 2024, p. 9. <https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/2024-Extras/SWB-2024/SWBO-Final-Report.pdf>

Committee that will oversee the changeover during the course of a year and thereafter will become the NOWA Management Board on a permanent basis. There would be appointees by the Mayor, each City Council at-large member, the Governor, and the Orleans House and Senate legislative delegations. The NOWA Board would also include management and engineering professionals who could be selected in accordance with procedures for the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authorities (R.S. 33:330.1).

The Coalition proposal focuses on appointing authorities, rather than the total makeup of the board. As a result, a clean comparison with the current board is not possible, but here is a side-by-side:

<b>Current Membership</b>	<b>City Services Coalition Proposal</b>
The Mayor	2 Mayoral Appointees
1 City Councilmember	1 City Council appointee (from at large member 1)
	1 City Council appointee (from at large member 2)
2 consumer advocates	2 Appointee of the Governor
2 members, Board of Liq.	2 Appointees: Orleans House and Senate members
	? Appointees from management and engineering professionals*
District A resident	
District B resident	
District C resident	
District D resident	
District E resident	

*\* It is unclear how many professional members would serve on the board or how many appointments would be made by appointing authorities.*

## S&WB Operational Challenges

S&WB responsibilities currently include (i) water purification, (ii) drainage and stormwater management, and (iii) maintenance and construction projects to repair the city's aging infrastructure.

The Coalition recommends that a Regional Water Purification Facility take over the first of these responsibilities. The S&WB is developing a reliable system of providing electricity to resolve many of the problems associated with drainage and stormwater management. In 2024 the City Council appropriated money for an arbitration program that is steadily diminishing the S&WB's backlog of billing disputes. Progress on these three initiatives would reduce the S&WB's remaining responsibility for maintenance and construction projects to a more manageable size, creating operational options (such as a merger into DPW) that cannot currently be contemplated because of the public's deep distrust of both agencies.

Rate-Setting Authority: In 2023, BGR researched the process for setting rates among 16 independent large-city water utilities. Among those 16, only one – the S&WB – required approval from the local city council for its rate increases. Of the remaining 15, two-thirds were “self-regulating,” meaning that they approved their own rate increases without requiring secondary approval. The other five required approval from the state utility regulator, which in Louisiana would be the Public Service Commission. As with reforming the governance structure, rate making would also require voter-approved legal changes.

Self-regulation procedures are found in two independent water utilities widely recognized as successful: Pittsburgh Water and DC Water. Pittsburgh Water was created explicitly to end a dysfunctional relationship between the then-municipal utility and the local city council, which had led to a dilapidated system.<sup>6</sup> Pittsburgh Water controls its water rates; the city and council play no direct role in its rate decisions.

Sewer and water services in New Orleans are paid for by water rates, while property taxes currently pay for drainage infrastructure. The funding generated by water rates is widely seen as insufficient, but any increases remain in the hands of the City Council. A proposal currently under discussion is creation of a

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with former Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy.

stormwater fee that would reduce the drainage millage on property taxes. If such a fee were implemented, final approval of stormwater rate increases could be vested in the S&WB or the PSC, moving the system toward alignment of authority, funding, and accountability in the S&WB.

Drainage is currently paid for entirely from three dedicated property taxes. They expire in 2027, 2031 and 2046. Therefore, the first opportunity to replace a tax with a stormwater fee is coming soon, in just two years, and the second is only six years away. The first of these was projected to raise about \$20 million in 2024; the second is the largest of the three property taxes, raising a projected \$31 million. In short, more than 70% of current drainage tax revenues could be converted to fees during the next six years.

### S&WB Workforce Challenges

Civil Service problems also hinder S&WB operations. BGR summarized the current state of affairs as follows:

Nearly all the S&WB's workforce, except for the executive director and a handful of top administrators, are civil service employees. This means that the S&WB must follow personnel policies and rules set by the New Orleans Civil Service Commission and work with the commission on various personnel matters, such as hiring processes, establishing new or modifying existing job positions, and setting pay rates. In addition, the commission exercises a quasi-judicial role in hearing S&WB employee appeals of disciplinary actions.<sup>7</sup>

The Commission's involvement has been regarded for many years as a significant problem for the S&WB's management of its employee workforce. Furthermore, New Orleans' Civil Service system has been regarded as one of the most dysfunctional in the nation.<sup>8</sup> Improvements have been made in the past decade, but serious issues remain.

In 2017, one of our researchers interviewed personnel executives from 10 high-performing water utilities and found that a clear majority (7) of them do not

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<sup>7</sup> BGR, *Waterworks in Progress*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> The Times-Picayune, "New Orleans City Hall dysfunction leaves specialist shocked," March 4, 2011. [https://www.nola.com/news/politics/new-orleans-city-hall-dysfunction-leaves-specialist-shocked/article\\_67318ed0-91ff-534a-9186-98d4361729a1.html](https://www.nola.com/news/politics/new-orleans-city-hall-dysfunction-leaves-specialist-shocked/article_67318ed0-91ff-534a-9186-98d4361729a1.html)



operate under city civil service. Two had thoroughly delegated authority over personnel matters with the city civil service department providing only oversight or auditing to ensure compliance with rules. Only one of the utilities operated under a city civil service system. (Note: These preliminary findings were not submitted for fact-checks to the 10 agencies; the research is now 8 years old, and circumstances may have changed.)

The S&WB is pursuing a plan to relieve the Civil Service Commission of responsibility over its personnel. Dubbed the “People Plan,” this endeavor was rejected by a vote of employees in March 2025. However, its goals were clear:

- ❑ The S&WB would have its own disciplinary and appeal/grievance processes.
- ❑ The S&WB would have control over compensation, including incentive pay and raises.
- ❑ The S&WB would control its own training and professional development programming.
- ❑ The S&WB would create its own streamlined recruitment and hiring process, with flexibility to create new positions and job descriptions.<sup>9</sup>

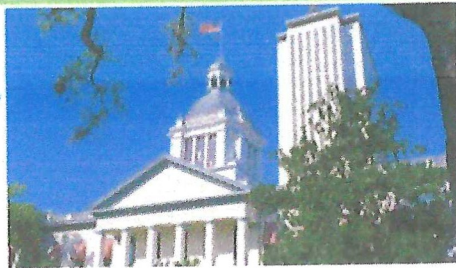
Pay enhancements were to be part of the People Plan, but pensions were not, as S&WB staff stated in a January committee meeting.<sup>10</sup> Pensions and benefits are managed separately from the civil service system, but the S&WB should address total compensation at some point. Pay and benefits could be tailored to attract and retain high-performing employees, securing superb services for a reasonable cost.

The S&WB might make changes in pension benefits apply only to new hires. A mix of pay and retirement benefits could be calibrated to meet specific needs of new employees. A young engineer who did not plan a long-term career at the S&WB might choose a low-cost, but portable defined contribution plan and a higher salary. Another hire planning a long-term commitment and to vest in a pension might choose a more favorable defined-benefit pension but at a lower starting pay rate. Putting such choices in the hands of new hires could attract the best workforce while posing no threat to current employee benefits.

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<sup>9</sup> Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans, “The People Plan: A Better Workplace, A Stronger Workforce,” Presentation for SWBNO Employees, slide presentation, January 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans, Operations Committee Meeting, January 15, 2025.  
[https://www.youtube.com/live/RdGSNOArg\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/live/RdGSNOArg_0)



## What are the requirements to become a building code administrator?

Published 12/01/2010 05:04 PM | Updated 08/14/2012 12:57 PM

SAMPLE

What are the requirements to become a Building Code Administrator?

The basic requirements are:

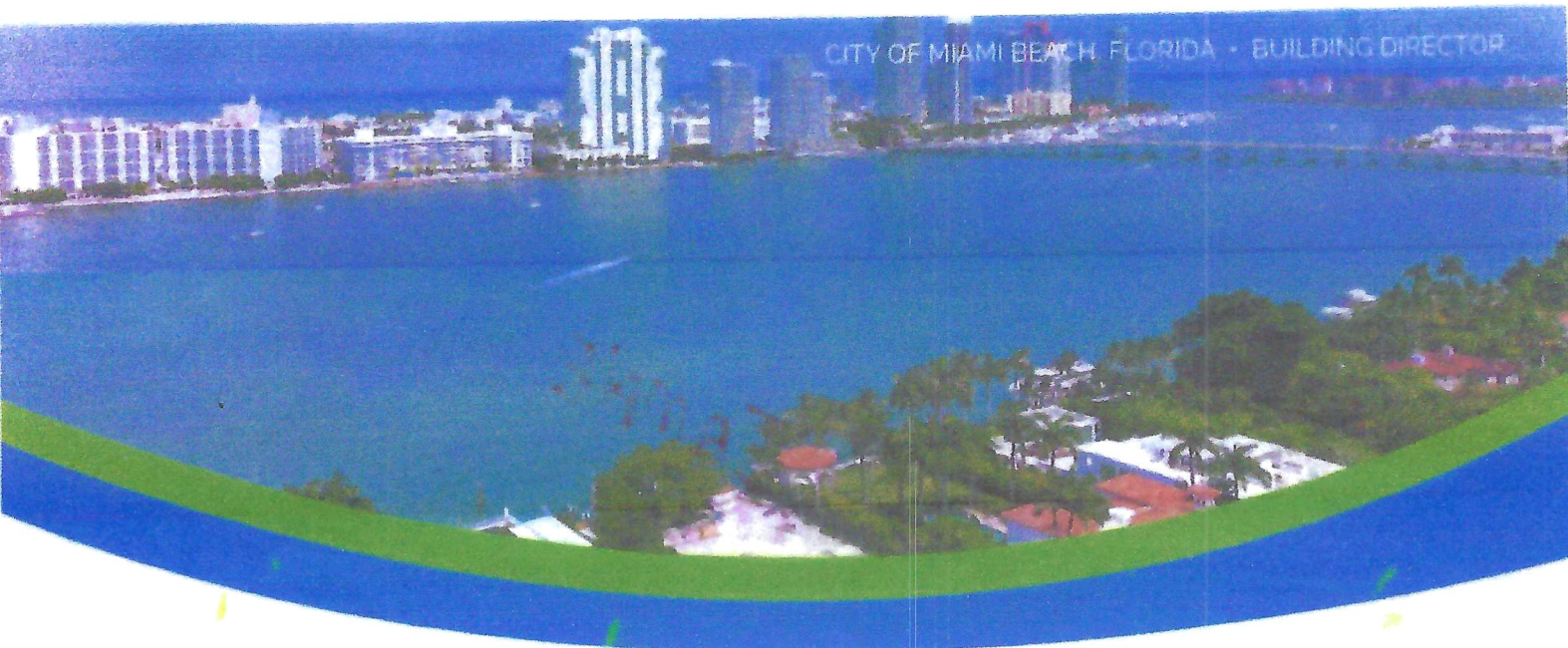
- An applicant must be at least 18 years of age and be of good moral character;
- An applicant must also demonstrate one of the following eligibility requirements:
  - Ten years combined experience as an Architect, Engineer, Plans Examiner, Building Code Inspector, Registered or Certified Contractor, or Construction Superintendent, with a least five years' experience in supervisory positions; or
  - A combination of post-secondary education in the field of construction or a related field, and experience as an Architect, Engineer, Plans Examiner, Building Code Inspector, Registered or Certified Contractor, or Construction Superintendent for a total of 10 years. No more than five years of education may be applied, and at least five years' experience must be in supervisory positions.

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Please see our [Chapter 455](#) page to determine if you are affected by this change.





## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- **Open, honest, collaborative, and transparent**
  - Possess a high level of emotional intelligence with the ability to effectively engage others with diverse personalities in a tactful, mature, and flexible manner to build trust, transparency, and productive relationships. Open to new ideas and ways of getting to 'Yes' in any given situation, while adhering to safety standards and requirements.
- **Professional demeanor** – Maintains a poised and professional demeanor and is adept at fostering productive relationships with team members, external developers, and contractors. Capable of enforcing regulations and safety protocols while offering clear explanations and communicating the significance of compliance.
- **Skilled in identifying and implementing best practice solutions** – Expert at anticipating needs and proposing unique, creative, and out of the box solution(s) to new or ongoing operational issues.
- **Safety first mindset** – In Miami Beach, navigating the intricate building codes and procedures necessitates teamwork among various departments, developers, and construction crews to prioritize safety. Balancing this with the pressure for speed can be challenging, but upholding the project's integrity and safety remains the foremost objective.
- **Proactive, solution and results oriented** – One who can partner with stakeholders to achieve goals.
- **Departmental leader, manager, and mentor** – Capable of motivating, collaborating with, and guiding a large team to define and execute a vision for the department. Cultivates strong relationships within the team to foster commitment and collaboratively identifies opportunities for enhancing service delivery.
- **Comfortable working in a fast-paced environment** – Tackles and resolves unique and recurring challenges across numerous high-profile projects simultaneously, demonstrating agility in adapting to shifting circumstances or pivoting direction as required.
- **Welcoming and inclusive in a diverse cultural and economic environment** – Has the ability to assimilate into a culturally diverse setting while demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness. Miami Beach includes resident owners and investors (roughly half of whom have relocated from different countries worldwide) along with nearly 11 million annual visitors. This diversity presents a nuanced challenge in accommodating varied needs and preferences related to government services and development endeavors.
- **Sets and achieves high expectations** (for self and the department) and can handle high demands and frequent unique situations.
- **Well-honed, active listening skills** – Ability to troubleshoot issues and develop multiple options for consideration.
- **Build and maintain trust** – Possess high ethical and moral character with the ability to build and maintain trusting relationships with team members at all levels and the community.
- **Metrics and data focus** – Ensure leadership has the data it needs to make informed decisions regarding priorities, budget issues, staffing matters and other operational issues.
- **Part of the City's Economic Development ecosystem** – Demonstrates an understanding of the role of Building Services in Miami Beach's economic development strategy and goals and manages the department's functions in support of those goals.



SAMPLE

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in building construction management or technology, architecture, structural engineering, or a related field and at least 7 years of progressively more complex senior management experience in building design and maintenance, codes, ordinances, and regulations regarding construction, alteration, and repair of buildings and other structures, with proven leadership experience in oversight of a large department. (Experience can substitute for education on a year-for-year basis.)
- Knowledge of national, state and local laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations regarding construction, alteration, and repair of buildings and other structures.
- Knowledge of general building design and good construction practices.
- Working knowledge of the construction industry including effective practices concerning air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, and other phases of building construction.

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Current certification, or the ability to obtain certification, as a Chief Building Official as defined by the State of Florida
- Previous public sector experience as a Building and/or Code Compliance Director
- Experience in the building trades
- Working knowledge of the South Florida Building Code
- Experience working in historic preservation
- Familiarity with EPA legislation



## Civil Service Challenges and Responses: Appendix E

Date: February 28, 2025

Re: Civil Service Challenges and Possible Responses

This discussion draft memo provides an overview of the government workforce challenges facing the City of New Orleans and explores possible responses to those challenges.

### **Background: Previous Efforts at Reform**

For more than 20 years, civic leaders have sought to transform the current New Orleans Civil Service Department into a high-performing human resource system that requires, incentivizes and rewards excellence among City employees. With a goal of improving the quality of government services, these efforts have sought to reform the City's employee base into a high-performing, high-morale work force. The City Services Coalition has identified the dysfunctional state of civil service as a challenge to the efficient delivery of city services.

In 2004, the Bureau of Governmental Research released a report called *System Upgrade: Retooling New Orleans' Civil Service*. The report found that, while the system was effective in preventing favoritism and politically motivated personnel decisions, it did a poor job of promoting merit and a culture of professional excellence. The report contained an array of recommendations aimed at building a higher performing city work force. It recommended steps to change the Civil Service Department from primarily a control-focused enforcer of rules to a service-oriented personnel department.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the early 2010s that reform began to gain traction. The City brought in a consultant to assess the situation; he described the city work force as the "least competent" he had ever seen: "I just haven't run into this level of dysfunction before, and I've been doing this work for almost 25 years." He also described "secretaries that can't type ... stuff that you just don't see other places."<sup>2</sup>

In response, the City launched the Great Place to Work Initiative, led by then-CAO Andy Kopplin. It included Civil Service Commission members, city staff, the City's consultant, and civic leaders and led in 2014 to a number of rule changes meant to repair the beleaguered Civil Service system.

For instance, prior to 2014, civil service rules required that the civil service department provide hiring managers with no more than three names of qualified candidates for an opening. The qualifications were determined based on an examination, and the managers might have had little

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<sup>1</sup> See SOURCE p. 8. <https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CivilServiceReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See SOURCE. [https://www.nola.com/news/politics/new-orleans-city-hall-dysfunction-leaves-specialist-shocked/article\\_67318ed0-91ff-534a-9186-98d4361729a1.html](https://www.nola.com/news/politics/new-orleans-city-hall-dysfunction-leaves-specialist-shocked/article_67318ed0-91ff-534a-9186-98d4361729a1.html).

say about the qualifications or how the examination was put together; the 2014 reforms undid the so-called “rule of three.” Today, hiring managers are entitled to receive a minimum of three names from which to choose, rather than a maximum. The reforms also allow managers to have input into setting the qualifications and crafting the examination.

The rule changes also called for the creation of a far more robust performance evaluation system, requiring managers to perform substantive evaluations before employees receive the tenure-like protections that accompany civil service status in New Orleans. Specific components of a performance evaluation system were set forth in the rule changes. There were also provisions requiring managers to take action to improve poor performance. Finally, the rule changes sought to make it easier for a manager to reward employees if the manager can document exceptional performance.

Other rule changes have occurred since then. For instance, in the summer of 2023, the Civil Service Commission adopted a rule change expanding the probationary period for new hires from six months to one year. This was important because the prior probationary period was widely seen as an inadequate amount of time to evaluate employees before extending robust civil service protections to them. While it is normal for a probationary period to be 3-6 months in the private sector, there is a major distinction between these private-sector probationary periods and the “working test period” in New Orleans’ civil service: Private employers keep employees on after probation in most cases as “at-will” employees (protected only by the business’ own internal dismissal procedures and labor laws). But a City employee, once past the test period, attains civil service protection, akin to lifetime tenure protection – meaning it will be far more difficult to remove the employee for poor performance. In short, the stakes are far higher for both employer and employee under the “working test” scenario.

### **Unresolved Issues, Unanswered Questions**

Despite the reforms of the last decade, citizen satisfaction with City services remains low.<sup>3</sup> And, by most accounts, satisfaction with the civil service system among government managers in the City and S&WB (which also hires and removes employees through the department) also remains low. Furthermore, the Great Place to Work Initiative can only be effective to the extent it is implemented, and it is unclear to what extent it has been. Key questions stand unanswered. For instance:

- ❑ Are there tools to improve workforce quality and performance that the City administration is not implementing or leveraging within the existing framework? Which of the 2014 rule changes have not been effectively implemented?
- ❑ Regardless of the rule changes, what obstacles remain in the way of a performance culture?
- ❑ What additional reforms are still needed beyond what was contained in the 2014 reform package?
- ❑ What challenges exist that are specific to unique entities like NOPD and SWBNO? Do the solutions lie outside of the current structure entirely?

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<sup>3</sup> [Faucheux SURVEY INFO HERE.]

- ❑ Would the City benefit from limiting the Civil Service Commission’s purview solely to disciplinary actions, terminations, and employee grievance procedures? In other words, should the recruiting, hiring, pay, and promotion functions be subsumed under an entirely different human resource apparatus (or multiple, agency-specific human resource entities)?
- ❑ Should even the “appeals” role of the Civil Service Commission be curtailed?
- ❑ What models can New Orleans explore for guidance?

Answering every one of these questions definitively is beyond the scope of this memo. However, the questions themselves suggest a range of possible paths to improve City workforce quality and performance.

### **A Range of Options for Reform**

The options for reform can be placed along a spectrum from continued tinkering with the existing system to a comprehensive reimagining of human resources in the City. Escalating intensities of reform are as follows:

**1. *Continued Tinkering.*** The lightest touch would be to leave intact the existing roles and responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission and Civil Service Department. Changes would involve a rethinking of: manager training, to ensure they raise performance and accountability among their charges; exploring options for greater flexibility in hiring and promotions, including broad-banding pay classifications; creating a flexible cap-based (rather than definitional) approach for unclassified hires (say 10% of the total workforce); and streamlining disciplinary processes to allow managers to remove poor performers in a timely manner. Tinkering may also involve selecting solely from a performance-focused group of experts for service on the Commission.

**2. *Removing the Commission’s Reinstatement Power.*** A key area of concern is the Civil Service Commission’s power to reinstate employees removed for poor performance. Theoretically, this can occur if a manager did not follow procedures well, regardless of whether the employee deserves to be removed. In addition, appeals processes can take many months or even years, potentially saddling a manager with a poisonous or underperforming team member. As a result, some managers may decide it’s not worth the effort to try to remove a poor performer. This reform option would go beyond mere tinkering with rules and practices; it would allow managers to remove poor-performing employees as they see fit. The Commission would have the power to audit managers for patterns of abuse and reward terminated employees with up to a year of back-pay, but would not be able to reinstate them. In short, anti-patronage protections would remain in place even as managers gain newfound freedom to eliminate poor performers.

**3. *Limiting the Role of Civil Service.*** A more intensive approach would be to move human resource functions to a centralized Deputy CAO’s office and to limit the role of the Commission to disciplinary appeals/grievance proceedings and rule-making – or remove the rule-making authority as well.

**4. *Fragmented Authority.*** A level up would be to move human resource functions to individual departments while limiting the role of the Commission as described above. A more limited approach would be to carve out HR functions for specific departments, such as NOPD, NOFD and the airport, while keeping line departments under a centralized Deputy CAO.

**5. *City Civil Service System.*** Currently, New Orleans operates under the State Civil Service system. Lying dormant in the Home Rule Charter<sup>4</sup>, the Louisiana Constitution<sup>5</sup>, and the Revised Statutes,<sup>6</sup> however, is a fully-elaborated option for the City to activate its own municipal Civil Service system. New Orleans no longer meets the 400,000 population criterion, so that would need to be modified, but the option is within reach through a “local option” vote that is already constitutionally-required: a city “may elect to be governed by this Part by a majority vote of its electors voting at an election held for that purpose.”<sup>7</sup> All three authorizing documents—the HRC, the LA Constitution, and the Revised Statutes—contain a “Prohibited Political Activities” provision. A City Civil Service system is compatible with the Coalition’s recommendation of a Deputy CAO for Human Resources, who would serve as the Director of Personnel.<sup>8</sup>

**6. *Elimination of the Civil Service System.*** The most intensive approach would be to eliminate civil service functions altogether. New Orleans already has multiple example of entities whose employees used to hold civil service protection but no longer do: the Audubon Commission, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office. Texas, likewise, lacks a state level system; employees are mainly at-will. If the City took this approach, rules and procedures around recruitment hiring, promotions, etc., would be left entirely to a central City HR department, departmental HR leadership, or a hybrid of the two. Employee appeals of terminations and other disciplinary actions would be left to the courts. However, critics would contend this provides an inadequate shield against patronage in hiring.

With the exception of “tinkering,” all of the foregoing changes would require significant legal changes.

Regardless of the ultimate approach, the City’s approach to human resources deserves earnest reappraisal. That reappraisal should place the following considerations front and center:

1. The primary goal of the City’s approach to HR should be to ensure that the workforce is producing efficient, effective services for citizens, mindful of the requirements of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. Any obstacles to that goal should be removed.
2. It is important to have in place a system that ensures employees are treated fairly and that roots out patronage, but a system committed to protecting employees’ interests at all costs will inevitably ill-serve the citizenry. Citizens are entitled to a performance culture – not a protection culture – in City Hall.

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<sup>4</sup> HRC Article VIII.

<sup>5</sup> LA Const. Art. X, Sec. 1(B) City Civil Service.

<sup>6</sup> R.S. 33:2391, et seq.

<sup>7</sup> LA Const. Art. X, Sec. 14(A).

<sup>8</sup> HRC Sec. 8-102.



3. Civil Service reform efforts now span more than 20 years. It is time for decisive and meaningful reform with a clear set of strategies and actions laser-focused on creating a high-performance culture in City Hall.

One final note: Structural reform of the City's HR function alone will not be sufficient to attract a high-performing workforce into the future if the compensation picture remains unaddressed. Any responsible employer must look at compensation as a totality, with available resources for pay and benefits calibrated efficiently to attract and retain high-performing employees. As a practical matter, this means placing greater emphasis on upfront pay and less on deferred benefits – and choosing portable defined contribution retirement plans over defined benefit pensions that tend to be more expensive to employers and take years to vest. Private sector employers are far more likely to take this approach, but public sector employers owe it to the public to explore a similar approach to ensure they can attract competent employees at a reasonable cost.

One soft-touch approach would be to make changes to pension benefits both a) applicable only to new hires and b) optional. The mix of pay and retirement benefits using existing financial capacity for compensation could be calibrated to attract new employees. For example, a young engineer who may not be planning a long-term career at the Department of Public Works may prefer to choose a low-cost, but portable defined contribution plan and a higher salary. Another hire looking to make a long-term commitment and willing to wait to vest in a pension may choose a defined benefit pension (but at a lower starting pay rate). The City might even consider offering a hybrid plan. With this soft-touch approach, the choice would be in the hands of new hires as a means of attracting the best workforce. It would pose no threat to current employee benefits, as long as the pension plan remains healthy.

## Bonds Debt Service: Appendix F

ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE REQUIREMENTS ON OUTSTANDING AND " <u>PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT</u> BONDS _ ISSUE OF 2024A AND TAXABLE PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT BONDS, ISSUE OF 2024B												
CALENDAR YEAR	OUTSTANDING BONDS (a)			ISSUE OF 2024A			TAXABLE ISSUE OF 2024B			TOTAL REQUIREMENTS		
	PRINCIPAL	INTEREST	TOTAL	(12/1) PRINCIPAL	(6/1; 12/1) INTEREST	TOTAL	(12/1) PRINCIPAL	(6/1; 12/1) INTEREST	TOTAL	PRINCIPAL	INTEREST	TOTAL
2024	34,825,000.00	26,829,591.26	61,654,591.26	0.00	2,694,166.67	2,694,166.67	17,000,000.00	287,819.44	17,287,819.44	51,825,000.00	29,811,577.37	81,636,577.37
2025	30,040,000.00	25,263,947.25	55,303,947.25	2,935,000.00	9,150,000.00	12,085,000.00				32,975,000.00	34,413,947.25	67,388,947.25
2026	29,125,000.00	23,951,458.25	53,076,458.25	3,085,000.00	9,003,250.00	12,088,250.00				32,210,000.00	32,954,708.25	65,164,708.25
2027	26,510,000.00	22,628,321.25	49,138,321.25	3,235,000.00	8,849,000.00	12,084,000.00				29,745,000.00	31,477,321.25	61,222,321.25
2028	24,975,000.00	21,397,398.75	46,372,398.75	3,400,000.00	8,687,250.00	12,087,250.00				28,375,000.00	30,084,648.75	58,459,648.75
2029	25,240,000.00	20,254,307.25	45,494,307.25	3,570,000.00	8,517,250.00	12,087,250.00				28,810,000.00	28,771,557.25	57,581,557.25
2030	23,380,000.00	19,122,405.25	42,502,405.25	3,745,000.00	8,338,750.00	12,083,750.00				27,125,000.00	27,461,155.25	54,586,155.25
2031	23,030,000.00	17,998,940.25	41,028,940.25	3,935,000.00	8,151,500.00	12,086,500.00				26,965,000.00	26,150,440.25	53,115,440.25
2032	22,075,000.00	16,957,197.00	39,032,197.00	4,130,000.00	7,954,750.00	12,084,750.00				26,205,000.00	24,911,947.00	51,116,947.00
2033	23,040,000.00	15,966,860.25	39,006,860.25	4,340,000.00	7,748,250.00	12,088,250.00				27,380,000.00	23,715,110.25	51,095,110.25
2034	20,045,000.00	14,897,681.75	34,942,681.75	4,555,000.00	7,531,250.00	12,086,250.00				24,600,000.00	22,428,931.75	47,028,931.75
2035	20,015,000.00	13,985,788.25	34,000,788.25	4,785,000.00	7,303,500.00	12,018,500.00				24,800,000.00	21,289,288.25	46,089,288.25
2036	20,930,000.00	13,067,387.75	33,997,387.75	5,020,000.00	7,064,250.00	12,084,250.00				25,950,000.00	20,131,637.75	46,081,637.75
2037	18,010,000.00	12,143,858.75	30,153,858.75	5,275,000.00	6,813,250.00	12,088,250.00				23,285,000.00	18,957,108.75	42,242,108.75
2038	18,880,000.00	11,284,590.00	30,164,590.00	5,535,000.00	6,549,500.00	12,084,500.00				24,415,000.00	17,834,090.00	42,249,090.00
2039	17,850,000.00	10,374,062.50	28,224,062.50	5,815,000.00	6,272,750.00	12,087,750.00				23,665,000.00	16,646,812.50	40,311,812.50
2040	18,710,000.00	9,519,010.00	28,229,010.00	6,105,000.00	5,982,000.00	12,087,000.00				24,815,000.00	15,501,010.00	40,316,010.00
2041	19,620,000.00	8,621,010.00	28,241,010.00	6,410,000.00	5,676,750.00	12,086,750.00				26,030,000.00	14,297,760.00	40,327,760.00
2042	20,570,000.00	7,679,197.50	28,249,197.50	6,730,000.00	5,356,250.00	12,086,250.00				27,300,000.00	13,035,447.50	40,335,447.50
2043	19,030,000.00	6,691,632.50	25,721,632.50	7,065,000.00	5,019,750.00	12,084,750.00				26,095,000.00	11,711,382.50	37,806,382.50
2044	19,955,000.00	5,782,897.50	25,737,897.50	7,420,000.00	4,666,500.00	12,086,500.00				27,375,000.00	10,449,397.50	37,824,397.50
2045	17,030,000.00	4,829,840.00	21,859,840.00	7,790,000.00	4,295,500.00	12,085,500.00				24,820,000.00	9,125,340.00	33,945,340.00
2046	17,875,000.00	3,995,867.50	21,870,867.50	8,180,000.00	3,906,000.00	12,086,000.00				26,055,000.00	7,901,867.50	33,956,867.50
2047	14,480,000.00	3,120,500.00	17,600,500.00	8,590,000.00	3,497,000.00	12,087,000.00				23,070,000.00	6,617,500.00	29,687,500.00
2048	15,205,000.00	2,396,500.00	17,601,500.00	9,020,000.00	3,067,500.00	12,087,500.00				24,225,000.00	5,464,000.00	29,689,000.00
2049	15,965,000.00	1,636,250.00	17,601,250.00	9,470,000.00	2,616,500.00	12,086,500.00				25,435,000.00	4,252,750.00	29,687,750.00
2050	16,760,000.00	838,000.00	17,598,000.00	9,945,000.00	2,143,000.00	12,088,000.00				26,705,000.00	2,981,000.00	29,686,000.00
2051				10,440,000.00	1,645,750.00	12,085,750.00				10,440,000.00	1,645,750.00	12,085,750.00
2052				10,965,000.00	1,123,750.00	12,088,750.00				10,965,000.00	1,123,750.00	12,088,750.00
2053				11,510,000.00	575,500.00	12,085,500.00				11,510,000.00	575,500.00	12,085,500.00
TOTALS	573,170,000.00	341,234,500.76	914,404,500.76	183,000,000.00	170,200,416.67	353,200,416.67	17,000,000.00	287,819.44	17,287,819.44	773,170,000.00	511,722,736.87	1,284,892,736.87

(a) Outstanding: Taxable Public Improvement Bonds, Issue of 2013A; Taxable Public Improvement Bonds, Issue 2015A; General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2015; General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2016; Taxable Public Improvement Bonds, Issue of 2016; Taxable Public Improvement Bonds, Issue of 2019; Public Improvement Bonds, Issue of 2021A and General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2022.

**COMBINED DEBT SERVICE SCHEDULE • FOR INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY**

**TAXABLE LIMITED TAX BONDS, SERIES 2016  
TAXABLE LIMITED TAX BONDS, SERIES 2017  
TAXABLE LIMITED TAX REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2021  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA**

Payment Date	Taxable Series 2016; dtd. 10/12/16				Taxable Series 2017; dtd. 11/30/17				Taxable Refunding Bonds, Series 2021; dtd. 10/26/21				Combined Semi-Annual Service	Combined Calendar Year Debt Service
	Principal Due	Interest Rate	Interest Due	Semi-Annual Service	Principal Due	Interest Rate	Interest Due	Semi-Annual Service	Principal Due	Interest Rate	Interest Due	Semi-Annual Service		
01-Mar-2025			28,719.75	28,719.75			60,065.50	60,065.50			835,773.30	835,773.30	924,558.55	
01-Sep-2025	1,100,000	2.570%	28,719.75	1,128,719.75	1,160,000	3.260%	60,065.50	1,220,065.50	14,010,000	1.369%	835,773.30	14,845,773.30	17,194,558.55	18,119,117.10
01-Mar-2026			14,584.75	14,584.75			41,157.50	41,157.50			739,874.85	739,874.85	795,617.10	
01-Sep-2026	1,135,000	2.570%	14,584.75	1,149,584.75	1,225,000	3.260%	41,157.50	1,266,157.50	14,200,000	1.569%	739,874.85	14,939,874.85	17,355,617.10	18,151,234.20
01-Mar-2027							21,190.00	21,190.00			628,475.85	628,475.85	649,665.85	
01-Sep-2027					1,300,000	3.260%	21,190.00	1,321,190.00	14,420,000	1.854%	628,475.85	15,048,475.85	16,369,665.85	17,019,331.70
01-Mar-2028											494,802.45	494,802.45	494,802.45	
01-Sep-2028									14,685,000	2.054%	494,802.45	15,179,802.45	15,179,802.45	15,674,604.90
01-Mar-2029											343,987.50	343,987.50	343,987.50	
01-Sep-2029									14,985,000	2.220%	343,987.50	15,328,987.50	15,328,987.50	15,672,975.00
01-Mar-2030											177,654.00	177,654.00	177,654.00	
01-Sep-2030									15,315,000	2.320%	177,654.00	15,492,654.00	15,492,654.00	15,670,308.00
<b>TOTALS..</b>	<b>2,235,000</b>		<b>86,609.00</b>	<b>2,321,609.00</b>	<b>3,685,000</b>		<b>244,826.00</b>	<b>3,929,826.00</b>	<b>87,615,000</b>		<b>6,441,135.90</b>	<b>94,056,135.90</b>	<b>100,307,570.90</b>	<b>100,307,570.90</b>

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