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# INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD

**Paul Flower, Chair   Neil Abramson, Secretary   Casey Tingle, Vice Chair**  
**Elisa Speranza   Bill Hammack   Karen Raymond   Chuck Morse**

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**Thursday July 14, 2022 | 2:00 pm**

***Woodward Design+Build – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor***  
***1000 South Norman C. Francis Parkway, New Orleans, LA 70125***

Via videoconference at: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83320035511>

Via teleconference at: (346) 248-7799

Meeting ID: 833 2003 5511

## **AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Approval of Quarterly Report
- V. Presentation of Agenda
- VI. Presentations:
  - A. Fair Share Agreement Update – City of New Orleans
  - B. Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans Update
  - C. Drainage Consolidation Working Group Update
- VII. Proposed Resolution
- VIII. IAB Progress Report
- IX. Public Comment
- X. Other Business
- XI. Adjournment

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD  
MARCH 10, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) was held on March 10, 2022 at Woodward Design+Build – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 1000 South Norman C. Francis Parkway, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The following IAB members were present:

1. Paul Flower, Chair
2. Karen Raymond
3. Elisa Speranza
4. Chuck Morse

**REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Presentations

Eric Smith, city of New Orleans, provided an update on Fair Share Agreement revenues. As of February 15, 2022, the City transferred \$35.6M in one-time funds to the Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO), which represents no change since the December 2021 IAB meeting. Smith explained City revenue is similar to pre-Covid-19 numbers, representing a recovery from both Covid-19 and Hurricane Ida. In January 2022, the City collected \$1.8M compared to \$452,109 in January of 2021; these numbers met 2019 projections. Notable Fair Share Agreement undertakings include: (1) city of New Orleans Department of Finance began integration of new software for Short Term Rental Equalization and Local Privilege tax (STR) enforcement; and (2) the city of New Orleans Department of Public Works (DPW) continued expansion of its Maintenance Division. Smith also provided an update on the Downtown Development District's installation of permeable pavement in seven (7) City corridors, explaining the RFP is expected to issue no later than March 31, 2022; DPW expects to complete the preliminary survey and design by August 1, 2022, with the bid and award occurring in September and construction beginning November 2022. Smith also provided an update on capital outlay sequencing spending by SWBNO.

Christy Harowski, chief of staff, SWBNO, reported a total revenue of \$16M collected through February 2022. Expenditures related to Meter Reading Initiatives, SELA Algiers Drainage Project, SWBNO Strategic Plan development, Turbine 7 design, and Smart Metering Program

(AMI) total approximately \$6.3M, with increased spending on Turbine 7 design and AMI. Ghassan Korban, executive director, SWBNO, requested approval to use Fair Share Agreement revenues to update SWBNO inventory and begin working on lead service line replacement projects to maximize the expected infusion of federal infrastructure-related funds. Harowski shared updates on priority projects: (1) the survey for AMI is complete and a RFP has issued and received seven vendor responses, the selection committee is expected to select a vendor later this month; (2) the permitting process and specs for Turbine 7 are complete and SWBNO issued a RFP for the work and has already received responses which are awaiting approval; (3) the Asset Management Program is moving forward and SWBNO anticipates spending on implementing the system in Q3/Q4 of 2022; (4) Turbine 6 had a spending adjustment, saving \$2M which SWBNO plans to transfer to the West Power Complex; and (5) SWBNO Board of Directors adopted the SWBNO Strategic Plan in February 2022. Tyler Antrup, director of planning and strategy, SWBNO, provided an overview of the SWBNO Strategic Plan. Ron Spooner, interim general superintendent, SWBNO, detailed the need for \$4M of funding for a high-priority operations project “construction of a new Bulk Chemical Feed and Storage facility”.

#### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### Quorum

There were not enough IAB members present to constitute a quorum and thus there was no approval of minutes, agenda, or of the Fourth Quarter 2021 Quarterly Report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 2:43 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE  
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD  
APRIL 4, 2022**

A Special Session of the Infrastructure Advisory Board was conducted virtually, via Microsoft Teams, on April 4, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

The following IAB members were present:

1. Paul Flower, Chair
2. Bill Hammack
2. Karen Raymond
3. Elisa Speranza
4. Chuck Morse

**REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Agenda

The March 10, 2022 IAB meeting agenda was unanimously approved.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 2, 2021 IAB meeting were presented, and no corrections were offered. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Quarterly Report

The IAB considered and unanimously approved its Fourth Quarter 2021 Quarterly Report.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

**QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE  
INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD**

**Second Quarter 2022**

In accordance with its obligations under Executive Order LC 19-02 issued by Mayor LaToya Cantrell on August 6, 2019, and the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of New Orleans (“City”) and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (“SWBNO”) dated July 7, 2020, the Infrastructure Advisory Board (“IAB”) respectfully submits this report of actions undertaken during the first quarter of 2022 and recommendations offered for the second and third quarters of 2022.

**I. IAB Meetings and Activities**

The IAB met twice during the first quarter of 2022, convening on March 10 and April 4, via in-person and videoconference. The complete meeting packet for the March 10 meeting is attached as Exhibit A, and full recordings of both meetings are available at:

<https://www.swbno.org/BoardMeetings/MeetingVideo?link=https%3A%2F%2Fwww2.swbno.org%2Fmedia%2FInfrastructure+031022.mp4&name=Infrastructure+Advisory+Board+Meeting&date=3%2F10%2F2022+2%3A00%3A00+PM>

and

<https://www.swbno.org/BoardMeetings/MeetingVideo?link=https%3A%2F%2Fwww2.swbno.org%2Fmedia%2FInfrastructure+040422.mp4&name=Infrastructure+Advisory+Board+-+Special+Session&date=4%2F4%2F2022+9%3A00%3A00+AM>

**II. Status of One-Time Funds**

The status of the Fair Share Agreement one-time funds is delineated in the City’s presentation in connection with the July 14, 2022 IAB meeting attached to this report as Exhibit “B”.

**III. Status of Recurring Revenue Under the Fair Share Agreement**

The status of each revenue stream of the Fair Share Agreement is delineated in the attached Exhibit “B”.

**IV. IAB Project Recommendations for Use of Recurring Fair Share Agreement Funds**

Since its inception, the IAB has worked closely with SWBNO to identify the highest and best uses for recurring Fair Share Agreement funds, attempting to strike a balance between support for acute short-term needs and projects that will contribute to the longer-term sustainability of the system. The projects approved for funding utilizing Fair Share Agreement revenues are set forth in the document attached as Exhibit “C” and below:

A. *Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI)* – The IAB recommended utilizing up to \$1,500,000 from the IMF to support AMI implementation, including the short-term engagement of supplemental meter readers, to provide more consistent, timely, and accurate customer billing. Phase 1 of the AMI project was meant to include a survey of the entire existing water meter infrastructure and determination of the proper scope of the eventual AMI solution. Due to limited IMF proceeds, SWBNO downsized the scope of Phase 1, moving some aspects to Phase 2, to make the project more affordable in the near term. The rescoping is a result of SWBNO’s efforts to identify which aspects of Phase 1 will generate the greatest benefits. SWBNO does not expect the rescoping to affect full AMI implementation, which is anticipated to cost approximately \$40 million.

The rescoped meter survey is complete, as is a business process analysis of all related SWBNO functions. The vendor implementation RFP was released in December 2021, and seven vendors responded. The SWBNO selection committee met in April and awarded the contract to Aquametric. SWBNO’s Board approved the award in May, and final contract negotiations are underway. Barring unforeseen delays, the first meters should be installed in Q1 of 2023.

B. *Master Plan* – The IAB recommended utilizing up to \$500,000 from the IMF to support development of a Master Plan. The Master Plan constitutes the blueprint for SWBNO’s long-term, comprehensive, integrated, sustainable vision for managing the City’s water, sewer, and major drainage systems for years to come.

After a competitive proposal process, a contract for a Utility Strategic Plan—a critical step in the development of a comprehensive Master Plan—was awarded to a team led by Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. and approved by SWBNO Board of Directors on May 19, 2021. IAB Member Elisa Speranza served as a volunteer member of the evaluation committee.

Raftelis led an intensive and comprehensive process over the past six months that included SWBNO leadership, workforce, Board members, partner agencies and stakeholders. The strategic plan, which covers priorities, strategies and tasks for implementation over the next five years, was adopted by SWBNO’s Board of Directors in February. SWBNO leadership is sharing the plan with stakeholders and the community over the next several months. Implementation of strategic plan tasks began in earnest in Q2, including identification and tracking of goal-related performance metrics. A public-facing dashboard reflecting progress toward goals will be unveiled in Q3 of this year.

C. *Water Treatment Plant – Sycamore Filter Gallery* – The design work for this project is 90% complete, and SWBNO expected to issue an RFP for the work in July 2021. While this project remains a high priority, release of the RFP was delayed due to Hurricane Ida and competing critical needs. The RFP was actually released in late 2021, and a notice to proceed on the project is expected in the near future. This project is part of a larger effort to upgrade many aspects of the Carrollton and Algiers water treatment plants, for which SWBNO will seek federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

D. *SELA Algiers Drainage Project* – The IAB recommended utilizing \$1,030,625 from the IMF to support the Algiers drainage project. As previously reported, SWBNO is participating in a federally funded SELA construction project improving Algiers drainage canals and increasing stormwater storage during rain events. As part of the agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, SWBNO paid 5% of the project costs up-front, amounting to \$1,030,625; this unlocked approximately \$25 million in additional funding from the federal government. As the Corps continues to receive federal funding for this project, SWBNO is obligated to pay the matching 5% up-front cost. The IAB approved an additional \$2,486,836 for that payment in the second quarter of 2021.

E. *Stormwater Fee Study* – The IAB recommends utilizing up to \$250,000 from the IMF to support a Stormwater Fee Study. A stormwater fee study would include a full analysis of the rate structure, assessment methodology, affordability, equity, incentives, and timing of a potential stormwater management fee. This study will allow for the design of an equitable, sufficient, and reliable recurring revenue source to support New Orleans’ drainage infrastructure and the implementation of best management practices, including green infrastructure. At the behest and recommendation of the IAB and SWBNO, a group of dedicated business, civic, and community organizations have begun to work collaboratively on a plan to bring the stormwater management fee to fruition.

F. *Turbine 7 (T7) Solution* – As part of an ongoing effort to address chronic shortfalls of availability of power generation to support SWBNO operations, the IAB recommends utilizing up to \$4,000,000 from the IMF to support a procurement of a new turbine dubbed “T7.”

T7, along with T6, will become the sources of backup power generation for the utility once the Entergy substation is constructed. In the meantime, T7 will replace the outdated steam turbine generators (T1 and T3) that are no longer reliable. Equipment, site preparation work, and installation of T7 is expected to cost approximately \$18 million to \$20 million. Funding for this project has been approved, and the

environmental permitting process is complete. The RFP for equipment and installation was released in December, and the selected vendor was approved by SWBNO's Board this spring. Design and integration work is underway.

**Anticipated IAB Actions in the Coming Quarter**

The IAB will continue to closely monitor Fair Share Agreement collections as well as the progress of recommended projects between meetings.

**Attachments**

Exhibit A – IAB Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Exhibit B – City of New Orleans Presentation to IAB

Exhibit C – Report of Revenue and Expenditures made pursuant to the CEA (R-079-2020) – Infrastructure Maintenance Fund





# Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting

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City of New Orleans  
July 14, 2022

# Fair Share Agreement

*All Funds (as of 7/1/2022)*

## **One-Time Funds** - \$35,648,650 transferred to SWBNO

- MCC Funds – (\$28M Disbursed).
- FEMA Revolver – (\$7.5M Disbursed).
- HMGP – 3 Phases (In process) - \$16M  
SWBNO is in process on reimbursement.

## **Recurring Revenue** - \$35,936,436 through May 2022

- Lost Penny - \$21,202,161 (August 2019-May 2022)
  - 75% Share to SWBNO - \$15,901,621
  - 25% Share to DPW - \$5,300,540
- STR Equalization - \$11,133,330 (October 2020-May 2022)
  - 75% Share to SWBNO - \$8,349,997
  - 25% Share to DPW - \$2,783,333
- STR Occupancy - \$3,600,945 (March 2021-May 2022) to NOCO

| <b>HMGP 1603-0039<br/>Power Plant Retrofit Project<br/>\$16m Fair Share</b> |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>Project</b>  | <b>Contract Amount</b> |
| Anti-Icing System and Software  | \$1,741,920            |
| Static Frequency Changer  | \$12,258,080           |
| Emissions Package   | \$2,000,000            |
|   | <b>\$16,000,000</b>    |

# Fair Share Agreement

*2020 - 2022 Recurring Revenue Breakdown (as of 2/15/2022)*

|              | 2020 Total         | 2021               |                      |                    |                      |                    | 2021 Total          | 2022               |                      |                    |                      |                    | 2022 Total          |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
|              |                    | SWB Lost Penny     | SWB STR Equalization | DPW Lost Penny     | DPW STR Equalization | NOCO STR Occupancy |                     | SWB Lost Penny     | SWB STR Equalization | DPW Lost Penny     | DPW STR Equalization | NOCO STR Occupancy |                     |
| Jan          | 1,486,294          | 146,557            | 192,525              | 48,852             | 64,175               | -                  | 452,109             | 634,143            | 558,389              | 211,381            | 186,129              | 243,209            | 1,833,251           |
| Feb          | 1,077,744          | 128,909            | 338,755              | 42,969             | 112,918              | -                  | 623,551             | 410,199            | 752,611              | 136,733            | 250,870              | 327,803            | 1,878,218           |
| Mar          | 1,003,376          | 157,809            | 331,256              | 52,603             | 110,418              | 454,197            | 1,106,284           | 743,289            | 830,235              | 247,763            | 276,745              | 361,613            | 2,459,646           |
| Apr          | 366,814            | 272,291            | 559,649              | 90,763             | 186,549              | 243,758            | 1,353,012           | 955,949            | 847,846              | 318,649            | 282,615              | 369,284            | 2,774,345           |
| May          | 302,088            | 324,270            | 543,228              | 108,090            | 181,076              | 236,606            | 1,393,271           | 1,107,310          | 690,605              | 369,103            | 230,201              | 300,797            | 2,698,018           |
| Jun          | 107,636            | 591,472            | 268,022              | 197,157            | 89,340               | 116,738            | 1,262,731           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Jul          | 89,956             | 425,648            | 612,350              | 141,882            | 204,116              | 266,712            | 1,650,710           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Aug          | 165,654            | 482,730            | 593,496              | 160,910            | 197,832              | 258,500            | 1,693,469           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Sept         | 151,422            | 308,495            | 59,260               | 102,831            | 19,753               | 25,811             | 516,152             |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Oct          | 257,901            | 581,374            | 230,209              | 193,791            | 76,736               | 100,268            | 1,182,379           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Nov          | 378,478            | 830,770            | 75,640               | 276,923            | 25,213               | 32,945             | 1,241,492           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| Dec          | 501,028            | 663,861            | 603,145              | 221,287            | 201,048              | 262,703            | 1,952,045           |                    |                      |                    |                      |                    |                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$5,888,394</b> | <b>\$4,915,190</b> | <b>\$4,005,443</b>   | <b>\$2,019,921</b> | <b>\$1,530,834</b>   | <b>\$1,998,238</b> | <b>\$14,427,213</b> | <b>\$3,850,892</b> | <b>\$3,679,687</b>   | <b>\$1,283,630</b> | <b>\$1,226,562</b>   | <b>\$1,602,707</b> | <b>\$11,643,481</b> |

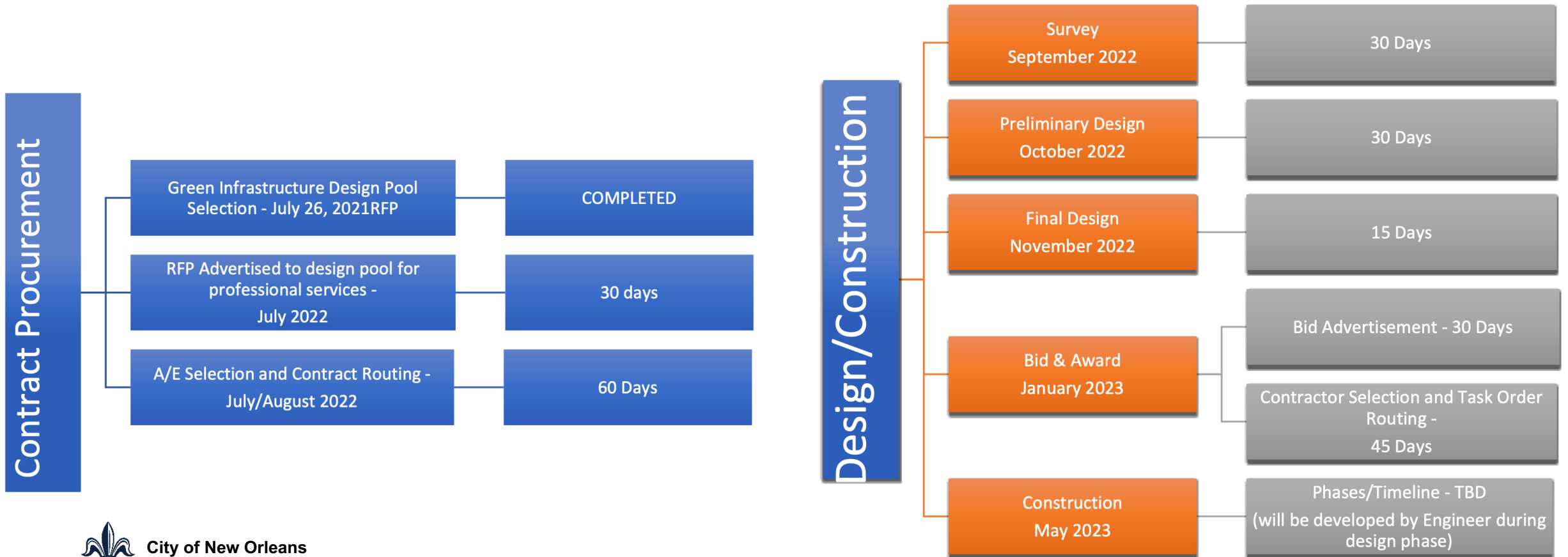
# Fair Share Agreement

## *Outstanding/New Events*

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- Hotel occupancy rates (increase) continue to pace 2019, per NOCO bookings report.
- Prolonged effects of COVID-19 and Hurricane Ida on tax collections have largely dissipated, seeing at or above 2019 levels.
- Council discussions around agency responsibility for drainage.
- Continued Expansion of DPW Maintenance Division for internal work force. Requisitions are in process as of 7/7/2022 for a total of 82 positions across multiple divi

# DDD Infrastructure Update



# Capital Outlay

## *Update on sequence of events*

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- SWBNO

- Continuing demolition phase of site preparation for Power Plant
- 2022 regular session re-authorized 32,700,000 in Priority 1 and \$39,000,000 in Priority 5, signed by Governor Edwards 5/30/22

- Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Green Infrastructure Project

- 2022 regular session authorized \$250,000 in Priority 1 and \$2,650,000 in Priority 5 funding for this project

- VA Building Rehabilitation

- City has received architecture and engineering proposals for design of life safety upgrades to the building as of 1/4/2022
- 2022 regular session authorized \$2,000,000 in Priority 1 and \$8,000,000 in Priority 5 funding for this project



# Infrastructure Advisory Board Meeting July 14, 2022

Sewerage & Water Board Updates  
Ghassan Korban, Executive Director



# Infrastructure Maintenance Fund Status

Total Revenues through May 2022: \$24,169,118

- Revenues nearing anticipated \$5M/quarter goal

Total Expenditures: \$6,589,678

- Q2 expenditures:

Asset Management assessment: \$100,000

Strategic Plan implementation: \$200,000

| Month                     | Revenue     |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| January 2022              | \$1,192,533 |
| February 2022             | \$1,162,811 |
| March 2022                | \$1,573,525 |
| April 2022                | \$1,803,796 |
| May 2022                  | \$1,797,916 |
| Monthly average this year | \$1.5M      |





# Priority Project Updates

- **Smart Metering Program (AMI):** Installation vendor selected and approved by Board. NTP anticipated in August.
- **Turbine 7:** Manufacturer selected and approved by Board. Design, delivery, and installation on schedule.
- **Sycamore Filter Gallery:** NTP issued; work begins Q3.
- **Asset Management Program:** Moving forward, RFP and vendor selection Q3 this year.
- **Strategic Plan:** Public-facing dashboard reflecting performance metrics and progress toward strategic goals will be launched in Q3. Implementation underway.



**SWBNO**  
**SMART WATER METERING**  
PROGRAM



# Projected Spending Updates:

## Updated projections through 2024:

- Projects fall into three buckets:
  - Ongoing critical infrastructure improvements – e.g., water filter gallery upgrades
  - Infrastructure modernization – e.g., start meter installation
  - West Power Complex – e.g., T7 costs
- Projected allocations based on anticipated post-Covid revenues and priority project schedules
- Will provide specific updates or changes at IAB meetings





## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Executive Order LC 19-02, the Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) is charged with “[m]ak[ing] recommendations as needed to the Mayor, the Governor, the New Orleans City Council, and the Louisiana Legislature regarding any identified improvements or reforms necessary to ensure the SWBNO is a high performing utility”; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the original Fair Share Agreement funds from the Hotel Occupancy Local Privilege Tax (“Tax”) originally funding the New Orleans Tourism and Marketing Corporation were redirected to Infrastructure Maintenance Fund (“IMF”); and

**WHEREAS**, following examination of the Tax’s enabling legislation, the City of New Orleans determined the Tax proceeds must go exclusively towards funding tourism promotion and not infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the City directed these funds to a new organization, the New Orleans Tourism and Culture Fund; and

**WHEREAS**, during the October 1, 2020 IAB meeting, the City, offered a proposed solution to identify and free up an equivalent amount of General Fund proceeds, to annually fund the IMF; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in making the these transfers; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has received or will receive a total of \$388 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”) funding and, according to the City, the prolonged effects of both the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ida on tax collections have largely dissipated, returning to or above 2019 levels; and

**BE IT RESOLVED THE INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY BOARD**, request the City utilize available funds to replenish the IMF in the full amount which it would have received from the Tax had those monies not been redirected; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the City commit an amount equal to the income from the Tax be directed to the IMF on ongoing annual basis.

## DRAFT IAB Progress Report

July 14, 2022

### What is the Infrastructure Advisory Board?

The Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) was formed August 6, 2019, by Executive Order LC-19-02 to oversee the spending of new revenue streams created by Act 170, collectively referred to as “Fair Share” funding. These revenue streams are intended to be dedicated to an Infrastructure Maintenance Fund, which supports water, sewer, and drainage projects vital to a sustainable and equitable economy in the City of New Orleans.

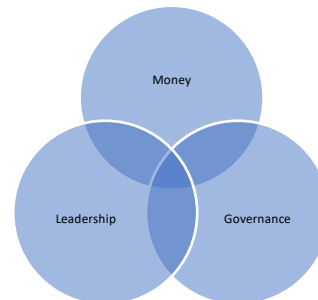
The IAB is also charged with making “recommendations as needed to the Mayor, the Governor, the New Orleans City Council, and the Louisiana Legislature regarding any identified improvements or reforms necessary to ensure the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) is a high performing utility.”

As the IAB approaches the completion of its third year of service, and as Fair Share funding begins to reflect greater economic activity in the city, now that pandemic-related closures are ending, this report is intended to share both the progress and challenges we’ve witnessed at the SWBNO and offer recommendations for continued work.

### What is the IAB’s vision?

Over the years, SWBNO has had one or two, but not all three elements the IAB believes are essential for the modern, functional, efficient, effective water/sewer/stormwater utility New Orleans deserves, including:

- access to adequate funding from local, state, and federal sources
- a qualified, experienced leadership and workforce in place, and
- accelerated progress towards building a well-governed, high performing utility.



### A quick history of SWBNO.

If you live in New Orleans, you are aware of the decades-long, troubled history of SWBNO. A historical underinvestment in infrastructure has left New Orleans with sub-standard water, sewer, and stormwater systems inadequate to consistently support a thriving, healthy city.

This observation is not to disparage or disrespect generations of workers and leaders who presided over these systems in the past—often hamstrung by a dysfunctional governance structure, archaic organizational, technical, and workforce systems, and a historic lack of will or ability to raise rates commensurate with the needs of an aging system.

Recovery from the levee breaks and flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina alone was a herculean feat, but that recovery did not keep pace with investment needs. In August 2017, catastrophic flooding caused by inadequate power and pumping capacity, plus a clogged system of canals and drainage pipes due to years of poor maintenance—on the heels of multiple boil-water advisories and chronic metering and billing challenges—brought the system to a breaking point.

After a series of interim leaders and emergency fixes, Mayor LaToya Cantrell recruited a proven, seasoned utility leader to begin orchestrating a professional analysis of the troubled agency’s challenges and to implement the improvements needed to bring the utility up to current utility standards. Ghassan Korban, with a track record of success in Milwaukee, arrived in the fall of 2018.

Those closest to the action know it had taken decades for the once proud and innovative system to fall into its broken and dysfunctional state, and that even the most forceful multi-front effort would not bring visible fixes overnight. While we recognize there is still a lot more work to do, it’s worth pausing to critically review progress on major issues made to-date and explore future plans. The table below summarizes these issues and projects.



*A car with a 2007 registration tag is removed from a Mid-City drainage canal on August 22, 2019. Mardi Gras beads spilled from the trunk. (Photo: NOLA.com)*

**Facing the challenges and what we can collectively do about them.**

The IAB, along with the citizens of our city, know that things have not improved as fast or as efficiently as needed or as we would like. The global COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant decrease in expected revenues from Fair Share Funds, which are dependent on hotel and Short-Term Rental (STR) visitors coming to New Orleans. This setback slowed the implementation of many planned improvements.

Also, SWBNO is still hampered by a profound lack of public trust, and by the invisibility of many of the improvements it *has* made. The utility remains an all-too-easy target for criticism—sometimes deserved, sometimes not—and often misinformed second-guessing. The IAB hopes we can reframe the discussion.

It’s time to offer support to the SWBNO—while also demanding accountability, transparency, and tangible progress. It’s time to collectively find the institutional and political courage to finally resolve daunting and seemingly intractable public policy decisions around modernizing civil service, increasing water and sewer rates, and consolidating stormwater management. It’s also time to develop a fee structure to wean the drainage system off outdated and inequitable millages. Today, 43% of the

property owners in Orleans Parish pay absolutely nothing to support handling their own stormwater runoff. This system is neither sustainable nor equitable.

Probably most importantly, it's time to stop wasting time, energy, and resources with political infighting and blame. It's time for all of us to collectively roll up our sleeves to bring constituencies together and develop solutions.

We need SWBNO leadership and workforce, elected officials, community leaders, business owners, advocates, ratepayers, and property owners to be active, vocal, and constructive players in this critical civic challenge.



**We need to act now.**

Simply put, we're already living on borrowed time. Addressing the existential threats to our economy, homes, businesses, and communities is not an option and can't be delayed.

Over the last several years, the IAB has heard from experts and "best practice" utilities from around the country and we are convinced everything that's wrong with our water, sewer, and stormwater systems can be fixed. There are lessons we can learn from others. New Orleans is special, but it's not necessarily unique.

We know that rebuilding public trust depends on tangible, visible outcomes people see in the streets, in their environment, and in their water bills. People will support what they value, and they will value what they trust.

**Here are the objectives:**

- Accurate, timely water and sewer bills.
- An affordable and equitable rate structure.
- An engaged, well-trained, and valued utility workforce.
- A functional and adequately funded power and drainage system, incorporating the many benefits green infrastructure brings to our neighborhoods.
- An end to boil-water advisories and clean, safe, reliable drinking water 24/7.
- A sewer system that continues to protect the environment and public health.
- Preventive and predictive maintenance rather than costly and disruptive emergency repairs.
- Public assets sustainably managed for the long term.
- Pride in a trusted utility system built to serve the community.

The IAB commends SWBNO for the progress made to date, often against stiff headwinds. We will continue to advocate for and support investment in critical projects, while also demanding

accountability. We encourage all public decision-makers: Administration, SWBNO Board, City Council, and the New Orleans legislative delegation to do the same.

The table below is very important, and we ask people to study it carefully. It summarizes key issues and projects SWBNO has tackled in recent years, progress made to-date, and near-term next steps. As we said earlier, while there still is plenty to do, significant progress, much of it invisible to the public, has already been accomplished.

| Issue   | Progress since 2018   | What's next  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Organization, leadership, management, and culture</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-organized utility structure to create a balanced leadership team and new customer service and administrative divisions</li> <li>• Recruited and hired a Chief of Staff, Chief Customer Service Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief Financial Officer to join other senior managers in re-focusing the utility</li> <li>• Established Employee Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Worked with the Civil Service Commission to incentivize key departments, such as meter reading, and create crucial positions, such as Strategic Planning Director and Deputy Superintendents to support operations</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded safety, training, and leadership programs available to all staff</li> <li>• Formed positive working relationships with partners such as Entergy, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and the Louisiana Department of Health</li> </ul> | <p><i>Evaluate workforce model options, including Civil Service and others, and determine an appropriate fit for SWBNO (in accordance with SWBNO's strategic plan)</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Customer Service &amp; Outreach</b></p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced average call wait times, instituted Customer Care Plans, revised bill estimating system, expanded satellite customer service centers</li> <li>• Doubled meter reading personnel to reach more meters monthly and reduce the need for estimated bills</li> <li>• Automated Metering Infrastructure ("Smart Meters") plan completed, and contractor selected</li> <li>• Established Customer Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Developed "Report a Leak" online platform and interactive maps showing pipes and drainage in neighborhoods</li> <li>• Increased visibility and public access through social media and neighborhood engagement</li> </ul>  | <p><i>Implementing a "smart metering" program to overhaul the meter-reading and billing systems; first meters expected to be installed in the fourth quarter of 2022</i></p> |



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|--|---|---|
| <b>Comprehensive Planning</b>                                | Five-year Strategic Plan completed with employee and customer input   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Master Plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Asset Management Plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Modern work order system</i></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Power</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power Master Plan completed with a vision of transitioning entire system to the more modern 60HZ power and relying on less expensive, cleaner power from Entergy New Orleans for daily power needs, replacing the over 100-year-old steam power plant and reducing greenhouse gas emissions with new, energy efficient, natural gas backup generation capacity.</li> <li>• Broke ground on West Power Complex in preparation for a new Entergy power substation; secured up to \$30m and a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City</li> <li>• Rehabbed Turbines 4 &amp; 5; winterized Turbine 6; completed environmental permitting for future Turbine 7</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Build Entergy substation</i></li> <li>• <i>Turbine 7 installation</i></li> <li>• <i>Frequency changer installation</i></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Resilience</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water towers completed, drastically reducing precautionary boil advisories</li> <li>• No loss of water service and no flooding during Hurricane Ida</li> </ul>   | <i>Continue to evaluate opportunities to improve.</i>   |
| <b>Funding</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$275M low-interest WIFIA loan through the EPA for citywide sewer-system improvements</li> <li>• \$75M in state capital outlay funds to support West Power Complex construction and integration with substation</li> <li>• \$52M in partnership with the City to fund substation and frequency changer purchases</li> <li>• \$7M in Fair Share funds spent to date to support smart meter procurement, additional meter reading capacity, and continued work on SELA drainage programs (\$16M additional funds in que to continue this work)</li> <li>• \$6M in federal earmarks to support drainage needs</li> <li>• \$4M of federal funds to assist low-income customers with outstanding bill payments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rate study for water and sewer revenues completed this year</i></li> <li>• <i>Development of a more equitable and adequate funding mechanism for stormwater management</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Drainage System Improvements and Green Infrastructure</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canal/ditch clean-out in coordination with the City's Department of Public Works</li> <li>• Expanded green infrastructure keeps 304k+ gallons of stormwater out of streets during every major rain event</li> </ul>  | <i>Working with the Mayor and City Council on a plan to consolidate drainage management</i>   |

The IAB has met quarterly since its inception; all its meetings and proceedings are public and posted at <https://roadwork.nola.gov/fair-share/>.

