



Joseph I. Giarrusso III

New Orleans City Council
District A



Friends,

It has been a busy few weeks for District A. Below you'll find updates on our legislative accomplishments on Blight and "Doubles to Dorms." Also, we have asked DPW to host a meeting on roadwork and related issues next week (when, where, and what below) as well as details on the closure of Magazine Street. First, I'll start with the Wisner lawsuit and where it stands.

WISNER UPDATE

The Wisner lawsuit sounds complicated but it is not. In 1914, Edward Wisner donated to the City of New Orleans tens of thousands of acres of land which was to be held in trust for 100 years for charitable purposes to benefit the City. He named certain income beneficiaries for the next century, at which time the trust was to expire and all the land held in trust was to return to the City. Later, the original beneficiaries allowed some of Wisner's relatives known as the "Wisner Ladies" to also become income beneficiaries of the trust, although that may not have been legal. Nothing, however, changed the facts that the trust was to end in 2014 and all the trust's assets then reverted completely to the City.

In 2020, the City signed an agreement extending the trust forever, allowing those who benefited from the trust for the last 100 years to continue to do so in perpetuity. In other words, instead of taking control of all the trust's assets, the City decided instead to keep the trust in place, allow all the other beneficiaries to draw income forever and not be required to use the funds to benefit the City. And, the agreement also changed the process to City grants from the trust, allowing the grants to be made privately instead of publicly with oversight.

Because those actions were unlawful and done without the Council's knowledge or approval, the Council sued the City to ensure residents receive the benefits of all the assets owned by the City instead of pennies on the dollar. A district court judge has suspended the City from making any [payments from the trust](#) or the beneficiaries from drawing any additional income for now. The Council also finally received from the City a list of recipients given grants by the City.

So what is next? The Council is reviewing the list of grant recipients to make sure they are qualified and worthy recipients of the funds. The Council also hopes to review records of all money disbursed to anyone since 2014 when the trust expired, but the opposing parties are objecting to providing such information. The Council additionally is seeking a legal determination that the trust's assets completely belong to the City. We continue to fight to ensure the City is getting everything it is owed.

Blight is one of the most frequent complaints all district offices receive, including ours. Enforcement is the primary means for addressing blight. However, this Council has now given Code Enforcement more tools, and a better pathway toward more efficient and effective enforcement.



The pool at 5700 Vicksburg was a blighted, mosquito-ridden nuisance for 17 years. Last month, Code Enforcement drained and filled the unsecured pool.

The City Council unanimously approved amendments to our current Code Enforcement legislation. These changes were made in partnership with Councilmembers Harris, King, Green, and Thomas as well as Code Enforcement. These changes include:

- Setting daily fines hearing date *at* the initial violation hearing, speeding up when daily fines can be set;
- Mark each violation on each unit separately instead of one violation for the entire structure. This would lead to more violations for slumlords in apartment buildings and multi-family structures;
- Require those with commercial licenses to keep their properties clean and in compliance with the city codes as a condition for license renewal; and,
- Focusing on commercial establishments and large-scale residential buildings that generate more litter and graffiti than single- or double-

family homes.



This Hollygrove property, which has been cited multiple times throughout the years, was slated for demolition in 2019 but has now been issued renovation permits to re-establish a double shotgun.

Our twin goals are to give Code Enforcement the necessary tools to pursue code cheaters without unnecessarily punishing someone who made a simple, first-time mistake. You can read more about these changes in [this Nola.com article](#).

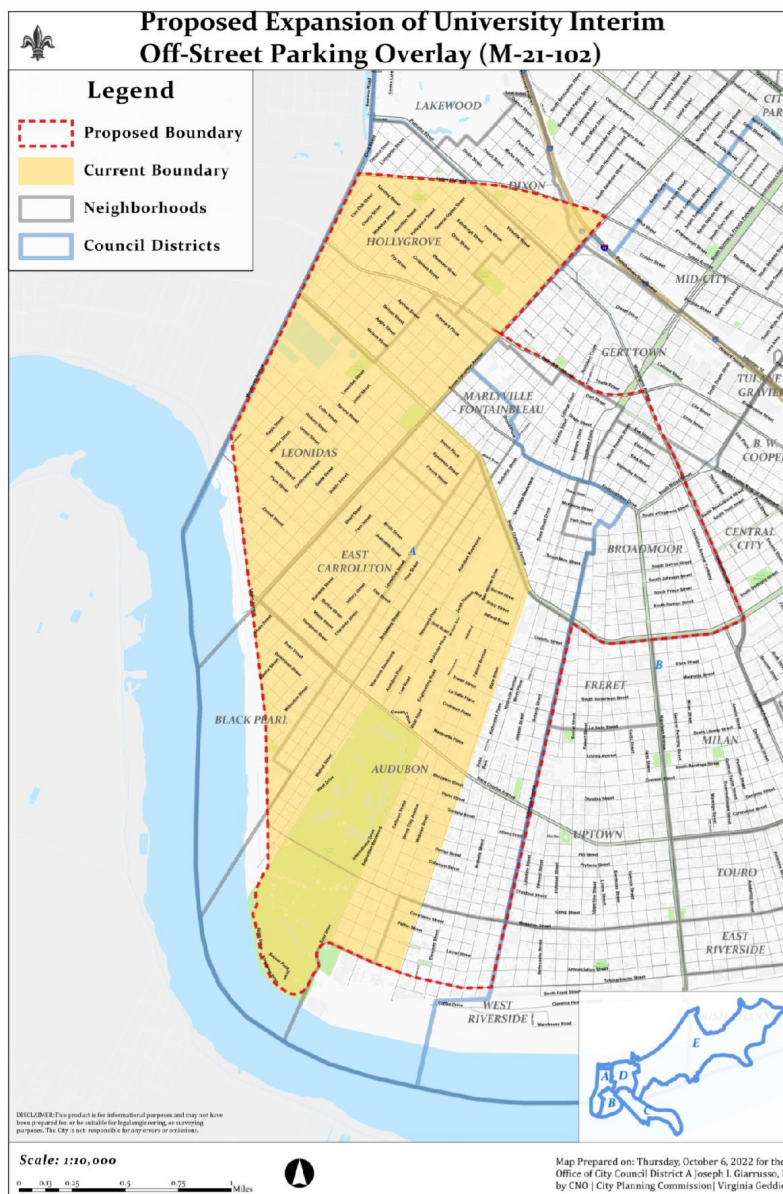


New Code Enforcement regulations are intended to remedy unsafe properties much quicker, such as this unfenced pool in Lakeview.

DOUBLES TO DORMS IZD

For years, single and double-family homes in the university area Uptown have been purchased by developers and then converted into large scale, multi-bedroom housing that is designed solely for students. These “doubles to dorms” are then rented out by the bedroom, decreasing overall affordability of the neighborhood. To help stem the tide of these D2Ds, the City Council unanimously supported an Interim Zoning District co-authored by me and Councilmember Harris.

The University Area Off-Street Parking Interim Zoning District (IZD) requires one off-street parking space for every new bedroom and applies to new construction and renovation projects. In addition, Broadmoor, Marlyille, and Fontainebleau are now seeing the impacts of D2Ds, and all agreed to be part of this new IZD. This IZD will serve as a temporary stopgap as we work to amend the current University Area Off-Street Parking Overlay, in partnership with Cm Harris’ office.



These developments are not affordable and are pushing out renters who can't afford to pay \$1,500 per month per bedroom. I'm thankful to the neighbors, [the universities](#), and my colleagues for supporting this IZD.

MAGAZINE STREET DETOURS

We know many residents have questions regarding street construction work, street light repairs, catch basin cleaning, etc. We've asked the Department of Public Works to join us for a District A meeting to answer your specific questions. This meet & greet style meeting will have different tables for each project, so you can join anytime between 6pm - 8pm and walk up to the table(s) where you want to ask questions.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2022 AT 6:00PM
THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL
4621 CANAL STREET, NEW ORLEANS, LA

ENTER AT SIDE GATE ENTRANCE ON ST. PATRICK STREET
MEETING IS IN THE CAFETERIA

Starting October 11, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will temporarily close the 7000 to 7100 blocks of Magazine Street to vehicular traffic to accommodate construction on the Magazine Street (Leake Avenue to East Drive) project. The closure will remain in effect until Friday, Nov. 11, 2022, weather permitting. DPW has promised signage and traffic control measures will be onsite to direct drivers and pedestrians.

During this time, crews will be performing roadway excavation to remove roadway pavement and an existing street car track system beneath the roadway surface. Directions along Magazine Street between Leake Avenue and West Drive are as follows:

- Westbound Magazine Street traffic to Leake Avenue detour: Henry Clay Avenue to St. Charles Avenue to Leake Avenue
- Eastbound Magazine Street traffic from Leake Avenue detour: St. Charles Avenue to Henry Clay Avenue to Magazine Street
- Westbound Magazine Street local traffic: Entrance to Audubon Nature Institute facilities are to remain open to local traffic at Leake Avenue. Audubon Zoo access via Constance Street and West Drive will remain open.

The \$5.5M Magazine Street (Leake Avenue to East Drive) project is a joint project between DPW, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. The scope of work is full reconstruction of the roadway and includes replacing sewage, water and drainage line utilities; replacing sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps and curbs. In general, the contractor is working from 7 a.m. until sunset, Monday through Friday. The entire project is scheduled to be complete by the winter of 2023, weather permitting.

Please visit roadwork.nola.gov for more information. Questions about this project or RoadworkNOLA should be directed to 504.658.ROAD (7623) or roadwork@nola.gov.

Best,

Joe Giarrusso III

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