



MESSAGE FROM **DISTRICT A** COUNCILMEMBER **JOSEPH I. GIARRUSSO III**



Friends,

This is a special single-issue newsletter.

My primary focus has been, and will continue to be, on public safety. As the Council's Public Works Committee Chair, we are particularly concerned with safe streets and good drainage. Each neighborhood in District A is important to me. In this newsletter, I will discuss roadwork currently underway under the FEMA program and what additional work should be coming soon.

While there are always issues to tackle (and making sure your street is repaired), we know without good streets and proper drainage, there is no city. It is not enough to point out the surface and subsurface problems. I, along with my great staff, work on common sense solutions to tackle these issues.

Best,

Joe

## STREET UPDATES

Our office works with City departments to make both large and small improvements across District A. We handle many small requests, ranging from helping repair curb cuts, moving abandoned cars off the street, fixing broken street lights, and beyond. We're highlighting some of the bigger infrastructure ones in this issue.

### FEMA FUNDS & BOND MONEY

To repair the streets, there are two separate pots of money. The first is \$2.4 billion from FEMA for streets deemed affected by Hurricane Katrina. These projects are also referred to

as the Joint Infrastructure Recovery Response (JIRR) program. Projects range from full-on reconstructions to incidental (piecemeal) repairs. Some projects include water line and catch basin repairs. The second pot is bond money. Those funds are used for certain capital improvement projects across the City.

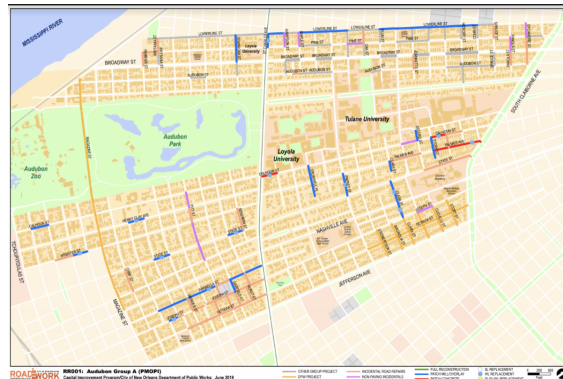
Your street may be next to a JIRR project but not included in the FEMA plan. If so, my office works with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to handle this in two ways. First, often all of the money allocated to a JIRR program is not spent. Our first goal is to use that money on streets or drainage issues left out of the original JIRR job scope, as we did for the 100 and 300 blocks of Bernadotte Street in Mid-City. Second, the first bucket of \$500 million in the City's Capital Improvement Program, more colloquially called "bond money," is heading to market. In the Neighborhood Improvements section below, you will see how we continuously leverage resources for more street work across the District.

For years, our office has pushed for increased – and better – drainage on our streets. We have successfully rallied for an expansion of current projects to not only repair aging streets, but also add catch basins to flood-prone areas. I expect DPW and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans to coordinate this work to cause as little inconvenience to residents as possible.

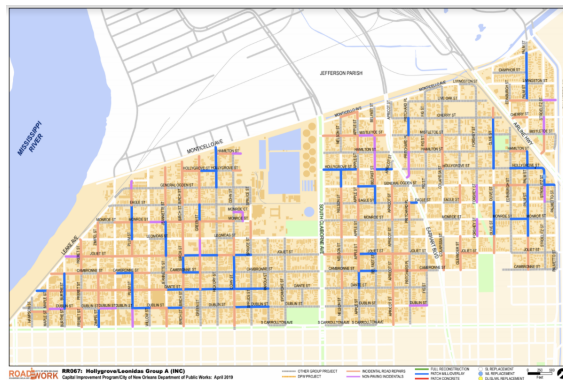
If you want to see if or when your street is included in the JIRR program, visit [roadwork.nola.gov](http://roadwork.nola.gov).

There are several [ongoing JIRR projects](#) within District A:

## AUDUBON GROUP A

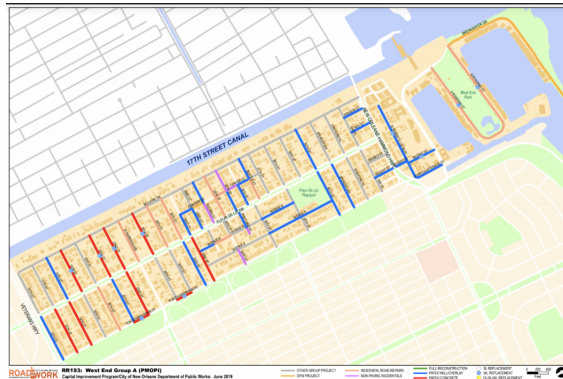
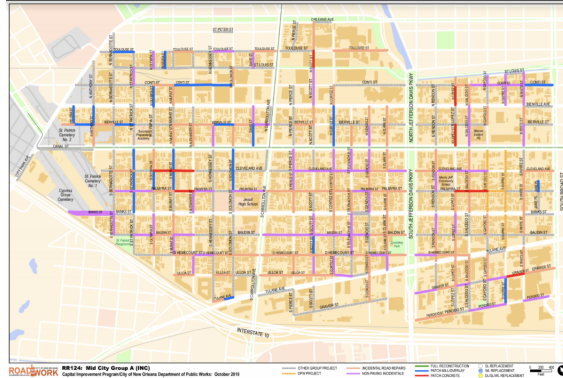


## HOLLYGROVE LEONIDAS GROUP A



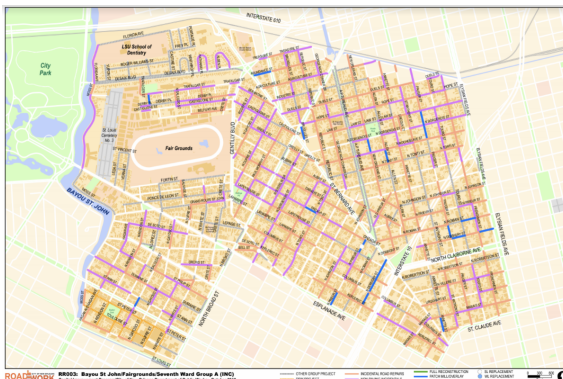
## MID-CITY GROUP A

## WEST END GROUP A



And there are several more slated to begin later this year:

## BAYOU ST. JOHN / FAIRGROUNDS



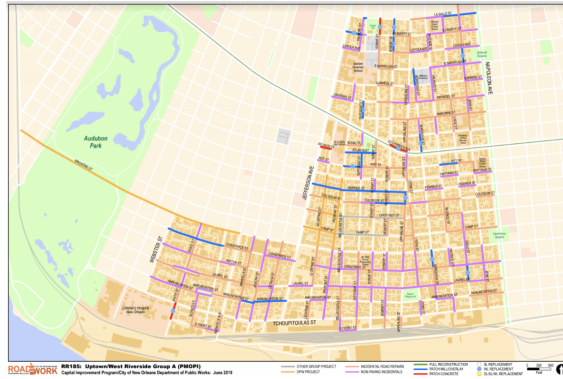
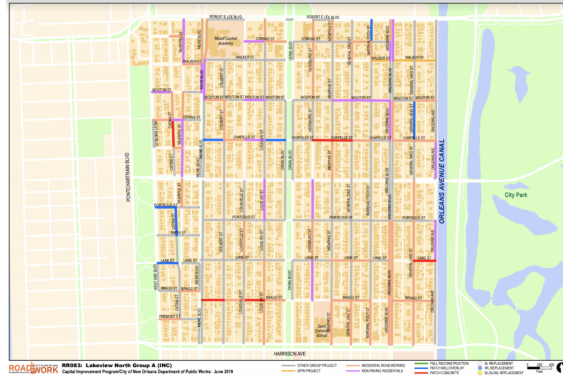
## BLACK PEARL EAST CARROLLTON



## LAKEVIEW NORTH & SOUTH



## UPTOWN WEST RIVERSIDE



## NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

### LAKEVIEW NAVARRE

- 5800 block of Louisville, which backs up to Kenilworth St., has been without proper curbs for years. The original project scope did not include waterline updates – merely street patching. Our office looped this block into the Lakeview South Group A project for drainage improvements and new curbing. I've provided photos here of before and after the 5800 block of Louisville drainage repairs.



- The 5600 block of General Diaz is a dead end without any catch basins or drainage. This project called for street patch overlays, but no drainage improvements. Our office successfully rallied for additional drainage to this block as part of the Navarre Group A/JIRR project.



- Alley Pilot Program: In 30 days, DPW is going to pave and install underwater drainage on 5900 block Marshall Foch and 5800 block Argonne to test the paving. If the program is successful, we will work with DPW to speed that process along and deal



with many alleys with longstanding issues.

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## LEONIDAS CARROLLTON

- The 2100 block of Joliet St. is slated for street overlay repairs. We worked to include drainage to this block as part of the Leonidas Group D/JIRR Project.
- East Carrollton neighborhoods boast some of the worst roads in District A. Our office successfully got the Black Pearl/East Carrollton Group A, which includes incidental road repairs, pushed up to summer 2020.

## MID-CITY

- The 800 block of Olga St., which is slated for incidental road repairs, now includes additional drainage improvements as part of the City Park Group A/JIRR Project.
- Originally, the Mid-City Group A project was slated for completion in fall 2020. My office pushed to include several more streets ranging from patch overlays to curb and sidewalk repairs. These expanded repairs should be complete by spring 2021.
- The 800 and 900 blocks of Taft place underwent a full reconstruction, including new sewer lines, repaired curbs, and ADA compliant curb ramps. Construction began in July and, at my office's insistence, wrapped in February.
- Our office worked with neighbors and stakeholders to design safe and appropriate bike lanes leading up to Magnolia Bridge.
- In early 2019, the Regional Planning Authority introduced a plan to eliminate several stops along the Canal Streetcar line to improve efficiency. Our office worked with the RTA to shelve that idea until it could be studied further.

## UPTOWN

- [5700 block](#) of Constance St. does not have any catch basins or drainage installed. The project originally encompassed incidental road repairs, but no drainage improvements. Our office was able to include drainage to this block as part of Uptown West Riverside Group A/JIRR project.
- The 10 block of Cromwell Place dead-ends into State Street, and was slated for patch repairs. Our office successfully pushed to include drainage improvements on this block as part of the Audubon Group A/JIRR project.

- Both the 400 and 600 blocks of Nashville Ave. were left out of the planned JIRR work Uptown. Our office has requested expanding the JIRR work on the streets that intersect with Nashville to include Nashville as well.

To be clear, we are in regular contact with DPW about cleaning ditches, speeding up the delayed work on the Hagan-Lafitte project, including Palm Air in the bond issuance, improving the light at Canal St./Canal Blvd/City Park Avenue, repairing LaSalle Place, reducing noise and speeding on the lakefront in Districts A and D, and many other issues that require immediate attention.

## COMPLETE STREETS & TRUCK ROUTES

Many residents were upset by the lane shrinkage on Marconi and the temporary closure of Moss Street earlier this year. A closer examination of the eight-year-old Complete Streets Ordinance should be the first step in helping avoid any future issues from neglecting to engage with the public. Our goal is to understand how the City is implementing and adhering to the Complete Streets program. I am also hosting a call with District A neighborhood presidents this week to discuss this problem.

When we rebuild beautiful new streets, it is imperative we protect them as long as possible. We are working on potential legislation to prevent large trucks from damaging smaller, interior streets across the city.

## SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS

Street discussions would not be complete without talking about the power, pumps, and drainage. When it comes to the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO), we must also focus on their well-documented billing problems.



## POWER, PUMPS & DRAINAGE

SWBNO had two failures [last Wednesday](#) — some mechanical failure causing Turbine 4 to “trip” offline, paired with failing to immediately publicize of the loss of power. This Council will hold SWBNO accountable for improving its power redundancy now. We have spent too much time merely talking about additional power for SWBNO to run the pumps. It is time for action.

That power must be reliable, safe, and cost-efficient. Our commitment to this work begins this week, starting with how to make this work publicly and practically.

This Council has repeatedly demanded information – and later action – from the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board (SWBNO). [Here is a link](#) to the Public Work Committee’s questions about the operations of SWBNO, and SWBNO’s responses. Still, the New Orleans public does not believe they are seeing enough action. After years of scrutiny and insistence of the Public Works Committee, SWBNO leadership has committed to several immediate actions to improve billing and customer service citywide.

## BILLING

Most of our district residents - and most residents citywide – have direct experience with SWBNO’s billing issues. SWBNO must be more reliable, more timely, more fair, and more efficient. The improvements Council have wrung range from reducing unnecessarily delay by insisting on virtual customer service meetings with someone actually empowered to adjust your bill, to overhauling the billing cycle, so the inaction of SWBNO does not add more cost to your bill, to filling all 60-meter reader positions so that estimates are greatly reduced.

These are steps forward, but they are not exhaustive – there is still much work to be done. You can find more details on SWBNO’s “action items” [here](#).

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As always, if you have any questions or need assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact my office at (504) 658-1010 or email me at **Joseph.Giarrusso@nola.gov**.



**New Orleans City Council**  
Councilmember Joseph I. Giarrusso, District A