



MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT A COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH I. GIARRUSO III



We're only two months into 2021 and so much has happened. Last year was particularly difficult for so many people. I'm proud to represent such incredible neighborhoods, whose residents step up every day to help each other. While there are a number of important topics to be addressed, this newsletter will focus on public health, public safety, and street renaming.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at [Joseph.Giarruso@nola.gov](mailto:Joseph.Giarruso@nola.gov) or 504.658.1010.

Best,

Joe

## VACCINE ROLLOUT

COVID vaccines are rolling out across the country. Governor Edwards expanded vaccine eligibility to K-12 teachers and support staff, pregnant women, non-emergency transportation workers, and people between 55-64 with specific health conditions. Many local hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics offer the vaccine but you must make an appointment. To find a participating location, please visit [ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine-locations](https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine-locations).

Residents 55+ (and anyone else currently eligible) who have not yet received the vaccine should call 311 or go to [ready.nola.gov/getvaccine](https://ready.nola.gov/getvaccine) to register for the Citywide Vaccine Waitlist. When appointments become available, members of the waitlist will be contacted.

For more COVID vaccine information or to sign up for COVID-specific alerts, please visit [ready.nola.gov](https://ready.nola.gov).



## CRIME

There are two different sets of statistics needing consideration. First, as of March 1, District A has seen a 28% decrease in crime compared to this point in 2020. The Council maintains a crime analysis dashboard ([crime dashboard](#)), which can be sorted citywide, by neighborhood, NOPD District, and each Council District. Here is what the chart looks like for District A:



Next, notwithstanding the lower crime statistics in District A, we have to acknowledge some serious crimes are on the rise such as carjackings and non-fatal shootings in District A. Citywide, aggravated assaults are up. People feel less safe and we need to focus on these serious persons' crimes.

To that end, the Council's Criminal Justice Committee is hosting a series of meetings with the New Orleans Police Department, the district attorney, juvenile

and criminal court judges, and other stakeholders to stem these crimes. We held our first roundtable on Jan. 25; you can watch the full [video here](#).

The second discussion, heard [Monday morning](#), focused heavily on a future electronic monitoring program for Orleans Parish. The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Coordination is working alongside the juvenile court to establish a coordinated, real-time monitoring program with narrow participation requirements. Each segment of the criminal justice system must agree on target population, maximum enrollment, duration, and responsibilities of law enforcement and the courts.

The goal is to have an electronic monitoring system in place by July.

There is no single solution. I worry about the extreme ideology that says either we should "defund the police" or that everyone, no matter how small, should be in jail. The answer, like most things, is in the middle. The questions we should be asking are how we fund the police properly while providing other services. Here are some proposed solutions:

1. Examine the use of police overtime for these serious person offenses while continuing recruiting efforts;
2. Jumpstart electronic monitoring, which all branches of the criminal justice system agree needs to be a point of emphasis;
3. Focus on providing job opportunities like [New Orleans Career Center](#) and out-of-school programs; and
4. Work with the State and other stakeholders on mental health and addiction.

One of the out-of-school opportunities is through our libraries. Councilmember Helena Moreno and I **filed a full renewal of the expiring 3.14 millage to completely support the New Orleans Public Library**. And, with New Orleanians wanting safety and opportunities, this proposed renewal allows New Orleans Public Libraries to continue doing their vital work.

*Government alone cannot solve these entrenched problems. We must partner with others to create opportunities for our kids. The 18th Ward is working to remove barriers to physical activity for our students by offering low-cost, inclusive, high-quality team sports. You can learn more about their programs at [the18thward.org](#).*



## STREET RENAMING

The [City Council Street Renaming Commission](#) (CCSRC) has finished its final report. As I have said publicly and privately, the Commission acts only in an advisory capacity to the Council. Its suggestions are not binding on the Council. My approach to zoning matters has been to use common sense to find common ground. My approach will be exactly the same here.

To accomplish that, I have rolled up my sleeves by working with neighborhood associations and neighbors on this issue for the last few months. We have been in regular contact, listening to and working with District A residents on their suggestions.

Finally, City and City-related departments have asked that the Council not revise all streets and parks at one time. This will give neighbors more of an opportunity to weigh in and, of course, means that we continue to focus on maintenance and repair of streets and subsurface issues.

Questions or concerns? Please don't hesitate to contact my office at (504) 658-1010 or email me at [Joseph.Giarrusso@nola.gov](mailto:Joseph.Giarrusso@nola.gov) and continue to follow along on my social media pages below.



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