



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



Friends,

In addition to the usual questions about roadwork and SWBNO issues, residents are asking more questions about crime. My approach has always been this: public safety is any City's top priority. What I am proposing is not novel, though it can be implemented and help now. We must urgently use available resources to immediately address the crime surge. This short-term urgency must complement our longer-term strategies. At this moment, as explained below, the City has a tremendous amount of cash on hand. That money should be used for pressing needs and to develop future objectives. We look forward to continuing our work and our dialogue with residents to reach responsive and thoughtful solutions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Giarrusso III".

Joe

## NOPD & FUNDING SOLUTIONS

The current upswing in violent crime – particularly homicides – is unacceptable. The City proposed and the Council approved \$215 million for NOPD this year. For a variety of reasons, a significant portion of those funds remain unspent. The personnel surplus of NOPD is about \$7.5 million, and the City has \$20 million more in personnel funds for unfilled positions. We are not going to fill 920 job vacancies between now and the end of the year. How then do we make the budget work now and in the future?

Here is the bottom line: that existing money needs a sound plan and then the money needs to be used as fast as possible. It is clear that issues around recruiting and retention must be fixed, and the City and Council have spent \$900,000 to work on those. More still needs to be done here.

In addition to the work of outside agencies, we need more civilians helping NOPD at a senior level. Councilmember Moreno, Representative Hilferty, and I worked on using civilians instead of NOPD to help with traffic accident reporting. The effort failed in the Legislature but it is time to dust it off again. Similarly, if we can reduce the load on NOPD by having other agencies with proper training respond to blight, dumping, homelessness, and other quality-of-life issues, then NOPD has more time to focus on violent crime.

Unused personnel funds also can be spent on one-time costs such as buying or upgrading equipment and vehicles. The Council is also weighing the Mayor's merit-based pay plan and Councilmember Harris' cost-of-living plan. And, we have to catch up to other parishes who are spending more robustly on juvenile probation/parole services. Jefferson Parish spends nearly \$15 million annually on this whereas Orleans Parish allocates about \$1 million. If we want better results, we must use our existing resources for those objectives. In addition, the City has funds sitting in the defunct Neighborhood Housing Improvement Fund. Given that the money will not create significant affordable housing, wouldn't it be better spent on removing blight in areas with crime hot spots? This helps the residents immediately adjacent to the blight and crime from spreading to other parts of the City. It is a win-win. These are the types of solutions we must embrace with existing funds.

If you want to see data that can be sorted by crime type, neighborhood, or NOPD, district, please visit the Council's [Crime Dashboard](#).



# Consent Decree Dashboard Stop & Search

"NOPD shall collect and maintain all data and records necessary to facilitate and ensure transparency and wide public access to information related to NOPD decision making and activities, as permitted by law." - NOPD Consent Decree

Stop Type  
All

Officer Assignment  
All

Year  
All

### Action Taken:

Summons  
All

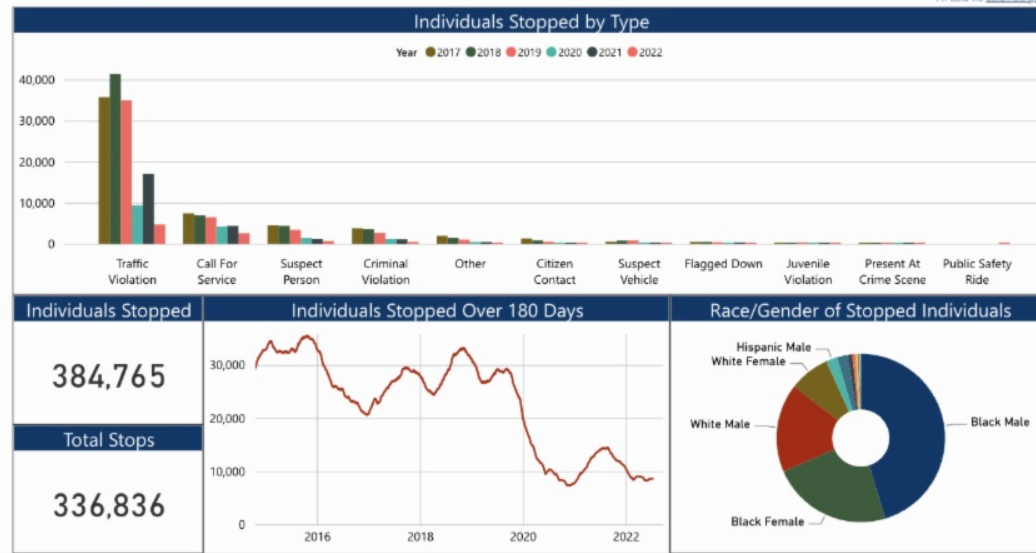
Citation  
All

Arrest  
All

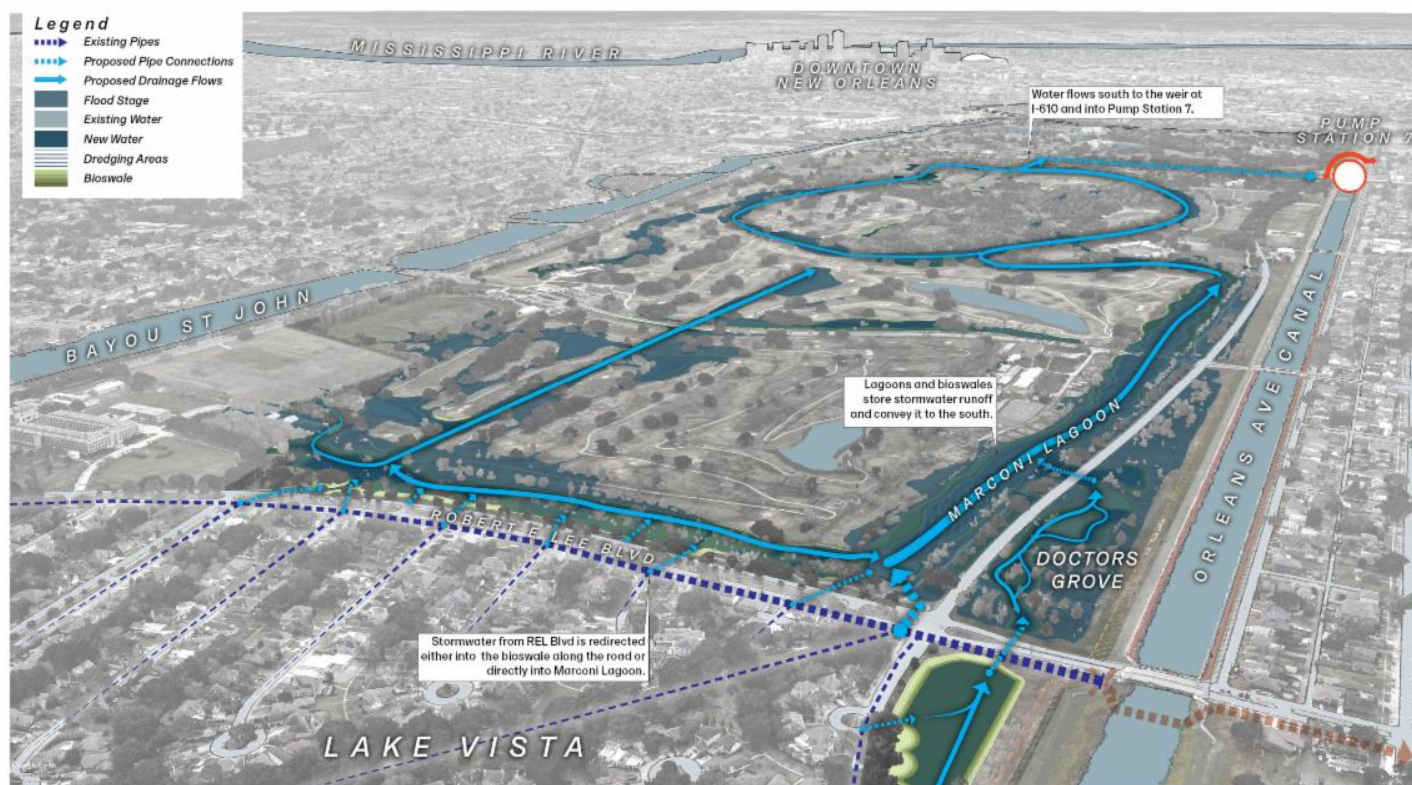
Warning  
All

Use of Force

Complaints



## CITY PARK FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM



I'm sure many of you have seen or heard about the Lakeview/City Park storm water management program delay. I wanted to completely explain the recent history of what has been requested and where things stand.

Following citywide flooding in 2017, the City commissioned a stormwater drainage system root cause analysis completed in October 2018. The results of the report showed the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) needed additional pumping capacity. To date, additional pumping capacity has not been added in the lakefront.

[In 2019, after the Mother's Day flooding in Lakeview, I wrote SWBNO complaining of how long water stood in the "Lakeview Box," an area bounded by Orleans, Toussaint, West End, and Harrison.](#) Unsurprisingly, we found out the Lakeview Box is lower than the surrounding land. The box culverts under Canal and Milne Boulevard may be retaining too much water, leading to flooding. There were discussions after the Mother's Day flooding to fix that issue, particularly with FEMA projects ongoing.

After Hurricane Ida made landfall, I drove the district from top to bottom. With the exception of a few streets in Hollygrove, the only parts of District A with standing water and widespread flooding were West Lakeview and the Lakeview Box. [I immediately wrote the Administration about what I had seen firsthand.](#) In short, it was clear the drainage system had not worked in Lakeview and West Lakeview as intended given that every other part of District A was pumped completely dry.

The following month, the Department of Public Works (DPW) committed to drainage system studies in Lakeview, West End, and Mid-City. That study, however, is barely underway.

The three keys to a proper grey infrastructure drainage system from front to back are: a functioning drainage system, appropriate pumping capacity, and adequate power. It makes good sense to use green infrastructure to complement grey infrastructure. As with any proposal, the plan must be feasible, workable, and manageable.





[City Park officials wrote the Administration outlining their concerns with the green infrastructure project in May.](#) Because it was clear several unresolved issues existed, I met with officials from City Park, SWBNO, the Administration, and Councilmember Green on June 2nd to address remaining questions and cement next steps for this project. All sides agreed that more time was needed to ensure this project is completed effectively and efficiently. To confirm our agreement, [I sent this email](#) to all stakeholders on June 3rd.

The current tranche of \$18 million is slated to be used for other shovel-ready projects in the City. My confirmatory June 3rd email ensured best practices were followed.

Much later, [we learned that SWBNO had emailed the State in March saying that it was exploring increasing the pumping capacity at DPS 12.](#) When we asked SWBNO about this, we learned SWBNO was examining more drainage and pumping issues in the lakefront. Remember the keys to a functioning drainage system. The City is still studying the drainage side while SWBNO is considering additional pumping capacity. It would not make sense with any type of project – green infrastructure or otherwise – to move forward without all the puzzle pieces in place.

There is no doubt that green infrastructure is a necessary and important part of our future in reducing flooding. We should not, however, rush to spend funds when increased pumping capacity, the uncertain extent of known drainage problems, and unresolved planning and operating issues remain. What we should do is gather and package all information quickly and deliberatively to reach the best possible solution.

## REDUCED PRICE INTERNET SERVICES

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For more information and to see details of each plan, visit [Cox's website](#).



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