

WATER JUSTICE NEW ORLEANS

Powered By The Water Collaborative



The Water Justice Fund is a community-built campaign and policy recommendations focused on the reparative work of fixing water inequities and climate change affecting New Orleans.

We value transparency, accountability, community voice, and financial equity to create a thriving New Orleans.

1

Financial Equity

Develop a funding stream where everyone pays their fair share into the drainage system.

2

Accountability & Transparency

Create a new stormwater utility with community oversight that will manage all stormwater assets.

W J F G O A L S

3

Neighborhood Safety & Quality of Life

Ensure funding supports green infrastructure expansion through diverse flood protection programs.

4

Job Creation & Economic Growth

Expand a growing workforce in water and climate careers, establishing New Orleans as a global leader in the resiliency sector.

THOUGHT PARTNERS

THE WATER COLLABORATIVE

Project Lead, community outreach and engagement, policy recommendations, and assessments.



WATERNOW ALLIANCE

Research partners on legal precedent, green debt financing laws, and case studies from other cities.

ADVANCING CITIES COALITION

Green infrastructure training, workforce development, and disadvantaged business support.

THE PREVENTION INSTITUTE

Health and park equity expertise and technical assistance.

COMMUNITY VOICE

7

Steering Committee

Provide feedback on the Policy Recommendations.

Work with WaterNow to include best practices that suit New Orleans.

Develop a strategy for passing legislation with major stakeholders.

70

Public Advisory Group

Create an open forum for process transparency and education.

Obtained feedback from city and industry professionals.

Supported complementary policies and procedures.

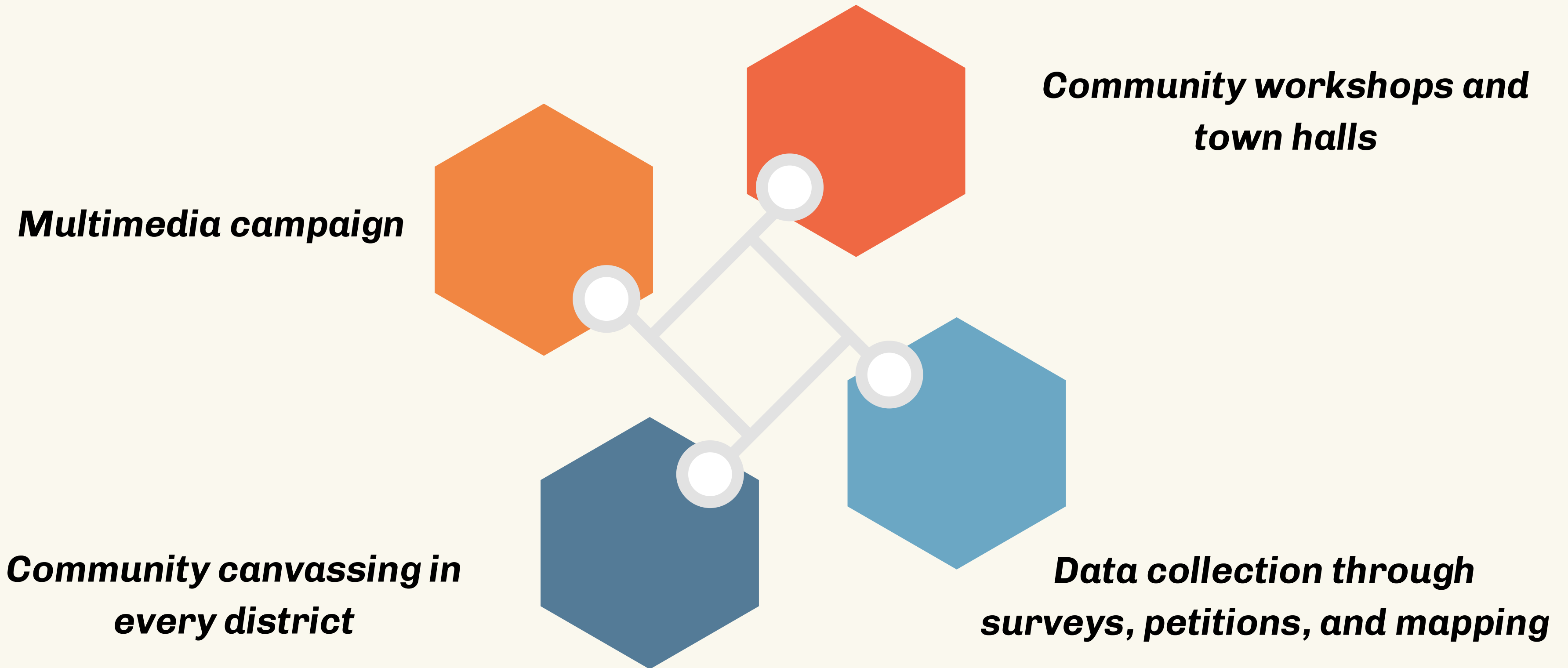
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Community Engagement Committee

Attend the 10-part workshop series and provided us with feedback throughout the process.

Provided community perspectives for the final policy recommendations

ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION STRATEGY



POLICY WORKSHOP

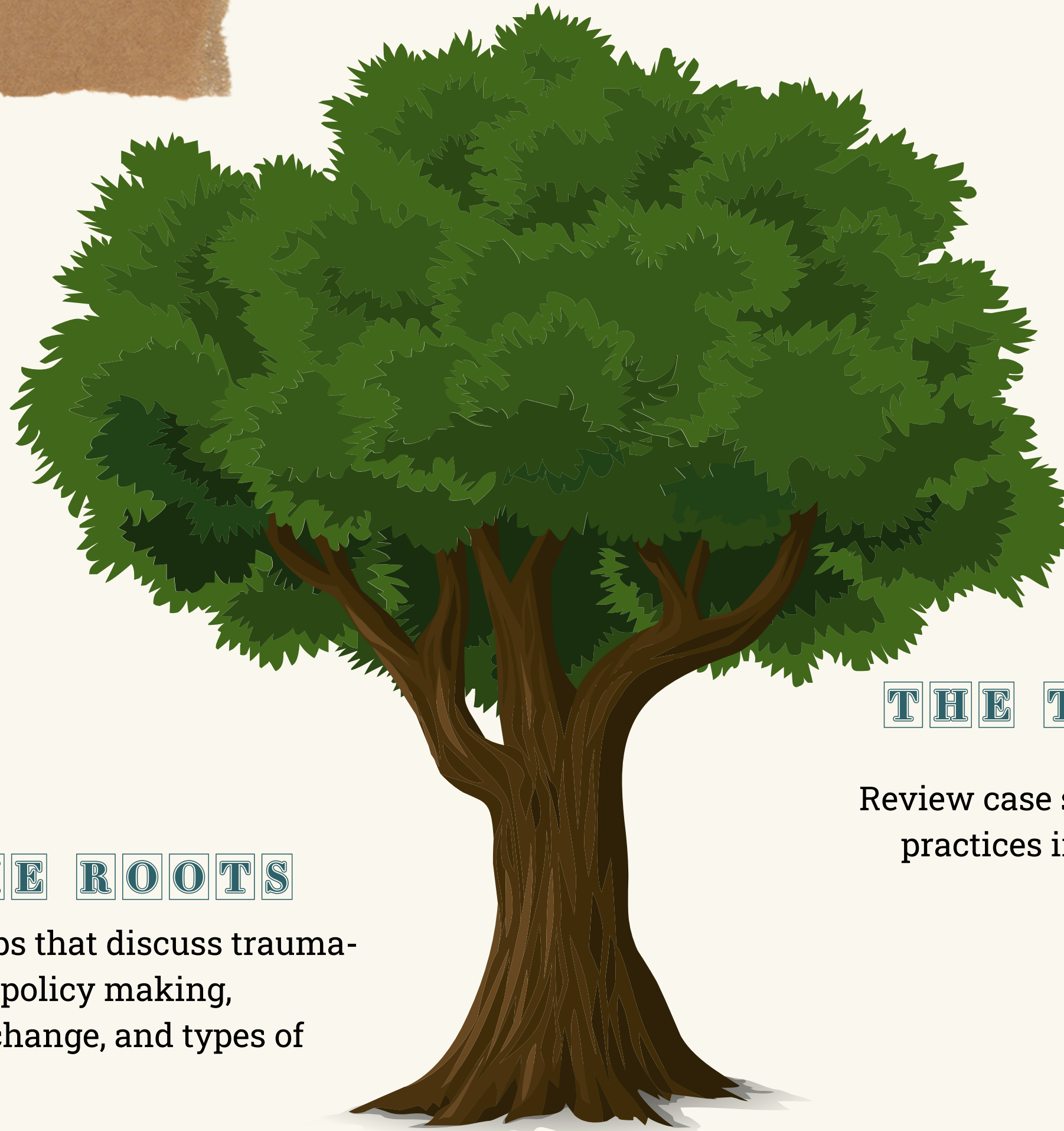
SERIES

THE BRANCHES

Based on the roots and trunk of the tree, we'll review every aspect of the fee in separate workshops, from data to who should house the fee.

THE ROOTS

Workshops that discuss trauma-informed policy making, systems change, and types of equity



THE LEAVES

Create a community-informed WJF and policy toolkit that is rooted in equity and justice and one that is informed by best practices from around the nation.

THE TRUNK

Review case studies and best practices in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

COMMUNITY

CANVASSING

THE BRANCHES

REPRESENTATION MATTERS.

WJNO talked to at least 2 people in every voting precinct in Orleans Parish to get their opinion. We talked directly to 3,298 residents.

THE TRUNK

AMPLIFY AFFECTED VOICES.

The communities of New Orleans deserve a voice in how their city is managed. We went to them asked them their thoughts on stormwater.

THE LEAVES

KEEPING IN TOUCH.

Every step of the process residents are invited to take part. Over 600 yard signs are in residential homes, over 10,000 attempts at contacting the city, and next informational town halls.



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Residents' First Priority				Residents' Second Priority				Total
	Fair Share	Protection	Accountability	Accountability	Protection	Fair Share	No 2nd Choice	
Total People	1,363	1,306	629	1,183	1,149	866	100	3,298
Total %	41.33%	39.60%	19.07%	35.87%	34.84%	26.26%	3.03%	

Fair Share

The new stormwater fee rate structure is equitable and ensures everyone pays their fair share for drainage.

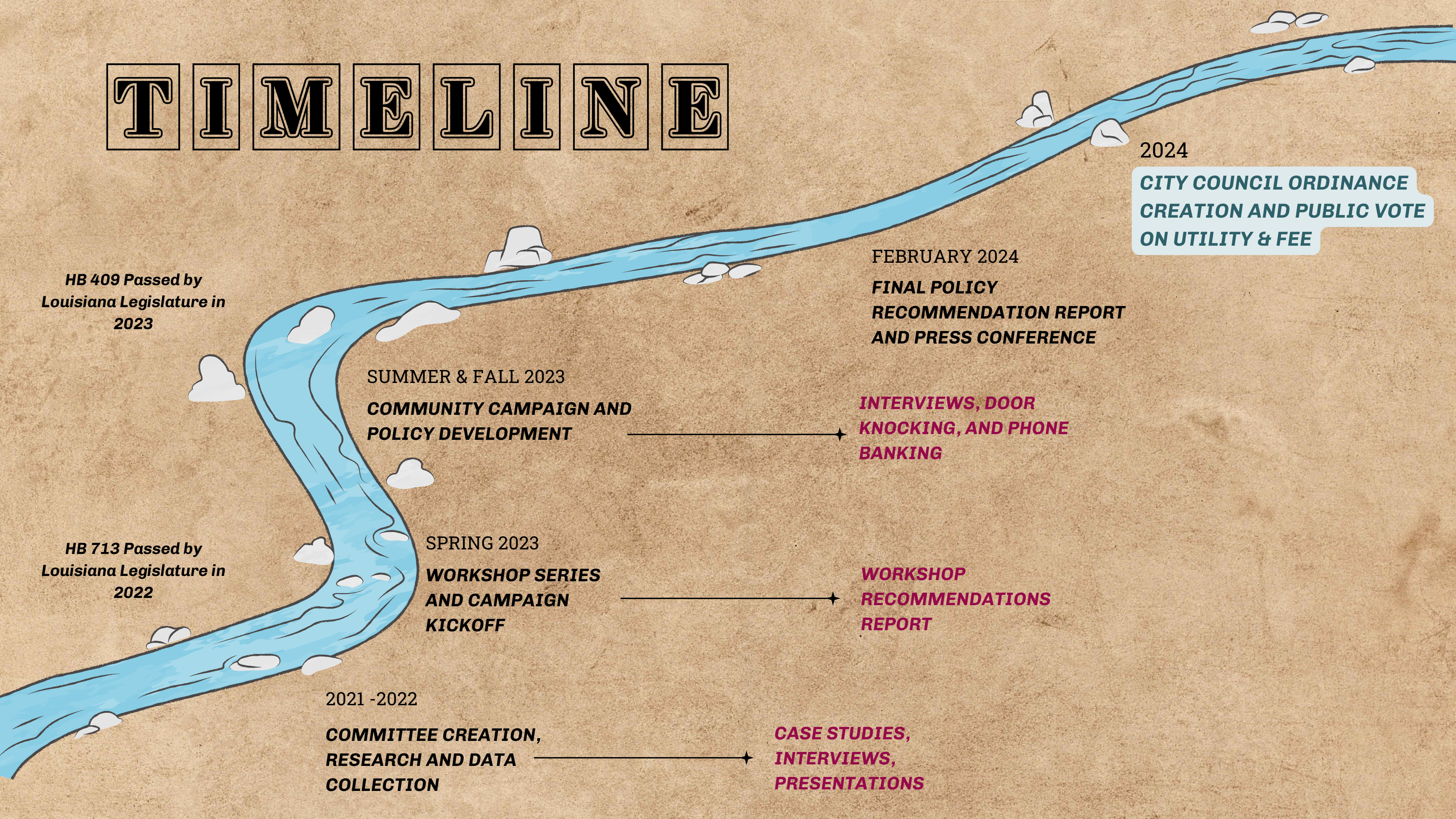
Accountability

The governing stormwater utility is accountable to upholding good governance.

Protection

The new stormwater utility ensures neighborhoods are protected from flooding, heatwaves, and tropical storms.

T I M E L I N E



HB 409 Passed by Louisiana Legislature in 2023

HB 713 Passed by Louisiana Legislature in 2022

**2021 -2022
COMMITTEE CREATION,
RESEARCH AND DATA
COLLECTION**

**SUMMER & FALL 2023
COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN AND
POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

**SPRING 2023
WORKSHOP SERIES
AND CAMPAIGN
KICKOFF**

**FEBRUARY 2024
FINAL POLICY
RECOMMENDATION REPORT
AND PRESS CONFERENCE**

**INTERVIEWS, DOOR
KNOCKING, AND PHONE
BANKING**

**WORKSHOP
RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT**

**CASE STUDIES,
INTERVIEWS,
PRESENTATIONS**

**2024
CITY COUNCIL ORDINANCE
CREATION AND PUBLIC VOTE
ON UTILITY & FEE**

FEE VS. TAX

STORMWATER FEE		STORMWATER TAX (MILLAGE)
<i>Accounts for a property's use of the system to capture its stormwater runoff.</i>	Consideration of Property Use	<i>Does not account for a property's use of the stormwater system.</i>
<i>Based on property size and/or amount of impervious area on a property.</i>	Basis for Calculation	<i>Based on property size and property value.</i>
<i>Imposed on all properties.</i>	Applicability	<i>Imposed only on tax-paying properties. Excludes tax-exempt properties.</i>

9,138

5.6% OF PROPERTIES IN NEW ORLEANS ARE TAX-EXEMPT

(TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE, 2023)

THE CITY IS LOSING APPROXIMATELY

\$123 Million

IN REVENUE ANNUALLY

(BGR, 2011)

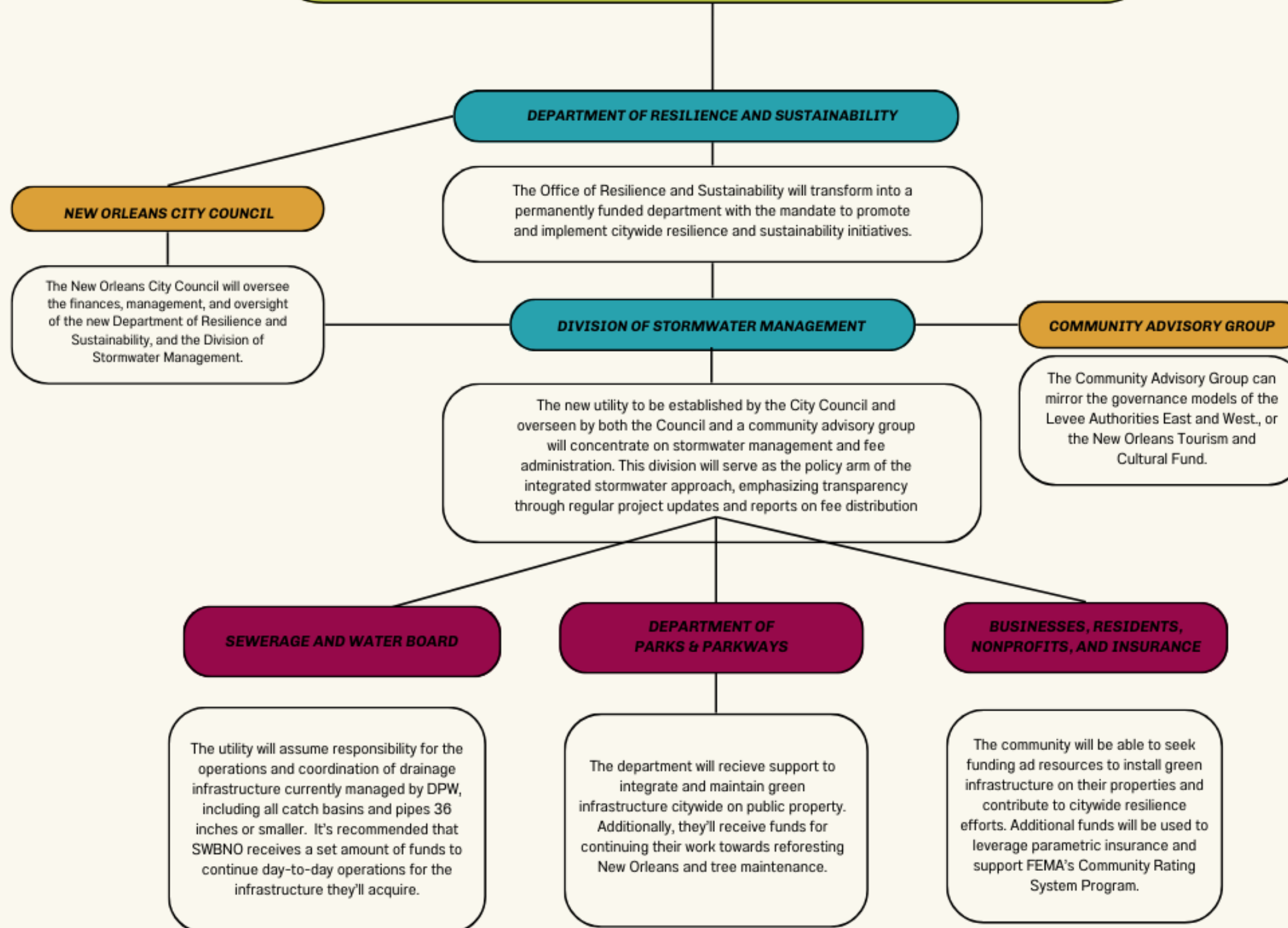
CREATE A NEW STORMWATER UTILITY

Create a new stormwater utility to manage projects, programs, and funding.

Reorganize roles and responsibilities to streamline leadership and management of stormwater assets.

- Transition the Office of Resilience and Sustainability to a **permanent city department**.
- Create the **Division of Stormwater Management** under the Department of Resilience & Sustainability.
- **Consolidate all gray infrastructure** under the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans.
- Create a **Green Infrastructure and Maintenance Office** under the Department of Parks & Parkways.

PROPOSED INTEGRATED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE



ESTABLISH A STORMWATER FEE

Establish a dedicated, equitable, and sustainable stormwater fee to be administered by the new Division of Stormwater Management.

Funds would be used for:

1

Operation and maintenance of newly acquired gray infrastructure.

2

Small grant and incentive programs for green infrastructure.

3

Staffing and operations for administration of the fee.

4

Maintaining a public website of how funds are used.

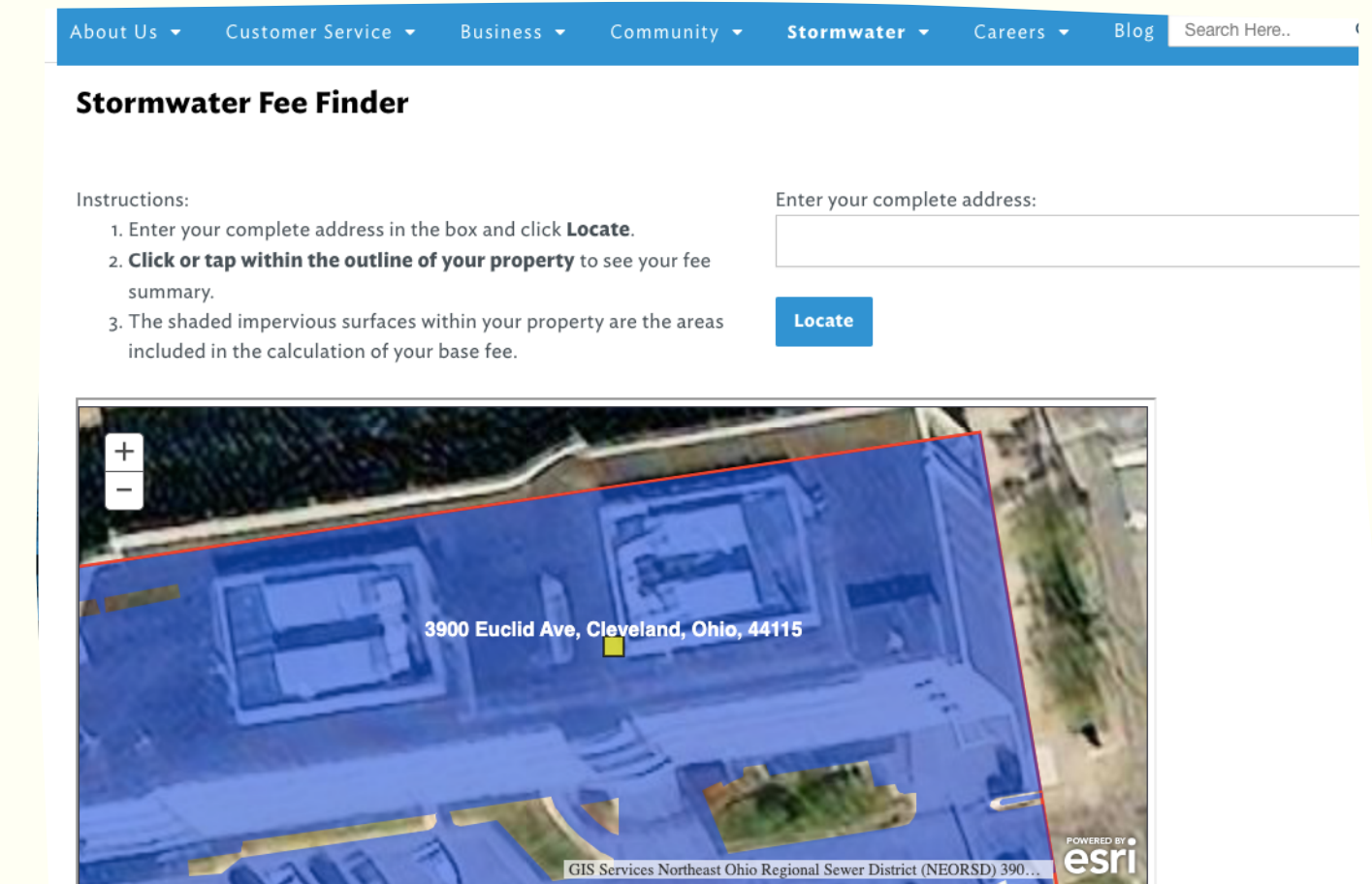
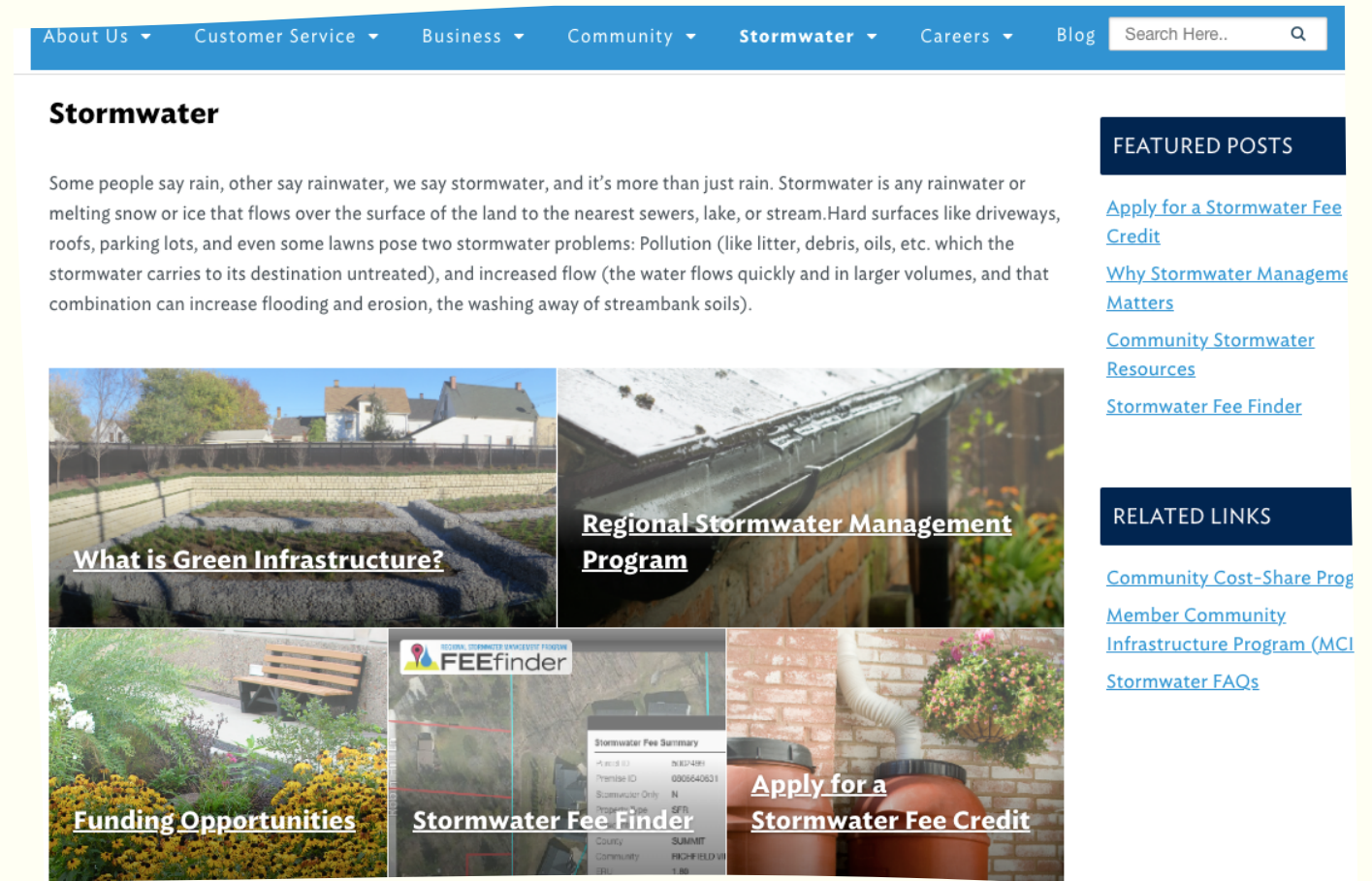
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Planning, designing, building, and maintaining green infrastructure.

TRANSPARENCY

The stormwater fee website should:

1. Provide calculations for individual property rates.
2. Share total revenue production.
3. Maintain a record of stormwater-related programs and projects funded through the fee.
4. Share opportunities for stormwater-related grants, incentives, and exemptions.



PUBLIC TRUST

Ensure public transparency and oversight by creating a Community Advisory Committee and a detailed website.



The Community Advisory Committee should:

1. Be composed of community experts in related fields
2. Ensure adequate expenditure of funding
3. Ensure equitable implementation of projects and programs
4. The governance model could be based on the Levee Authorities East & West or the New Orleans Cultural Fund.

GRANTS AND PROGRAMS

Create a dedicated fund for community improvement programs to ensure neighborhoods, businesses, and residents reap direct benefits from the new stormwater fee.



Restoration Tree Fund



The Pocket Park Program



Blue/Green Workforce Program



Community Adaptation Program (CAP)



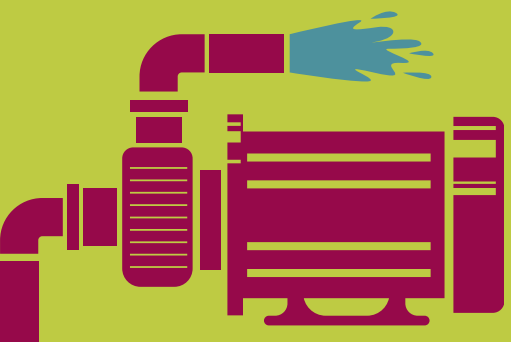
Parametric Insurance &
FEMA Community Rating System

DEDICATED FUNDING FOR GRAY

INFRASTRUCTURE

Require a percentage of the stormwater fee revenue to be allocated to necessary and sufficient gray infrastructure operations and maintenance.

NEW ORLEANS HAS:



180

MILES OF ABOVE- AND UNDERGROUND CANALS

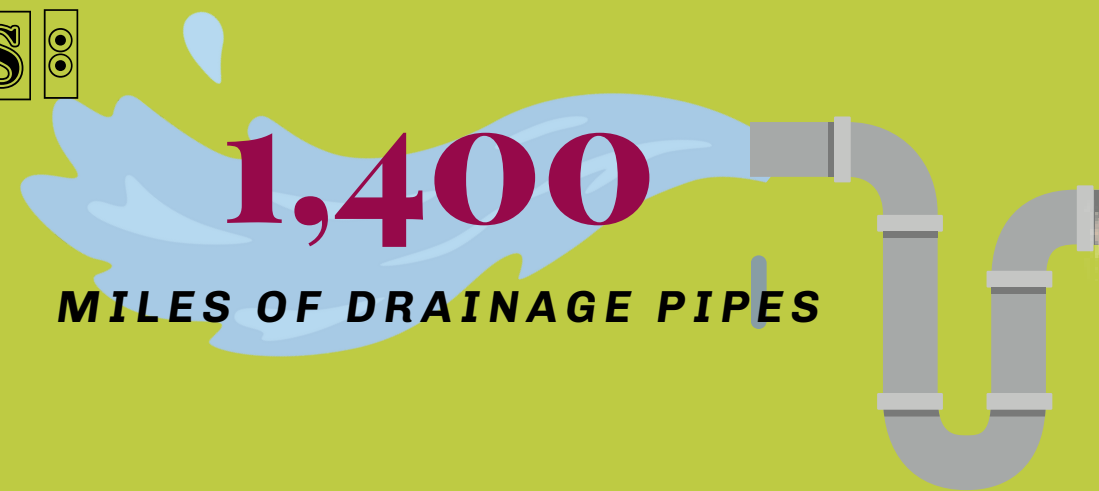
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DRAINAGE PUMPS



1,400

MILES OF DRAINAGE PIPES



72,000

CATCH BASINS



SWBNO estimates that the city's drainage system requires an additional annual funding of at least **\$35 million** if it acquires DPW's drainage.

PHASED-IN APPROACH FOR RESIDENTS

Develop a phased-in approach for stormwater fees, with commercial organizations, including nonprofits and tax-exempt businesses, paying first. Transition residents and taxable organizations into the fee as millages expire.

- Designed to more equitably distribute the cost of stormwater management.
- Unburden residents and taxable companies from paying more than their fair share.

Millage Expirations	
6 MILL	2027
9 MILL	2032
3 MILL	2046

RATE STRUCTURE

Single family properties

Everyone else

Pay a simplified, three-tiered rate based on property size

Pay a fee based on amount of impervious surface area on property

- Utilize a common Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) based on median parcel size in the city.
- Hire a consulting firm to create a database for:
 - Use in calculating and regularly updating the stormwater fee.
 - Assessing the appropriate ERU and rate structure.
- Assess total fees and rate structures annually to ensure equity and adequate funding.

Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)

A standardized unit of measure implemented by many stormwater utilities to equate non-residential or multi-family residential properties to a specific number of single-family residences.

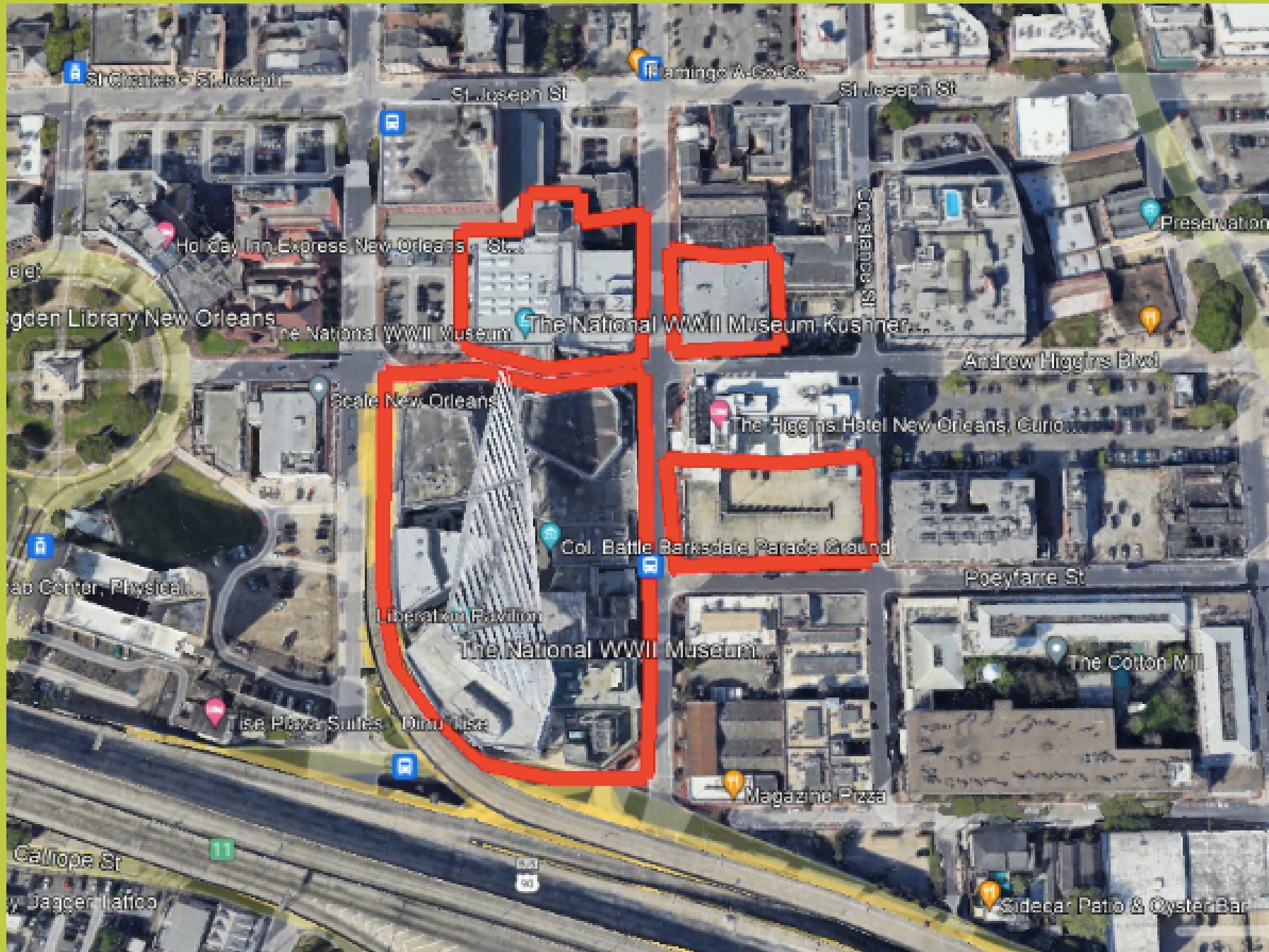
DATA & MODELING

This data is meant to give the viewer a general understanding of an equitable rate structure and an approximate amount of revenue that can be generated from our proposed rate structure.

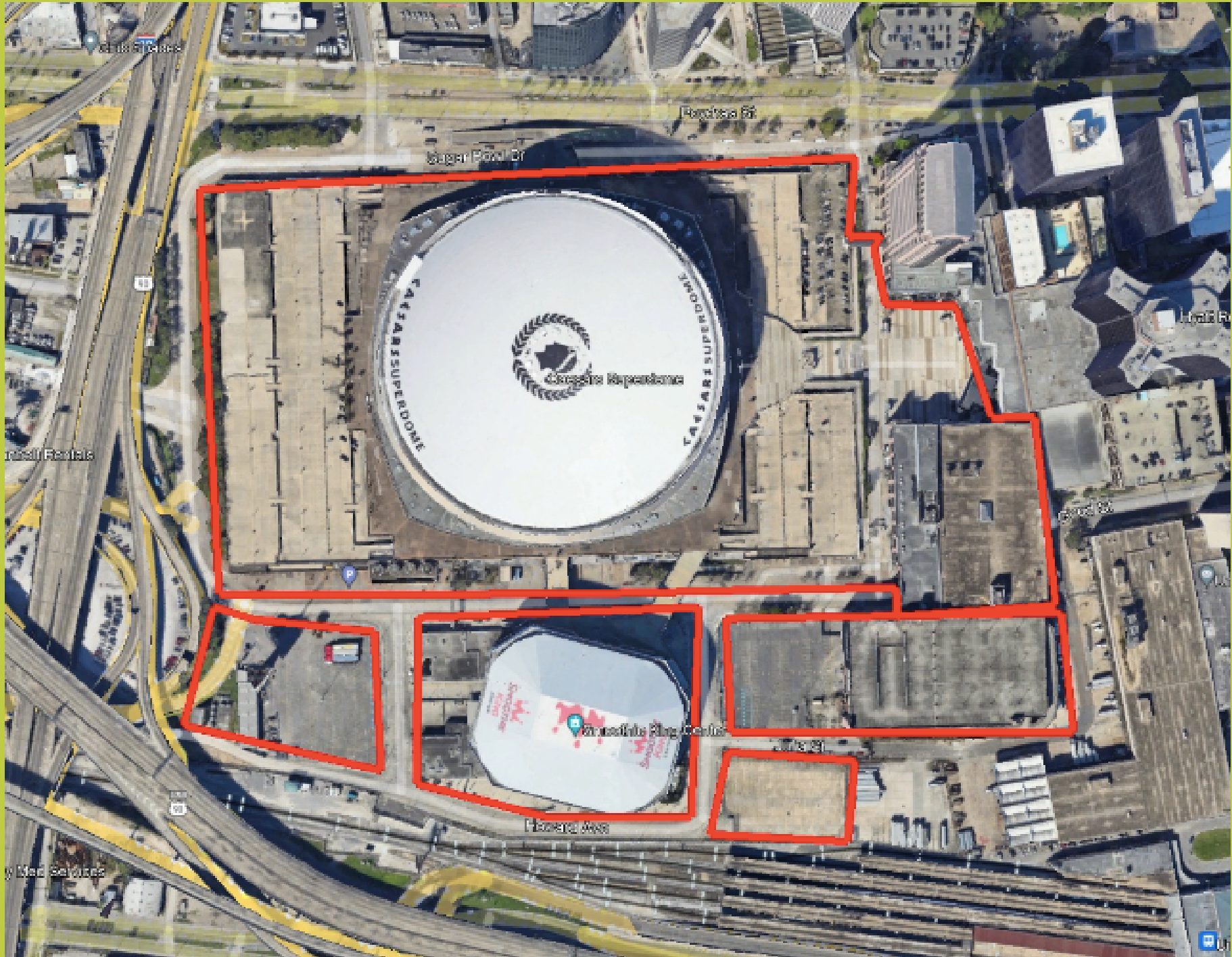
- 1. Data based on the 2023 tax rolls*
- 2. Represents commercial properties in New Orleans that are currently tax-exempt*
- 3. Model assumes average residential property size is 2,500 sq. ft. and that 1 ERU is equivalent to 2,500 sq. ft.*

COMMERCIAL EXEMPT - \$30 per ERU

Parcel Size (sq. ft)	# of Potential ERUs	Monthly Fee Based on # of ERUs	# of Properties	Highest Revenue per # of Properties in Category
< 5,001	1-2	\$30 to \$60	1,242	\$74,520.00
5,001 to 10,000	2 - 4	\$60 to \$120	515	\$61,800.00
10,001 to 50,000	4 - 20	\$120 to \$600	675	\$405,000.00
50,001 to 500,000	20 - 200	\$600 to \$6,000	359	\$2,154,000.00
500,001 to 1,000,000	200 - 400	\$6,000 to \$12,000	21	\$252,000.00
1,000,001 to 2,000,000	400 - 800	\$12,000 to \$24,000	9	\$216,000.00
ESTIMATED TOTAL PER MONTH				\$3,163,320.00
ESTIMATED TOTAL PER YEAR				\$37,959,840.00



Superdome
Parcel Size: 2,885,013 sq. ft.
~ 1,068 - 1,154 ERUs
\$32,040 - \$34,620 per month



World War II Museum
Parcel Size: 195,059 sq. ft.
~ 72 - 78 ERUs
\$2,160 - \$2,340 per month

HARDSHIP EXEMPTIONS

Provide hardship exemptions for property owners unfairly burdened by the stormwater fee.

Residential Exemptions

Should remain in perpetuity if property owners can provide evidence annually that the exemption is needed

Commercial Exemptions

Allows property owners time to incorporate the fee into financial planning.

Should sunset within 3-5 years to ensure adequate funding to achieve the goals of the fee.

INCENTIVES AND CREDITS

Create incentives to encourage residents and commercial property owners to increase permeability by expanding green infrastructure on their properties and participate in community greening initiatives.

Entities should be eligible to benefit from incentives that reduce their stormwater fees or provide stormwater fee credits.

Eligible activities funded, in part, by stormwater fee revenues include:

- Increasing permeability on properties to enhance on-site stormwater retention.
- Supporting registered and approved community greening initiatives.
- Promoting reforestation efforts.
- Facilitating green workforce development.

A MINIMUM STORMWATER FEE

Require a minimum stormwater fee for residential and commercial properties to ensure adequate funding for operations, maintenance, and programs.

- Ensuring sufficient funding for both gray and green stormwater initiatives is crucial.
- The minimum fee should account for future inflation rates and ensure long-term viability.
- Additionally, establish a low-income assistance program to maintain affordability while implementing the minimum fee.



THANK YOU

