



DATE: 5/21/2024

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Executive Boardroom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Janet Howard, Chair | Tamika Duplessis, Ph.D. | Joseph Peychaud |  
| Maurice Sholas, M.D., Ph.D. | Chadrick Kennedy |

# Operations Committee Meeting Agenda

## I. Roll Call

## II. Discussion Items

- A. Strategic Plan Update – Jamie Parker, Director of Strategy and Planning; Kaitlin Tymrak, Deputy General Superintendent
- B. Lead & Copper Rule Program Overview – Felicia Bergeron, Principal Engineer

## III. Public Comment

## IV. Adjournment

# Strategic Plan Updates

## 2023 Successes

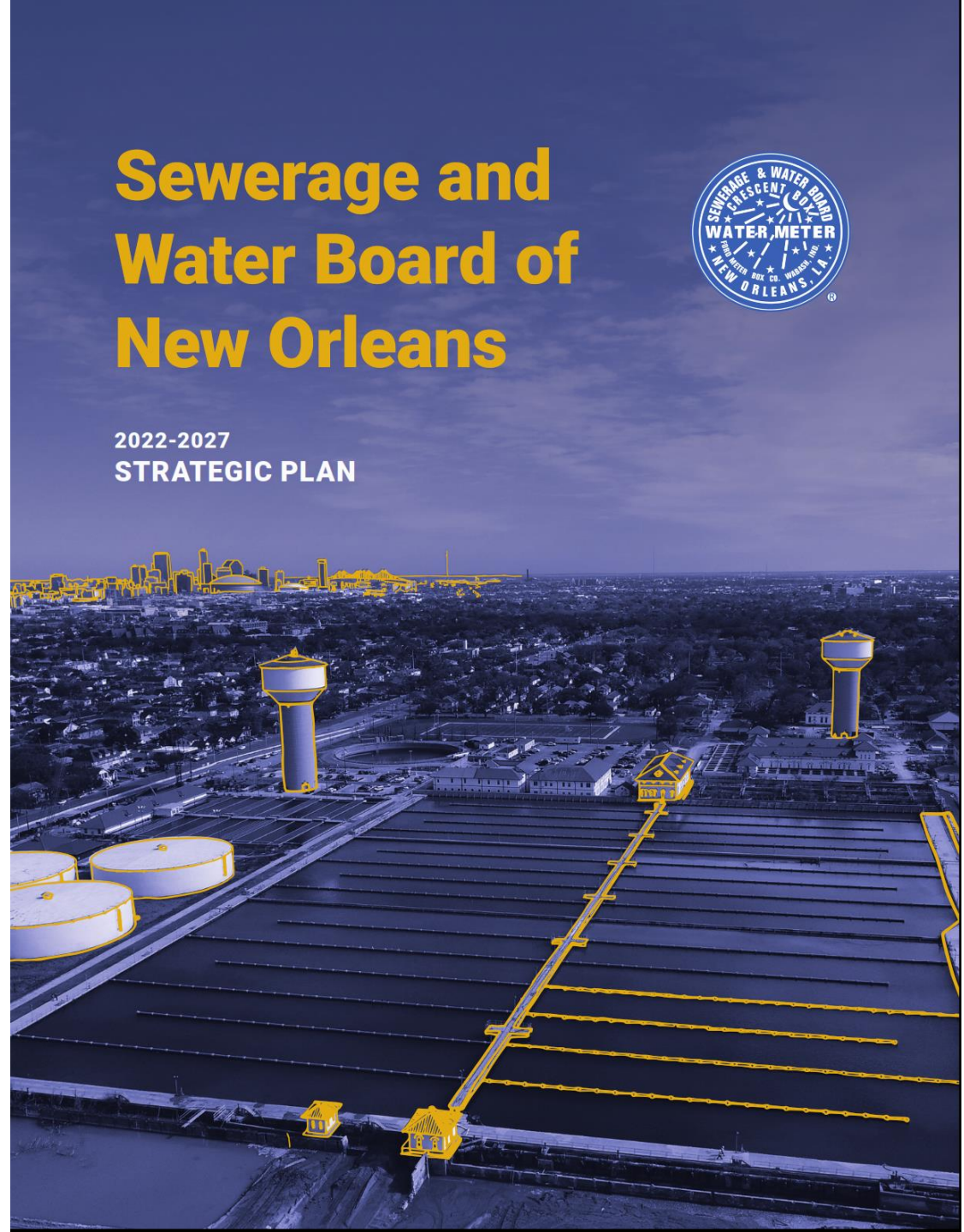
## 2024 Implementation Plan



# Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans



2022-2027  
STRATEGIC PLAN



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**Vision**  
To be a model utility that earns and holds the trust and confidence of our customers, community, and partners through reliable and sustainable water services.

**Mission**  
Our team of experts serves the people of New Orleans and improves their quality of life by reliably and affordably providing safe drinking water; removing wastewater for safe return to the environment; and draining stormwater to protect our community.

**Core Values**  
The SWBNO Team is committed to making these shared values our reality.

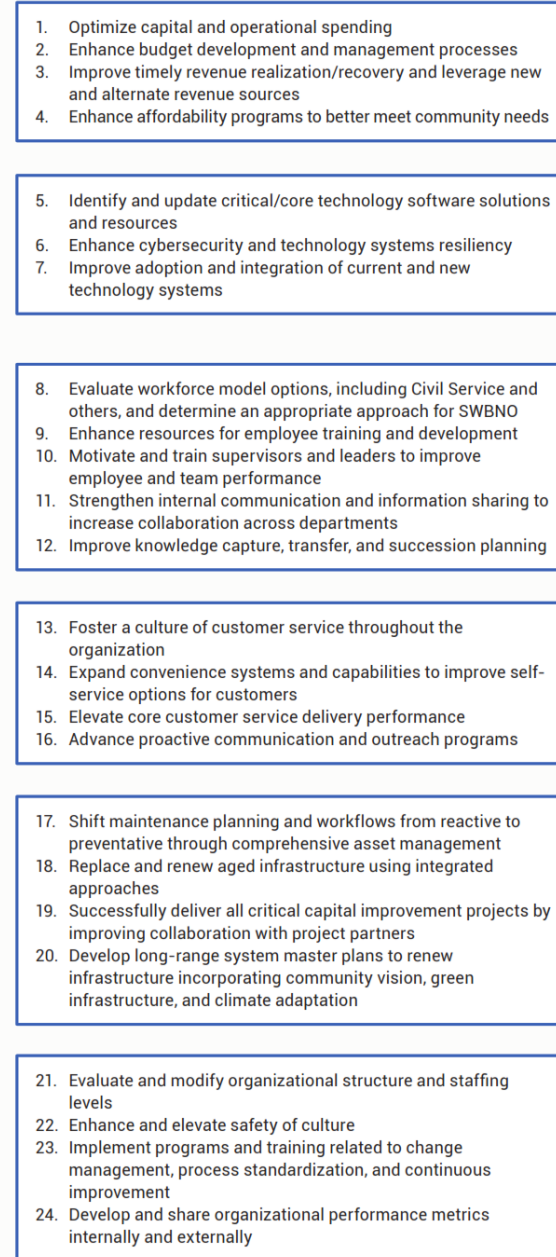
**We are:**  
Customer Focused  
Accountable  
Safety Minded  
Transparent and Honest



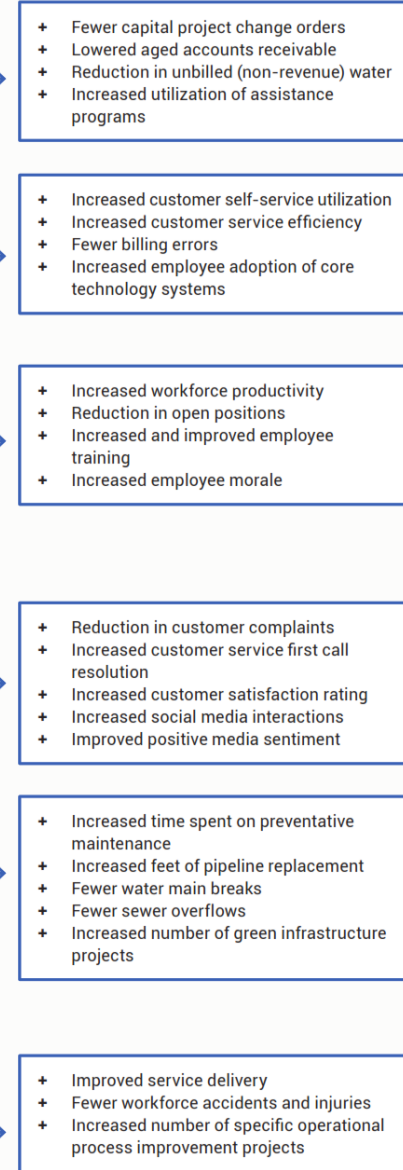
## FOCUS AREAS



## GOALS



## RESULTS



# 2023 Key Successes and Progress



## Financial Stability

- Awarded contract for Oracle Financials to replace AFIN
- Hired new controller
- Onboarded FUSE Fellow focused on revenue recovery



## Technology Modernization

- Developed 5-year schedule to upgrade key software systems
- Consultant selected to write RFP for asset management system



## Workforce Development

- Initiated the 'People Plan'
- Hired permanent HR director
- Restarted Leadership Essentials
- Hired a second Community Outreach specialist
- NEOGOV training and support for 2024 performance period



## Customer Service Excellence

- Initiated clearing of outstanding investigations from 2022 and earlier
- Increased training for staff and set documented expectations regarding individual and team performance.
- Actively recruiting multilingual CSRs



## Infrastructure Resilience

- Formal Pumping and Power dashboard
- Formal maintenance escalation team established
- Details of drainage funding needs provided externally
- Consultant selected for Water Quality Master Plan



## Organizational Improvement

- Developed internal procurement guidance documents
- Project Manager positions were approved and utilized
- Improvements made to coordination such HR requisition tracking between GSO and HR, and procurement policy adoption.
- Salary increases for Operations leadership and USM/USA series





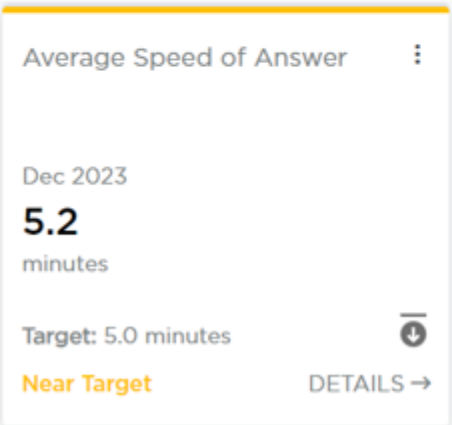
# Metrics Example

## Average Speed of Answer Objective

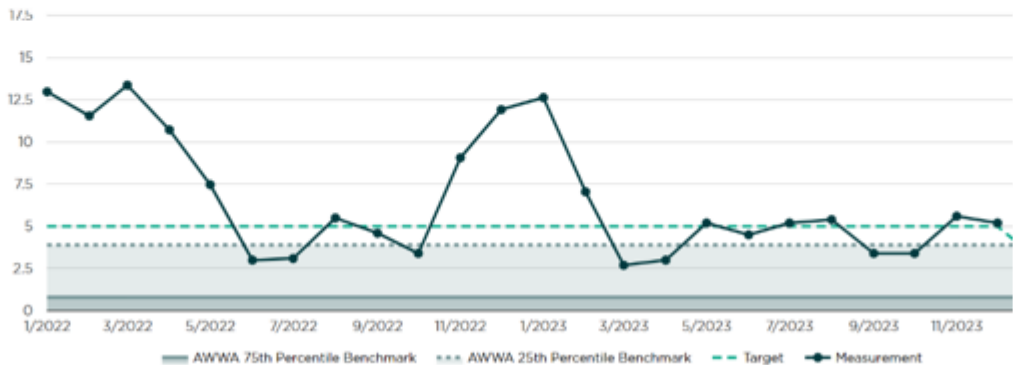
This performance metric measures how quickly our customer service representatives are able to answer the telephone to assist customers when they call with inquiries.

Keeping this value low will enhance our customer service and our customer's experience when reaching out to SWBNO.

### Status & Target



### Data Trends



### 2023 Narrative

This metric is closely tied to staffing levels in the Contact Center. The increase in time at the end of 2022/early 2023 was related to staffing shortages. Eight new staff were onboarded and training in 2023.



# 2024 Workshop

## What Went Well?

- Agreement on our challenges
- Staff are empowered to make change
- Interdepartmental coordination
- Process transparency
- Accountability
- Initial data aggregation

## Areas for Improvement?

- Clear and actionable tactics
- We can't address all issues all at once with the same people
- Progress documentation and technology support
- Using the data to drive decisions
- Accountability



# Challenges and Feedback

## Challenges

- Staff turnover and availability
- Data availability and usability
- Shifting focus due to external events and pressures

## Feedback

- Difficult to tie some tactics/activities back to the Goals and Challenges identified in the initial plan
- Need more specific, actionable goals to clearly demonstrate progress



# 2024 Approach

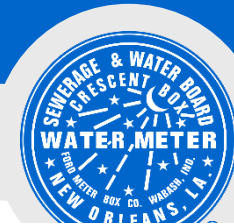
- Clear and actionable tactics that relate directly back to the challenges identified in the initial plan
  - Reduce focus from 24 goals (4 or 5 per focus area) to 2 per focus area
  - Multiple tactics identified per goal, being mindful of priorities
- Shift from quarterly, consultant-lead meetings to team-driven meetings
- Annual planning work session with executive leadership and all focus area leads
- Mid-year meeting with full strategic plan leadership with executive leadership
  - Re-align and identify further opportunities for coordination





# Major Projects in 2024

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION AND CURRENT PROGRESS	IMPACT
<b>Smart Metering and Billing Strike Team (Customer Service)</b>	In line with Smart Metering Implementation, and recognizing the impact of billing inaccuracies on our reputation, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency, the Strike Team is a strategic effort aimed at resolving the longstanding issues we've faced in providing accurate bills to our valued customers.	Improve customer confidence and the ability to address arrearage and delinquencies, as well as bring our systems and processes up to par with high-performing utilities.
<b>Oracle Financials Implementation (Finance)</b>	Replace AFIN system with Oracle Financials, an industry-leading financial management system. Go-live date is currently planned for January 2026. Throughout the next 2 years, the team will be working with the consultant to review and update existing processes to create efficiencies and streamline workflows. <u>The implementation started in Q1 2024, with the first Discovery sessions current underway.</u>	More data availability and visibility into financial transactions, allowing staff to make more timely decisions, reduce administrative time for transactions, and improve transparency.
<b>People Plan (Workforce)</b>	The People Plan is an employee-focused effort with a consultant partner to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of our current workforce model (i.e. City Civil Service) and identify potential alternatives for models that will allow us to achieve the best outcomes for our staff and utility. <u>The evaluation of existing conditions was completed in Q1 2024, with review of alternative models to be provided in Q2 2024 for SWBNO review.</u>	This process will identify near term and long-term areas for improvement, as well as provide information to staff to evaluate and select a model that best fits our needs.
<b>Power Complex (Infrastructure)</b>	The Power Complex represents a paradigm shift for our utility, transitioning from a model of self-generation of 25-hz power to utilization of a dedicated transmission level substation on our facility to provide power for drainage pumps and water pumping. <u>Phase 1 of the Power Complex is underway and on schedule for operation in summer 2025. The final installation, testing, and commission project will begin in Q2 2024.</u>	Improve reliability of power supply for drainage pumps and improve overall efficiency in operations.
<b>Lead and Copper Rule Program (Infrastructure)</b>	SWBNO has established a Lead and Copper Rule program to comply with anticipated changes in regulations in October 2024. In 2024 we will complete the Lead Service Line (LSL) inventory, develop a Lead Service Line replacement plan, and secure an initial \$79M funding source from LDH. A legal pathway to use public funds to replace LSLs on private property is also underway.	Comply with new regulations and take advantage of funding source being made available through IIJA at the state and federal levels.



Financial Stability | Executive Lead: Grey Lewis

Practice strong fiscal stewardship and ensure timely revenue recovery while balancing customer affordability with investments necessary to deliver critical services

GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
Optimize capex and opex spending	Real time spending data is currently limited, impacting manager and staff ability to understand budgeted versus actual spending, current and future resource needs, and normal and unusual charges.	Improve managerial budget communications and education by holding quarterly Finance and Budget closing meetings internally (and eventually with key department decision makers) focused on budget to actual spending, understanding the drivers and anomalies to establish baselines, and planning for next year's budgetary needs.	Q4 2024
	Some financial policies have not been reviewed in recent years, creating the risk that they may not align with current best practices and the organization's financial needs.	To facilitate the financial system replacement, review and update critical financial policies to drive better compliance and understanding.	Q4 2024
Optimize revenue sources	Grants and other alternative funding are available but require time and resources to pursue. SWBNO does not have these dedicated resources, meaning it may be missing out on revenue opportunities.	Create an ad-hoc team structure to identify funding opportunities a prioritize and coordinate resources to pursue grants and loans as needed.	Q4 2024

## Technology Modernization and Optimization | Executive Lead: Dave Callahan

Modernize technology and system integration to improve reliability and efficiency of operations and enhance customer service



GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
Update critical/core technology software solutions and resources	SWBNO does not have an effective or modern system in place to manage workforce data, impacting recruitment, retention, and professional development. The existing software system will need to be replaced by January 2028 and requires a replacement.	Complete a needs assessment and develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a <u>new human resources</u> planning software to enhance SWBNO's workforce management.	Q4 2024
	The existing billing software (Cogsdale CSM) will need to be replaced by January 2028 and requires a replacement.	Complete a needs assessment and develop an <u>RFP</u> for a new billing system to help ensure effective and accurate billing and revenue collection.	Q4 2024
	SWBNO does not have an asset management software system in place, impacting its ability to comprehensively track the condition and maintenance needs of existing equipment, facilities, and infrastructure, as well as its ability to plan for future capital needs.	Complete a needs assessment and develop an <u>RFP</u> for an asset management software to help proactively maintain SWBNO's infrastructure, facilities, and equipment.	Q4 2024
Enhance cybersecurity and system resiliency	All networks at the Algiers Water Plant are part of the same fiber system, creating the risk that <u>all of</u> these systems would be affected in the event of a cyberattack.	Design a new fiber system at Algiers Water Plant to separate the Information Technology (IT), Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), security, and power networks and mitigate against external access or cyberattack.	Q4 2024
	SWBNO is required by the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to complete cybersecurity evaluation and risk assessment to help identify and mitigate any vulnerabilities.	Complete the CISA-mandated cybersecurity evaluation and risk assessment and implement recommendations for compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Safe Water Act of 2018.	Q4 2024

## Workforce Development and Enrichment | Focus Area Lead: Corwin Washington

Support and develop a high-performing team that is skilled, committed, inspired, rewarded, engaged, and accountable



GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
<b>Elevate internal communication and collaboration</b>	Some employees have expressed a lack of understanding of how their roles fit into the larger SWBNO mission. This may be impacting recruitment and retention, as well as collaboration across work groups.	Connect new hires to the organization and create an understanding of why their work matters through an improved on-boarding process.	Q4 2024
	Some Human Resources (HR) processes are not documented, creating the risk of them being applied inconsistently or inaccurately and limiting employees' ability to understand HR procedures.	Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), process maps, and other documentation of HR policies and procedures to help clarify and standardize workforce management throughout the organization.	Q4 2024
<b>Enhance workforce training and development</b>	Civil Service <u>trainings</u> are often required before an employee is eligible for promotion, but it can take months or years before a specific training is available. This impacts employees' ability to advance in the organization and SWBNO's ability to fill vacancies in a timely manner.	Conduct some required Civil Service training in-house with SWBNO staff to create a faster and more streamlined advancement process. <u>Civil</u> Service has already approved of this approach and qualified instructors are being sought internally.	Q4 2024
	SWBNO does not have a formal succession plan in place. This increases the risk of institutional knowledge loss due to employee turnover and impacts the organization's to proactively plan to fill vacancies.	Develop and implement a succession planning program to capture institutional knowledge, starting with employees on the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP).	Q4 2024
<b>External Communications</b>	SWBNO's communication needs continue to expand, with staff needed to focus on specific projects and external engagement.	Complete a review of existing positions that can be used by the Communications Department and complete job studies for new positions if needed for recruitment purposes.	Q4 2024





## Customer Service Excellence and Stakeholder Engagement | *Executive Lead: Rene Gonzalez*

I *Continuously meet and exceed the service needs of our customers and proactively communicate and engage stakeholders*

GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
Elevate customer service delivery	Some customer service policies, regulations, and processes have not been reviewed in recent years, creating the risk that they do not align with current customer service best practices.	Review, prioritize, and update policies, rules and regulations, and other mechanisms to ensure SWBNO's policies are current and align with best practices, ultimately enhancing the customer's experience.	Q4 2024
	There is no comprehensive, formal training program for customer service personnel, which creates the risks that some employees have gaps in their skills or knowledge that may impact their ability to serve customers effectively.	Develop and facilitate training sessions for all customer service personnel.	Q4 2024
	Current structure of Customer Service organization needs to be updated to reflect best management practices for a Customer Service department to effectively provide required level of service for an organization of this size.	Create and fill new management positions to improve organizational structure. Determine best staffing structure for long-term Billing strategy when Smart Metering implementation is completed.	Q4 2024
Enhance internal customer service culture	Customers often interact with staff across multiple divisions. This can create a lack of accountability among staff, because no single work group or division is responsible for the customer experience.	Develop and implement "Customer Experience" training for non-Customer Service staff to improve the overall customer journey and improve consistency in the public's interactions with the utility.	Q4 2024



▲ **Infrastructure Resiliency and Reliability** | *Executive Lead: Steve Nelson*

| *Improve efficiency and resiliency of current and future infrastructure by leveraging partnerships and innovative approaches to funding and sustainable design*

GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
Enhance infrastructure renewal efforts	SWBNO has historically had limited communication with stakeholders about comprehensive capital funding needs, which impacts the ability to get support for the resources needed to invest in system renewal efforts effectively.	Develop resources and information to support external communications of SWBNO's capital program to build stakeholder understanding and support.	Q4 2024
	SWBNO does not formally prioritize its capital needs, which creates the risk that resources will not be invested as effectively as possible.	Develop prioritization criteria for a comprehensive capital improvement plan for water, sewer, and drainage programs.	Q4 2024
	Ongoing infrastructure maintenance and enhancements are vital to maintaining safe water and efficient, reliable operations.	Continue to maintain and enhance infrastructure through the Joint Infrastructure Renewal & Replacement (JIRR), Sewer System Evaluation & Rehabilitation (SSERP), Smart Metering, Power Complex, and Southeast Louisiana (SELA) programs.	Q4 2024
	Existing water treatment facilities have reached or are reaching end-of-life status and require major upgrades to maintain current service and comply with upcoming regulations, as well as plan for future demand and climate change impacts.	Initiate and complete first steps in the Water Quality Master Plan, focusing on water loss mitigation strategies, optimizing of existing processes, corrosion control options for saltwater intrusion mitigation, and a near-term capital plan with high-value projects.	Q4 2024





## Organizational and Operational Improvement | Focus Area Lead: Kaitlin Tymrak

| Optimize organizational structure, alignment, and capacity to ensure safe operations and efficient service delivery

GOALS	ISSUES	2024 TACTICS TO ADDRESS ISSUES	EXPECTED COMPLETION
Optimize organizational structure and staffing	Limited staff capacity in Water Quality/Water Purification, Environmental Enforcement, and Safety impacts SWBNO's ability to maintain safe operations and to advance its organizational goals.	Enhance staff capacity in key areas by <u>making adjustments</u> to the position series used in Water Quality/Water Purification, Environmental Enforcement, and Safety.	Q2 2024
	SWBNO is in the process of transitioning to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), which will allow for more effective meter management but will also require dedicated, specialized staff support that is not currently in place.	Create a new position series related to AMI to ensure that staff with the appropriate qualifications will be in place to effectively support the program.	Q4 2024
	SWBNO is in the process of transitioning operations to the new West Power Complex, which requires an update to existing positions to account for qualifications to utilize the new technology.	Create a new position series related to the West Power Complex to ensure that staff with the appropriate qualifications will be in place to effectively support the program.	Q4 2024
Drive a culture of safety	There are no formal safety training <u>program</u> or comprehensive safety standards, creating the risk that managers may not be equipped with the tools and knowledge they need.	Enhance awareness of organizational safety and responsibility and the adoption of safety standards by implementing a <u>safety management systems</u> training program for managers to enhance awareness of organizational safety and responsibility.	Q4 2024
	There are no dedicated safety programs for some high-hazard activities, including confined space, rigging, and environmental compliance, increasing the likelihood of injuries and accidents.	Develop and implement training and procedures to help mitigate the risks associated with high-hazard activities.	Q4 2024

# Lead Service Line Replacement Program Overview



Operations Committee  
May 21, 2024

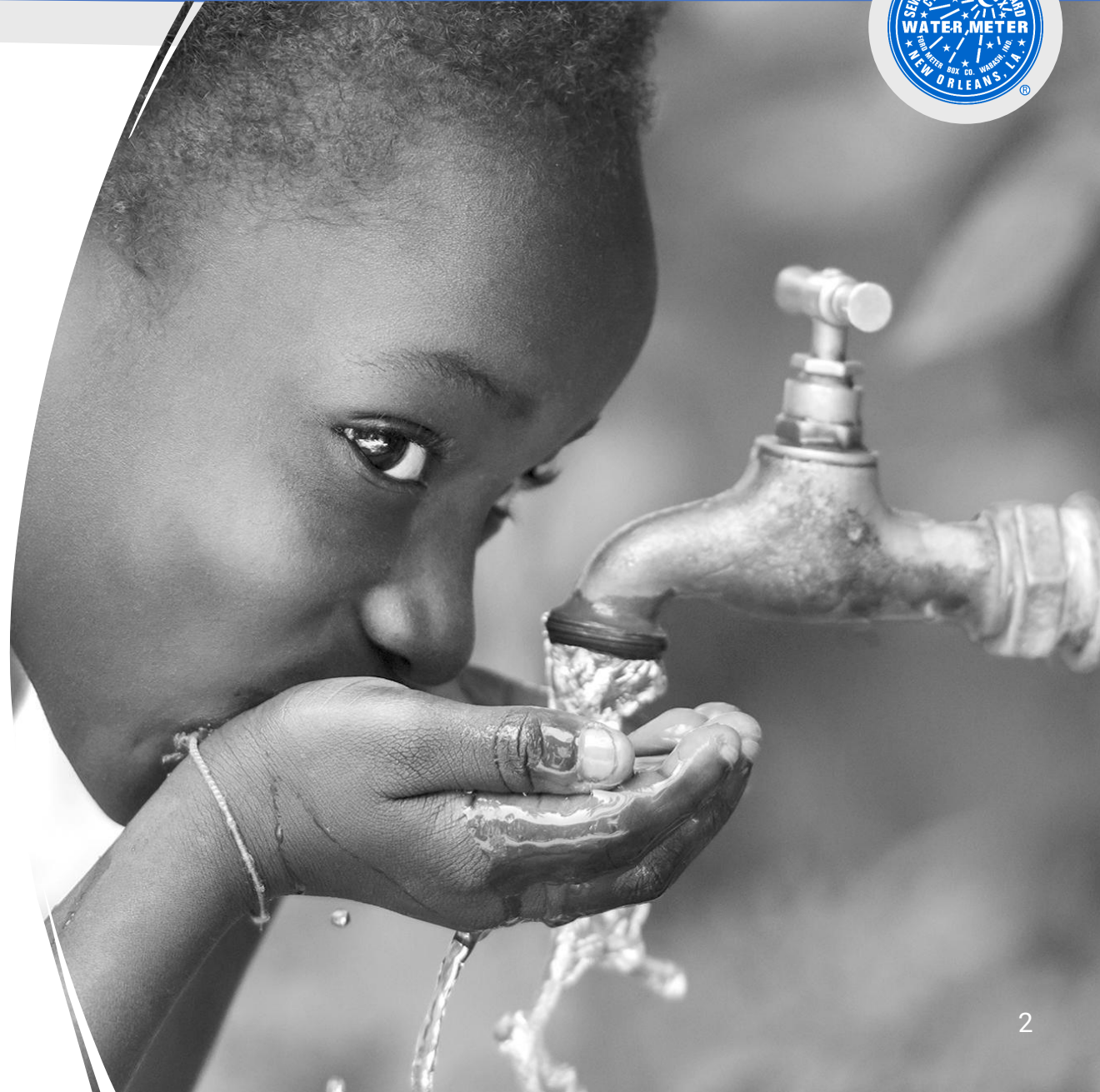






# Agenda

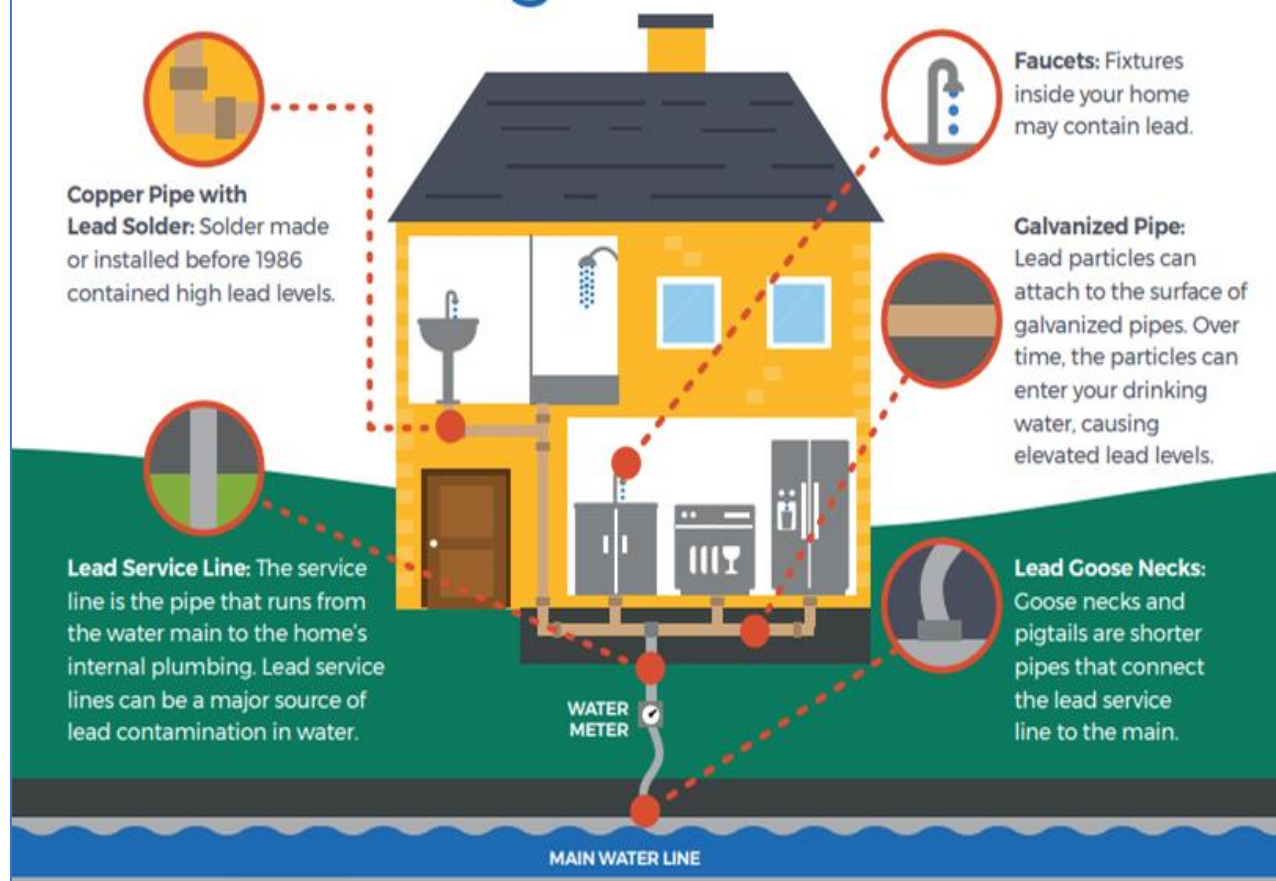
- Lead Pipes and Risk
- Lead and Drinking Water Regulations
- SWBNO's Lead Program
  - Inventory
  - Funding
  - Lead Service Line Replacement
  - Mitigation
  - Community Outreach
- Program Milestones





CONCERNED ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER?

## Sources of **LEAD** in Drinking Water



## Lead Pipes and Drinking Water

1986

Lead banned for use in plumbing fixtures used for human consumption

*“Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust are the most common and widespread hazardous sources of lead exposure for young children.”*

Louisiana Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

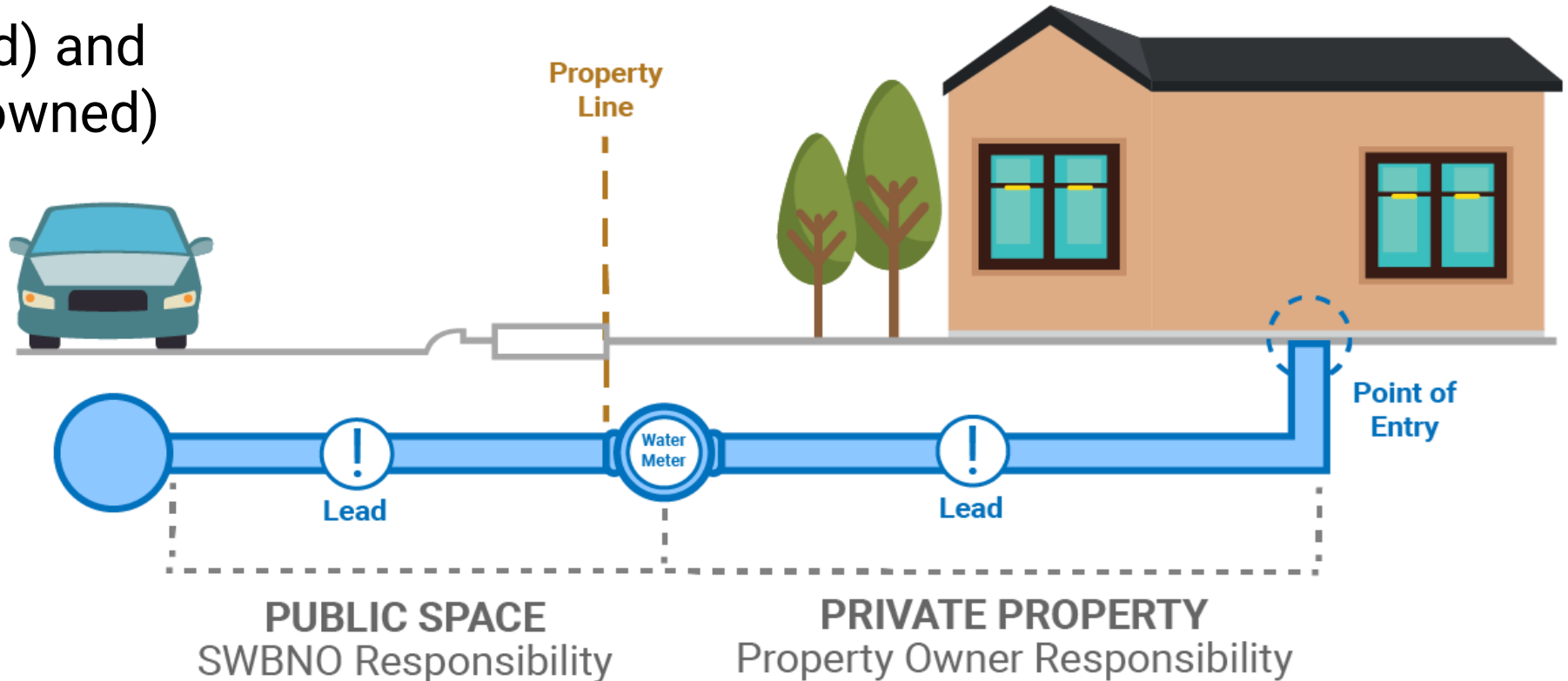
# Service Line Materials

**Service lines connect the distribution main to the home:**

Public (utility-owned) and  
Private (customer-owned)

Pipe Materials:

- Copper
- PVC/plastic
- Galvanized Steel
- Lead





# Protecting Our Community

## Corrosion Control Treatment



## Service Line Replacements



## School Notifications



## Water Quality Testing



## Pitcher Request



## Informational Materials







# Lead and Drinking Water Regulations





# Lead and Copper Rule Regulations

Current Regulations (LCRR) (compliance by Oct 16, 2024)	
Publicly available Lead Service Line Inventory	
Monitoring for schools and childcare facilities	
Plan for Lead Service Line Replacements with full replacement encouraged	
Enhanced Corrosion Control Treatment measures	
More stringent compliance levels	
Increased community outreach	



# Lead and Copper Rule Regulations

Current Regulations (LCRR) (compliance by Oct 16, 2024)	Proposed Regulation Changes (LCRI) (compliance by 2027)
Publicly available Lead Service Line Inventory	
→	Must validate the accuracy of non-lead service lines no later than 7 years after compliance date
→	100% lead service line replacement within 10 years, starting 2027
→	Mitigation for disturbances; New filter requirements
→	Remove trigger level and lower action level from 15 µg/L to 10 µg/L
→	Increased and additional community outreach





# SWBNO's Lead Program



# Program Elements



**Inventory**



**Funding**



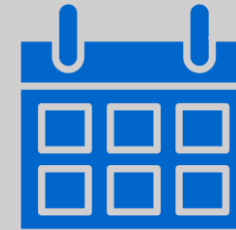
**Lead Service Line  
Replacement**



**Mitigation Efforts**



**Communications**



**Program Milestones**



# Inventory







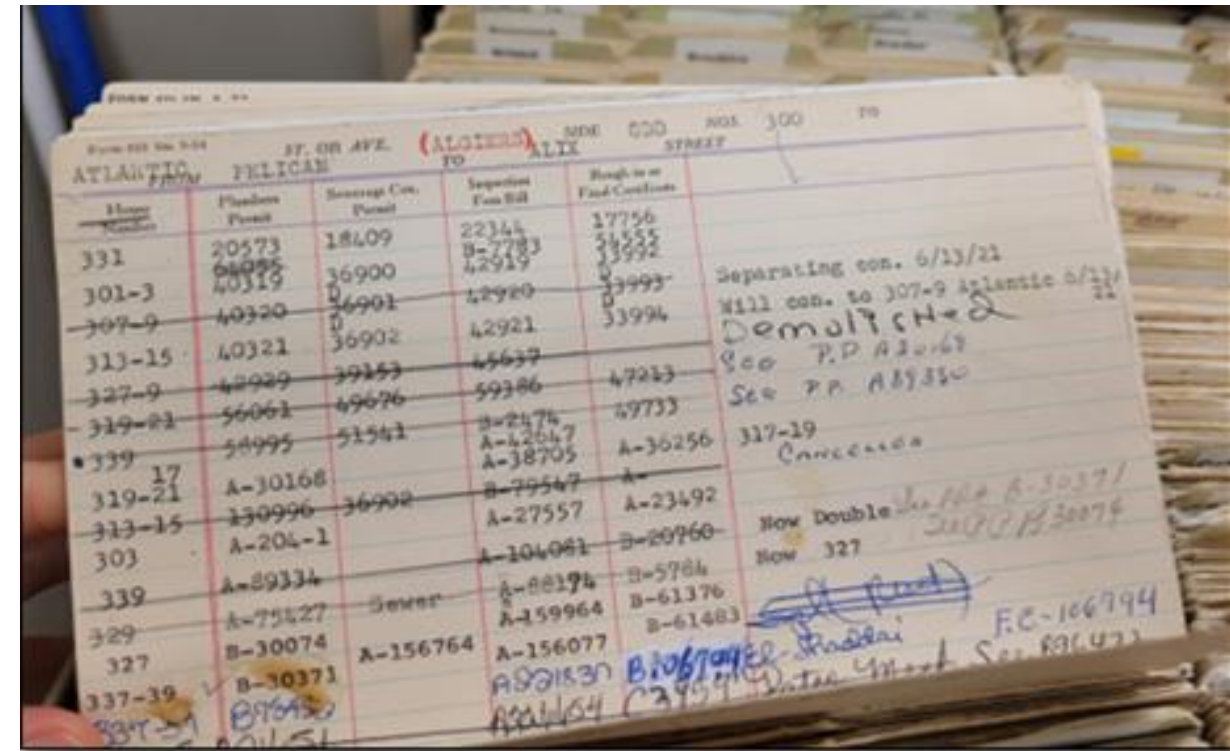
# Inventory Due by October 16, 2024

Must include all utility-owned and customer-owned service lines

## Labor intensive work

- Historical records must be pulled by hand and deciphered

Initial findings based on a small sample is an estimated **40-60%** of metered locations likely include a lead service line



# High Percentage of “Unknowns”

- ~100,000 locations (75%) of the inventory have unknown service line materials
- Regulation states “unknowns” must be treated as lead service lines until verified
- Creates additional notifications and potential community concerns
- “Potholing” is a priority
  - Visual inspection to reduce the number of unknowns
  - Work is State Revolving Fund reimbursable



Source: Trenchlesspedia



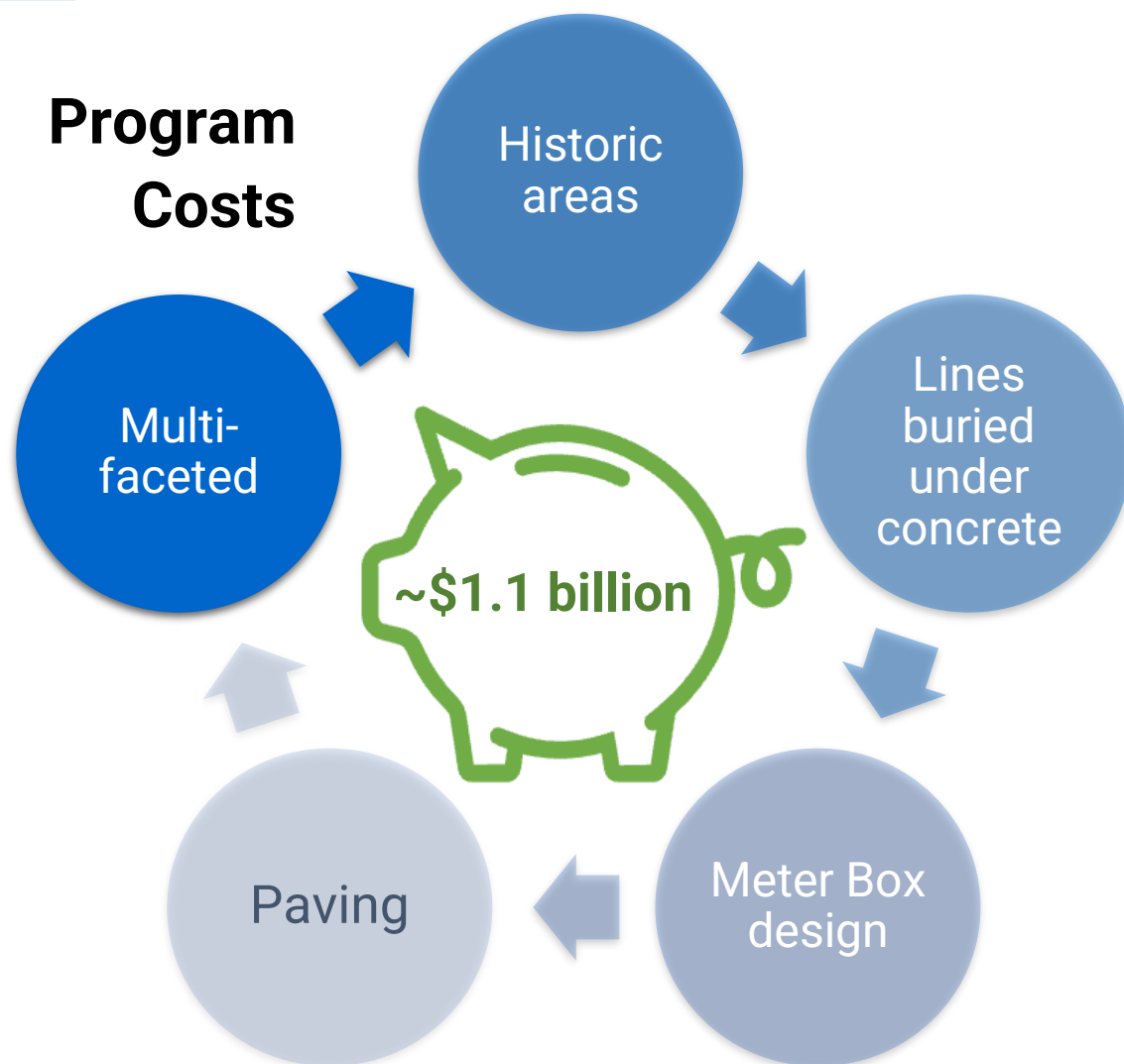


# Funding





# Program Costs and Funding



## Potential Funding Sources

\$84 million request submitted to Louisiana Dept of Health Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

- Funds require full Lead Service Line replacement (public + private) - SWBNO estimates based on past construction projects and assumes full restoration
- Estimated 1,800 replacements per year for 3 years with this funding
- Covers only 7% of the total estimated \$1.1 billion need
- Additional State/Federal funding may become available





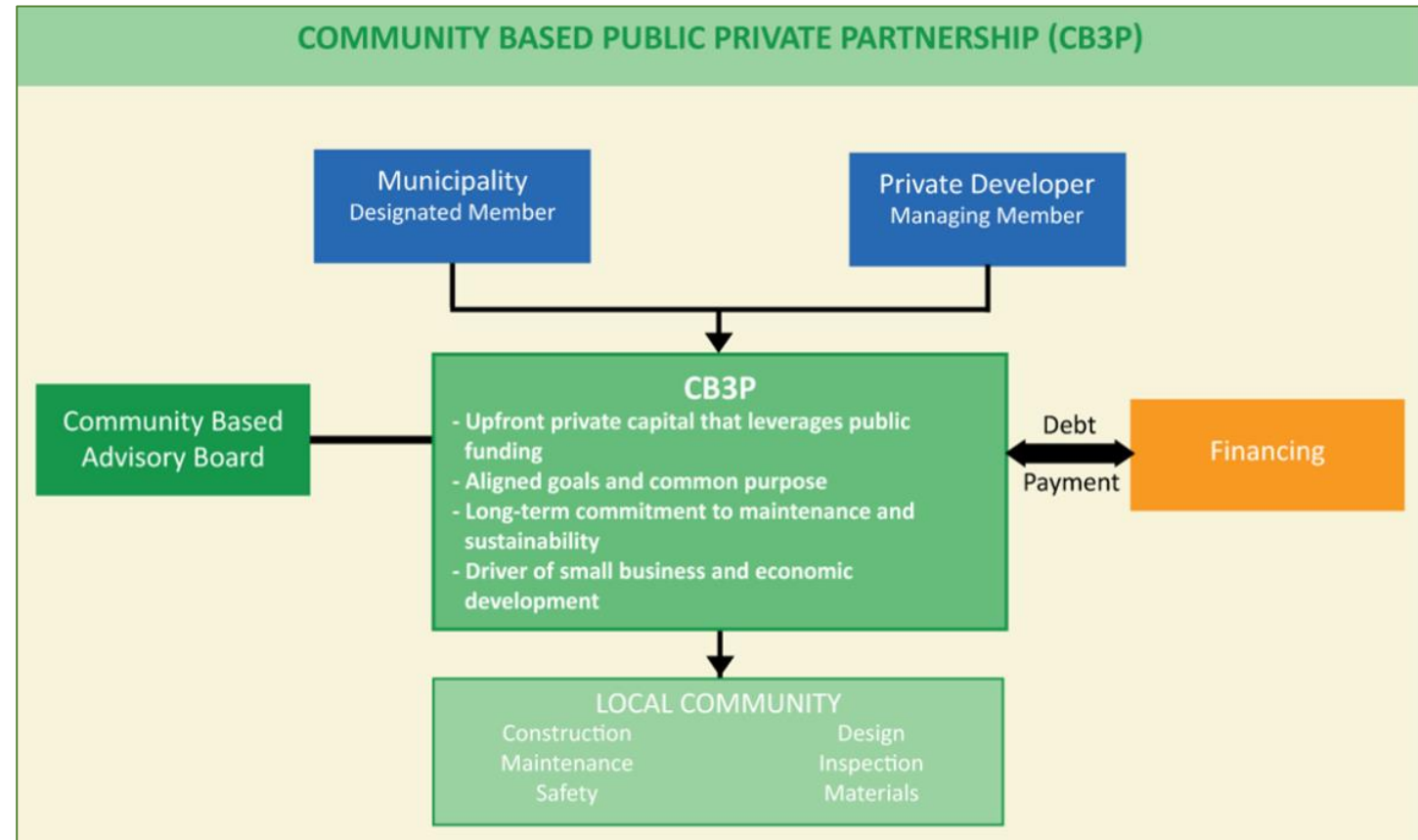
# Lead Service Line Replacement



# Program Model-Community Based Public Private Partnership

## Advantages:

- Private partner contracts with community stakeholders
- Private partner contracts for service line replacements
- Key Performance Indicators specific to the community
- Risk passed through to the private partner
- Can attract funding opportunities







# Mitigation Efforts

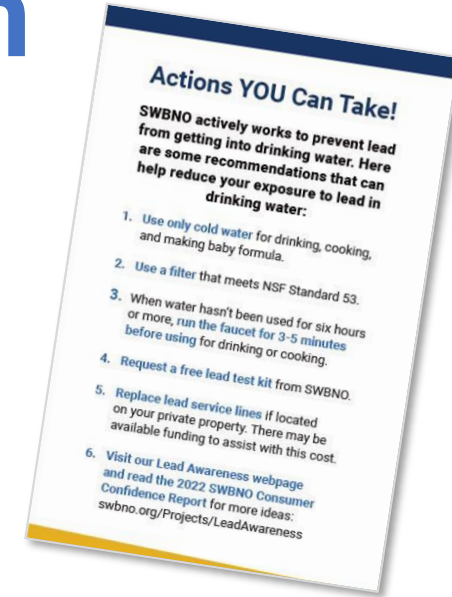




# SWBNO Proactive Mitigation

## Empowering the Community

- Sharing steps that concerned citizens can take now
- Website, doorhangers, community presentations
- Testing upon request



## Pilot Program for Pitcher Distribution

- SWBNO voluntarily establishing (pre-regulation)
- Essential to work out challenges before full distribution required





# Communication





# Strategic Outreach on Many Fronts



Reliable  
Information



School  
Engagement



Community  
Outreach

Empowering  
Customers





# Opportunities and Challenges

## Opportunities:

- Strengthen partnership with Louisiana Dept of Health
- Lead service line replacement leads to safer, more modern system
- Funding sources may be available
- Increase trust and engagement with the community
- Integrate lead program with other SWBNO initiatives for efficiency and productivity



# Opportunities and Challenges

## Challenges:

- Age of our city and its historic nature
- Cost and timeline to implement (~\$1.1 billion)
- Insufficient funding to support a program of this magnitude
- Required full replacement of service lines
- Access to private property and restoration
- Equity and prioritization





# Program Milestones





# Important Lead Program Milestones for SWBNO

## 2024 - Q2

- Community Based Public Private Partnership RFQ being developed

## 2024 - Q3

- Community Based Public Private Partnership out for bid
- Agreement finalized
- Kick-off meeting
- Close on State Revolving Fund

## 2024 - Q4

- Initial inventory submitted and publicly available
- Initial notifications to properties with known lead lines
- Lead Service Line Replacement Plan complete

## 2027

- New regulatory compliance date
- Baseline inventory due (10% per year target)
- Lead Service Line Replacement Plan due
- Partial prohibited and disturbance requirements
- Free lead testing to all Known Lead and Unknown (if requested)



# Next Steps

- Complete inventory by October 16, 2024
- Establish Community Based Public-Private Partnership
- Implement pitcher pickup process
- Finalize Lead Service Line Replacement Plan
- Monitor regulation finalization (LCRI)
- Coordinate community engagement



# Key Takeaways

- SWBNO is leading the state in responding to this complicated regulation.
- The ultimate goal is to replace all of the lead service lines in our system.
- Meeting this goal and the regulation will be a labor, timing, and financial challenge.
- We are using a multi-faceted approach to meet this challenge.
- Engaging the community is key.





# Questions?

[swbno.org](http://swbno.org)

