

From: [michael burnside](#)
To: [Annie G McBride](#)
Cc: [MCAC](#); [Lesli Harris](#); [Andrew V. Tuozzolo](#); [Elizabeth Woolverton](#)
Subject: Re: Municipal Complex Advisory Committee Meeting Interest
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 11:20:46 AM

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well, like many things the proof will be in the pudding. either the room will be full, or the room will be half full, or the room will be empty.

the s&wb event held in the dryads ymca a few of months ago was empty. not even a staffer from the district, or the at-larges.

michael

On Mon, Aug 3, 2026 at 11:13 AM Annie G McBride [REDACTED] > wrote:

Hi Mr. Burnside:

Thanks for your email. I can certainly understand your criticism. We did not want to have to change the meeting date again and would not have done so unless it were imperative. Unfortunately, in this instance, we had a critical conflict that we could not avoid. We did our best to give people as much notice as possible, both posting the new date to the website and sending out the notice via Gov Delivery last week. We also plan to send a blast out via City social media today to make sure folks see that the date and time are changed from August 5 at 1 p.m. to August 6 at 10 a.m.

We understand that people are busy, and we always aim to respect schedules. We are committed to avoiding future schedule changes absent extenuating circumstances.

We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience created by this schedule change, and we appreciate your continued interest in this process.

Sincerely,

Annie G. McBride, CEO

New Orleans Building Corporation

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: michael burnside [REDACTED] >

Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 9:48 AM

To: MCAC <MCAC@nola.gov>; Annie G McBride <[REDACTED]>; Lesli Harris <[REDACTED]>; Andrew V. Tuozzolo <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: Municipal Complex Advisory Committee Meeting Interest

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this is bad.

i understand the first cancellation. weather is officially important in this city.

i do not understand this one. worse, you are moving both day and time. people who marked their calendar for a wednesday will find a move to thursday bad enough. to change the time from after lunch, to before, is the straw that will make sure many people originally planning on attending will not come. i will be surprised if the room is even half full of public commentators, and the subject is very important.

michael burnside

On Mon, Aug 3, 2026 at 9:27 AM MCAC <MCAC@nola.gov> wrote:

Thank you for your interest.

The Municipal Complex Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, August

6 @ 10am.

Meeting Location:

Union Passenger Terminal

1001 Loyola Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70113

2nd Floor Conference Room

For more information please visit:

- [Events - City of New Orleans](#)
- [Government - Boards & Commissions - Browse All - Municipal Complex Advisory Committee - City of New Orleans](#)

Thank you,

MCAC

From: [Jonathan Roberts](#)
To: [MCAC](#)
Subject: Written Public Comment — Municipal Complex Advisory Committee
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 11:11:10 PM

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Dear Municipal Complex Advisory Committee Members:

My name is Jonathan-Anthony Roberts. I am a New Orleans East resident, Marine Corps veteran, community organizer, and founder and president of BRIDGE NOLA. I respectfully ask that this comment be considered for inclusion in the formal record.

As the Committee evaluates renovation, new construction, leased space, hybrid options, financing models, and a possible City Hall annex in New Orleans East, I urge it to apply the following principles:

First, access to city government must be treated as an equity issue. Residents of New Orleans East and the Lower Ninth Ward should not have to absorb disproportionate travel time, transportation costs, and service barriers to conduct basic business with the City. The annex concept should therefore receive serious analysis rather than being treated as a symbolic addition.

Second, the Committee should evaluate each option based on the resident's full experience: public-transit access, parking, disability access, language access, technology, safety, operating hours, and the ability to complete multiple city services in one visit.

Third, the City should avoid choosing an impressive building that becomes financially or operationally unsustainable. The public needs transparent comparisons of acquisition or construction costs, financing costs, maintenance, insurance, utilities, technology, security, transportation impacts, and long-term operating expenses.

Fourth, public participation must begin before a preferred option is selected. Meetings and listening sessions should occur in New Orleans East, the Lower Ninth Ward, and other communities whose residents face the greatest barriers to accessing centralized government services.

Finally, the Committee should establish measurable public-interest criteria before recommending a site or delivery model. Those criteria should include reduced resident travel burdens, improved service accessibility, responsible lifecycle costs, resilience to storms and power interruptions, equitable economic opportunity, and meaningful community participation.

A new municipal complex should not simply relocate government offices. It should improve how residents experience government and ensure that every part of New Orleans can reach and use public services with dignity.

Thank you for your consideration.

In Solidarity,

Jonathan-Anthony Roberts

[REDACTED]

New Orleans, Louisiana 70127

[REDACTED]

Marine Corps Veteran

Founder and President, BRIDGE NOLA

From: michael burnside
To: Jean-Paul Morrell; Aimee B McCarron; Lesli Harris; Freddie King; Eugene J Green; Duplessis, Sen. Royce (District Office); Knox Rep. Alonzo (District Office); Landry, Rep. Mandie (Chamber Laptop)
Cc: Annie G McBride; MCAC; shane.guidn [REDACTED]; Ann Beyerly; Michael Garver; M1138 Abx; CASEY GIRAUD; Joe Heeren-Mueller; Jennifer L. Aveano M.D.; sarah; Renee Blanche; clarence I adams sr; knitha grooms-williams; Rebecca Collins; shaila delaney; bette perez; Matt Ryan; Bruce Reilly; amorris; Monique Blossom; Dana Eness; Erin Holmes; Erin Genrich; William Edwards; Nellie Catzen; David Melancon; Elizabeth Woolverton; Freeman, Aimee Adatto; Peter Gardner; Scott Howard; Jim Goodwin; Jackson Smith; Justin B. Schmidt; Kim Keene; Katie Boudouin; Kristin Palmer; haiyan khan; Linda Trueblood; Molly Vigour; Anomalocaris Lover; laura paul; Rebecca Howbray; rampant [REDACTED]; Ronnie LaNasa; Susan Johnson; Zachary Smith; Vincent Carr
Subject: 8-6 public meeting at union passinger terminal second floor - #2
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 5:59:52 PM

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the first meeting of the municipal complex advisory committee {MCAC} was held today. roughly starting at 10am, and ending at plus or minus noon.

-----insert-----

[it has taken six hours to write this. i wil not be going to the web site and i wil not be reading the material there, i have two doctor appiontments next week. we wil be going over the brain mri i had tsken last week. this is too much, and a smuch as i love the city and ove showing off, i spent to much on this way too slowly.]

the mayor and the ceo were in attendance, though not officially holding committee membership. ceo giarrusso gave a powerpoint that can be summed up: the current city hall sucks; it needs to be replaced. rats. snakes. elevators. stained ceiling tiles. unfixed bathroom fixtures. etc. discussion amongst committee members followed. the public was then given two minutes each. the meeting ended after three public comments of which mine was one. the news cameras were there. the committee chairperson was interviewed for the tv news. etc.

the following email is out of context. it is my response, and as such may be confusing without knowledge of the stimuli. the email address labeled "MCAC" on the cc line is the email address for the municipal complex advisory committee staff consultants. these consultants have been, already, working for a year, and among other duties create the committee's briefing book. MCAC has a website. the mayor stated that much of what is presented at the meeting will be viewable online. there was an active zoom component to this meeting. roughly 30 members of the "public" were present. some of the "public" were either elected officials, or their staff members. i will not repeat the detailed information findable online.

1) if the current city hall is demoed and the underlying land sold to a developer, i do not believe it will be purchased for anything remotely close to the 42 million dollar figure mentioned more than once. a commercial appraisal should be performed by a licensed appraiser on the potential value of the land only, excluding any building value, that appraisal should be made public.

2) the idea mentioned several times that the past city hall and the future city hall, were and will be, commercial buildings with a "life expectancy" of fifty years is a huge problem.

2a) as a matter of public teaching this professional statement needs wide dissemination. i believe the public will be emotionally shocked to hear professionals state this fact. the 50 year life expectancy needs to be clearly known to all new orlean voters. the sooner the better. specifically and particularly, in regards to the NEW city hall. [or the new jail for that matter.]

2b) there will be push back, and it needs to be addressed. as one man at the meeting said..i live in a 100 year old house. it was gutted and refurbished, but still....

2c) this 50 year life expectancy kills alot of ideas, and how their deaths are handled matters. for example, one shell square is currently in receivership. one idea would be to buy it, but we run smack up against the 50 year life expectancy. one shell square was built in the 1970's. it is 50 years old. why merely trade one problem building for another? ditto the use of the one million square foot old va hospital building already owned by the city since 2012, and empty since 2016. the police would rather rent, than be in the old va hospital.... we have many plaza towers.

3) the assumption in number one above is dangerous. today we do not have the money to demo the old city hall. cart off all the debris, and build a new city hall on duncan plaza. this, duncan plaza as new city hall concept, assumes that somebody else will take care of the old city hall in a positive manner that enhances civic virtue and value. translation: somebody else will buy the land for 42 million, which the city will use to basically cover the costs of demo and clearing. the counter examples include the aforementioned old va hospital which is only one block away from the super dome.

if when the new city hall exists, the old one is still sitting there, alot of arguments will have been proven false if the old is still in use, and true if the old is a blight. we have not used the old va hospital building. we will not use the old va building. we will not demo the old va building. we will not return the old va building to the feds. so it sits there. blight. a city owned counter example to every blight docket brought by the city's department of code enforcement. counter examples abound, and reflect our city's values. ignoring the old va hospital is unwise. it's sisters include the old jail. we build a new jail at great expense, and the old one sits there. mute testimony.

4) i believe that two physically separate buildings should be built. one for the administration, and the other for the council. (i am deliberately leaving the judges out of this for the moment) i believe in the separation of powers. i believe that physical environments enhance or detract the implementation of theory into the real world. when a council president told me that {s}he could not expand the number of council staff employees BECAUSE gilbert would not assign him/her any more office space in the building, i ground my teeth. the white house is not physically part of the capitol building, and vice versa. this physical separation is realistically helpful in keeping the theory of separation of powers a reality.

5) i do not believe we should build anything. i believe we should rent. however, if we build or renovate, i would like the committee to consider the rta ferry building in algers. i listened to the architect of that project speak about some of the design choices she/he made, and the reasoning involved in making those choices. in specific, he designed the stairs to allow for poor elevator maintance, and thus significant elevator down time.

6) to creep closer to the foreshadowing above...new is not better. witness our "new" jail.

7) we should rent. the police were wise. we do not do maintance. we substitute early capital replacement to compensate for the life expectancy shortening do to the lack of, or extremely poor performance of, maintenance on many fronts, including and not limited to elevators, a/c units, and informational technology infrastructure. this is in part because of the difference in the political allocation methods applied to city bond funds, versus the general fund.

8) opportunity cost. the bond money is a brutal game of robbing peter to pay paul. do not expect paul to be happy.

9) the governor actively wants a sport's district inclusive of a brand spanking renovated {note: not "new", and not in lafayette} smoothie king center. this is known to some people. however, this upcoming change is not known to the full electorate of the city, and it should be.

10a) judges. the municipal and traffic court building was renovated at the cost of more than 60 million bucks. physically adjacent sits the unused n opd old headquarters building, unrenovated. it had rats. it had rats, so we rent.

The only creatures that seem to be enjoying the decaying New Orleans Police Department headquarters are the rats in the building's evidence room, officials said this week. **"The rats are eating our marijuana. They're all high,"** NOPD Chief Anne Kirkpatrick testified at a city Criminal Justice Committee meeting on Monday.

10b) judges. tulane and broad just got cut three judges. leaving aside the lack of renovation for the moment, are there physically empty courtrooms?

10c) judges. juvenile judges exist, as do their courtrooms. rumor is one of them got cut.

10d) judges. state appeal courts, state supreme courts, a thousand different types of federal courts..immigration, etc.

10e) lots of judges. very expensive giveing each judge his or her own personal court room, with no sharing. very expensive closing on the weekends. very expensive running only one shift in a three shift day. think nopa headquarters...does it ever close? does that new bright and shiny jail, that is alot less than 50 years old, close? is treating our judges so differently than we treat ourselves, really an act of wisdom? they do not want pillars in the middle of their room, so they can see people and events. fair. so too do all judges. you get the pillarless court room for eight hours, five days a week, day shift. i get the SAME ROOM for eight hours five days a week, swing shift. we'll stick the newby with the SAME ROOM eight hours a day five days a week, midnight shift. we will close it two days a week, for maintance and cleaning. everybody can have their own office, like in a law firm.

11) flip the script. put the "real" city hall in new orleans east. put annex in the cbd.

12) rent. we do not do savings accounts well. we just gave away 50 million in caesar's rent money to get our hands on 100 million right now, because the savings account of 2024 went up in smoke. we do not "tuck away" a little money each year so we can pay for the roof when the roof life expectancy is up. when we build a building, we do not attempt as a design feature to reduce maintance costs. as any cosmetic store will teach, pretty is not cheap. it is not a one time pay out. you want pretty, you pay more, every day. so, we want pretty. we do not tuck away. we blow through the lotto money like there is no tomorrow. elevators are not really capital costs. they are day in and day out maintance costs. even boring, unsexy, an ugly person's job..no marketing skill needed. the kind of job i could do. you know, like balancing a budget....

13) budget. we get money flowing into our coffers on a continuous basis, but it flows and ebbs, maybe a little more in february. maybe a little less in august. still we budget, and we budget yearly amounts..no matter the "rules," we do not budget five years, much less 50. our money flow is set up for yearly recurring payments. we'd do a mortgage fine. we'd do a property insurance payment fine. what we will never do is have 500 million in the bank, to go out and buy a new city hall for cash. so we will pay interest.... we will need bond commission ok....

we are by both nature and inclination renters. bluntly put it is easier. the only downside is we could get evicted, that, and the landlord might jack up the rent. entergy exists. we regulate them. they make 10% profit. without electricity, there is no city. entergy has us over a stronger barrel than any landlord of a city hall building could ever imagine. at the risk of driving you all into the hills screaming, it is my opinion that the best landlord would be the the state government of louisiana. and yes i am serious. they already own "our" port. they own "our" convention center. they own "the" super dome. they own the supreme court building. they own the river district. they own CITY park..... why not a building that we rent from them to use as a 50 year life expectant city hall? i have zero problem kicking back gov landry a 10% profit. he actually wants to run the city..maybe we should let him.... what do they say? keep your friends close, and your enemies closer? if he has enough to lose, maybe he will play nice. not all landlords kick out all tenants. if i understand correctly META is actually a tenant {?} up in richland parish. for your consideration, there was a new york times article. it said something about a private equity firm owning the data center. said META could walk away after only four years, with a penalty, but still locked in for only four years...not fifty.

MCAC has the chance to create a discussion with the potential to educate the public, and perhaps even change our views about the current truth surrounding power inside the economy.

i wish you all well.

i will not be writing another email like this one. me and the computer have had a long fight, and i have little to no desire for another one.

michael eric burnside

70113

From: [michael burnside](#)
To: [MCAC](#)
Cc: [Annie G McBride](#)
Subject: 8-6 public meeting at ups second floor - #1
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2026 1:37:30 PM

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i was told the lady's name who facilitated the meeting more than once and of course have both forgotten it, and failed to write it down. my apologies. if you send it to me, i will write it down! :-)

this email number one is about procedure only, not content.

a) i realise that it is called the ddd, as in the downtown development district. still most people in new orleans refer to the area under discussion as the cbd, the central business district. most people do NOT refer to it as "downtown." there are very real reasons, both logical and historical, for this comparative weirdness by folks in new orleans. if you have chosen the use of "downtown" after being aware of details, it might be worth your time to casually, but publicly, explain why you chose to NOT use "CBD." this is so people here are aware that you are publically aware of their way of doing things.

b) i could not hear mr woodward. you did mention mic use to him once, and he did physically respond by moving his mic. i was in the back of the room. still i heard all the others, though some were much louder than others. his was the only voice that i failed to hear, and thus did not respond to.

c) your email address should be included on the physical agenda handout. potentially, it should be included on the last slide of any powerpoint presentation, even if generated by a third party.

d) various side discussions happened about what will be posted on your website for the public to explore. the actual briefing book was not mentioned as one of these items to my hearing. given the, dare i suggest, extreme transparency of the process, please consider posting the briefing book online.

e) there were 40 white chairs out for a public that at one count equaled 28, and at another 32. i suggest that your second meeting might have more than 40 members of the public. while i very much liked seeing the second floor of the union passenger terminal and am glad the first meeting was there, you might consider a larger venue for the second meeting.

i will send an email #2 in a while focused on content.

michael eric burnside
[REDACTED] 70113

From: [Rafe Rabalais](#)
To: [MCAC](#)
Subject: thoughts on new city hall
Date: Saturday, August 8, 2026 12:41:07 PM

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Good morning:

Please accept the following suggestions for the future of New Orleans' City Hall:

1. I do not think that the current building should be torn down. The building is historic; it represents a unique period in the city's history and urban development (Morrison's sweeping modernization effort for the city); and it would qualify for State and Federal historic tax credits most likely, which would provide the building with a significant potential source of redevelopment financing that would be totally lost if the building were demolished.
2. The old City Hall should be the subject of an RFP to the development community along the lines of the Four Seasons Hotel. While it would surely not yield the municipal revenue that Four Seasons had, it could be an excellent site for a hotel and possibly residential and co-working space. Redeveloping the old City Hall also would present an opportunity to activate Duncan Plaza, which the Plaza desperately needs. A classic Jane Jacobs observation about civic centers certainly rings true in the case of New Orleans--their periodic, daytime-only activation means that adjacent public spaces frequently become inhospitable and the locus of unsavory activities.
3. A new, small civic building--think a modern version of Gallier Hall--should be situated on a portion of the former State-owned property on the Lake-side of Duncan Plaza. This could also have a commercial use on the ground floor to further activate the Plaza, and its functions (and therefore the budget for construction) could be limited--Council chambers, executive offices, and Council offices.
4. Given how weak the local office market is, back office and public serving civic functions (safety and permits, planning, revenue, etc.) should be in a portion of a nearby office building. The City could negotiate a commercial condominium purchase in the Orleans Tower or 1515 Poydras. The office market is SO soft that building a gargantuan, new City-owned building does not make much fiscal sense.
5. The remainder of the former State-owned property on the Lake-side of Duncan Plaza should eventually be disposed of and redeveloped as a private, mixed-use building. While the market for ground-up construction downtown does not presently exist, there could be a time in the future when the market turns around and when the City could reap some revenue from the disposition of this property.
6. A \$20-\$30 million refresh of Duncan Plaza, generally following the DDD study that was completed prior to the pandemic, should accompany the above efforts.
7. This package of improvements could be an appropriate use of a P3 development partner, similar to the Long Beach Civic Center in California, in which Long Beach built a new City Hall, library, Port headquarters, and public park all under the direction of a P3 developer.

I would be happy to discuss all of these ideas with the Committee in greater detail. While the City is short on resources at the present, this initiative does represent a historic opportunity to improve civic facilities (thereby dramatically improving working conditions for City

employees), engender new confidence in the direction of the City, and revitalize a long forlorn corner of downtown New Orleans. I wish you the best of luck on your planning efforts.

Yours truly,
Rafe Rabalais

From: John.P.Klingman@tulane.edu
To: RICHARD.CAMPANELLA@tulane.edu
Subject: City Hall
Date: August 20, 2008 12:55:00 PM

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I am John P. Klingman, Professor Emeritus of Architecture, Tulane University, and for many years I have taken an active interest in our Civic Complex. As you know the discussion of its future has also been around for many years! In 2009 Richard Campanella and I offered an Op Ed in *The Times Picayune*, "City Hall not just a place, but a Statement." (See attached)

Subsequently, I offered two upper level semester-long design studios on the topic. In the first, students considered the design of a new Civil District Courts building on the vacant State Office Building site. In the second, with the new Civil Courts building in place, students considered the demolition of the existing Civil Courts building and the linear expansion of City Hall to the corner of Poydras and Loyola. Both of these studios also engaged the potential of extensive and demonstrative storm water management as inherent to the projects. I am happy to share the work with the committee.

The current conditions of City Hall and Duncan Plaza are poor and do not speak well of our city. However, the potential to reinvigorate the Civic Complex is real, as the Tulane student work demonstrates. With a new Duncan Plaza, a new Civil District Courts building and a fully renovated and expanded City Hall, a world class Civic Complex, with greatly added amenity, is possible.

Sincerely,

John P. Klingman FA
Professor Emeritus of Architecture
Tulane University

TUESDAY

OTHER OPINIONS

City Hall not just a place, but a statement

JOHN P. KLINGMAN
AND RICHARD CAMPANELLA

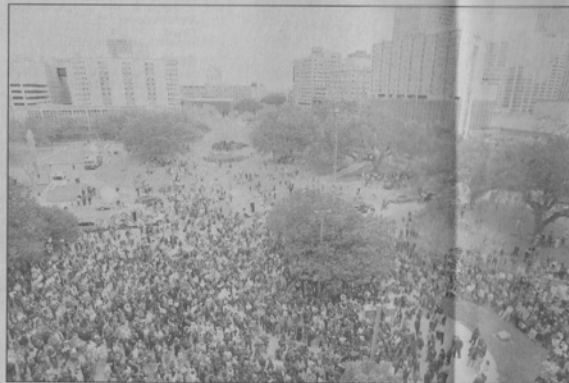
Point of View

A City Hall reflects the aspirations of the citizenry. New Orleans' history provides clear examples. The future, however, is not so clear.

From colonial times into the mid-nineteenth century, New Orleans' City Hall was the Cabildo. Architecturally reflecting the city's Spanish heritage, this structure was specifically designed for city government, and was situated appropriately. It flanked St. Louis Cathedral, fronted the Place d'Armes (Jackson Square), and overlooked the great river. We treasure the Cabildo to this day.

As the city expanded upriver and became more culturally American, City Hall moved into a monumental Greek Revival edifice, built in 1853. Designed by James Gallier Sr. specifically for its civic purpose, the new City Hall also fronted an urban park, Lafayette Square. Like the Cabildo, we treasure Gallier Hall to this day.

When the city expanded lakeward and embraced progressive governance in the mid-twentieth century, City Hall moved once again. This time a civic center was carved out of a poor, historic neighborhood, a loss that included the birthplace of Louis Armstrong. However, the plan exhibited bold vision and confidence in the city's future. A cluster of civic structures, including a nationally acclaimed public



CHRIS GRANGER / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

Thousands protested a rising crime rate at a march in January 2007 that ended with speeches in Duncan Plaza, in front of New Orleans City Hall.

library, complemented the new urban space, Duncan Plaza. Designers thoughtfully oriented the new City Hall, built in 1957, to face down the Loyola-Basin corridor toward the cultural complex centered around the Municipal Auditorium.

All three of our city halls were designed as iconic civic structures positioned to face important public urban spaces. They reflected visionary thinking.

Now we learn of plans to relocate City Hall into the former Chevron Place complex at Gravier Street and

O'Keefe Avenue. Significant operational advantages are foreseen in the move, including the consolidation of office space and savings on rent for the Amoco Building. Expedience is a formidable argument these days, amid Katrina recovery, a national recession and limited budgets. Moving to Gravier and O'Keefe would also increase foot traffic and generate new commerce in that relatively quiet section of the CBD.

However, the promised financial savings are not guaranteed. Cost estimates, for example, are already rising,

and gains in commerce for the area would be offset by losses at the Poydras and Loyola area.

Retrofitting City Hall into a corporate office building speaks of no clear vision or plan. The nondescript Chevron building does not stand out in the skyline, or even from the street. It was not designed for city government. It lacks even a chamber for public council meetings.

It also lacks adjacent public outdoor space, which serves important ceremonial and civic purposes. Where would citizens convene at the new location? Remember the March Against Crime in front of City Hall a few years ago?

Everyone agrees our current City Hall needs a major renovation. Conceivably it could be joined with a new building on the site of the former State Office Building, breathing new life and vision into the Duncan Plaza complex while maintaining an iconic centrality.

A great city's seat of government plays a vital role in defining the persona of the place. City Hall is not only a building; it is a statement. Architectural quality, visual iconography and a vital urban public presence must factor into the form City Hall takes.

These values are not trivial. They are important to this discourse because, if history is any guide, we will live with this decision for many decades to come.

Architect John P. Klingman (jklingm@tulane.edu) and geographer Richard Campanella (rcampane@tulane.edu) are professors at Tulane University.

From: [michael burnside](#)
To: [MCAC](#); [violet bucaro](#); [Joseph I Giarrusso](#); [Jean-Paul Morrell](#); [Aimee B McCarron](#); [Lesli Harris](#); [Freddie King](#); [Eugene J Green](#); [Jason Hughes](#); [Nellie Catzen](#); [Rebecca Mowbray](#); [Bruce Reilly](#); [amorris](#); [Erin Holmes](#); [Erin Genrich](#); [sage michael pellet](#); [chelsey richard napoleon](#); [opba3md](#); [Duplessis, Sen. Royce \(District Office\)](#); [Knox Rep. Alonzo \(District Office\)](#); [Landry, Rep. Mandie \(Chamber Laptop\)](#); [shane.guidry](#); [henry](#); [devillier](#); [Kristin Palmer](#); [Mike Waguespack](#)
Cc: [Ann Byerly](#); [Michael Garver](#); [M1138 Atx](#); [CASEY GIRAUD](#); [William Edwards](#); [Kim Keene](#); [bette perez](#); [Susan Johnson](#); [Jim Goodwin](#); [Morgan Clevenger](#); [Dana Eness](#); [Monique Blossom](#); [Peter Gardner](#); [Zachary Smith](#); [Austin Riotte](#); [jhb214](#); [Rebecca Collins](#); [katie donahue](#); [Elizabeth Woolverton](#); [Freeman, Aimee Adatto](#); [Ronnie LaNasa](#); [hilfertys@legis.la.gov](#); [walter j. leger iii](#); [Jackson Smith](#); [Katie Baudouin](#); [laura paul](#); [Molly Vigour](#); [nicole nelson](#); [Oliver Thomas](#); [Paula George](#); [james quinn](#); [rcampane](#); [Shawn Castrillo](#); [Matt Ryan](#); [Linda Trueblood](#); [Keely Lewis](#); [Vincent Carr](#); [Larry W. Massey Jr.](#); [y. frank southall](#)
Subject: august 19th - municipal complex committee meeting - comments
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2026 12:23:39 PM

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yesterday, august 19th was an interesting meeting. that a member of the committee was "floored" by joe's presentation on the current state of city hall at the last meeting, concerns me. we after all have the example of the old n opd headquarters building and all the publicity surrounding that, as well as comments in the public speaking space about tulane and broad. i am "floored" that anybody is even mildly surprised about the data joe provided, much less "floored." i do wonder how and why the committee members were chosen. obviously the mayor will listen to them, but some seem distant from the realities that i assumed knowledge about was commonplace and broad based.

additionally, the judges, their advocates, and some members of the panel, seem very publicly concerned about "dignity." "dignity" and "security" seem to be serious driving factors in the civil district court building proposals. there is no discussion of "headcount." no discussion about why each judge needs his or her own "pod." no discussion about judicial case loads, or the average time to resolve a civil case. i was floored to learn that in a building for ONLY civil cases, there are people in custody. the consultants seems to present themselves as people who most often design, and make recommendations on Criminal court buildings.

"limited" parking at the current site was spoken of in the consultant discussions. however at the very end, one consultant stated clearly that there is no longer a "limited" parking issue. the city recently received a multi story parking structure from the state as part of a land swap involving duncan plaza and the roads around the super dome. why we could not use the parking garage while it was under state ownership was never explained.

security during the super bowl went undiscussed. we closed city hall for approximately a week due to it's current location. no discussion as to if a move to duncan plaza would or would not necessitate additional closures of city hall for future sports district extravaganzas like another super bowl, or a final four at the redone smoothie king center.

the examples of both the super dome and potentially the smoothie king center were not discussed in the drum beat that buildings have a 50 year life expectancy, that city hall is way older than 50 years, and that it can not be renovated at a reasonable cost as compared to a new build. if this is true, it seems that perhaps the super dome itself should not have been renovated, but rather a new suprema mega new dome should have been built instead, perhaps in new orleans east.

the new built municipal complex on duncan plaza is to include a free standing, with separate

entrance, civil district court building. it is to have a construction cost not including so called "soft" costs of 200-250 million dollars. this is to provide 18 courtrooms and all attendant needed functions inclusive of both the clerk of court {combined civil and criminal} as well as the orleans parish assessor. some of the inclusion of these functions are do to cost. the assessor will contribute a large amount of money to the building. no consultant spoke to the potential need for clerk space at tulane and broad. discussion about the need for climate controlled archives for 300 year old records was conducted.

see below for further discussion. the following is a google fact:

United States The US has approximately 31,457 judges, including both federal (about 1,457) and state (around 30,000) judges, for a population of 330 million. This results in roughly **95 judges per million people**.

so, let us do a little math:

30,000 state judges in a population of 330 million people. 30 state judges in a population of 330,000 people. population of new orleans 356,000 people..so we "should" have 30-31 judges.....MAYBE what we actually have is 13 at criminal, and 14 at civil, and 8 at municipal/traffic, and 4 at juvenile, and ... maybe 39??? obviously the state legislature has decreased the number of judges. all this begs the question as to if the number of 18 "pods" can or will be reduced.

[Judicial Branch - The official website of Louisiana](http://www.louisiana.gov)

www.louisiana.gov › government › judicial-branch

There are also five courts of appeal, 43 district courts, five family or juvenile courts, 48 city courts and three parish courts. First Circuit Court of Appeal ...

a little more math:

the civil district court building will be very approximately one half the size of city hall proper. civil district court building is envisioned at 284,000 sq ft. city hall at 457,000 sq ft. half of city hall would really be 228,000 & double civil court would be 568,000 so the math will be very rough. court house cost for construction only and no soft costs is between 700 and 900 dollars a sq foot. [warning: city hall will house only 1300 employees. the city has 5000 employees.] so at 800 dollars a square foot

city hall will cost: $457,000(800) = 367$ million

&

civil district court building will cost: $284,000(800) = 227$ million

thus the total for the "complex" will be more than the sum of the two which equals 594 million or in round numbers: **600 million dollars**.

this math ignores entirely the example of the orleans parish jail phase three that ballooned from an estimated 30 million to an actual cost above 90 million.

for your consideration and awareness.

michael eric burnside

[REDACTED] 70113

warning. \$800 per sq ft came from the consultants for the civil court building only. they actually gave a range of 700 to 900 dollars a square foot in the public meeting. for that number i did not use google. it is possible the city hall proper might come in cheaper... less dignity and cheaper security requirements.

michael eric burnside

[REDACTED] 70113

From: [Lee Bressler](#)
To: [MCAC](#)
Subject: Financing Idea for the Civil District Courthouse project
Date: Monday, August 31, 2026 10:54:43 AM
Attachments: [19th JDC Presentation September 2026.pptx](#)

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Here is an idea for financing all or part of the New Orleans Civil District Courthouse based on what we did in Baton Rouge for the 19th JDC.

This can easily be combined with other financing vehicles such as other Revenue Bonds and Tax Backed Bonds depending on the cost of the project.

We are happy to present at the 11/10 meeting when the Financing options are discussed.

Lee

Lee M Bressler
Managing Director

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19th Judicial District Court – Case Study

Raymond James Public Finance | September 2026

RAYMOND JAMES

Municipal Bond Underwriter / Placement Agent



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- Higher Education Institutions
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- TIF Districts



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Section I

OVERVIEW

Overview

- In 2007, the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority, as conduit issuer for the Nineteenth Judicial District Court Building Commission, issued \$100 million of bonds to finance the construction of a courthouse facility located in the heart of downtown Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- In 2015, the 2007 issue was refunded and extended to reduce annual debt service requirements to better match the pledged revenues.
- In 2021, the Bonds were refinanced to reduce debt service by \$6.0 million over the life of the bond issue.



Overview

- The Facility, which was completed in 2010, is considered state of the art, and includes nearly 300,000 square feet of courtrooms, judicial chambers and administration space for the Court, the East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court, the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court, and the Sheriff's Security Staff.
- The facility was designed specifically as a courthouse, providing necessary security for judges, jurors, witnesses, attorneys, plaintiffs, defendants, employees and citizens.



Section II

CITY PARISH\OBLIGATION

City\Parish Obligation



According to State law, the City/Parish Government of Baton Rouge is required to bear the expense of a suitable building to serve as the courthouse for East Baton Rouge Parish.



The City/Parish provides most of the operational funding through annual appropriations to the Judicial Expense Fund and pays all of the maintenance expenses for the building.



The Building Commission pays debt service on the Bonds and certain authorized expenses including auditing fees, insurance premiums, and the cost to replace and/or repair certain moveable equipment, like the telephone system, jury management system, courtroom audio-visual equipment and metal detectors.

Section III

SECURITY FOR THE BONDS

Security for the Bonds

- The Bonds are uniquely secured and paid by recordation fees and filing fees charged by the clerk of court on behalf of the Building Commission in the facility according to the following schedule:

<u>SERVICE PROVIDED</u>	<u>AMOUNT OF COST AUTHORIZED</u>
Recordings	\$30.00 per recordation
Civil Filings	\$200.00 per civil filing
Jury Trials	\$200.00 per jury requested
Class Actions	\$2,050.00 per class certified
All Matters Filed into Civil Suit Records ⁽¹⁾	\$10.00 per item filed
Pro Hac Vice ⁽²⁾	\$750.00 per filing

- In addition, investment earnings on bond trustee-held funds are pledged to the payment of the Bonds.
- Fees can only be increased after receiving approval from the Judicial Council and 2/3 of each house of the Louisiana State Legislature.
- The Commission agrees to request an increase in fees if the Rate Stabilization Fund drops below the 125% of Maximum Annual Debt Service requirement for more than 6 months or if revenues are insufficient to pay debt service on the Bonds and replenish any draws on the Debt Service Reserve Fund or the Rate Stabilization Fund.

(1) Includes, but shall not be limited to, petitions, motions, orders, judgments, citations, rules, evidence, correspondence, affidavits, dismissals, depositions, writs, appeals, answers, subpoenas and jury matters.

(2) This fee is not authorized by the Commission Act, nor is it required by the Commission Act to be deposited in the Courthouse Construction Receipts Fund. However, the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court has been depositing this fee in the Courthouse Construction Receipts Fund pursuant to a directive by the Judicial Administrator to the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court dated September 26, 2006. The revenues derived from this fee (the "Pro Hac Vice Revenues") constitute Revenues and are pledged by the Commission to the payment of Rentals pursuant to the Amended and Restated Financing and Lease Agreement and Option to Purchase (the "Agreement"), which Rental payments are pledged to pay debt service on the Bonds.

Historical Volume and Revenues

Civil Court Filing Fees														Recording Fees		
Fiscal Year	Civil Filings (New Cases) (\$200/filing)		Jury Trials (\$200/trial)		Class Actions (2,050/filing)		Matters Filed into Civil Suit Records ⁽¹⁾ (\$10/filing)		Pro Hac Vice (\$750/filing) ⁽²⁾		Building Fund Recording Fee (\$30/filing)		Civil Court Filing Fees Revenues Subtotal	Recordings ⁽³⁾ (\$30/filing)		Total
	# of Filings	Revenues	# of Filings	Revenues	# of Filings	Revenues	# of Filings	Revenues	# of Filings	Revenues	# of Filings	Revenues		# of Filings	Revenues	
2011	12,214	2,375,967	3,705	608,772	10	16,400	162,577	1,548,596	320	136,589	4,698	141,295	4,827,619	85,249	2,144,490	6,970,632
2012	11,487	2,233,237	3,527	596,057	4	8,200	162,114	1,544,679	162	62,415	5,501	152,647	4,597,235	86,207	2,153,295	6,756,021
2013	10,445	2,023,009	3,454	584,859	13	18,450	150,419	1,434,537	182	77,247	5,268	145,496	4,283,598	87,770	2,283,330	6,563,143
2014	10,078	1,945,674	3,945	670,872	3	4,100	149,470	1,431,298	115	45,753	4,105	113,789	4,211,486	78,637	1,996,170	6,207,656
2015	9,794	1,885,005	4,167	717,896	4	6,150	152,622	1,461,053	262	114,300	3,523	95,814	4,280,218	63,960	1,918,680	6,198,897
2016	10,218	1,968,597	3,953	706,571	5	10,250	156,664	1,504,144	144	63,004	3,406	92,329	4,344,895	68,001	2,039,850	6,384,745
2017	10,680	2,054,174	4,751	832,424	8	16,400	155,437	1,483,114	249	102,841	3,319	87,227	4,576,180	71,430	2,142,840	6,719,020
2018	12,386	2,396,537	5,211	906,077	1	2,050	167,648	1,612,104	169	65,151	2,858	77,625	5,059,544	64,297	1,929,310	6,998,854
2019	14,052	2,810,315	4,083	816,528	4	8,200	202,974	2,029,736	77	57,803	2,645	79,337	5,801,919	52,586	1,577,590	7,379,508
2020	12,948	2,589,504	4,107	821,397	6	12,300	184,016	1,840,161	70	52,500	2,202	66,065	5,381,928	60,226	1,806,770	7,188,698
2021	12,193	2,447,795	3,965	793,000	3	6,150	192,568	1,929,351	135	101,200	1,293	38,802	5,316,298	78,072	2,342,160	7,658,526
2022	12,166	2,457,450	3,464	697,193	5	10,250	184,618	1,874,673	81	61,279	1,563	46,948	5,147,793	73,406	2,202,190	7,349,984
2023	13,899	2,773,314	4,026	805,204	5	10,250	186,383	1,927,978	58	43,500	2,278	68,341	5,628,587	56,089	1,682,670	7,311,257
2024	16,957	3,426,525	4,783	956,601	7	14,350	208,810	2,077,157	51	39,750	2,098	62,938	6,577,321	50,534	1,516,020	8,093,341
2025	15,102	3,173,947	3,228	651,843	1	2,050	205,824	2,131,208	83	62,250	1,921	55,032	6,076,330	50,698	1,520,940	7,597,270

(1) Includes pleadings, petitions, answers, exceptions, motions and judgments filed in connection with each civil litigation case.

(2) This fee is not authorized by the Commission Act, nor is it required by the Commission Act to be deposited in the Courthouse Construction Receipts Fund. However, the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court has been depositing this fee in the Courthouse Construction Receipts Fund pursuant to a directive by the Judicial Administrator to the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court dated September 26, 2006. The revenues derived from this fee constitute Revenues and are pledged by the Commission to the payment of Rentals pursuant to the Agreement, which payments are pledged to the payment of debt service on the Bonds.

(3) Includes the recordation of all notarial acts, such as transfers of real estate, mortgages, marriage contracts, leases, adoptions, donations, dedications, trusts, assignments, powers of attorney, servitudes, sheriff sales, wills, tax liens and similar items.

Section IV

FUNDS AND ACCOUNTS

Funds and Accounts

Trustee-Held Funds

- **Rate Stabilization Fund:**
 - Required Funding at 125% of Maximum Annual Debt Service (\$7.23 million).
 - Replenished from excess revenues, if balance drops below requirement.
- **Debt Service Reserve Fund:**
 - Funded at the lesser of Maximum Annual Debt Service , 125% of Average Annual Debt Service, or 10% of Total Proceeds.
 - ½ cash funded (used first) and ½ Reserve Fund policy from Assured Guaranty.

Fiscal Agent Funds

- **Surplus Account:**
 - Can be used for certain capital expenses of the facility.

Section V

PRO FORMA DEBT SERVICE COVERAGE

Historical Debt Service Coverage

- Every January, the Commission must post its audited financial statement and annual report on the EMMA website. If the audit is not available, a late filing notice is filed and the unaudited information must be posted on EMMA.

REVENUES					
Fiscal Year	Filing and Recording Fees ⁽¹⁾	Investment Earnings	Total Revenues	Historical Annual Debt Service Requirements	Debt Service Coverage Ratio
2011	6,776,465	197,130	6,973,595	6,548,363	1.07x
2012	7,214,749	160,682	7,375,431	6,548,613	1.13x
2013	6,579,493	27,841	6,607,334	6,550,363	1.01x
2014	6,218,171	181,024	6,399,195 ⁽²⁾	6,550,363	0.98x
2015	6,198,437	174,578	6,373,015	6,548,363	0.98x
2016	6,384,564	178,238	6,562,802	5,786,614	1.14x
2017	6,719,020	124,960	6,843,980	5,788,300	1.18x
2018	6,988,854 ⁽³⁾	144,388	7,233,242	5,788,900	1.23x
2019	7,379,508 ⁽³⁾	411,161	7,790,669	5,791,150	1.35x
2020	7,188,697 ⁽⁴⁾	320,952	7,509,649	5,787,400	1.30x
2021	7,658,526	(4,516)	7,654,010	5,787,400	1.32x
2022	7,326,308	(3,376,124)	3,950,184	5,590,359	0.71x
2023	7,293,746	357,973	7,651,719	5,588,220	1.36x
2024	8,071,936	1,243,565	9,315,501	5,586,311	1.66x
2025	7,640,403	1,302,595	8,942,998	5,583,769	1.60x

(1) Includes charges for judicial services (civil court filing and recording fees) and investment earnings in accordance with the provisions of the 2007 Indenture. Differs from "Total Revenues" amount set forth in the table under "Revenues" above because the report provided by the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court's Office (i) is presented on a cash basis of accounting and the audited financial statements of the Commission are presented on an accrual basis of accounting and (ii) does not include certain court fees which are included in revenues in the audited financial statements of the Commission.

(2) Because moneys on deposit in the 2007 Debt Service Fund were insufficient by approximately \$88,000 to make the June 1, 2014, debt service payment on the Series 2007 Bonds, on June 2, 2014, the 2007 Trustee transferred such amount from the 2007 Rate Stabilization Account to the 2007 Debt Service Fund for such purpose. On June 16, 2014, the Trustee transferred funds from the 2007 Revenue Fund to replenish the 2007 Rate Stabilization Account. The Trustee then replenished the 2007 Revenue Fund with a transfer of approximately \$1.1 million from an account originally intended to be used to pay property insurance premiums. The Commission's obligation to pay insurance premiums, auditing fees and certain other operational expenses were being paid from the Commission's Operating Account, which at the time had a balance of approximately \$2.19 million. Funds in the Operating Account are available to replenish the Rate Stabilization Account if necessary.

(3) Note that the audited financial statements of the Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2018 (the "FY 2018 Audit Report"), shows civil court filing fees in the amount of \$5,233,855, which reflects an inadvertent overpayment to the Commission by the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court. The discrepancy was discovered after the release of the FY 2018 Audit Report, and the auditor elected not to restate the FY 2018 Audit Report. The correction is noted in the audited financial statements of the Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2019.

(4) The Statements of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances – Governmental Funds - Year Ended June 30, 2020 found at page 13 of the Commission's Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020 reflect total civil court filing fee and recording fee revenues in the amount of \$7,227,547, an overstatement of such revenues by \$38,850, which amount is attributable to such revenues for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2019.

Section VI

ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES

Alternative Revenue Sources

If future revenues do not exceed the new debt service requirements, the Commission can:

1. Transfer funds from the Rate Stabilization Fund and replenish the fund to the extent Excess Revenues materialize.
2. Request an increase in fees and filing charges from the Judicial Council and the Louisiana Legislature.
3. Request an appropriation from the Baton Rouge City/Parish Government to cover any shortfall.
4. Request more timely and full payments from State agencies at the time of civil filings.
5. Charge rent to other City/Parish agencies located in the building.

Section VII

FACILITY USAGE

Facility Usage

If debt service payments are not paid by the Commission, the Trustee can be directed to evict the Judicial District Court Commission and rent the building for approved purposes (i.e. to other City/Parish or State of Louisiana agencies or other qualified tax-exempt tenants).

Any rent received would be pledged to pay debt service on the bond issue.

The City/Parish would then have to find and secure suitable alternative space for the Court to operate.

Section VIII

MOODY'S RATING REPORT

Moody's Rating Report - Summary

- **Ratings Action:** Moody's assigned an A3 issuer rating and confirmed the Baa1 rating on the commission's special tax revenue bonds.
- **Issuer Rating Basis:** The A3 issuer rating reflects manageable long-term liabilities equal to just 0.1% of full value and no plans for additional borrowing.
- **Revenue Limitation:** Revenues are narrowly defined as court fines and fees set by state statute, limiting flexibility despite strong reserves.
- **Reserve Strength:** Fiscal 2025 reserves exceed 300% of annual revenue, providing substantial cushion for the commission's limited operational scope.
- **Liability Coverage:** Available fund balance equals 32% of long-term liabilities, which Moody's views as satisfactory.
- **Debt Profile:** The commission has approximately \$92 million in outstanding debt, with no additional issuance planned.
- **Special Tax Bonds:** The Baa1 bond rating is one notch below the issuer rating due to the narrow pledged revenue stream, though MADS coverage is nearly 1.4x in fiscal 2025.
- **Structural Protections:** Bonds benefit from a debt service reserve funded at MADS and additional reserves in a rate stabilization fund to mitigate volatility.
- **Economic Context:** The commission operates in Baton Rouge, where resident income equals 70% of the national average, supported by strong institutional presence tied to state government activity.
- **Upgrade/Downgrade Triggers:** Upward pressure would require reserves exceeding 35% of liabilities and stronger liquidity, while deterioration in reserves or coverage below 1.1x would pressure the bond rating.

Section IX

PROPOSED NEW ORLEANS CIVIL DISTRICT COURT

Proposed New Orleans Civil District Court

- The Orleans Parish Civil District Court's Judicial Building Fund, intended for future construction of a new judicial building , has about \$1.2 million in annual fee collections, per the 2024 audit report.
- Collection of these fees was extended through August 2031.
- Key Audit Details and Findings:
 - Financial Position (2024): As of December 31, 2024, the Building Commission reported \$20,451,302 in net position, with over \$19 million restricted for capital expenditures.

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— of NEW ORLEANS —

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August 31, 2026

To the Municipal Complex Advisory Committee,

The Preservation Resource Center appreciates the opportunity to participate in this process, and we commend Mayor Moreno and her administration for convening this committee. It is encouraging to see the time and thought that is going into addressing the needs of city employees and residents when it comes to the future of City Hall.

After nearly 70 years, the building's systems and infrastructure have unsurprisingly reached the end of their useful lifespan, and the city and its employees deserve better than the building's terrible existing conditions.

Other aspects of City Hall, however, still make it the most viable option for the future.

Its location is a primary benefit, in proximity to key transportation routes, hospitals, parking garages, the library, the biomedical district, and public green space for employees and residents to gather.

Additionally, the 1957 building is structurally sound and an important example of modern architecture in New Orleans. In the post-World War II era, it was a visionary symbol of progress.

New Orleans faces a new set of challenges in 2026 and this advisory committee has an exciting opportunity to reimagine a municipal complex that meets the needs of the city while also positioning New Orleans as a leader in environmental stewardship, climate resilience, storm water management, large-scale blight reduction, public engagement, and sustainable maintenance planning.

In the 1950s, a historic neighborhood was destroyed to construct a new government complex. With the current initiative, New Orleans can instead choose to reuse the existing building and prioritize sustainability – after all, the greenest building is the one that is already built.

To increase available square footage and accessibility on the prominent corner of Poydras and Loyola avenues, the Civil District Courts building could be reworked to house the public-facing departments in City Hall. In turn, the courts could relocate to a more suitable facility.

The PRC preserves New Orleans' historic architecture, neighborhoods, cemeteries and cultural identity through collaboration, empowerment and service to our community.

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We look forward to future discussions about another great advantage provided by staying in City Hall: namely, access to state and federal historic tax credits which could offset up to 45% of qualified construction costs. After Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans School Facility Finance Foundation was created to partner with the Recovery School District and Orleans Parish School Board on the School Facilities Master Plan so the city could utilize state and federal historic tax credits in renovating 10 schools. This resulted in \$100 million in new equity.

We urge the committee to prioritize sustainability in their decision-making process, and we thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin Gisleson Palmer
Executive Director

MaryNell Nolan-Wheatley
Director of Advocacy and Education