

# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

## “Integrated Master Planning RFI



**Submittal Deadline Date: February 18, 2020**  
**Proposal Opening Time: 11:00 A.M. (Local Time)**

**Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans  
Special Projects**

**January 31, 2020**

**Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO)**  
**Request for Information (RFI)**  
**“Integrated Master Planning RFI”**  
**January 28, 2020**

**Purpose.** SWBNO is requesting information from qualified firms that are interested in assisting with an innovative approach to create a long-term, integrated master plan covering each of SWBNO’s key business lines. From the information collected through this RFI, SWBNO will review all responses, assess its needs, and refine its requirements in order to create one or more Request for Proposals (RFPs). It is also the intent of this RFI process to help the firms responding to the forthcoming RFP(s) better understand the needs of the SWBNO.

**Background.** SWBNO is a public agency authorized by the Louisiana Legislature in 1899 to furnish, construct, operate, and maintain a public water, sewerage, and drainage system for the City of New Orleans (La. R.S. 33:4071, et seq.). The organization is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors, led by the Mayor of New Orleans, and run by an Executive Director appointed by the Board. Currently, SWBNO employs more than 1,300 employees in three distinct divisions: sewerage, water, and drainage. The three divisions are financed separately, but work closely together to safely treat wastewater, provide clean drinking water, and drain stormwater for the citizens of New Orleans.

SWBNO has faced significant challenges in recent history. It is well documented that even before Hurricane Katrina, the Sewerage & Water Board was in dire need of funds to repair and re-build its aging sewer, water, drainage, and power systems. Water and Sewer rates had not been increased in more than 20 years and an additional millage for drainage was lost, while the cost of construction, materials and labor had doubled. Katrina only made matters worse, despite the Board’s expertise and ability to obtain FEMA funds and other Federal assistance; SWBNO’s costs grew with every new project brought on by the storm’s damages. Post Katrina conditions which included financial issues for survival plagued both the customer base and the agency. Finally, multiple flood events in the summer of 2017 resulted in a turnover of most executive staff and put the long-term viability of the whole utility in question and seriously damaged public trust.

Under the leadership of Mayor LaToya Cantrell, who took office in May of 2018, the Sewerage and Water Board has begun to rebuild from these multiple crises. New Executive Director, Ghassan Korban, joined the agency in September of 2018 and has worked quickly to install a new, highly qualified leadership team to begin to transform the utility into a more efficient, and accountable operation.

As a part of this transformation, the SWBNO is undertaking an ambitious effort to plan for all of its lines of business in a long-range, integrated fashion in order to direct investments in the systems in a way that solidifies the City’s future, improves quality of life, and provides the greatest community value through multiple benefits.

This integrated planning process will consist of three main phases:



### 1. **Phase 1: Pre-Planning**

This phase consists of everything contained in this RFI and serves as a way to generate interest in the planning process, and assists SWBNO in scoping the process further, in addition to developing RFPs for future work under the planning process. This phase also includes the gathering of all studies, plans, and reports that have been conducted on system components over the last 30 years to inform the future planning process.

SWBNO is also moving towards completion of a Power Master Plan which will address the balancing of power generation needs and costs based on future needs. This plan will necessarily tie into future system master plans.

### 2. **Phase 2: Vision and Strategy**

This phase consists of two primary processes, first, to conduct extensive community outreach and employee in-reach to understand what ideas our customers and employees have for improvement. The development of a shared vision for SWBNO's role in the everyday lives of our customers, as well as how the City will adapt its infrastructure to climate change are a crucial component of the planning process and must be underway before planning begins in earnest.

The second portion will be the development of a strategic plan for the utility that considers SWBNO's vision and mission, as well as the desires and ideas of our employees. Any new strategic plan will require the development of performance measures so the public can track progress on these strategic actions.

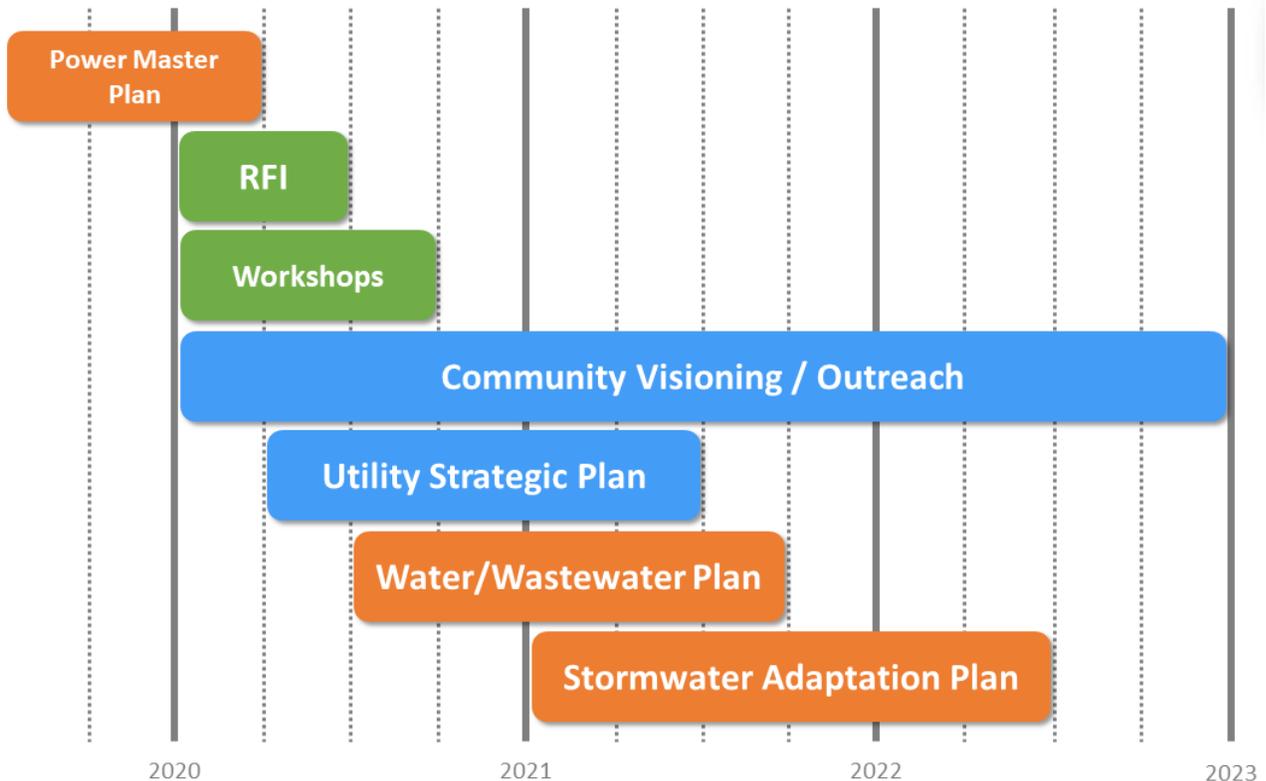
### 3. **Phase 3: System Planning**

SWBNO has not undertaken any meaningful attempts at integrated system planning in at least a generation. While some plans and reports have been developed looking at the various components of the system, this piecemeal approach has not resulted in the results

the utility should be achieving. This portion of the planning process will largely be guided by the RFI responses, workshops, and community meetings. A Power Master Plan is currently underway and will be finalized shortly.

A document library has been compiled at [swbno.org/projects/masterplan](http://swbno.org/projects/masterplan) which includes past plans and reports that respondents may find helpful in better understanding of SWBNO, our infrastructure, and challenges.

### *Planning Timeline*



**Information Requested.** Qualified firms are requested to submit the following information to assist SWBNO develop an innovative approach to create a long-term, integrated master plan covering each of SWBNO’s key business lines.

The RFI is broken into two stages: 1) Written Response and Firm Profile and 2) Workshops. Respondents may be invited to participate in one or more workshops based on the written response.

## 1. **Written Response and Firm Profile**

Written responses and firm profile should be a maximum of twenty (20), 8.5x11” pages. SWBNO requests response to the following questions. Respondents may choose to respond to any combination of the questions, based on their interest and areas of expertise.

- a. What will be New Orleans’ biggest stormwater/drainage challenges in 50 years and what is the best approach to integrated, long-range planning to address those challenges?
- b. What will be New Orleans’ biggest wastewater/sewerage challenges in 50 years and what is the best approach to integrated, long-range planning to address those challenges?
- c. What will be New Orleans’ biggest drinking water challenges in 50 years and what is the best approach to integrated, long-range planning to address those challenges?

Respondents may expand upon the questions above in their responses as they see fit. Responses to each question are limited to a total of five (5) pages, including any combination of text, graphics, etc. as needed to convey the response.

In addition to responses to the questions listed above, respondents should submit a profile of their firm (or firms), and include a concise description of two to three relevant projects. This is not intended to be a detailed list of qualifications, but rather a brief summary of firm experience. The firm profile should be a maximum of five (5) pages.

Firms are encouraged to respond separately to this RFI as SWBNO is seeking creative responses from a wide array of qualified firms. Respondents may team on the written responses but attendance at subsequent workshops will be limited. Firms that choose to respond separately to this RFI will not be prohibited from teaming on any future RFP. Failure to respond to this RFI or participation in any invited workshop does not disqualify any qualified firm or team from responding to any future RFP.

## 2. **Workshops**

Following review of the written responses, SWBNO may invite respondents to participate in a workshop with other invited respondents, as well as academic and technical partners, that will seek to further examine each line of business and opportunities for innovative, integrated planning. There is no guarantee that respondents will be invited to present following submittal of the written response. Each RFI respondent firm or team selected to participate shall be represented by no more than three subject matter experts from the relevant workshop topic. Attendees at each workshop may include, but are not limited to, the Executive Director, Chief of Staff, General Superintendent, Director of Planning and Strategy, SWBNO Engineering and project management staff, and representatives from other government or institutional agencies and partners.

SWBNO may choose to hold separate workshops for each line of business, or based on RFI Responses, choose to combine these in some way. Topics and/or additional questions will be identified to guide selected participants based on the RFI responses and will be provided to the participants in advance of the workshops. SWBNO may ask invited participants to prepare presentations on selected topics based on RFI written responses.

**Administrative Requirements**

Copies of the RFI and related information are available from the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans’ purchasing website at <http://www.swbno.org>. All Responses must be received by the Board on or before the Submission Deadline. The Board will not accept Responses delivered after the Submission Deadline. The Board will not credit delivery claims not clearly documented by receipt.

**Submittal** Completed responses may be submitted either by email to: [Pwallace@swbno.org](mailto:Pwallace@swbno.org); by mail or hand delivered to: Patti Wallace, Purchasing Director, Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, 625 St. Joseph Street, Room 131, New Orleans, Louisiana 70165 no later than **February 18, 2020, at 11:00 am CST** (Submittal Deadline). marked “Written Response and Firm Profile for Integrated Master Planning RFI” bearing the Respondent’s name and address, and containing:

- A cover letter indicating the Respondent’s interest in participating in this RFI process, any future workshops, and including the Respondent’s full legal name, address, and primary contact for this RFI (including name, telephone number and e-mail address);
- One (1) digital copy of the written response and firm profile in PDF format contained on a USB flash drive or emailed will suffice.

**Schedule:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
RFI Release	1/31/2020
Deadline for Questions	2/14/2020, 11am CST
Submittal Deadline – Written Response and Firm Profile	2/18/2020, 11am CST
Workshop invitations sent	Week of March 9, 2020
Workshop(s) held	April – May 2020

**Point of Contact:** All correspondence and other communications regarding this RFI shall be directed to: Patti Wallace, Purchasing Director, Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans 625 St. Joseph Street, Room 131, New Orleans, Louisiana 70165, 504-585-2428; email [pwallace@swbno.org](mailto:pwallace@swbno.org).

**Questions & Addenda:** SWBNO will attempt to answer questions submitted to the point of contact no later than three (3) business days before the Submission Deadline. Any request received after that time may not be reviewed. Questions must be submitted in writing and must include the Proposer’s name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. In its discretion, SWBNO may respond to questions and inquiries by written addenda posted on the SWBNO’s website prior to the Submission Deadline. Proposers shall not rely on any representation, statement or explanation

other than those made in this RFI and any addenda. If there is a conflict between this RFI and any addenda, the last addendum issued will prevail.

**Ownership and Proprietary Information:** All Responses, including any submitted documents, to this RFI are the property of SWBNO for all purposes. SWBNO does not guarantee the confidentiality of submissions. Both the responses and the list of respondents are considered public information. Respondents should not include proprietary or confidential information in the response to this RFI.

**Effect:** This RFI and any related discussions, evaluations, proposals, or resulting solicitations by SWBNO or any person on its behalf create no rights or obligations whatsoever except as provided in this RFI. The Board may cancel or modify this RFI or any resulting solicitation at any time at will, with or without notice. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, response to this RFI does **not** create any legal or contractual relationship between SWBNO and the respondent. No Respondent shall be compensated in any way for their work in preparing a response this RFI or participation in any associated workshop.