



MATTHEW JEWELL
PARISH PRESIDENT

ST. CHARLES PARISH

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

September 20, 2024

Dear Members of the Parish Council,

I am pleased to present the proposed 2025 St. Charles Parish Consolidated Operating and Capital Budget for your consideration. This budget reflects our shared efforts to maintain a sustainable fiscal path while continuing to meet the needs of our community. It supports key priorities such as enhancing drainage systems, completing critical levee protection projects, and upgrading major utility infrastructure.

The 2025 budget includes \$272.4 million in governmental fund expenditures. Significant allocations include \$78 million for levee protection, \$37.8 million for public works, and \$31.9 million of grant funding for various drainage projects. Additionally, projected revenues for governmental funds total \$169.1 million, with a beginning fund balance of \$135.8 million carried over from 2024.

In 2019, the parish millage rate was 118.58 mills. By working collaboratively with the St. Charles Parish Assessor, Sheriff's office, and the School System, we have been able to reduce the parish's total millages to 102.42 mills. My goal is to continue reducing millages for our residents and businesses, creating a favorable taxing environment that spurs economic investment while also meeting the parish's needs. This approach will further position St. Charles Parish as a destination for people to live, work, and play, increasing value within the parish and enhancing our ability to continue lowering taxes.

Our administration has worked diligently since May to ensure this budget reflects thoughtful decision-making and prudent use of resources. Sales tax revenues, which account for 33% of total revenues, remain strong, driven by industrial expansions expected in 2025. We anticipate another substantial increase in assessed property values, with \$253 million added to the Parish's overall valuation, ranking us seventh in the state.

The budget addresses the needs of our residents by ensuring that our existing drainage, streets, and other essential infrastructure are well maintained, while also prioritizing capital improvements in those areas. This includes funding for projects such as the Engineers Pump Station improvements, Primrose and Cousins Bank Stabilization, and the Murray Hill/Destrehan Drive Subsurface project, to name a few. Overall, my budget reflects over \$155 million in Public Works and levee capital projects. At the same time, we recognize the importance of quality-of-life improvements, ensuring that investments in infrastructure are balanced with enhancements to recreational facilities and programs, which are important to our community's well-being. That is why my budget includes funding for quality-of-life projects such as Ama and Keller Street Park improvements, the East Bank Bridge Park Gymnasium, and a parish dog park. In total, this budget reflects over \$16 million in recreational capital projects.

The budget also recognizes the hard work and dedication of our Parish personnel, who are our greatest asset. To ensure we continue to keep and attract skilled employees, we have included a two percent cost-of-living increase to the overall pay plan, as well as merit-based raises for eligible staff. I believe the 2022 revisions to the pay plan have paid dividends, and our continued investment in our workforce will ensure that all departments are well-staffed, trained, and equipped to deliver the essential services our community depends on.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to the Parish Council for your continued collaboration and support, as well as to the Finance Department and all our employees for their dedication in preparing this budget. While the lingering effects of major disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ida, are still very present in our day-to-day work, I continue to be impressed by how our directors and employees consistently get the job done. Together, we will ensure that 2025 is a year of progress and continued growth for St. Charles Parish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Jewell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Matthew Jewell
Parish President