

Department of Asset, Information and Services
2023 Budget Statement to the City Council
Committee on Budget and Government Operations
Acting Commissioner Sandra Blakemore

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chairman Dowell, Vice Chairman Silverstein, and members of the City Council. I am Sandra Blakemore and I have been Acting Commissioner of the Department of Assets, Information and Services for the past seven months. Thank you for allowing me to join you today to present and discuss the 2023 budget request and my vision for the Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS).

Our Department’s mission is to support the operations of other City departments and sister agencies with efficient asset management, operational support services, and access to information technology. We provide a range of support services including environmental engineering support, energy procurement, graphics and reproduction, records management, and mail delivery. Our Department is leading the IT Modernization for the City to deliver technology to enable greater efficiency for our City workers and improved customer service for our citizens.

We will continue to bring equity to the front and center of all our work. AIS has achieved good MWBE performance in the past with 37% MWBE YTD, but we want to continue to grow our minority and women business participation. I plan to create a position focused on MWBE Compliance for our Department to provide stronger oversight to our contracts. We also plan to reflect our rich diversity in our staff. Our new hires this year have grown more diverse with 32% African American, 37% Hispanic, 25% White and 5% Asian.

FLEET

Our portfolio of 13,308 pieces of equipment includes 9,108 pieces of owned equipment, 2,193 pieces of leased or rented equipment and 2,007 pieces of equipment for sister agencies. AIS is embarking on the electrification of the fleet with the transitioning of 25% of the light duty vehicles electric by the end of 2023 and ultimately transition all our fleet by 2035. AIS is strategically locating charging stations in INVEST South/West neighborhoods in order to run clean energy vehicles and help lower pollution in these communities.

FACILITIES

Our facility portfolio currently includes 451 owned and 60 leased facilities for a total count of 511. Our building decarbonization efforts include a new solar panel installation project for libraries. We are focusing on libraries located in the South and West Side neighborhoods in order to drive clean energy solutions and energy conservation measures in areas that are most historically underserved.

The Riverwalk has rebounded successfully from the pandemic with revenues YTD at \$19M. The Community Marketplace is thriving with new vendors such as Chi Boy, an African American owned clothing retailer, and returning vendors such as Colores Mexicanos who has had two strong years on the Riverwalk.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Our Department launched an ambitious IT Modernization Initiative in early 2022 to accelerate the adoption of digital solutions that are easier to use, mobile-enabled, and more accessible. The City has over 500 applications, many of which are built on unstable technologies or that are nearing end-of-life. Decades of disinvestment, in both IT talent and capital, have left the city with technical debt due to deferred maintenance or incremental improvements. The IT MOD aims to transform our IT enterprise to eliminate paper-based and manual processes, improve our websites with the goal of “no dead ends,” and to ensure that our constituents can do business with the city in the most effective manner possible. The 2023 Budget Recommendation includes a re-organization of central IT and new positions that are needed to lead this transformation that will touch every city department.

SAFETY

The health and safety of our employees is critical to the success of the Department. AIS achieved a 15% reduction in the OSHA Total Recordable Incident Rate (non-COVID), from the 2019 rate of 5.5 incidents per 100 people to 4.7 in 2021, through the implementation of EHS programs and training. In 2021, 891 AIS employees attended a total of 4,192 training sessions.

2023 BUDGET PROPOSAL

AIS’s 2023 budget proposal is \$568 million compared to the 2022 appropriation of \$514 million. The increase is driven by commodities with higher costs for electricity, fuel, and natural gas. We are using hedges to provide budget stability and lower the City’s risk to volatility. AIS is also pleased to lead, in coordination with the Mayor’s Office, the largest equity-focused energy supply agreement to transition the City’s municipal load to 100% renewable energy by 2025.

CONCLUSION

We are committed to delivering the highest quality of services to the city departments in the most efficient manner. I would like to thank our employees for always stepping up to new challenges and embracing problem solving and delivering great customer service. I look forward to serving in partnership with you to deliver the best services for the City.

Madam Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. My staff and I are pleased to answer any questions that you, or the members of the City Council, may have on our presented budget.