



Community Lead Response Advisory Committee

August 12, 2019

Meeting Minutes

- **Welcome and Introductions**

In Attendance:

Mike Blackhurst  
Aly Shaw  
Grant Gittlen  
Pat Bigley  
Christine Hoover  
Lauren Burge  
Sarah Bolenbaugh  
Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis  
Will Pickering  
Sarah Vizreki

On Call:

Pete DeMarco  
Gina Miller  
John Coogan  
Sarah Stoner

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- **2019 LSLR Program Updates:**

- 77% agreement return rate overall.
- 86% in completed areas.



- A little over 1,300 public side replacements under 2019 LSLR Contracts.
- 17 partial replacements to date.

**Lauren Berge: When you say an area is ‘complete,’ what exactly does that mean – does it include restoration?**

- The LSLR contractors do the replacements and then do a temporary restoration in the roadway and backfill the sidewalk with gravel. PWSA’s restoration contractor comes in and fully restores it. Complete here means the LSLR replacements are done in these work order areas.

**Aly Shaw: Clarify what partial replacements, etc. means?**

- ‘Partial replacement’ is when only the public-side line is replaced; ‘Private side replacement’ is where we replaced the private side when the public side has been lead as well. More frequently encounter public lead than private lead.
- Some customers have declined our offer to replace private side.

**Duffy Comment**

- We are adding 4 additional areas to the program based on funding and prior discussions with CLRAC: Highest priority being Marshall-Shadeland area with work starting as early as November, when one of the contractors moves out of Greenfield.; map shown (slide 6). In addition to LSLR there are areas where we are replacing mains in this portion instead of LSLR,
  - Bolenbaugh: there are 4-inch mains that we know have low fire-flow as well as sidewalk mains.

**Gina Miller (from call): Vacancies are counted in the non-response rates?**

- Correct.

**Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: The Homewood active area seems like a problem area (still less than 80% returned agreements); is there anything we can do here as a committee to help that? Is it because that community has so many out-of-town landlords?**

- It’s very challenging. We have some numbers on tenant-landlord vs owner-occupied locations later in the presentation, but the problem seems to be getting people engaged.



- We've gone to more community meetings in that area than any other, employed door hangers, canvassing efforts, etc., but getting people to respond and continue in following the steps to final replacement has been the struggle.

**Michelle Naccaraki-Chapkis: Have their reps done any outreach? Anything posted around at Pitt?**

- Yes, we provide the city council offices with lists of unresponsive locations, but other than send a letter back in the early stages we are not sure what they've done with it. We have been getting more agreements as work progresses in the area, though. We are currently working from North to South in the Homewood area.
  - We did hang posters at over 200 locations around the city, but we will check.
  - Michelle suggests posting the info at churches in the community.

**Michelle Naccaraki-Chapkis: Could we (as committee) get the posters to print out and hang places?**

- Yes, we can send copies.

**Grant Gittlen: Can you send me the unresponsive list that was sent to the council? I can talk to some people to assist.**

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## Construction Statistics:

- Very few locations that we haven't been able to do trenchless replacements on the private side now. We try to pull the lines first, then mole it if that won't work, unless there are other utilities on street, we do pull trench.

**Aly Shaw: What is 'mole-ing'?**

- They use a flexible drill, starting in the basement, and send the mole out from basement to sidewalk.

60 locations have opted out:

- 47 are City-owned properties; we have visited them all with City officials where we make the call jointly that it is not worth the investment for safety reasons.



- 13 locations are private-owned, usually opted out due to sanitary issues (animals, feces, collapsed infrastructure, etc.)
- We urge the homeowners to contact United Way to assist with improving conditions inside home, but none have gotten back to us. For some, the only issue is debris in basements which in most cases have been cleaned so we can go back to do the work later.

**Grant Gittlen:** Can you send the list of issues for the 47 locations to our [City] finance director?

**Mike Blackhurst:** If there are sewage issues, shouldn't the Health Department be notified about that?

- If we out people to the Health Department, it may discourage others from signing up due to the perceived privacy breach. We haven't reported any to date.
- We can't pass the homeowners' info to United Way, we can provide United Way details but the homeowner has to contact them.
- URA has a relatively new program. Funding is focused on correcting code violations first (it is a loan process, but the loan is forgiven after so many years.) The timing doesn't work very well with timing of LSLR.
- Only 13 houses fall into this, so it's not our biggest issue, and we try to keep our workers safe.

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## 2019 Outreach Update:

- Canvassing is the primary way, once we are in work order areas, and after-hours canvassing in conjunction with after-hours phone calls. Before we complete an area, we've done at least two after-hours outreach campaigns (canvass & call).
- We do a robocall when we are finishing areas telling customers to call in before the end date to get a free replacement. This usually gets some locations added.
- Continuing with community meetings, though usually slower in the summer, and social media outreach as well (Twitter, Fb, LinkedIn).



**Aly Shaw: Are you keeping track of which form of outreach is most effective?**

- We don't really know, as many forms are happening simultaneously.
- **Pickering: People sometimes bring their agreements with them to community meetings, and we do a robocall to unresponsive sites telling them we will be at community meetings if they want more information on the program.**

**Grant Gittlen: I think that it is great that PWSA is canvassing, and the City should adopt canvassing as well. Assuming it's not cost-prohibitive, maybe an exit-survey would be good to find out how people came to accept agreement.**

- Lead Help could add that to their script when people call in.
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**CEP Update:**

- \$330,000 of \$1.8 million spent as of the last week in July (about 75 done so far).
- Should be able to do more than the original 200 locations projected with these funds, but agreements are the biggest hurdle to overcome before we can even use the money.
- Sent letter to those identified as private-only lead; also did door-hangers, and saw many agreements come in after that.
- Presently have one contractor with two crews, may add a third crew to complete the current backlog while still making sure they will be busy.

**QUESTION: Can you confirm that this program is outside of LSLR areas?**

- Correct. The only CEP locations inside a LSLR area is when we find private-only lead (which the LSLR program does not replace).
  - Dollar Energy discusses multiple programs when customers call. 1,000 have followed up.
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## Reimbursement Update:

- Recently started, for locations where Operations team replaced public side between Feb 1, 2016 - Dec 31, 2018.
- Anybody who didn't respond to the offer for PWSA to replace the private side were sent an application for this with details for what the reimbursement program would entail.
- Have 10 requests for reimbursement as of last week; average cost a little over \$4,000/per site. Should start issuing checks in approximately one week to those who have applied.

### Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: Is this funding coming directly from PWSA?

- Yes.

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## Board Policy Update:

- The update maintains our current policy of replacing the private-side when we replace public side, however it now extends this policy with no end date.
- Income-based full reimbursement also added for customers who want to replace their side on their own. Finalizing how we implement this now (next 1-2 months).
- This is an enhancement to what we are currently doing. The board's concern was two-fold:
  1. Having available funding given the other priorities PWSA has as an agency and the fact that orthophosphate should soon be working to drastically reduce lead levels.
  2. If we continue free private-side replacements for all customers, there are those in our service area that *can* afford to do it without financial assistance. It would be unfair if low-income customers subsidized replacements for people who can afford it. May be litigated by PUC and interveners in our compliance process.

### Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: What is the scenario for the expansion program?

- Currently, if you decide you want to replace, we will do the public side at the same time so there will be no partial replacements. This has been in effect since 2016; we worked with ACHD to make sure private plumbers know this too. We waive tapping fees and replace the sidewalk.



**Mike Blackhurst: Would you provide people who are interested in this program with plumbers who are experienced in the pulling method to minimize damage to personal property?**

- We are looking at the legal and procurement issues associated with that. We are looking to pre-qualify plumbers and get a fixed cost per location.
- Most plumbers want half the money up front before they will start work, so we would like to provide a list of pre-qualified plumbers with prices and caveats to help low-income people, link payment so it's made out to both plumber and homeowner that will co-sign the check to avoid plumber needing security deposit.
- It's early (only 10 applications) in our other reimbursement program, but we are seeing costs less than what we're paying for our contractors to replace the private side (\$5,500+ for us vs. \$4,000 for them on average).
  - **Mike Blackhurst: Pre-certification or training plumbers would be a nice incentive.**
- Most private plumbers are mole-ing

**Christine Hoover: How are you comparing the costs of PWSA work vs. private plumbers?**

- We are comparing apples to apples. We do not include the meter-replacement costs, amongst other things, that we cover in our estimate. The \$5,500 cost doesn't include the extra costs we have (admin, updating GIS, etc.).
- **Christine Hoover: OCA has not agreed on administrative substantial cost of PWSA to do income-based verification. (object of contention).**

**Other PUC Settlement Updates:**

- We continue to update our maps on a monthly basis with new data.
- We provide free filters to CAP customers and send out letters to new customers monthly as well. We have distributed 348 pitchers and filters since commencement.
- Over 7,600 meters replaced since November 2018 and the effort continues.
- Customer Request Map provided per request last meeting. (outlines neighborhoods around city with number of lead test kit requests from customers) We've made it clearer that customers in exceedance after lead testing will be sent a free lead-removing pitcher and filters. We have done outreach on social media for this as well.
- Have agreed to two changes with PUC:



- If sample exceeded 100ppb, we would go out and flush the service line. We've lowered to **50ppb**.
- If a lead test kit result came back above 15ppb, we provided pitcher and filter. Now lowered to 10ppb.

**Mike Blackhurst: For those homes in exceedance, is flushing working?**

- We drop the meter and flush the line from there, then go back and resample.

**Mike Blackhurst: Is it worth referring those occupants [in exceedance] to the County if there are kids living there so they can intervene?**

- We do not do that now, we could suggest it though, after we pull data on this to see if flushing works.
- Some high lead levels are seen post-construction and the homeowner hasn't flushed as directed, so we complete this step for them.

**Mike Blackhurst: The public may not be aware of what to do post-construction.**

- We communicate post-construction instructions to every replacement site with multiple types of printed materials and a video available on our website (and viewed with the homeowner if they are willing).
- Elevated lead levels after a replacement is a temporary impact and usually it is a result of the homeowner not flushing. We do our best to make sure it doesn't happen.
- We still provide a pitcher and filter and ask them to use it for 6 months after our work.

**Pat Bigley: Where is the water sample being taken from? Are they taking the aerator off the spigot before they collect the sample?**

- We tell them to not use the water for 6 hours, then take the sample from the kitchen sink after running for 15 seconds. We ask them to flush the plumbing after replacement so there should be no need to remove the aerator but many may not do the flushing.
- **Bigley: Removing the aerator is important because sometimes when plumbers throw old aerators away and replace them then they get good water test results after. Stuff gets trapped in the aerator post-construction. Taking the sample from non-aerator spicket is more accurate.**



- Duffy: However, we want to know what exactly they're drinking, so, non-aerator sample may not be as accurate a result for our purposes.
  
  - PWSA is trying to keep our work to the basements only to avoid legal issues.
  - We now have cards printed out for our plumbers to leave behind at houses. When we identify lead or galvanized lines, we leave the customer a sample bottle. This is part of a three-month-long study to see if lead levels go up after work at the meter.
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## Other Questions:

**Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: Do you anticipate the next six months will allow enough time for orthophosphate to work and see lead levels come down?**

- Bolenbaugh: We saw that ortho has to go through really large reservoirs after we inject it into the water supply, so it took a lot of time for it to distribute thoroughly. People don't remember/want to sample so we have to do a lot to get them to send it in, and the earliest samples probably had very little orthophosphate in them.
    - Duffy: Yes. Our data suggests we should see a reduction in overall numbers reported in the next round of testing.
  - We are working with EPA to study how ortho is scaling on pipes now.
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## Provisions on Tariff Settlement (C. 1. c. and d.i.) Outlined

- Owner/Tenant Stats outlined in Power Point.
- Does not show a tremendous difference between the return rate of agreements in landlord versus homeowner properties, so it doesn't seem to be as big of an issue as we thought.
- Tenants at the approximately 500 locations don't have control over if work is done.



**Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: Do you have models from other cities that have taken this approach?**

- We have looked and haven't found much, but the EDF has a good website with ordinances outlined, however they are more geared towards financing.
- Some states have laws in place that when a location with a child living there has elevated lead levels, then the state is required to intervene in order to protect the child, so the compliance rate is 100%.

**Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis: Have any legal studies been done to see if this could fly here in Pittsburgh?**

**Grant Gittlen: The City could probably look into it but hasn't yet. If the CLRAC wants them to do it then they will.**

- PA does require a general ordinance of disclosure for plumbing in homes, maybe this could be amended to include disclosing lead lines.
- The City *could* do a legal analysis and wouldn't be out of line, but should it be City or Health Department doing it? Probably should be a County decision.

**Mike Blackhurst: If PWSA got authorization from the City, would they be able to do it?**

**Grant Gittlen: Enforcing it is probably the bigger issue here.**

**Dan Duffy: Michelle and I saw some cities saying that lead had to be replaced on the private side if found or else water would be shut off (City ordinance). However, this would be of cost to the homeowner**

**Pat Bigley: What about areas out of our service area though?**

- Not PWSA's responsibility at this place and time.



- Some data in the Property data assessment set is not accurate according to Mike Blackhurst, so we should request the County update it and make sure it's right, and should be able to get info on if there is lead pipes there too.

**Dan Duffy:** How often does someone look at County real estate page data?

**Mike Blackhurst:** It is hard to maintain those. PWSA would have to coordinate with County to send this data to be updated. Seems an important piece of info that should be included and is not currently. Ex. of values to include: "Lead visually confirmed," etc.

**Mike Blackhurst:** Who should be in charge of getting this request sent to County? This committee, PWSA, or City?

- Duffy: I don't know, but PWSA needs help doing things like this to be more effective in implementing helpful changes like this. We need everyone to be behind it as we can't pull it off alone.
- This is transitioning to our water main relay work in future. Trying now to prevent partials then.

**Mike Blackhurst:** Has any H.O. reached out to PWSA to see if they have lead lines in their house?

- Unsure, but hopefully, yes.

**Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis:** Can you explain the County's current moratorium on partials?

- It hasn't been enacted into the plumbing code (yet), but if there is a problem with the private-side line then the moratorium dictates that it must be replaced entirely instead of only repaired.

**Mike Blackhurst:** Should we invite someone from County (not Health Dep.) here next time to figure out how to move forward? Or, alternatively, have a small group meeting with the County outside of this CLRAC meeting.

- Maybe we can reach out to Jim Kelly for ideas on how to approach County.
- Michelle notes she would be interested in continuing this discussion on both issues.



- A disclosure associated with rentals may be advantageous as well.
  - Grant Gittlen: Rental registry discussion being enforced opens many possibilities in future.
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### Dates for next CLRAC Meeting:

- September, end of month (last week of Sept., but not Fri AM.)
  - Monday, Wednesday will be harder for Mike because he teaches. Maybe Thurs.
  - LIAC doesn't have another date scheduled yet, but if they meet in Sept. then we'll try to do it on the same day to accommodate the folks coming from Harrisburg.
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### Further discussion:

**Pat Bigley:** Pittsburgh school district just completed their testing in July of all 70 of their sites, starting with stand-alone Pre-K's, and the data should be released online soon (served by 4 water companies). They tested every outlet.

**Gina Miller:** Thank you and your team for all your hard work, it's very impressive.

**Grant Gittlen** hopes there is some sort of booklet from PWSA developed in the future that can be passed to other water authorities around the country to be used as a template should they go this route. On the Communications side alone, this would be helpful as other companies don't do this as much or as well as we do.

**Mike Blackhurst:** I am very pleased and think you're doing a great job.

**Christine Hoover and Lauren Berge** commented that our data maps were useful.