



Community Lead Response Advisory Committee

March 7, 2024

Meeting Minutes

On Conference Call:

Dan Duffy
Mora McLaughlin
Rebecca Zito
Harrison Breitman
Nick DeMarco
Lauren Burge
Sarah Viszneki
Israel Gray
Michael Podskoch
Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis
Marcela Gonzalez-Rivas
Gabriel Gray
Dominique Nunley
Gina Miller
Pete DeMarco
Barry King
Julie Barg

Welcome and Introductions

- Group introduced themselves as we have new members on the committee.
 - Harrison Breitman – with OCA
 - Gabriel Gray – Pittsburgh United
 - Michael Podskoch – Bureau of Enforcement, PUC

SDWMR Updates

- 2022 SDWMR
 - Started in October 2022



- Three contracts
- 13 miles of water main to be replaced.
- Original bids were high, decided to pursue 2 of 3 contracts. Third contract will go out to bid separately soon.
- Contract B is moving ahead of schedule, will likely be done in late summer 2024.
 - Water main replacement in Millvale is nearly complete.
 - No restoration completed yet.
- Contract C is largely happening in the North Side
 - Contractor is new to us – Golden Triangle
 - Work is meeting our standards
 - We anticipate they will be done in 2024, which is on schedule.
- Lead map shows completed, active, and upcoming work.
- 2022 SDWMR (A, B, C) Agreement Status:
 - 87% returned or not needed.
 - We are finding varying amounts of lead, not as much as we would hope.
 - This indicates that we were choosing the correct neighborhoods early on, which is positive.

Other Water Main Replacement Activities:

- South Side Flats Sewer Separation
 - We will replace two water mains within this sewer project area to access the sewer.
 - Anticipate work will begin in April.
- 2023 Water Relay Project
 - Addresses water mains that have been problematic recently, multiple leaks.
 - Logan Street, Blenheim Court (tentative), Zuzu Circle
 - Work to begin later this month.

Future SDWMR Activities

- 2023 SDWMR
 - Awarded design contract in March 2023
 - Anticipate starting construction in 2025
 - Two contracts, 13 miles and 2,300 service lines
 - Full project contingent on PENNVEST funding. Only have six miles budgeted in CIP.
- 2024 SDWMR
 - Completing final site selection.



- Focusing on removing 4-inch water mains in our service area. Very difficult to replace a service line on these older, smaller pipes.

LSLR/Future Work

- 2022 NLSLR – ARPA Fund from City of Pittsburgh
 - City approved \$17.5M to PWSA from American Recovery Plan Act of 2021 (\$17M for LSLR)
 - Wrapping up project right now.
 - We originally hoped to work at 1,400 locations and replace 725 public lead lines.
 - We have worked, to date, in 11 neighborhoods. Have added more locations to ensure we spend all the funds. Ultimately worked at 2,600 locations.
 - Added one small project on Ionic Way in Highland Park, where we are shifting service from an old water main behind homes to the water main in front of homes, in the City Street.
 - Restoration work remains in Troy Hill.
 - We are approaching the City this month to request any additional funds from ARPA.
 - Money is to be allocated this year and all spent by 2026.
 - Any support from CLRAC members would be much appreciated – we think it is a good use of these funds.
 - We have drafted letter of support – if you can review, modify as you see fit, and send back to us we will include in our request packet.
 - We were able to work at so many additional locations because we ultimately did not find as much lead as we thought we would.
 - All locations in the contract have been verified, with exception of Ionic Way.
 - 729 public LSLR, 693 private LSLR (this is more private side replacements than we anticipated.)

Gina Miller: Is there a timeframe on the letter?

- **We will send it to you early next week.**
- **Our understanding that City is looking at this issue in early April. Would like to turn around request to them in a couple weeks/end of March.**

- 2023A NLSLR
 - Construction began in summer of 2023.



- 5 neighborhoods, agreements mailed out last May.
- 78% agreements returned.
- Have completed all work in first 4 neighborhoods.
- Most unresponsive agreements are in Marshall-Shadeland, which has proven to be a difficult neighborhood to receive agreements. We haven't found much lead yet.
- Public and private lead hovers around 22%.
- Recently completed budget review, comparing how much we've spent and how much we anticipated spending. All dependent on how much lead we find. Prepared budgets anticipating that we would find more lead. We can add another ~700 locations.
- Have added new neighborhood to continue to spend funds – Allentown, 450 locations.
- Agreements will be mailed to Allentown this month.

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – Have any other utilities reached out for technical assistance?

- **We do – have spoken to about 13-15 utilities, agencies, government bodies about how we run our program. (Upon review of the meeting tracker after the meeting, PWSA has held 24 consultations with other entities since May of 2021).**

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – Can we provide support for Marshall-Shadeland? What is the home ownership breakdown?

- **We haven't had to spend as much effort collecting agreements as of late, but newer work areas are proving difficult.**
- **Are having to go back to old methods of collecting agreements. We are door-to-door canvassing this weekend.**
- **Mora and Rebecca are working with Mayor's office and Council Districts**
- **Lead Help is making calls on weekends.**
- **Have not looked specifically at ownership breakdown.**
- **Also having issues in Homewood North (2023B NLSLR) – 30% of properties in work area are vacant. We will still verify materials. If we can't get into home, we will at least update our inventory. If location is ultimately unresponsive, we will proceed with termination process and replace the public side, disconnect private side.**
- **2023B NLSLR**
 - PENNVEST-funded, \$10M grant and \$4.6M loan. 1,400 locations.
 - Homewood North, South, West; Middle Hill; Fineview; Larimar
 - New contractor to PWSA, out of Wisconsin.



- Will start work next Monday in Homewood North.
- Given the low agreement return rate, we will open up more work orders to them to ensure they stay productive.
- Agreements were mailed mid-December
- Return rate is 31%.
- 2024A NLSLR
 - PENNVEST approved \$32M (\$14M grant, \$18M loans) plus \$3.3M in non-reimbursable paving costs that will come from PWSA rates.
 - 4,500 locations
 - Procurement process underway, received Construction Management/Construction Inspection proposals.
 - PENNVEST closing is scheduled at end of July 2024.
 - Splitting it into three contracts, generally broken out by portions of the City.
 - Millvale and South Side Flats work orders are very large, would cause concerns if we were to do it all at once.
 - We will realign our work in South Side Flats to avoid overlap with South Side Flats Sewer Separation project. We will move our work to south of East Carson.

Nick DeMarco – Why is PENNVEST not allowing us to reimburse paving costs?

- **The City asks us to pave beyond area we disturbed to ensure smooth, visually even roadways.**
- **PENNVEST will only allow us to reimburse paving work for the area disturbed + 1 foot in any direction.**
- **This has been the case on all PENNVEST projects.**
- **On 2019 PENNVEST contract, restoration was completely separate contract. This was inefficient. We have since wrapped it in with the water main and LSLR contracts.**

Gabriel Gray – Did the packet have an “response required?” Sometimes people will just throw paper mail from utility away if they have an e-bill.

- **We send robocall to every location ahead of the packet getting to them.**
- **Envelope indicates it’s a packet to replace lead line.**
- **We used to send postcards before the packet and those were largely ignored.**
- **Mora to send materials to Gabriel to review after meeting.**



- 2024 B NLSLR
 - PENNVEST has indicated we should keep our requests to the \$10-\$15M range.
 - Recent award was large, but 43% grant which is less than we would need to get the work done and maintain our rates. Recent PENNVEST awards for lead have been in the 75%+ grant range.
 - Will likely go back to \$10-\$15M range for 2024B request.
 - We are hoping more grants + funding for the City will match what we wanted to request.
 - We will use neighborhoods discussed at last meeting to build work areas.
- 2023 Urgent LSLR
 - We will replace leaking lead lines.
 - Work continues as needed.

Pete DeMarco –

- **1 - Re: cutting back on PENNVEST request: maintaining that level of funding is crucial regardless of where it comes from. Do you have a plan to plug that gap with other funds to work towards meeting the 2026 goal of replacing all lead lines? How do you balance that with overall affordability?**
 - We are looking into this right now. Also important to remember we are finding less lead than we used to.
 - For example, we are pivoting our Small Diameter program to replace 4” mains since we know there is a lot of lead attached.
 - We will have report at our next meeting regarding meeting our 2026 goal.
- **2 – You are working with Blue Conduit to create machine learning model. Can you provide update on this?**
 - We gave them contract late 2023.
 - Confident in saying we have situations they have never seen before.
 - Initial modeling effort is complete.
 - Most of their work thus far has been in cities where there is no data related to verified materials. They pull other data points to paint picture.
 - We have tremendous amount of data, including verifications and historic records.
 - They are revamping their modeling process to accommodate this data.
 - Major predictive factor is whether the nearest 9 properties had lead.
 - i. Our records often reflect a service line that was replaced a long time ago.
 - They are not accustomed to having real-time excavation data for comparison to the model.
 - We have sent postcards to locations where we need interior material verification.



- **Pilot consultant program to kick off soon to have data collectors canvass and collect data.**
- **Also looking into product, not yet approved by DEP, to probe service line and determine pipe material with electromagnetic reading.**
 - i. **Need more information on impacts of probe on water quality and accuracy of results.**
 - ii. **If effective, will be huge tool to verify material.**
 - iii. **If there are impacts, we would like to replace lead line very quickly after inspection to minimize water quality concerns.**
 - iv. **Will reduce costs of sidewalk restoration at verification sites.**
- **LCRR does not anticipate that utilities will have 100% verified inventories, so we are working through it like many utilities.**

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – Are you still having trouble getting good data from ACHD?

- **ACHD data still using 2010 Census tracts.**
- **We weren't able to use all the data since it does not match with the most recent census tracts we are using.**

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – We have data committee within Lead Safe Allegheny. I can ask why they aren't using newest census tract data.

Opt-Out Status

- **Have one area of concern currently, are trying to work to make area safe for workers.**
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Outreach (Mora McLaughlin):

- **Outreach consists of:**
 - **Virtual and in-person public meetings**
 - **Robocalls**
 - **Lead Help Direct phone calls**
 - **Directed outreach for locations verified private lead**
 - **Project updates, including new 2023 water main replacement locations, found here:**
 - **Water Main Programs: <https://www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance/water-main-replacement-program>**



- LSLR Programs: <https://www.pgh2o.com/projects-maintenance/lead-line-replacement-programs>
- Lead.pgh2o.com retirement will happen sometime in 2024.

Overall LSLR Progress

- Approaching 11,000 public replacements.

Lead Spending To-Date

- Have spent nearly \$200M on the program to date.

Marcela Gonzales-Rivas – Are you tracking when you leave lead in the ground? Is information publicly available?

- **Have begun tracking where we remove or replace lead. That database has been added late last year.**
- **Can include this data point in the slides going forward. Right now, not sufficient data.**
- **We receive waste disposal plan from contractor at beginning of project since it is considered hazardous waste. There is value in recycling, so they currently all use this method. They provide chain of command slip when they drop off lead to recycling plant.**
- **We will share records**

Termination Updates

- Terminated 78 locations, all unoccupied.
- 22 locations were emergency LSLR where there was a leak on public side and found private lead, could not establish temp service.
- 15 locations ultimately replaced agreement in grace period after the shut.
- Termination protocol is big lift for our Lead Help Staff.
- ~30% of locations where we send initial notice are tenant-occupied.

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – can someone return agreement and opt in after termination?

- **If contractor is still in the area, absolutely.**



- If it is the Urgent contract, we will circle back and do the work since that contract is based on one-off locations.
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Orthophosphate Update

- Latest round of testing came in at 3.58 ppb, happy with these results.
 - Request in for Designation of Optimal Water Quality Parameters submitted to DEP in July 2023, awaiting final permit this month.
 - We are now in a tri-annual sampling schedule. We will continue to sample our system annually to ensure levels are still low.
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Reimbursement Program Update (Julie Barg):

- Have added more detail about application breakdown and how far people go through the process.
- 950 “open” applications, with majority in the 100% reimbursement tier.
- 416 locations where income has been reviewed, no further action.
 - 456 have been on this step for more than a year
- 78 locations where we are waiting for final plumber invoice and county inspection.
- Have completed LSLR and payment at 145 locations
 - 92 locations where no lead was found after inspection, closed out
 - 59 locations where application was not in our service area
 - 81 sites are under an existing PWSA work order, we will address ourselves.
 - 63 where there was a duplicate application.
- We are seeing an uptick in applications in last year.
- Have also increased final payments in last year.

General Updates

- PUC Settlement Requirements sheet will be included after meeting
 - Web map of service lines updated the end of each month
 - Customer request sampling program continues
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LSLR Plan

- Submitted mid-February 2024
- Required under PUC Regulation Chapter 65.56



- Intended to use the plan for LCRR/LCRI compliance in the future.
- Details include:
 - Inventory
 - Overall program plan
 - Cost and funding strategy
 - Communication strategy and public outreach.
- Replaces former Lead Infrastructure Plan that was part of prior PUC settlements.
- We will distribute Plan after meeting with other documents.
- Submittal included waiver request to continue Reimbursement Program.
 - PUC regulations require utilities to reimburse customers who replace their private LSL on year before or after commencement of a LSLR project in the project area, up to 125% of utilities typical cost for replacement.
 - We believe it will be confusing to customers to have our program and an additional offering.
 - We believe our program is more inclusive – we do not restrict eligible customers within work order, it is available to everyone.
 - Focuses on 100% reimbursement, regardless of cost for low income customers.
 - 125% reimbursement based on our costs could leave people out who have expensive replacements and cannot shoulder costs.
 - Our program allows low income customers to use any licensed plumber and does not have to pay up front for work, removing cost barrier so long as they go through our process.

School Sampling

- LCRI pushes school sampling program to 2027.
- PWSA watching proposed regulations and will continue to update.

Housekeeping

- Next meeting will be held June 6, 2024.
- Meeting topics will include:
 - Water main construction updates
 - LSLR updates
 - Other program updates
 - Reimbursement Updates
 - We will include other topics upon request.