



Community Lead Response Advisory Committee

September 12, 2024

Meeting Minutes

On Conference Call:

Dan Duffy
Mora McLaughlin
Sarah Viszneki
Sharon Webb
Harrison W. Breitman
Israel Gray
Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis
Michael Podskoch
Julie Barg
Sarah Stoner
Jared Thompson
Will Pickering
David Kennedy
Marcela Gonzalez Rivas
Dominique Nunley

Welcome and Introductions

SDWMR Updates

- Still working on SDWMR 2022, split into three contracts
 - B and C were started a little over one year ago and are wrapping up now
 - B – 3 streets in Elliott need to be restored as part of cost-share with City, working through final arrangements.
 - C – a few last service lines are to be replaced in Marshall Shadeland, restoration work to follow. Point Breeze and Spring Garden are complete.
 - Contract A was split into two sub-contracts, both were started last month.
 - Squirrel Hill (A1) and Brighton Heights (A2)



- Service line and water main replacement have started in A1, just service line verifications have started in A2.
- Work on both sites will take approximately 15 months. Contractor expects to have water main replacement work done before end of year.
- Current lead map shows a lot of active sites, but we will be closing many out by next week.
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Other Water Main Replacement Activities:

- South Side Flats Sewer Separation
 - Work has been limited to service line verifications.
 - Finding decent amount of lead during verifications.
- 2023 Water Main Relay Contract
 - Work is wrapping up – Blenheim Court done, Kennedy Avenue finished with water main, Logan Street about to start replacing service lines.
 - Zuzu Circle postponed until next year.
 - Not finding much lead at these locations.

Future SDWMR Activities

- 2023 SDWMR
 - Design and permitting complete.
 - PENNVEST application sent in July – their board meeting is mid-October, will get word on funding then.
 - If approved, will start construction next spring.
 - 3 separate contracts – 10 miles of main, 1,600 service lines.
- 2024 SDWMR
 - Design is underway. Are trying to expedite time between design and PENNVEST application – divided design into 5 separate areas with 5 separate consultants.
 - Aiming to apply to PENNVEST early next year (February or May).
 - Fall 2025 construction start. If we must apply to PENNVEST in May, will begin work end of 2025.
- Have started planning for 2025 SDWMR. SDWMR projects are key part of replacing all lead left in system.

LSLR/Future Work

- 2023A Neighborhood Lead Service Line Replacement (NLSLR) (PENNVEST-funded)
 - Started construction a little over one year ago.
 - Goal to work at 1,500 locations across five neighborhoods. Later added Allentown and portion of Manchester.
 - Service line work in first five neighborhoods complete, wrapping up Allentown now with approximately 20 more locations, verifications just began in Manchester.



- Have increased total planned locations to 1,900
- We are not finding much lead in these areas, with exception of Allentown, and hope to find more in Manchester (have not worked here previously).
- This and 2023B contract have been going to neighborhoods that we have worked in before. Previously we skipped skip over unresponsive locations, and now we are going back. We continue to have difficulty getting an agreement from these unresponsive locations a second time.
 - While we are having to send more termination notices in these areas, we are cleaning up our inventory. We are also finding a lot of vacant locations, leading to higher unresponsive rates.
- We are investigating if we can add more locations from Manchester to spend last funds on this contract.
- 2023B NLSLR (PENNVEST-funded)
 - Began in March 2024.
 - This contract also contains a lot of vacant locations, making it challenging to collect agreements. Have done a lot of canvassing, phone calls, meetings, and coordinating with Council.
 - Close to wrapping up work in four of six neighborhoods.
 - Began work in Middle Hill this week. This is the largest work order of the contract. Additional crews will move from east end to increase capacity.
 - We are finding a lot of lead in these work areas – 38% public, 53% private.
 - We may not be able to add more locations to this contract since we are finding so much lead.

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – if you are finding more lead than anticipated and don’t have enough money to replace, is there an education plan to ensure people filter if they won’t receive replacement?

- We had planned on 1,500 locations for this contract and have only sent 1,000 agreements, giving us some buffer. If our budget does not allow us to hit all locations, we will not send any additional agreements.
- We do general outreach on reimbursement, filters, and test kits.

Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis – 2023 EBL data has been released by the County – are you aware?

- Dan hasn’t looked at it yet, but made our GIS team aware.
- 2024A NLSLR (PENNVEST-funded)
 - PENNVEST approved \$14M grants, \$18M loans in July.
 - Construction started in late summer.
 - 11 neighborhoods – 5 neighborhoods for first contract, three-a-piece for other two contractors.
 - We started in neighborhoods where we have street paving coordination with the City or other utilities.
 - Finding a lot of lead in Mount Washington, not a lot in Garfield. Perry South is middling.



- Have budget for approximately 4,000 locations. Staggering agreement mailings. First half were sent in May, second half will be sent in October.
- Current efforts are challenging to internal staff – many contractors active at one time, putting pressure on internal staff to keep up with productivity.
- 2024 B NLSLR
 - Had submitting application to PENNVEST in May – happy to announce that we received a 100% grant, \$15M. No impact to ratepayers other than for \$1.5M in restoration costs that PWSA will fund through rates. PENNVEST does not see restoration work beyond the limits of our excavation as necessary to the project (but the City requires it), so they will not allow us to use their finds rather, it meets City requirements.
 - We are currently undergoing procurement for our construction management firm and contractor, will close with PENNVEST in February, and will begin construction in March.
 - Seven neighborhoods, with Upper Hill being recent addition. We anticipate doing a lot of water main replacement work in Upper Hill in 2026, so we want to complete service line work there as soon as possible to avoid future conflicts.
 - Agreements will be sent in January.
- Urgent LSLR
 - Will replace private lead that was prompted by a leak.
 - Will also replace public lead service lines in the event of Field Operations are busy.
 - Contract will run until July 2025 – a new contract will be bid in the Spring of 2025.

Opt-Out Status

- Many locations opt out because they think their private service line is non-lead.
- 50 opt-outs in active construction and have verified 25 – all found to be non-lead.
 - If lead is found, we will reengage with the property owner to get agreement.
- We abandon service line at condemned locations.
- We replace public side and leave private side unconnected at vacant locations.

Michelle NC – how often do you update construction data on web maps? Are opt-outs reflected?

- We push data to web map at end of each month, it is not live due to necessary quality checks.
- There is nothing that reflects opt out, but we do note a reported non-lead.

Outreach (Mora McLaughlin):

- Outreach consists of:
 - Virtual and in-person public meetings, I am attending the Brighton Heights Citizens Federation meeting later tonight.



- Robocalls
 - Unresponsive locations
 - Packet mailing notice
- Lead Help Direct phone calls
- Directed outreach for locations verified private lead
- Requests for support from City Council, City Planning, Mayor’s Office in areas with linger unresponsive locations. We engaged District 9 regarding low return rate in East End work orders and are doing the same for the Middle Hill work order, which is hovering around 53% return rate.
- Project updates 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>
- Transfer of lead.pgh2o.com to main website continues.

Overall LSLR Progress

- We are close to surpassing total replacements we did in 2023.
- 818 public, 763 private lead line replacements in 2024

Lead Spending To-Date

- We have spent well over \$200M on lead line replacements to-date.

Removing Lead by 2026

- At last meeting, our goals were to:
 1. Work with PENNVEST to determine financing
 2. Determine work plan for how to complete the work.
 3. Evaluate internal processes and personnel to complete work.
- PENNVEST financing
 - Have met with PENNVEST staff and Board members
 - Initially hoped to complete final work as singular program.
 - Have been eager to utilize Bipartisan Inf. Bill (49% grant dollars to the states) and will expire in 2026. Unsure if Congress will fund lead line replacements beyond BIL.
 - SRF will still be available, but perhaps without the generous 49% grant dollars).



- 2023A&B had over 75% grant
- 2024A had less grant percentage, but still had highest grant award in PENNVEST history.
- 2024B beat the 2024A grant record with a 100% grant.
- Strategy – Pennvest advised if we limit out asks to \$10-\$15M every 6 months it will maximize our grant dollars.
 - To meet our 2026 goal we would have two more application cycles and potentially be leaving \$30M grant dollars on the table.
 - If we ask for \$15M every 6 months, we will not be complete until early 2030 – and the potential for grant dollars after 2026 (when the BIL funding is complete) is greatly reduced.
 - We must find a balance between maximizing grant money and completing program as soon as possible
 - **SOLUTION – take advantage of BIL as much as we can with higher asks and extend program by one year until the end of 2027.**
 - **Will Pickering – we want to maximize grant dollars and still be mindful of prior 2026 goal, we feel we need to slightly extend goal to 2027. We think this is a good solution to get all lead out and minimize costs. We have other cost considerations in other focus areas of organization.**

Jared Thompson – The only cycle where you requested \$30M, you got a very high grant. Do you think this will happen again or if you receive more loans on next ask, will you change your strategy?

- Dan – we anticipate receiving a funding package similar to 2024A. It will be more loan as a percentage, but if we extend our program beyond 2027 it is likely that the awards will be all loan after the BIL funding is complete.
- 2025A will be a \$30M request to PENNVEST in October.
 - 3,500 locations.
 - We did use old EBL data from ACHD for this round of prioritization.
 - Focused on priority level 3 and above and used income as a further ranking mechanism.
 - Have found 12 neighborhoods and are folding in adjacent neighborhoods where we have less than 50 locations so we can “clean up inventory”. Although they may not be meeting priority criteria, we want to be efficient in our construction planning.
 - We are working closely with SDWMMR planners to ensure there are not conflicts.

Termination Updates



- 224 locations, all unoccupied.
- Have had some challenges recently.
 - One termination location filed a PUC complaint, we were happy to be supported by the PUC.
- 25 locations were ultimately replaced after the water was shut off. It is only if we have completed the sidewalk replacement and left the neighborhood that we would refer them to our reimbursement program.
- 2,096 37 day notices sent. 300 more letters went out on September 11th that are not reflected in this data.

Orthophosphate Update

- As per last meeting, DEP approved our request for Designation of Optimal Water Quality Parameters.
- DEP reduced our compliance sampling requirements to 50 locations every three years with the first event June – September 2025.
- We feel we should still test on an annual basis for our own knowledge, started Voluntary (unofficial) Sampling Event recently.
 - We were interested in testing in the summer – all compliance testing has been in fall or spring. Wanted to see what our water quality was when water temperature was highest, which can increase lead levels.
- 87 samples taken and results are excellent:
 - 1st liter – 3.01ppb
 - 5th liter – 2.79ppb
 - Highest of 1st and 5th – 3.54ppb
 - New sampling parameters in LCRI require utilities collect 1st and 5th, count the highest of the two. We tested with this future requirement in mind.

Jared Thompson: Are you getting any outliers above action level? What are you doing to follow up?

- **Two of the 87 locations exceed 15 ppb. Since 2020 we have had a procedure in place something akin to the ‘find and fix’ requirements of the LCRR.**
 - **If we receive a high sample, we will notify property owner and ask them to participate in more samples. We also visit their home and determine why orthophosphate is not working effectively in their home.**
 - **We will collect 12 sequential samples to see where the high result is coming from within the service line and plumbing.**
 - **We observe our distribution system, including nearby water quality test results, hydrant flushing schedule, if they live on a dead-end water main.**
 - **As our Urgent LSLR budget has allowed, we have replaced lead lines found at exceedance sites.**



- Early in our use of orthophosphate, we found that locations with low water usage were having less orthophosphate buildup in the pipe and higher test results.
- Early in use of orthophosphate, we had exceedances on dead end mains. Our hydrant flushing has seemingly alleviated that.
 - Hydrant flushing program is very robust in recent years.

Reimbursement Program Update (Julie Barg):

- *Refresher on eligibility based on income shown.*
- 1,215 total locations that have been closed for various reasons that mean we will not replace the line.
- 592 complete applications, with lead line replaced.
- We have received more applications to-date than we did in all of 2023.

PWSA Assistance to Others (Mora McLaughlin)

- Project team has provided technical assistance and lessons-learned to 31 entities since 2021, two more since we last met.
- Interested parties include utilities, municipalities, state governments, EPA, and policy centers responsible for EPA Technical Assistance.
- Share packet after meetings that includes communications materials, Board-approved policy, IFB examples, Lead Help Liaison job description, which many organizations are interested in.
- Most interested parties come to us through word-of-mouth or research about most successful lead programs.
- If you know any entities that would be interested in speaking with us, we are always available.

General Updates

- PUC settlement requirement status spreadsheet will be shared after this meeting.
- Web map updated monthly.
- Customer sample program continues.

LSLR Plan/Inventory

- We are due to submit a Joint Status Report to Administrative Law Judge in about 1 week.
- Updated inventory to be sent to PADEP by October 16th.
 - PADEP has new requirements to designate “non-lead” status. GIS team is working to update our records based on this.



- Have worked with consultant called Blue Conduit to update inventory machine learning model that was first done by University of Pittsburgh.
- Will be sending letter to all lead, galvanized, and unknown locations after inventory is submitted October 16th.
 - Developing media plan to stave off high volume of calls and questions to Lead Help Desk.

Housekeeping

- Next meeting set for December 5th.
- If there are any topics you would like us to address, let us know.