

Public Hearing | March 18, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.

(opening statement)

Lead Service Line Replacement Revolving Loan Fund - Application

History

I'm sure most people remember the 2014 Flint, Michigan water crisis. This issue brought national attention to the dangers of lead contamination in drinking water. In response, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) implemented new regulations requiring all communities in the state to replace lead service lines to protect the public health.

Where does lead come from?

It is important to note that lead is common and naturally occurring element that can be found in all parts of our environment – the air, the soil, the water, and even inside our homes. Lead can enter drinking water when plumbing materials that contain lead corrode, especially where the water has high acidity or low mineral content that corrodes pipes and fixtures. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures. In homes with lead pipes that connect the home to the water main, also known as lead services lines, these pipes are typically the most significant source of lead in the water. Lead pipes are more likely to be found in older village's, cities and homes built before 1986. Among homes without lead service lines, the most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and plumbing with lead solder.

Illinois' Response to Flint Michigan

Recognizing these concerns, Illinois passed the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act, which took effect on January 1, 2022. This legislation requires all public water systems to develop and implement plans to identify and replace lead service lines.

The first purpose of the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act, is to require owners and operators of community water supplies [municipalities] to develop, implement, and maintain a comprehensive water service-line material inventory and replacement plan.

Homewood completed our lead service line inventory and submitted the inventory to the IEPA on last year (April 2024) officially kick starting our Lead service line replacement program.

Purpose of the Public Hearing

Tonight's public hearing is being held to gather feedback and answer questions regarding the Village's Project Summary and Preliminary Environmental Impacts Determination submitted to the IEPA in support of the Village's loan application. These documents are essential in applying for funding through the Public Water Supply Revolving Loan Program, which requires an environmental impact assessment of the proposed project. The IEPA has reviewed the Village's project plan and determined that it is technically sound and cost-effective.

Over the past two years, Village staff has been actively working to develop an inventory of all lead service lines within the community. Equally important, staff has assessed the total cost of the replacement project. We are also identifying potential funding sources for this massive project.

Homewood's Projected Costs

The projected cost to replace all lead service lines in the Village is approximately **\$70 million**. To help finance this effort, the Village has applied for a \$4 million IEPA revolving loan to begin the project in 2026. The Village must re-apply every year for these competitive funds. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the Village will receive the full amount requested each year. Because the funding is

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competitive and gives priority to disadvantaged communities, there is no guarantee that Homewood will be funded in subsequent years, depending on the availability of funds.

Homewood Replacement Methodology

To ensure an efficient and effective approach our replacement project, the Village will prioritize lead service line replacements based on three key factors:

1. High-Risk Sites – Locations with the greatest potential for lead exposure (older areas).
2. Disadvantaged Areas – Areas in the community that may require financial or logistical assistance.
3. Planned Capital Improvements in the Right-of-Way – Coordination with other infrastructure projects to minimize disruption and costs.

Homewood’s replacement project is part of a broader plan to remove all lead service lines by 2036.

Annual Replacement Requirements per the IEPA

Starting in Fiscal Year 2026, the Village plans to replace approximately 267 lead service lines, with an ongoing target of 410 replacements per year. This pace will keep the Village above the required 6% annual replacement rate, ensuring compliance with 415 ILCS - meeting the 10% rolling annual average outlined in the new Lead and Copper Rule Improvements guidelines (LCRI).

Water Accounts and Lead Service Lines

Currently, the Village’s water system serves 6,839 total service lines (*includes commercial and residential*), of which 3,763 have been identified as full or partial lead service lines. Additionally, there are 600 service lines where the material is still unknown. Our inspections and evaluation of these unidentified service lines will continue, even during the start of the replacement program. Until these lines have been inspected and categorized, the IEPA mandates that the lines be categorized as “lead service lines.” This means that the number of confirmed lead service lines may increase as further investigations are completed.

Public Comments Encouraged

The public comment input period for this project remains open until March 28, 2025. Unless new information is presented that warrants reconsideration, the IEPA will approve the project plan at the conclusion of this period. Copies of the project documents are available on the Village website at <https://www.village.homewood.il.us/how-do-i/learn-about/lead-service-line> and in person at the Village Hall front desk.

Our Consultant

Representatives from Burns & McDonnell, our lead line replacement consultants, are here this evening to address any questions. Staff is also present to answer questions. We will also stay at the conclusion of the public hearing to answer any questions. We encourage residents to share their input as we move forward with this critical initiative to ensure safe, clean drinking water for our community.

Read aloud during the Public Hearing by Napoleon Haney, Village Manager