

Sustainable Resources and Infrastructure

Greeley Lead Service Line - Identification & Replacement Project

In recent years, there has been greater national awareness of the potential for lead in drinking water and the adverse health effects this can cause over a long period. Lead pipes have historically been installed in homes, in a time when people did not know that lead could seep into drinking water. The issue really became apparent with the public health crisis in Flint, Mich., from 2014-2019.

The water leaving Greeley's treatment facilities is lead-free, compliant with drinking water regulations, and high quality. Lead in domestic water does not come from our water supplies or the city's water delivery pipelines. We have been monitoring and proactively removing lead from our supply network since the 1990's. Historically, lead piping was sometimes used in the service lines that connect individual properties to the water main. The Water & Sewer Department has already replaced all known city-owned portions of the service lines containing lead (from the water main to the water meter,) but has not replaced the customer-owned portions (from the meter to the house) as shown in Figure 1. Until now, these have been left for homeowners to replace at their discretion. This means that older homes in Greeley may still have service lines that contain lead. In practice, the City of Greeley has found lead service lines present in homes built prior to 1960, therefore we are prioritizing these homes. However, it was not until 1980 that Greeley adopted the International Plumbing Code that banned lead in water service lines, so there is a small chance that lead service lines could be present until this date.

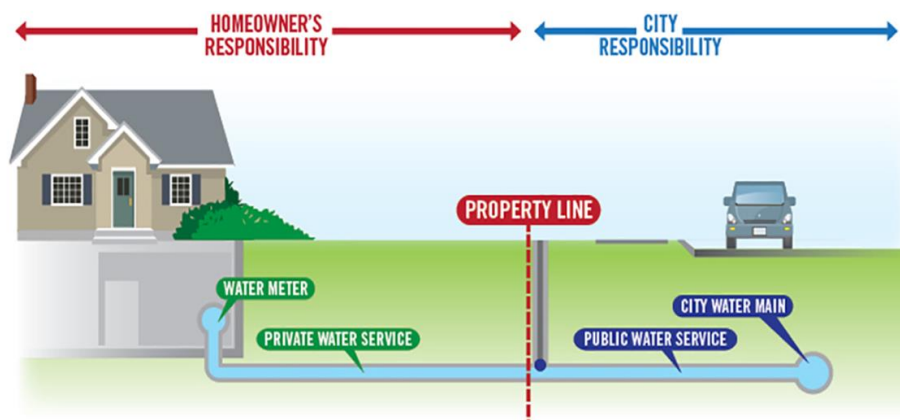


Figure 1 – Typical maintenance responsibilities between City and Homeowners.

In December 2021, the Environmental Protection Agency released the Lead and Copper Rule Revision (LCRR), that strengthen the regulatory framework governing lead in drinking water. One of the key elements of the LCRR is the requirement for water systems to develop and maintain a service line inventory, including material information for both the public and privately owned portions of the system. The LCRR also required that any galvanized steel lines downstream of historical lead lines must also be removed.

To provide the best possible water to our customers, and to stay ahead of the regulatory framework the city is preparing to undertake two related projects. The first project is known as the WATER SERVICE LINE INVENTORY POTHOLING PROJECT. This project will identify homes with lead service lines or galvanized steel downstream of historical lead service lines. The first phase will start in early 2023. It begins with direct mail communications and an online questionnaire for impacted customers. Thereafter, the project must further investigate those service lines that are likely lead or galvanized downstream of lead by “digging” basketball-sized holes, known as potholing. The potholing work is focused at this time on 120 high priority properties to identify and document service line pipe material (public & private). This project will then be expanded to further investigate nearly 2,000 older homes over the next three years.

Before potholing begins, affected customers will receive two notification letters and a door hanger. In addition to this, city personnel will be available to answer customer questions. Customers will also receive an invitation to complete an online questionnaire to identify service line material as it enters the home. Those who complete the survey will receive a \$50 discount on their water bill. Those with suspected or confirmed lead service lines or galvanized steel downstream of a historical lead service line will be offered free filtered water pitchers and a six-month supply of replacement filters.

Where lead or galvanized steel downstream of historical lead service lines are identified, the second project, known as the WATER SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT, will replace such lines at no cost to the customer (private systems are excluded). The new service lines will extend to the first fitting inside of customer homes as required by the EPA’s LCRR revisions. Customers will need to sign an acknowledgement and consent form for this work to begin. They can decline this replacement, but they may eventually be required to do so at their own expense, estimated at \$6,000 to \$12,000.

These projects are critical for the City of Greeley as we meet changing regulations and continue our mission to provide high quality, safe, and reliable drinking water to customers. More information is available on our website at [Lead and Copper \(greeleygov.com\)](https://www.greeleygov.com/Lead-and-Copper) The water quality team can also be contacted via email at waterquality@greeleygov.com or by phone at **970-350-9836**.