

Coffee with the Mayor

Ser 53 (26-04) 2026 Lead Line Replacement

The Utilities Manager has been speaking for several months at the council meetings about the requirement to identify the type of pipe that brings water into your home. Some time ago you may remember being asked to identify, by material, the water line that services your home from the water meter. Many responded with the information but there were many that either weren't sure or didn't know. A little background may help.

The Final Lead and Copper Rule adopted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2021 required all communities with a public water system to develop a Lead Service Line (LSL) inventory including a material inventory of the portions owned by both the utility service lines (system side) and the customer service lines (private side). All Public Water Systems were required to complete and publicly post by October 16, 2024. EPA published a subsequent rule, the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) plan, requiring identification of all unknowns and eventual full replacement of any "lead" or "galvanized" lines within 10 years. The LCRI requires submission of a baseline inventory by November 1, 2027, including information identified on connectors as well as updates to service line material. The LCRI also required the water utility (Linton Utilities) to submit a Service Line Replacement Plan, also by November 1, 2027, and included additional requirements for notification and risk mitigation measures.

The initial lead service line inventory was completed by the city in 2024. There are 2973 service lines with the water system. The inventory revealed 47 lead or galvanized lines, 600 known non-lead lines and 2,326 unknowns, a significant percentage. A high priority is placed on identification of the unknown service lines. Of the large number of "unknown" service lines, it is estimated approximately 8% may be found to be lead or galvanized and will require replacement. But that is only an estimate or guess. To accurately determine the lines needing replaced requires potholing, the process of exposing the lines into and out of the water meter. The estimated cost to conduct this process for all the unknowns is over \$1,200,000. If, and I repeat if, there are only 8%, or 186 lines actually needing replaced, the estimated cost, at \$15,000 per home, is over \$2,700,000 plus over \$700,000 for the 47 already identified.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provides funds to the Indiana Finance Authority-State Revolving Fund (IFA-SRF) for communities that have an average median household income below the state average, which Linton qualifies for. As stated, there is significant upfront cost to address and complete this federal requirement. The IFA-SRF has an incentivized program in place for replacement of lines, a 50% grant and a 50% interest free

loan. If awarded, this will go far in assisting the city water utility in addressing this mandate.

We have been working with Commonwealth Engineering to prepare supporting documentation in order to make application to the SRF board by April 1st. Their efforts are well documented in the Lead Service Line Replacement Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). This PER is available in city hall for public review and comment. This is just one of the several regulations and mandates the city utilities must comply with.