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Village of Hazel Crest awarded \$4M for lead service line replacement program;
Launches resident survey to gain information about locations of LSLs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT, VILLAGE MANAGER DANTE SAWYER

708.335.9600 EXT 107

dsawyer@villageofhazelcrest.com

HAZEL CREST, ILLINOIS— 06/24/2022 — In October 2020, the Village of Hazel Crest passed a resolution to mitigate exposure to lead in drinking water by conducting a thorough and transparent inventory of all water service lines and creating a plan for replacement. The village also made a commitment to prioritizing its most vulnerable residents in its lead pipe replacement plan.

Today, the village is proud to announce it has reached a critical stage of its lead pipe inventory and replacement effort; Hazel Crest has been officially informed it is on the state's intended funding list for \$4M of principal forgiveness for year one of their lead service line replacement program. Earlier this year, after determining its plan to replace its approximately 2,700 lead service lines was "advisable, necessary, and in the best interest of the public health, safety and welfare," the Village President and Board of Trustees authorized the village to apply for \$30 million of federal infrastructure funding through the state of Illinois.

"To receive this funding is a vital, long-term step toward permanently protecting the health of our residents," said Village President Vernard L. Alsberry Jr. "I want to thank the state of Illinois, and our staff for their work to support our lead service line replacement program."

As part of the process to identify lead pipes, the Village of Hazel Crest is launching a survey asking residents to provide important information so we can quickly understand the locations and number of lead lines. This will help start the replacement process as soon as possible. This survey work will also help Hazel Crest meet new regulations placed on water utilities by the State of Illinois.

The village is currently working with the Center for Geospatial Solutions and BlueConduit as part of its partnership with the Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC) to update the initial lead pipe inventory. In the survey, the village is respectfully asking residents and businesses to strengthen the inventory work by visually inspecting the water lines and connections entering their homes and properties for lead. The presence of lead pipes does not necessarily indicate the presence of lead in drinking water, but the village will offer filters to all residents if lead service lines or connections are found.

Next Steps

In the coming days, residents of Hazel Crest will receive a letter about the survey and asking for their assistance. A QR code on the letter will take residents straight to the survey online. (The survey will also be available online on the village's website at www.villageofhazelcrest.org.) In addition to the letter, the village is also asking for help from elected officials, community leaders, and the news media, to inform the public of the survey. All public communications will also be repeated frequently on social media.

“Our ultimate goal is to remove all of the lead from our water system. To successfully achieve that goal, we need the community’s help to identify the water lines in their homes and businesses,” said Dante Sawyer, Hazel Crest Village Manager. “The more information we can receive during the critical early stage of our work, the faster we’ll be able to hit the ground running with replacement efforts that will benefit of the entire village.”

The letter and other public communications will show residents how to identify the water lines within their homes and businesses and determine if they are made of lead.

Here is the step-by-step process we will ask residents to use as part of the survey:

- Locate the water line coming into the building, typically found in the basement near the water meter.
- Identify a test area on the pipe after it comes into the building, but before the valve/meter. If the pipe is covered or wrapped, expose a small area of metal.
- Use the flat edge of a screwdriver or other tool to scratch through any corrosion that may have built up on the outside of the pipe.
- If the pipe is a dull, silver-gray color and easily scratched with a coin, the pipe is likely a lead pipe. Use a magnet. Strong magnets do NOT attach to lead pipes.
- If the pipe is a dull, silver-gray color and a magnet DOES attach to the pipe, it is likely a galvanized pipe.
- A copper pipe is similar in color to a penny, and a white, rigid pipe is likely plastic.
- If the pipe is lead, email your street address to PublicWorks@villageofhazelcrest.com or call Village of Hazel Crest Department of Public Works at (708) 335-9600 ext. 200. .

This is the QR Code Hazel Crest will use in its letter to residents.



Project Bid Scheduling

Now that the state has committed \$4 million to the Village of Hazel Crest for lead service line replacement, the next steps are to set up a bid scheduling for the replacement work. The funding comes from the Public Water Supply Loan Program (PWSLP), which is federal funding through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and provides low interest loans to eligible recipients, primarily local government units, for the construction of community water supply facilities and other facilities that fulfill federal State Revolving Fund (SRF) requirements for a Green Project Reserve.

The loan program is capitalized annually with federal grants and state matching funds, with these amounts supplemented by program repayments that now exceed \$20 million on an annual basis. Loans carry a maximum twenty-year term, with interest rates set annually at one-half the bond market rate, and funds are awarded competitively.

Upon approval, the loan is to be repaid by the revenues of the water system. However, in accordance with the Procedures for Issuing Loans from the Public Water Supply Loan Program, the village may be eligible for up to 100% of the costs to be forgiven by the State of Illinois.

For more information, press only:
Dante Sawyer
Hazel Crest Village Manager
708.335.9600 ext. 107
dsawyer@villageofhazelcrest.com