

Key Points Discussed

- **City Remediation Project:** The City's lead pipe remediation project began in **2025** as part of a national **EPA** initiative that mandates all cities to begin lead pipe abatement by late **2027**. Syracuse is proactively initiating this project ahead of schedule. While the **EPA** requires the replacement of all lead pipes within ten years, **Commissioner Brandt** anticipates that, given the project's extensive scope in Syracuse, the city will have a **fourteen-year timeline** to complete the remediation.
- **Lead Service Lines:** There are at least **14,000** lead service lines identified for replacement. Some neighborhoods, like **Eastwood** and **Salt Springs**, were not part of the city when these lines were installed, requiring further investigation to ascertain the number of lead lines.
- **Project Cost:** The total projected cost for the remediation project is **\$300 million**. The City is funding this initiative with annual deposits of **\$25 million**, along with additional government grants.
- **Water Sources:** Syracuse's water system is primarily sourced from **Skaneateles Lake**, bringing in **40 million gallons** daily, with an additional **1 million gallons** from **Lake Ontario**.
- **Lead Protection Measures:** To prevent lead leaching into the water supply, the City adds **FDA-approved food-grade Orthophosphate**, which creates a protective barrier in the pipes.
- **User Recommendations:** Residents are advised to run cold water for a few minutes in the morning or after periods of inactivity to flush out any potential lead.
- **Historical Context:** Lead pipes were installed from the **1880s** until they were banned in **1986**.
- **Testing and Compliance:** In early **2024**, a testing error led to exceedance of the **EPA** lead threshold (15 parts per billion). The City has since contracted a new testing company and is mandated to test water for lead twice yearly.
- **Replacement Progress:** In **2025**, the City replaced **800** lead service lines, with plans to replace both lead and galvanized steel lines with **copper**.
- **Inclusive Replacement Plans:** While only the main service lines are typically the City's responsibility, all components will be replaced at no cost to residents to ensure lead-free water delivery.

Additional Information

- **Previous Replacements:** In **2005** and **2007**, the city replaced lead service lines on the public side. Now, they will begin replacing private lines for **2,700** homes that were previously unaffected.
- **Streamlined Contractor Applications:** To expedite the above project, the city will open multiple bids to contractors instead of awarding one bid, aiming to complete **1,400 to 2,000 homes** this year.
- **Replacement Order:** Currently, there is no established plan for prioritizing neighborhoods. The focus will be on replacing the most needed lines without regard to resident requests.
- **Pipe Assessment Technology:** A new vacuum truck has been acquired to quickly determine pipe materials without extensive digging.
- **Online Resources:** A map of affected lines can be found at www.syr.gov/Departments/Water/Lead-Free-Syracuse, where the project's progress will also be updated.
- **Homeowner Engagement:** If your line is marked as "unknown," you can test and upload results to assist the city in updating their inventory.
- **Minimal Disruption Plans:** The city plans to make small **4x4** holes instead of trenches to reduce yard disruption. Existing lead connections will be sealed during the transition to copper lines.
- **Future Treatment:** Even after remediation, the city will continue to treat water with Orthophosphate and monitor lead due to older fixtures remaining in homes.
- **Support for Vulnerable Families:** Brita filters will be provided for families at risk, particularly those with children under **6 years**.
- **Scheduling Replacements:** Homeowners will be contacted in advance when it's time to replace lead lines, aiming to minimize water service disruptions.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** The city is also replacing outdated pump stations as part of the broader project.
- **Year-Round Replacement Objective:** The goal is to conduct private side replacements year-round, while also striving to ensure public side work can continue throughout the year.

- **Coordinated Efforts:** The City Water Department is collaborating with the Sidewalk Repair program to streamline efforts and reduce additional disruptions.

For further questions, please reach out to your elected officials or the Syracuse Water Department.