



April 7, 2026

Members of Common Council
Council City of Milwaukee
200 East Wells Street, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

SUBJECT: Update on Lead Service Line Replacements conducted per Milwaukee Code of Ordinances sec. 225-22.5

To the Honorable Members of the Common Council:

Milwaukee Code of Ordinances (MCO) sec. 225-22.5, Lead Line Service Replacement, effective January 1, 2017, mandates the replacement of certain lead water service lines on private property, and established a special assessment for replacement of lead water service lines on private property.

Pursuant to MCO sec. 225-22.5-11, semi-annual reporting is required on the financial impacts of this ordinance on property owners who have had their service lines replaced. As of December 31, 2025, the Milwaukee Water Works had performed a total of 12,564 lead service line replacements on projects with confirmed leaks, due to a planned infrastructure project, at child care facilities and schools, included in the prioritization program, or as an owner-initiated project, since January 1, 2017.

Of these 12,564 projects:

- 5,200 were a result of a leak or failure on the service line
- 2,334 were a result of a planned infrastructure project
- 3,732 were at prioritized locations
- 938 were replacements at childcare facilities
- 266 were a result of an owner initiating the project
- 75 were Owner Request locations
- 13 were replacements at schools

Additional information related to these projects:

- Most replacements occurred on service lines to residential buildings with one to four units. The property cost share was limited to \$1,600 for properties identified between January 1, 2017 and February 29, 2020, was adjusted to \$1,754 on March 1, 2020, was adjusted to \$1,843 on March 1, 2021, and was adjusted again on January 20, 2022 to \$1,723, then adjusted once again on March 1, 2023 to \$1,592. The property cost share was eliminated for qualifying properties as of January 4, 2024 via ordinance changes adopted in file #231032.
- As of December 31, 2025, the five-year average cost of replacing a public-side lead service line was \$3,935, and the five-year average cost of replacing the private-side lead service line was \$3,454. The public-side costs include pavement restoration.

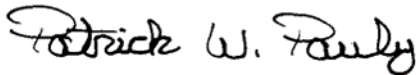
- 393 of the replacements occurred on service lines to commercial properties or residential properties with more than four units, and therefore, did not qualify for the City cost-share for private-side replacement. Property owners who have a city contractor perform the work are eligible for the full cost of the replacement to be paid through the special assessment process.

The process wherein any replacement cost falls to the property owner on their tax bill is as follows:

1. The Milwaukee Water Works will collect, verify, and recommend payment of the contractor's invoice for private-side and public-side costs. For one to four family unit properties mandated to replace the lead service line, who elect to use the city's contractor, there is no cost to the property owner. For properties that are commercial or greater than four family units mandated to replace the lead service, who elect to use the city's contractor, the owner is responsible for the lesser of the actual cost or the average current cost. For properties where the lead service is replaced at the request of the owner, the owner is responsible for the lesser of the actual cost or the average current cost.
2. The Milwaukee Water Works will submit this information to the Department of Public Works Special Assessment Section. The Special Assessment Section will keep track of the invoice and averages throughout the year and will verify their lists to be sure they have accounted for each payment.
3. All invoices received by August 15th/September 1st of any given year will be included in the Special Assessment Section's October billing to the affected property owners. Property owners have 45 days to pay in full (for example November 15th), or the amount will be equally distributed over the next 15 tax bills. Per MCO, interest will be charged on the balance of the Prime Rate + 1% at the end of June of the previous calendar year. The 2026 interest rate is 8.50%. The City of Milwaukee Treasurer's Office is responsible for adding the lead service line assessments to the property tax bill. Invoices for 224 lead service line projects were received in time for the 2017 billing, 448 were received for the 2018 billing, 726 were received for the 2019 billing, 481 were received for 2020 billing, 853 were received for the 2021 billing, 825 were received for the 2022 billing, 776 were received for the October 2023 billing, 664 were received for the October 2024 billing, and 35 were received for the October 2025 billing.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions related to this report.

Thank you,



Patrick Pauly, P.E.
Superintendent
Milwaukee Water Works

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