



# Lead Line Replacement Engagement Summary

*Engagement Summary*

June 23, 2021



## Executive Summary

There is currently no program in place for the replacement of private side only lead lines. Since the City side is already a non-lead material, any work taking place within the City right-of-way does not require the replacement of the lead line on private property. To achieve the City's goal of replacing all lead service lines by the end of 2026, a strategy is needed for the replacement of private side only lead lines.

City Council will consider four options for replacing private side only lead service lines.

1. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines at their own expense, with the costs eligible to be deferred to their property taxes.
2. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines at their own expense, with no eligibility to defer payments to their property taxes.
3. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines with costs shared between the owner (40%) and the City (60%).
4. No requirement for property owners to replace private side only lead service lines.

An online survey was open for responses from May 26 to June 18, 2021 to gauge support for each option, as well as to receive comments on the project. The survey was available to the general public on the project's Engage webpage and was directly marketed by mail out to owners and residents of properties known to have a private side only lead service line.

In total, there were 59 responses to the survey, 33 of whom own property that has private side only lead service lines.

Of the four presented options, option 3 received a strong level of support from survey respondents, options 1 and 4 received some moderate support, and option 2 received very little support. For the 33 respondents who own property with private side only lead service lines, almost 9 in 10 strongly support option 3.

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## 1 Background

Water service lines are the pipes that connect buildings, like houses, to the water main in the street. The portion of the water service line between the property line and the building is the responsibility of the property owner, while the portion between the water main and the property line is owned by the City.

Prior to 2010, when the City was replacing lead service lines, property owners were given the option of replacing the portion from the property line to their house. Many owners chose to replace the private side of the lead service lines when the City's portion was replaced, but some did not.

Today, about 256 properties have lead material on the private side of the service lines but the City side is not lead. These are referred to as "private side only" lead service lines.

In 2010, City Council made it mandatory for the entire lead service line to be replaced anytime one is cut into for repair or replacement. In 2016, City Council approved a strategy to replace all lead service lines in the City by the end of 2026.

When a lead service line is replaced from the water main to the house (referred to as a full lead line replacement), the City obtains a price for the replacement from the contractor. The price is then shared by the City and the property owner, with the City paying 60% and the property owner paying 40%, up to a maximum of \$3,250. The 60% represents the City's portion of the service line and the 40% represents the property owner's portion. Although the full replacement cost is shared between the City and the property owner, the property owner is still fully responsible for the cost of the replacement on their property.

When a full service line replacement is done, the property owner can pay the contractor directly for their portion of the replacement, or they can have the City pay the contractor and have the costs added to their property taxes. This is referred to as the tax deferral option, and can be done over 1, 3, or 5 years.

There is currently no program in place for the replacement of private side only lead lines. Since the City side is already a non-lead material, any work taking place within the City right-of-way does not require the replacement of the lead line on private property. To achieve the City's goal of replacing all lead service lines by the end of 2026, a strategy is needed for the replacement of private side only lead lines.

Four options for replacing private side only lead service lines were considered for this engagement.

1. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines at their own expense, with the costs eligible to be deferred to their property taxes.
2. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines at their own expense, with no eligibility to defer payments to their property taxes.
3. Require property owners to replace private side only lead service lines with costs shared between the owner (40%) and the City (60%).
4. No requirement for property owners to replace private side only lead service lines.

## 2 Engagement Activities

### 2.1 Marketing

An [Engage webpage](#) for the project was created on the City website.

Owners and residents of properties known to have private side only lead service lines received a mailout to explain the purpose of the engagement and to direct recipients to the Engage webpage for more information and the online survey. Recipients were also provided contact information if they had any questions.

### 2.2 Survey

An online survey was posted on the Engage webpage and was open for responses from May 26 through June 18, 2021. In total, there were 59 responses.

#### 2.2.1 Results

##### *Contextual Questions*

Respondents were asked some preliminary questions to better understand their context in relation to potential impacts of the options they were being engaged on:

Do you rent or own the home you live in?	
Rent	0%
Own	98%
Other (please specify)	2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "This is a rental property of mine. It is rented."</li> </ul>	

Was the home built before 1950?	
Yes	74%
No	19%
Not sure	7%

Does the home you live in have a lead service line?	
Yes, on both the private side and City side	7%
Yes, on the private side but the City side is already replaced	63%
No, it is already replaced on both the private side and City side	4%
No, it never had a lead service line	7%
Not sure	19%

Do you own any rental property that you don't live in?	
Yes	16%
No	84%

<b>IF YES: Was any of your rental property built before 1950?</b>	
Yes	60%
No	20%
Not sure	20%

<b>IF YES: Does any of your rental property have a lead service line?</b>	
Yes, on both the private side and City side	0%
Yes, on the private side but the City side is already replaced	56%
No, it is already replaced on both the private side and City side	11%
No, it never had a lead service line	0%
Not sure	33%

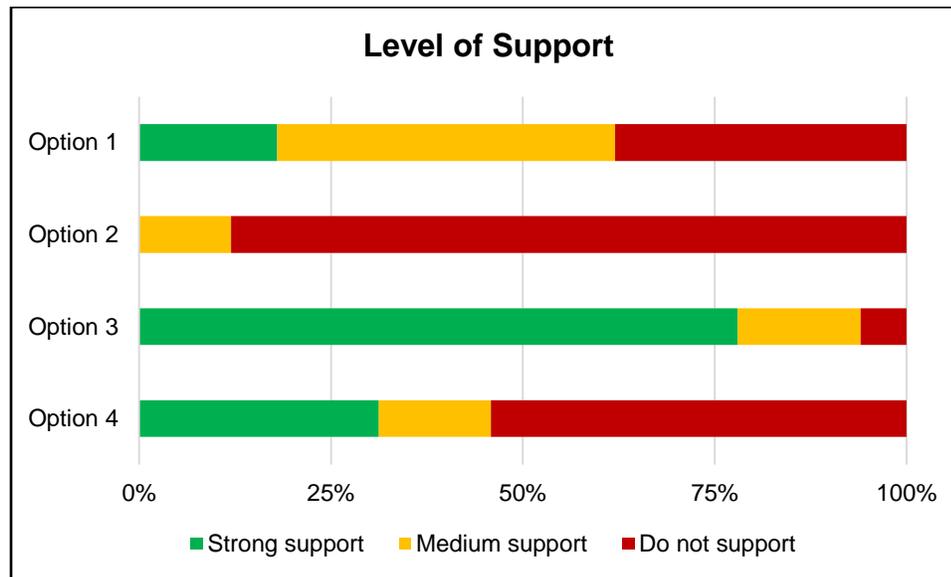
### Support for Options

Respondents were provided detailed descriptions of the implications for each option and were then asked to provide their level of support for each.

The level of support indicated for each option is provided below as a proportion of all respondents who provided a level of support for that option. The results are

A weighted score is also provided in the table as a measure of level of support. This weighted score was calculated by multiplying responses of “Strong support” by 2, responses of “Medium support” by 1, and responses of “Do not support” by 0. These “weighted” responses were then added together and divided by the total number of responses, which provides a total weighted score between 0 and 2. A “0” weighted score would indicate all respondents provided a response of “Do not support” while a weighted score of “2” would indicate all respondents provided a response of “Strong support.”

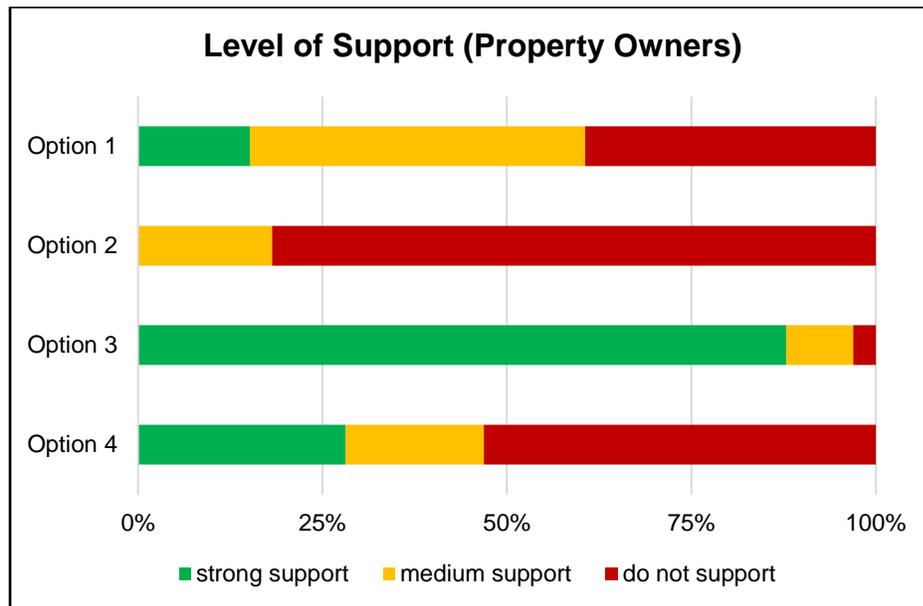
<b>What is your level of support for each option?</b>				
	Strong Support	Medium Support	Do not Support	Weighted Score (0 - 2)
Option 1 Require replacement with property owner paying full cost but able to defer costs to their property taxes	18%	44%	38%	0.80
Option 2 Require replacement with property owner paying full cost	0%	12%	88%	0.12
Option 3 Require replacement with the City covering 60% of the cost	78%	16%	6%	1.72
Option 4 Replacement not required	31%	15%	54%	0.77



### *Support for Options – Owners of Property with Private Side Only Lead Service Lines*

Of the 59 respondents, 33 indicated they own a property (home or rental) with private side only lead service lines. The level of support for each option provided by those who own property with private side only lead service lines is presented below.

<b>What is your level of support for each option? (Property Owners)</b>				
	Strong Support	Medium Support	Do not Support	Weighted Score (0 - 2)
Option 1 Require replacement with property owner paying full cost but able to defer costs to their property taxes	15%	45%	39%	0.76
Option 2 Require replacement with property owner paying full cost	0%	18%	82%	0.18
Option 3 Require replacement with the City covering 60% of the cost	88%	9%	3%	1.85
Option 4 Replacement not required	28%	19%	53%	0.76



The support indicated for each option by owners of property with private side only lead service lines is similar to the overall results. Of note, Option 3 received especially strong support (88%) among this group.

*Comments*

Respondents were invited to provide any comments they have on the project. The content of these comments were coded and analyzed to determine any common themes. The project team responded directly to those who posed questions and provided their contact information.

A summary of comments received are provided below, in descending order of how commonly the theme was expressed.

Comments Provided	Count
• Previous owner opted out – current owner didn’t have a choice to participate in the program	10
• Cannot afford the replacement / high cost	8
• Monitor ourselves / use filters or bottled water / not concerned / should be personal choice	6
• Would be unfair to have property owners 100% responsible for replacement costs / others are able to take part in program / City originally approved the lead lines	6
• Received the mailout but does not think they have lead lines / was confused by City’s communications	4
• Plan to do infill on the property in the future (past 2026) – would then be paying to replace the private side service lines twice	3
• Would like more detailed information (work involved, breakdown of payments on property taxes, etc.)	3
• Should not have been able to opt out originally	2
• My foundation / basement would make the work to replace the lead lines difficult	2
• Would prefer replacing in conjunction with future City repairs, even if past 2026	1
• Wants the City to coordinate the work rather than put that on the property owner	1

• Prefers other possible amenities	1
• Would be interested in having water tested for lead and other metals through the City lab	1
• Water was tested for lead and results indicated it was “negligible”	1

### Neighbourhood

Respondents were asked to indicate which neighbourhood they live in. Below are the counts of responses per neighbourhood in descending order.

Buena Vista	11
Exhibition	9
City Park	7
Nutana	6
Caswell Hill	4
Varsity View	3
Pleasant Hill	2
Queen Elizabeth	2
Forest Grove	1
Grosvenor Park	1
Hampton Village	1
Mayfair	1
Westmount	1
Westview	1

### 3 Data Limitations

- Due to COVID-19, we were not able to conduct any in-person engagement. Online engagement may be less inclusive as some local residents may have limited to no Internet access. The mail out sent to property owners and residents of properties with private side only lead service lines included a phone number as an option for providing input or asking questions.