



Brown Initiative for Policy

Brown University's Student-Run, Nonpartisan Think Tank

Water Quality Research Team

Who We Are

3 people, 2 team leads
(freshman, sophomores, and
juniors at Brown)

Varying backgrounds and
interests with a common
interest in getting closer to
public health parity

Our Vision

See Providence move toward
total lead line replacement.

Our Goals

Speak to stakeholders,
policymakers, and other
decision-makers to
understand the problem and
who has power to change it.

Assist in research that can
help facilitate a policy change
and this transition.

Today's Objectives



PRESENT OUR
RESEARCH ON
CITIES THAT
IMPLEMENTED
TOTAL LEAD LINE
REPLACEMENT



DISCUSS SOME KEY
TAKEAWAYS



LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE STEPS PW HAS
TAKEN AS THEY RELATE
TO WHAT OTHER CITIES
HAVE DONE



DISCUSS IDEAS WE
HAVE FOR FUTURE
PROJECT DIRECTION

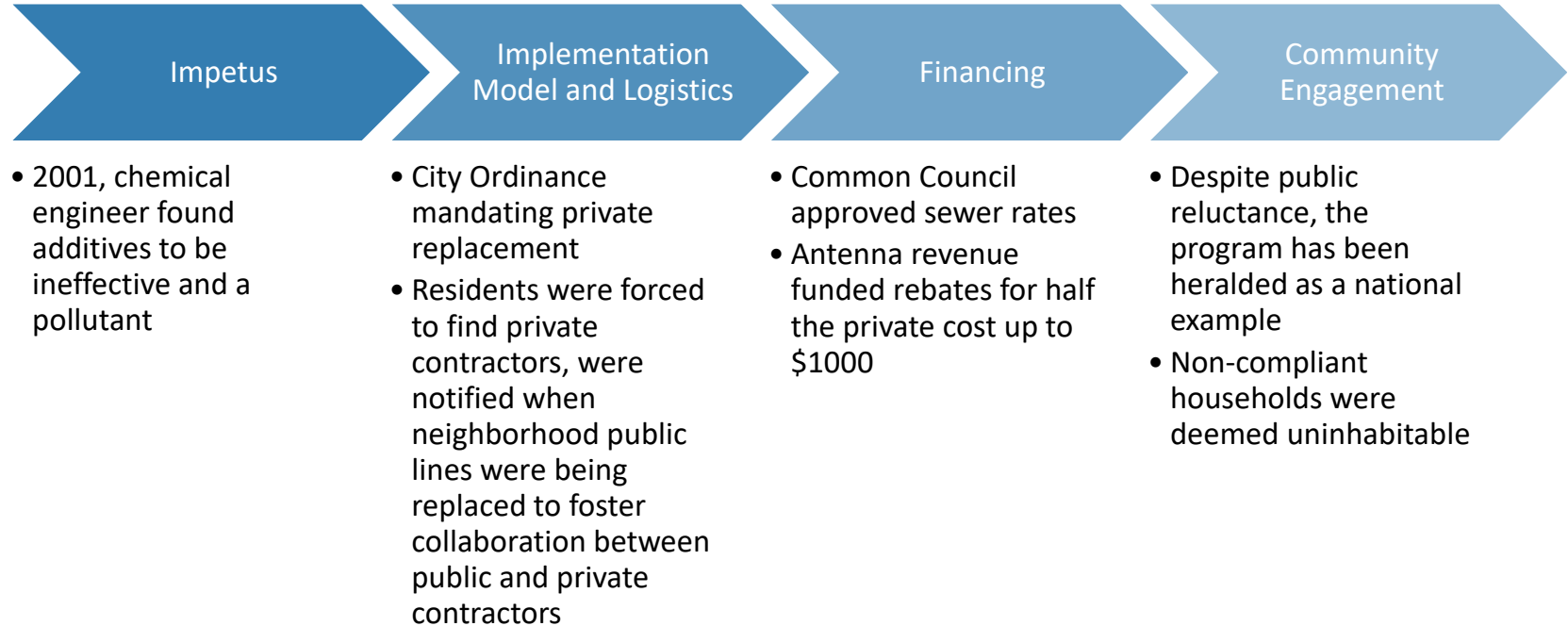


ANSWER YOUR
QUESTIONS

Research Approach

- Formulated a series of broad questions to investigate related to:
 - Impetus/Motivation, Logistical Implementation, Financing
- Picked three cities based on:
 - Similarity to Providence w/ regard to size and water utility (quasi-public)
 - Variety in their approach to solving the problem
- Desk Research
 - News stories
 - Scientific reports
 - Policy papers
- Primary Research when needed
 - Phone calls and meetings with:
 - Community organizations
 - City officials and Replacement Project Leaders in Madison, Pittsburgh, and North Providence

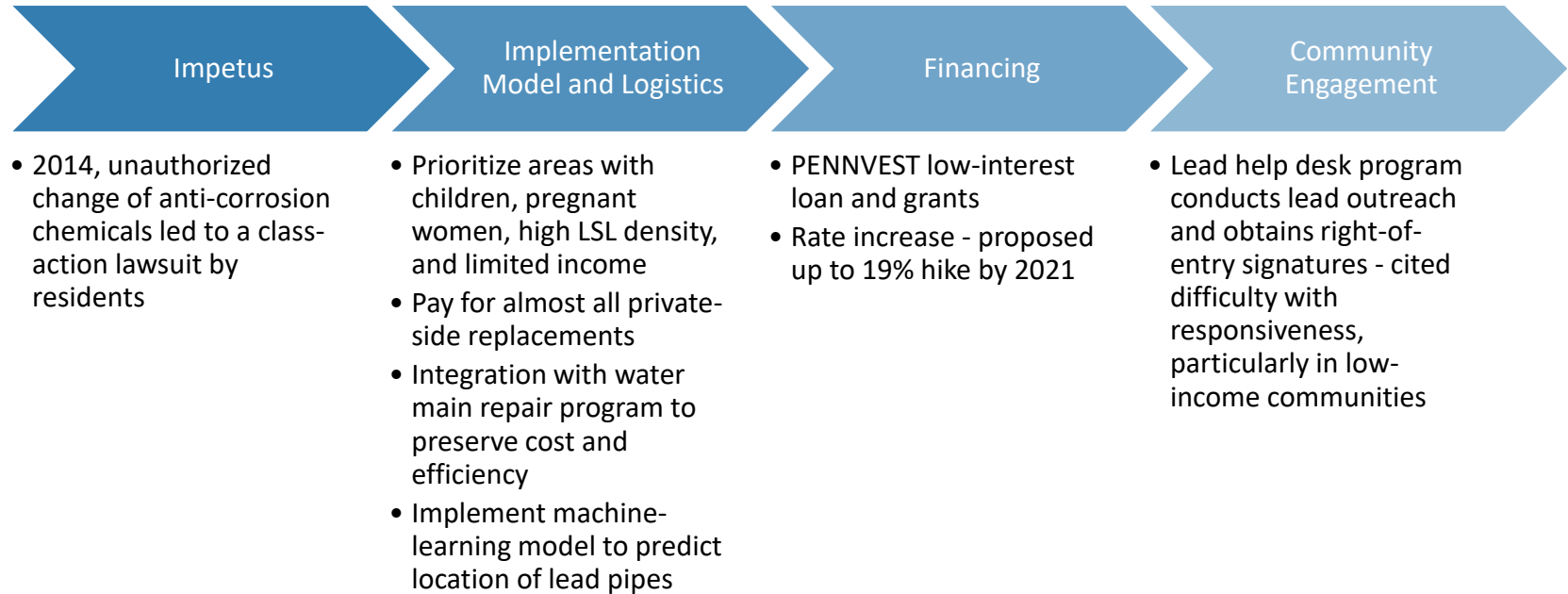
Madison



Discussion

- Advanced notice was typically missing
- Environmental factor played a role for Madison, in addition to the health factor
- Community meetings to demonstrate scratch tests
- Heavily relied on City Council

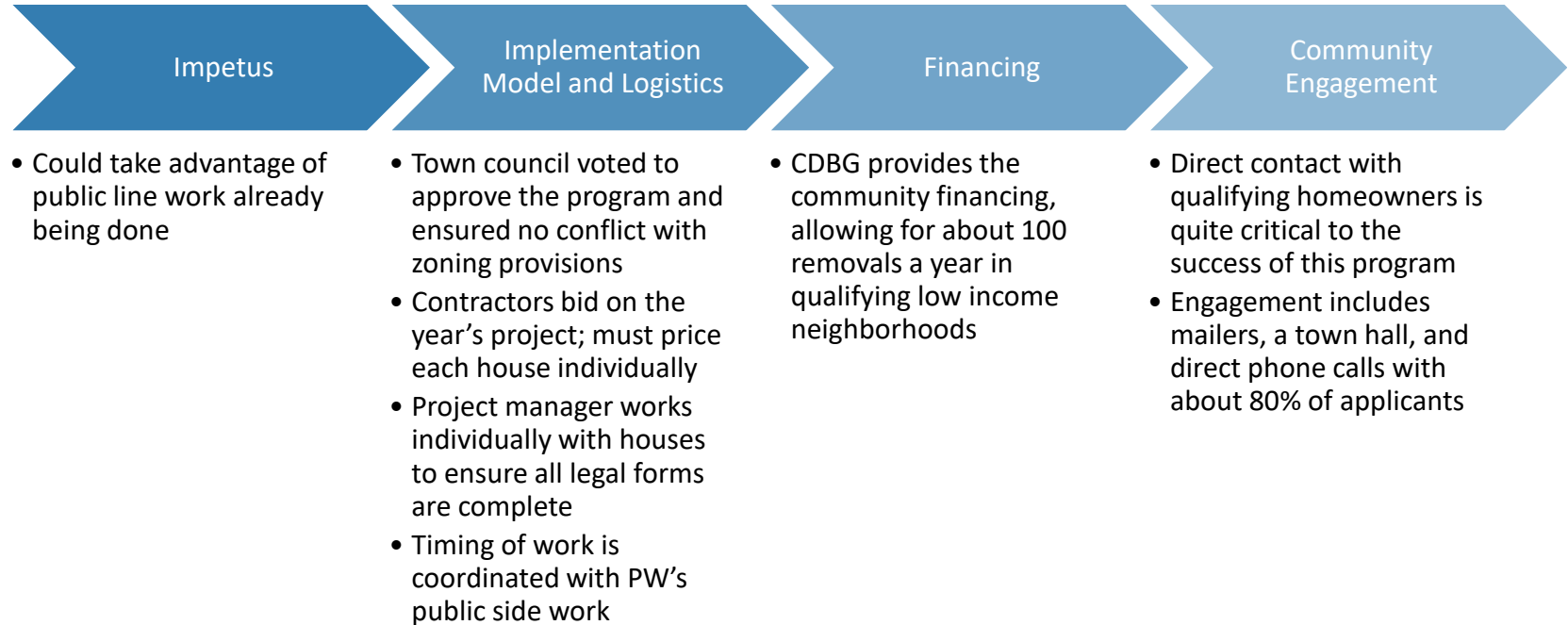
Pittsburgh



Discussion

- Formation of expert committee to create and maintain targeted objectives
- Integration with small-diameter water main replacement makes this an ambitious project
- Burden falls 100% on the utility to initiate and coordinate the repairs
- Extremely dependent on relations with Public Utilities Commission and PENNVEST
- Robust outreach, yet problems with responsiveness, particularly in limited-income communities
- - Duration: up to 2026
- Cost: est. \$326 M

North Providence



Discussion

- Community buy-in is highly important without a top-down mandate
 - Even free of charge, some folks are uncomfortable agreeing to the repairs
- Working individually with every homeowner is infeasible but assistance is necessary
 - Could PW host advocacy hours in local neighborhood centers?
 - Could PW make use of website design like Newark has?

Discussion

- There are federal resources that could complement the current loan program
 - Would require support from the city government
- Many barriers to logistical implementation remain
 - Contractors: could they be sourced from neighboring Massachusetts?
 - Timeline and priorities: who gets picked first and why?
 - Comprehensive database of confirmed lead presence would be critical

Takeaways

- Legal + financial support from legislative bodies seem like the lynchpin to success
- State Governments
 - Pass a law allowing municipalities to adopt an ordinance to enter properties without property owner permission
 - Pass laws clarifying public dollars can be used for private replacement, if legality seems to be a barrier

Takeaways

- City Government
 - Pass an ordinance mandating that lead pipes are replaced by the homeowner within a window of time or upon sale of home
 - Pass an ordinance mandating people sign up for a replacement program if one is implemented
 - Apply for CBDG funding for low income households to supplement other efforts
 - Authorize the sale of bonds to fund the program
- Other Governing Bodies
 - Amend seller disclosure requirements to require that homeowners disclose lead pipes

Looking Forward

- Hope to carve out ways to contribute to the goal of seeing more pipes replaced in Providence
- Want to help out in more tangible ways. Some ideas:
 - Expanded case study looking at other cities like Newark, NJ
 - Evaluating the demographics of those who utilize the 0-interest loan program
 - Focus groups to determine efficacy of PW lead outreach (was in progress, on hiatus due to COVID-19)

Discussion

- What questions do you have for us?
 - Regarding our research
 - Regarding our goals
- Do you have suggestions for how we could be most useful to you and/or the effort?
- Our questions:
 - What is Providence Water's relationship with the city council?
 - What is Providence Water's relationship with RIIB?
 - What funding sources have been looked into?
 - Is it possible for the Public Utilities Commission to raise rates for only one area?
e.g. Just PVD
 - Have any of the legislative efforts been suggested or attempted in Providence?