

Pontiac Water Affordability Coalition

March 23, 2021



Introductions

Commissioner Nash



Roundtable Introductions and Discussion

1. Name
2. Organization
3. Explain your mission for water affordability:
 1. What is the most important issue to you?
 2. What should be done about it?

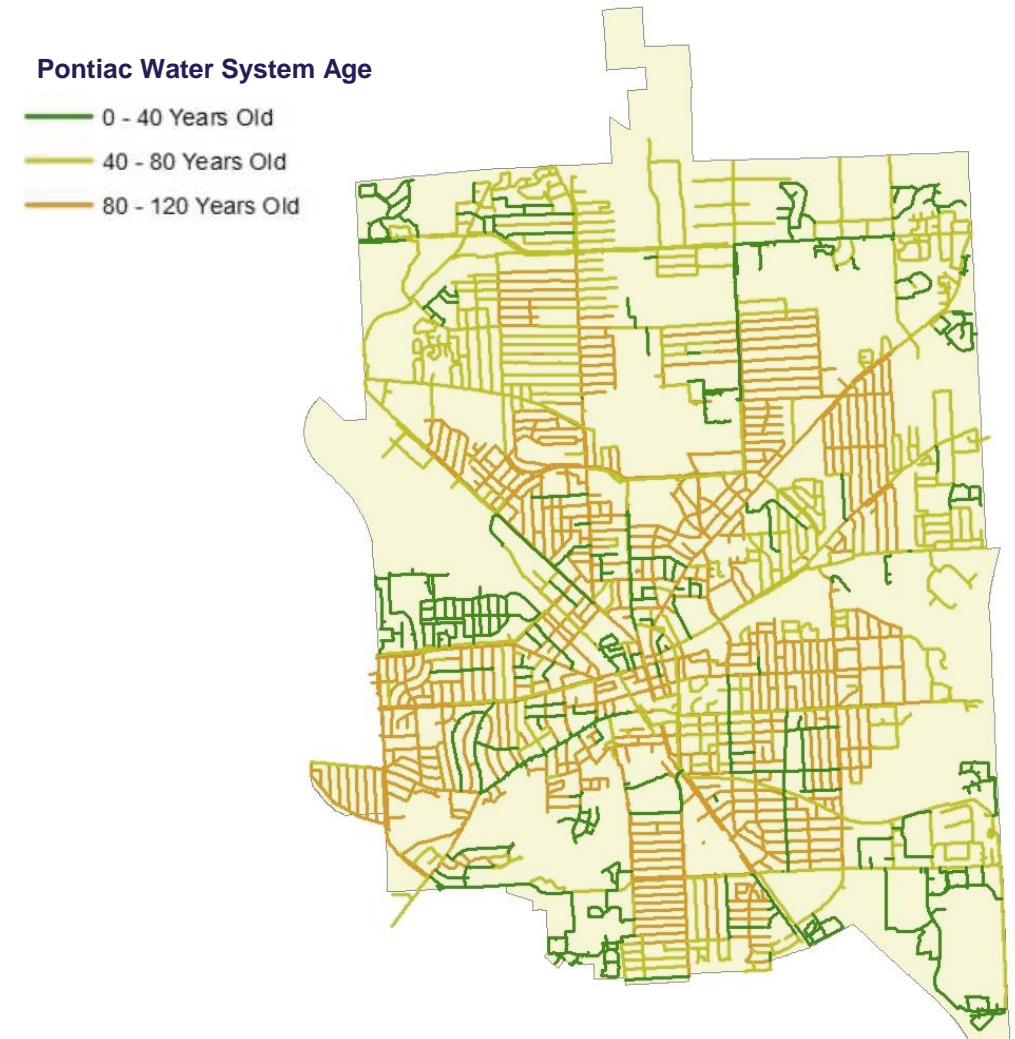
Proposed Vision

- Provide access to quality water for everyone
- Reaffirm trust in the quality of water that is being provided
- Educate customers on what they are paying for when making water bill payments for services



Redefining Affordability

- Access to quality water is an essential human right that requires sustainable funding while striving to maintain affordability
- Disinvested communities are often served by water systems characterized by long deferred maintenance/replacement plans that tend to struggle to meet state and federal guidelines that assure the provision of top-quality drinking water
- There is a practical—and moral obligation—to invest in and improve these systems
- It is incumbent that state and/or federal funding is provided to close the current funding gaps in marginalized and redlined communities populated by black, brown and indigenous people



Coalition Mission

- Advocacy for water affordability starts with water customers understanding every aspect of their water bill charges to ensure transparency regarding what they are paying for water services
- When the importance of the provision of water service is at the forefront of the community, the power of multiple voices initiates changes
- Changes are needed at the state and federal levels of government to provide funding for affordability programs to ensure everyone has access to drinking water
- Without funding, whether it is through state and federal programs or through payment of water bills by customers, a water system is not sustainable
- Sustainability is necessary for the continued provision of quality drinking water



Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Affordability and Planning Grant

- Our office applied on behalf of Pontiac and Royal Oak Township

American Rescue Plan

- 2021 Federal COVID-19 Relief Bill that includes funding for water affordability

Senate Bill 690 with The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

- State COVID-19 Relief Funding for Qualified Water and Sewer Customers
- Approximately 86,000 water and sewer accounts statewide will receive relief under the program
- WRC customers in nine communities will receive over \$617,000 in credits for more than 2,000 service accounts – Pontiac is included

Action Items

Public Education

- Industry Expert Presentations
- Development of Written Materials
- Public Service Videos
- Familiarize or refamiliarize the public on current affordability programs

Study Affordability Program Options

- Legal, Engineering, and Billing Analysis

Advocate for Funding

- State and Federal Grant Opportunities
- New Legislation

Thank you!

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