

FAQs – Pilot Block Program

What is THEP's soil management *pilot block program*?

- It is a trial program to provide soil management to all yards within a city block. 'Pilot' refers to this being the first time a block is receiving soil management at one time. This will be monitored to ensure learning is incorporated into future program design.

How have you selected the block(s) for the pilot program?

- Block(s) were evaluated using THEP's existing soil management prioritization criteria, with a focus on children and known lead (Pb) levels in the soil. Ground cover, accessibility for equipment and willingness of the neighbourhood to participate are other considerations that may factor into block selection.

How much time will the soil management work take on a block?

- The soil management process at an entire block is estimated to take up to 45 days. The timing will vary depending on access and complexity of individual yards.

Why now?

- THEP's Soil Management Program addresses individual properties in priority order and in recent years has been able to offer soil management to all priority properties identified. THEP now has capacity to trial soil management at the city block scale. Research shows that neighbourhood-wide soil management is an effective way to reduce community exposure to lead (Pb) and the potential impact on children.

Why was my block not chosen? How do I get on the list for the pilot block program?

- All blocks were considered for the pilot block program and were prioritized based on child occupancy and lead (Pb) levels in the soil.
- If successful, the pilot block program may be repeated in the future.
- If you have not had your soil assessed, consider getting it tested this year so the information is included for potential future block programs.

When will my block be selected?

- Soil management of entire city blocks is a pilot program in 2023. The process and outcomes will be monitored to determine if this should be repeated in future years.

There are kids on my block and kids spend time in my yard. Why didn't you select it?

- All blocks were considered for the pilot block program and were prioritized based on child occupancy and lead (Pb) levels in the soil.
- If your block has a relatively high number of children and elevated soil lead (Pb) levels, it may be a candidate for a future block program.

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- Other considerations that may factor into the selection of blocks in the future include ground cover, accessibility for equipment and willingness of the neighbourhood to participate.
- If you have not had your soil assessed, consider getting it tested this year so the information is included for potential future block programs.

Won't lead (Pb) exposure increase if the entire block is being dug up?

- THEP aims to keep dust down during soil removal and replacement, and uses a several methods to manage this, including:
 - Homeowners will be asked to moisten their soil daily in the week prior to digging. Moist soils create less dust.
 - Contractors will keep soils damp by sprinkling during digging and covering truck loads with tarps where possible.
 - Residents are advised to keep their windows and doors closed during the soil management process to minimize indoor dust.
- THEP monitoring of airborne dust during soil management activities in Trail has shown low concentrations of metals.

My neighbour doesn't want to dig up their yard and I have children. Does this make it less safe for my children?

- Only bare soils have the potential to increase exposure to metals, and soil management is just one way to reduce exposure to metals in your home and yard environment.
- Soil remediation solutions can include replacing soil as well as covering bare soil and improving ground cover. Ground cover is an important factor in reducing dust in the community. If your neighbour has declined soil replacement on their property, encouraging them to maintain good ground cover and keep dust to a minimum will help prevent exposure to metals.

Why are you remediating an entire block in this neighbourhood when some properties in other neighbourhoods are still waiting for soil replacement?

- The Pilot Block Program is an addition to the Soil Management Program and is not replacing soil management at priority properties.
- All priority properties will be offered soil management in 2023, including those with difficult access for equipment.
- THEP is piloting alternative solutions and equipment to provide soil management at prioritized properties with access restrictions. Soil management solutions can vary and include replacing soil as well as covering bare soil and improving ground cover.