



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

March 18, 2019

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Northwestern Water and Sewer District – Wood County
Water Meter Pit Installation and Replacement
Loan number: FS391432-0141**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a drinking water project in Wood County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The LER describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program, as described in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-150-05.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WSRLA program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. This project's relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies it for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment, as described in OAC 3745-150-04. More information can be obtained by calling or writing the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination, award of funds may proceed without further environmental review or public comment unless new information shows that environmental conditions of the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerry Rouch".

Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Water Meter Pit Installation and Replacement

Applicant: Jerry Greiner, President
Northwestern Water and Sewer District
12560 Middleton Pike
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

Loan Number: FS391432-0141

Project Summary

The Northwestern Water and Sewer District (NWWSD) has applied for funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the Water Meter Pit Installation and Replacement project. The project is intended to reduce water losses within the aged distribution system by replacing water service lines and meter pits from the existing water mains to the existing curb stop valves. The total construction cost of the project is \$302,505, with construction scheduled to begin in the spring of 2019 and to be completed in six months.

History & Existing Conditions

The Northwestern Water and Sewer District (NWWSD) owns and operates the water distribution system that serves urban and rural customers in large portions of Wood and Hancock counties through approximately 440 miles of water lines. NWWSD also owns and operates two ground storage tanks, eight elevated storage tanks, and seven booster pumping stations. NWWSD service areas in northern Wood County are provided water by the cities of Toledo and Oregon. The southern portions of the county are provided water by the City of Bowling Green.

Since assuming control over the Wood County water distribution system in 2011, NWWSD has reviewed potential projects to improve service, water quality and reliability, and replace old water lines throughout the entire county. Their current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes water main rehabilitation/replacement projects, maintenance to existing tanks (including adding mixers or aerators to improve water quality) and booster pumping stations, and water line extensions to reduce the number of dead ends in the system to improve water quality. Included in NWWSD's CIP has been the performance of water loss audits of its entire system, which has determined that water service lines are a substantial source of water losses. NWWSD has become the owner and operator of various water distribution systems over the years and has found that water meters were sited at varying locations near the public/private boundary within these systems. This has made locating and servicing damaged lines difficult for NWWSD. The Water Meter Pit Installation and Replacement project will install water meters in subsurface meter pits at the right-of-way edges so that all water losses can be accounted for and future losses and repairs can be correctly charged to either the public system or the private land owners.

The project area (see Figures 1 and 2) is within the WL#2300 service area and Village of Weston, which has a population of approximately 2,200. The distribution system includes a 250,000-gallon elevated storage tank within the Village of Weston. The village is fed by a 12-inch waterline along Sand Ridge Road from the City of Bowling Green.

There are no immediate projects planned for the WL#2300 service area for service extension, pump stations or elevated tanks. NWWSD is not aware of any large developer projects in these areas that will include subdivisions and new demand for water, and there are no known areas within the WL#2300 service area that are working on petitions for water. While Wood County saw its population increase by 3.6% from 2000 through 2010, the vast majority of this increase was in the northern portion of the county. There is little anticipated growth within the project area over the next twenty years, and this improvements project will provide adequate service for this limited anticipated growth and existing homes. The service agreement between Bowling Green and NWWSD specifies no limit on the amount of water provided to the WL#2300 service area. Given the low projected growth in demand and the large water supply, NWWSD can provide water to the expected 20-year service population without major infrastructure improvements.

Project Description

The project includes the installation of approximately 3,700 linear feet of replacement service lines and 93 water meter pits from the existing water mains to the road right-of-way edge. The project also includes all pavement, drives, curbs and landscape restoration activities. Construction activities will include open cut and trenchless installations in previously disturbed rights-of-way (streets, sidewalks, driveways, and areas of buried utilities) that support no wetlands, forested areas or aquatic habitat.

Implementation

The total construction cost of the project is \$302,505. NWWSD proposes to borrow the entire project amount from the WSRLA. The project service area qualifies for the small systems WSRLA below-market interest rate on 20-year loans, which in March is 1.62 percent. Borrowing at 1.62 percent will save NWWSD approximately \$63,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.37 percent.

Debt for the project will be repaid from a general repair and replacement fund without rate increases for the specific areas served by the improvements. The local median household income is \$42,560. Under the water rates that are effective in 2019 and, based on a usage of 7,756 gallons of water per month, the average residential water bill is \$75.03 per month, or \$900.36 per year. This represents 2.1 percent of the MHI, which is considered affordable.

Public Participation

NWWSD will send the affected residents a letter explaining the project prior to construction. In addition, NWWSD has discussed the project at board meetings that were open to the public, and project information is present on NWWSD's website. Given the limited potential environmental impact of the project, the lack of a rate increase and the lack of property assessments, this is considered adequate public participation.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action within an existing water treatment system, which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing water lines and equipment. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

- **will have no significant adverse environmental effect**, since sensitive resources such as floodplains, wetlands, riparian areas, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeological or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species are not present in the project area;
- **does not require extensive specific impact mitigation**, as the proposed project involves the replacement of existing water service lines and meter pits located in urban road rights-of-way where the roads will be restored to their pre-project grade and condition;
- **will have no adverse effect on high value environmental resources**, as the project area includes a developed residential area, with asphalt roads and numerous existing utilities, so no high value environmental resources are present there;
- **is not a controversial action**, as user rates will not be increased as a result of this project, nor will any adverse impacts to environmental resources likely occur. Further, Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to the project;
- **is cost-effective**, as replacement of the water service lines and meter pits will help to minimize water losses and ensure continuous potable drinking water supply to residents and businesses located in the project area at a reasonable cost;
- **does not involve a new or relocated discharge to surface or ground water, involve any increase in volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or new facilities, create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from existing sources; or provide capacity to serve a design population substantially greater (thirty percent) than the current design population**, as no discharge points or pollutant loading will be part of the project. The project does not require the expansion of Bowling Green's water treatment facility beyond its current capacity or require the addition of a supplementary water supplier, so it will not require a change in water withdrawal. Little population change is anticipated of the 20-year planning period;
- **will not create new sources of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing source; nor will it provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population**, as the project scope is limited to replacing existing water service lines and meter pits.

The planning activities for the project have identified no potentially significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources. Implementation of appropriate construction mitigation measures is required by the contract specifications and construction activity will be limited to the existing, previously-disturbed road rights-of-way. The project will benefit the project service area by replacing aged water service structures and will help reduce water system costs by minimizing/eliminating water loss.

Contact info

R. Eric Schultz
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049

Phone: (614) 644-3713
E-mail: eric.schultz@epa.ohio.gov

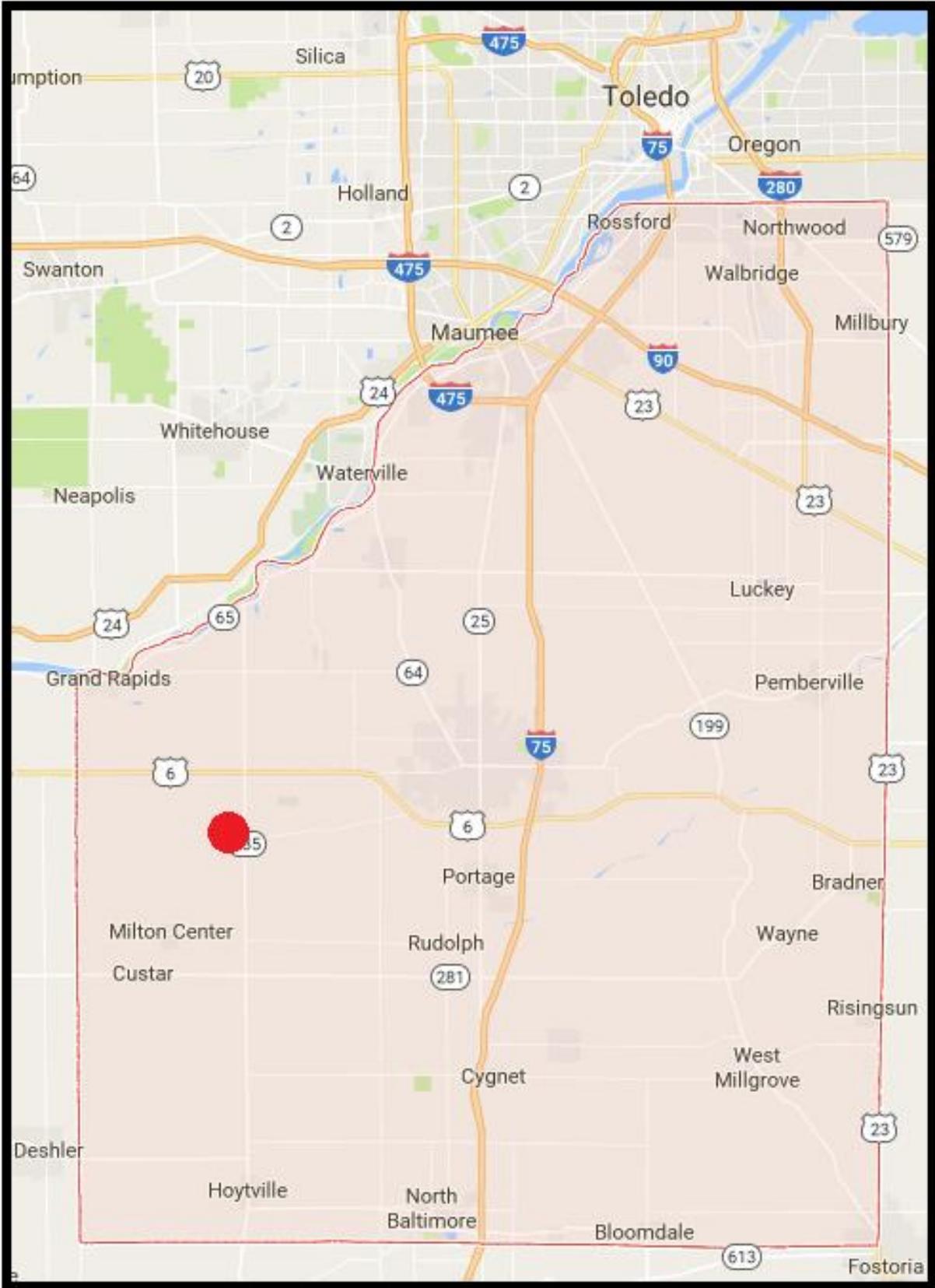


Figure 1: Project general area, in red.

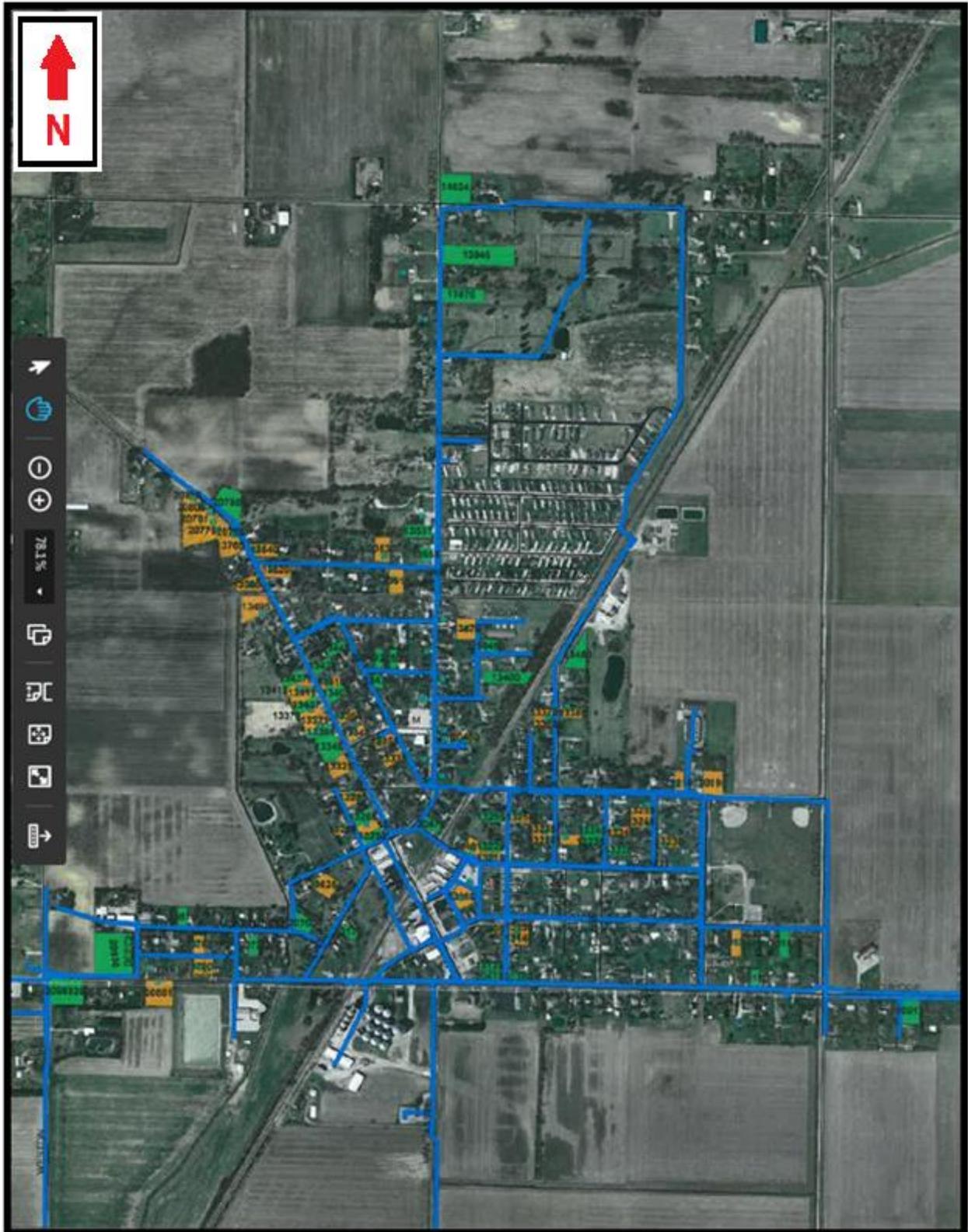


Figure 2: General project area.