



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

December 17, 2019

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Northwestern Water and Sewer District - Wood County
Lime City Waterline Replacement
Loan number: FS391432-0146**

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 3745-150-06. 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, appearing to read "Jonathan Bernstein", is written over a horizontal line.

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Lime City Waterline Replacement

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

Loan Number: FS391432-0146

Project Summary

The Northwestern Water and Sewer District (NWWSD) has applied for funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the Lime City Waterline Replacement project. The project is intended to reduce water losses within the distribution system by replacing the existing aged waterlines. The estimated construction cost of the project is \$946,585, with construction scheduled to begin in January 2020 and to be completed in four months.

History & Existing Conditions

NWWSD owns and operates the water distribution system that serves urban and rural customers in large portions of Wood and, to a lesser extent, Hancock counties through approximately 440 miles of waterlines. 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 waterlines 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 waterline extensions to reduce the number of dead ends in the system to improve water quality.

The project area is within the City of Rossford and northern Wood County (see Figures 1 and 2) and is a mixture residential and business properties with an average daily water demand of approximately 42,000 gallons. The City of Rossford draws its water supply from the City of Toledo. The existing, aged waterlines, constructed in 1953 and 1966, are a mixture of 8-, 10-, and 12-inch diameter distribution pipes that have experienced multiple waterline breaks requiring repair. Each of these incidents cost thousands of dollars to repair, require water shutoffs and boil advisories, and temporarily reduce fire protection. A review of the aged distribution system in this project area found existing waterlines are located within the road rights-of-way, with most of the waterlines deteriorated and beyond their useful life.

There are no immediate projects planned within the project's water service area for service extensions, pump stations, or new 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 project's water service area that are working on petitions for water. The service area population is projected to remain stable, and therefore the proposed water main improvements are not expected to have impacts on the existing water demands. Given the low projected growth in demand and the large water supply, NWWSD can provide water to the expected 20-year service population without expanding the infrastructure.

Project Description

The project includes the installation of approximately 6,050 linear feet of 8- and 12-inch replacement water distribution lines and reinstatement of service lines, valves, and hydrants. Work also includes 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, areas of buried utilities, and one directional bore under a small stream) that otherwise support no wetlands, forested areas or aquatic habitat.

Implementation

The total estimated construction cost of the project is \$946,585. NWWSD proposes to borrow the entire project amount from the WSRLA. The project service area qualifies for the standard long-term WSRLA below-market interest rate on 20-year loans, which in October is 1.03 percent. The standard rate is changed monthly to reflect bond rates and may be slightly different in December 2019, the anticipated month of loan award. Borrowing at 1.03 percent will save NWWSD approximately \$134,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 2.28 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 \$61,485. 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 \$83.66 per month, or \$1,004 per year. This represents 1.63 percent of the MHI, which is considered affordable.

Public Participation

NWWSD will send the affected residents and businesses 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 and the lack of a rate increase or 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 waterlines 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 distribution lines located in 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, adverse impacts to environmental resources are unlikely to occur, and Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to the project.
- **is cost-effective**, as replacement of the water distribution lines 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 Toledo'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 during 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 distribution lines.

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

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Figure 1: Project general area, in red



Figure 2: Specific project area, in red