



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

October 6, 2021

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Mock Rd. Area Waterline Improvements
Loan number: FS390274-0338**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a waterline replacement project in Columbus which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its 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.

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. 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,

Kathleen Courtright, for

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: Mock Rd. Area Waterline Improvements

Applicant: City of Columbus
910 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Loan Number: FS390274-0338

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$2,671,722 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for construction of new water mains in the Mock Road area. The project is intended to replace inefficient and deteriorated existing water mains. The project limits include no sensitive environmental resources as construction is limited to roadways and city rights-of-way.

History and Existing Conditions

Columbus operates an extensive water treatment and distribution system that serves the city and most of Franklin County, delivering 50 billion gallons of water per year to its service area. Prior to treatment, water is sourced from reservoirs, wells, rivers, and creeks, including Big Walnut Creek. Existing 2-inch, 6-inch, and 8-inch water mains provide water service within the Mock Road and Parkwood Avenue community area. The existing water main ranges from 71 to 93 years of age and will be abandoned at the project's completion. These existing water mains are in need of replacement to reduce the regular maintenance due to deteriorated conditions. If not addressed, the flow and water quality of the existing mains will decrease. Water main breaks will continue and require more costly maintenance.

Project Description

This project involves installing approximately 9,300 linear feet of new 6-inch, 8-inch, and 12-inch ductile iron water mains to replace the existing 2-inch, 6-inch, and 8-inch water mains. The new water mains will have an estimated service life of 100 years and will significantly reduce the regular maintenance required by the existing main. New copper water taps and fire hydrants will also be installed.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway and existing water line, therefore minimizing effects on environmental resources. To protect endangered bat species, tree clearing will occur between October 1st and March 31st. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control dust, erosion and sedimentation, and maintain local traffic during construction.

Maps of the project location are provided in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$2,671,722 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period Columbus will save approximately \$366,737 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.48%, compared to the market rate of 1.73%.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$534/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated water projects are expected to increase to approximately \$608/year, or 1.2% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$51,612.

By using WSRLA financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in October 2021. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2021 and to be completed by November 2022.

Public Participation

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed water line construction and contact information provided for any public questions or concerns. Prior to construction, the Neighborhood Liaisons will be contacted and informed of the project. Further community outreach may result through the Neighborhood Liaison Program. Notification letters will also be mailed out in advance to residents located near the project area. These letters will provide detailed information regarding the project and important contact numbers.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx> (Under the "What's New" tab, scroll to: "Documents Available for Review and Comment – WSRLA Documents for Review and Comment") and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Limited Environmental Review (LER) is available from the project contact named below.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for an LER; namely, it is an action which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing mechanical equipment. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Has no significant environmental effect, no effect on high value environmental resources, and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation.

The project replaces water lines within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway and existing water line, therefore areas lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work is scheduled to occur, and there will be no new construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. If necessary, tree clearing is to occur within seasonal clearing dates to protect endangered bat species located in the area. The contractor is responsible for dust control, sedimentation and erosion control, and maintenance of traffic during construction.

Is cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed project is cost effective because the overall costs and benefits of replacing the water mains outweigh the temporary advantages of rehabilitation. Taking no action would allow the flow and water quality of the existing mains to decrease and continue to accumulate maintenance costs, which average \$5,000 per break. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will improve the safety and efficiency of a continuous supply of potable water to customers.

Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, or substantially increase the volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters.

This project involves the replacement of the existing water lines which service the area. It does not otherwise alter Columbus's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or usage of potable water).

Based upon the available planning information for this project and the materials presented within this LER, Ohio EPA concludes that the proposed project will not result in any significant adverse impacts to any environmental features. The project is expected to have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources such as surface waters, coastal zones, riparian areas, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species.

This project will decrease the burden on water maintenance operations, reduce water loss, and improve water service within the Columbus area.

Contact Information

Kristin Parrish
Ohio EPA-DEFA
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049
kristin.parrish@epa.ohio.gov

Exhibit 1: Project location map

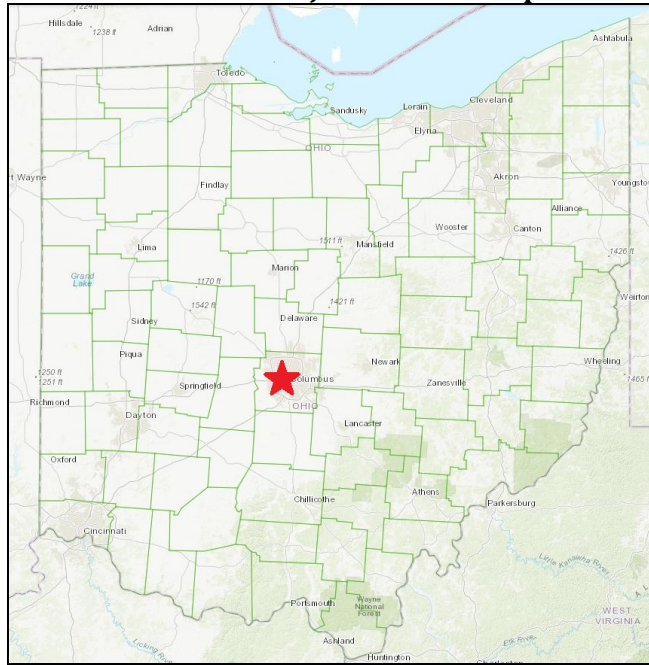


Exhibit 2: Project location map

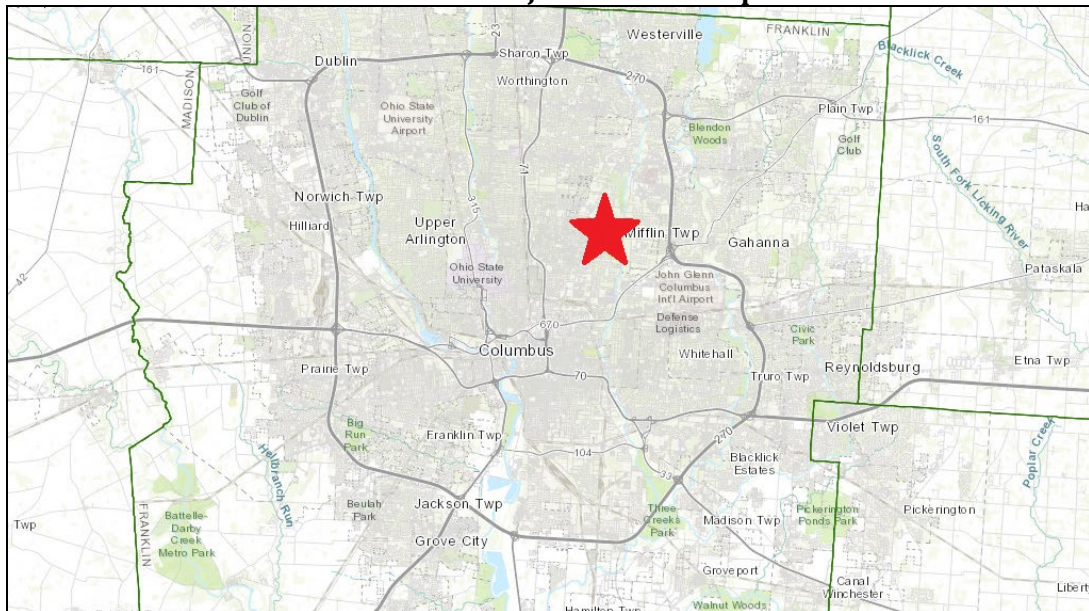


Exhibit 3: Project location map

