August 14, 2019

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

Franklin County Sanitary Engineer – Franklin County
Little Farms Subdivision Waterline Replacement-Phase I
Loan number: FS390025-0033

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a waterline replacement project in Franklin County 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, 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,

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment
LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Little Farms Subdivision Waterline Replacement, Phase 1
Applicant: Stephen Renner
Franklin County Sanitary Engineer
280 East Broad Street, Second Floor
Columbus, Ohio

Loan Number: FS390025-0033

Figure 1. Franklin County

Project Summary

The Franklin County Department of Sanitary Engineering is requesting $4,266,603 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for Phase 1 of a two-phase project to replace failing water line infrastructure throughout the eastern portion of the Little Farms subdivision in Prairie Township, Franklin County (Figure 1).

History and Existing Conditions

The project is located in Prairie Township in western Franklin County and encompasses the eastern portion of the Little Farms subdivision and the area of Prairie township, formerly known as the Village of New Rome. The project area is comprised of approximately eighty-two acres and is mostly residential. The existing water lines in the Little Farms Subdivision are 60 and 90 years old. The industry-recognized useful life of water lines is 40 years. The mains have both occurrences of tuberculation (a type of corrosion) and biofilm (slimy bacteria that adhere to a surface). The aging infrastructure is prone to failure and there has been a substantial history of water main breakage in the area resulting in insufficient pressure and water loss. Between 2001 and 2017, there were at least 40 water line breaks in this area. There is concern about potential contamination of the water supply because of the poor condition of these water lines.

Franklin County purchases water from City of Columbus.

Project Description

The Franklin County Department of Sanitary Engineering plans to remove approximately 16,000 linear feet of six-inch water line throughout the eastern portion of the Little Farms subdivision and the area of Prairie Township and replace with 16,300 linear feet of new eight-inch water line. Additionally, approximately 180 water service taps will be transferred or otherwise replaced and approximately fourteen fire hydrants will be replaced. This project will address the public health concerns associated with the frequently broken and depressurized water lines that are failing due to age.

There is a single location where the proposed water main replacement extends into the US Route 40 (West Broad Street) right-of-way (Figure 2). This location is at the intersection with Buena Vista
Avenue (north edge of US Route 40), where the proposed 8-inch main will be connected to an existing 8-inch main installed three years ago. Excavation for the proposed water main connection will extend approximately 9 ft into the US 40 right-of-way, and approximately 4 ft beyond the existing curb line and into the right travel lane. The typical trench in this area will be approximately 3 ft wide by 5 ft deep. Pavement removal and replacement will consist of approximately 425 SF with the right-of-way limits. The work limits are confined to existing asphalt roadway areas. No curbs, sidewalks, or any other topographical features will be disturbed. In addition, no natural features such as trees or shrubs will be removed or disturbed. Work in this area is expected to last one day for waterline installation, and one additional day for roadway asphalt replacement.

Replacement of the existing small section of 6-inch water main at this location is necessary to provide a continuous upsized 8-inch main for the project service area; extending from the terminal 8-inch in US Route 40 to the new 8-inch in Buena Vista Avenue. This will optimize the hydraulic capacity of the new line and provide the intended level of service for residential, commercial, and fire flow purposes.

Phase 2, which is not part of this application, will install 14,300 linear feet of new waterline in the residential area immediately adjacent to the Phase 1 area (Figure 3).
Estimated Project Costs

The County will borrow $4,266,603 from the WSRLA for Phase 1 at the Economic Affordability interest rate (currently 0.85%). The rate is set monthly and may change for subsequent projects. During the 20-year loan period for this project, the County will save $850,119 by using WSRLA dollars at this rate, compared to the current market rate of 2.60%. Similar savings are expected for each subsequent project. The total cost of the Phase 1 project is $8,202,000. OPWC will provide the balance of the funding.

The quarterly service fee and the water consumption fee charged to area residences and businesses served by the Franklin County Department of Sanitary Engineering are set by the Franklin County
Board of Commissioners on an annual basis. The quarterly service fee is $53.08 per quarter and the water consumption fee is $6.05 per cubic hundred feet of water consumed.

**Project Schedule**

Once the county receives the loan award, the construction will start shortly thereafter and the whole project will take a full year to complete.

**Public Notification**

The public is well informed about this project. The County's consultant has a role on the team to manage public notifications on the County’s behalf. The public will receive a mailing about when the project will start. A fact sheet will be included with the notification and a copy will be available for viewing and download via the county’s website.

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 in the "WSRLA Documents Available for Review and Comment" list and will provide copies upon request.

**Planning Information**

Multidisciplinary comprehensive reviews for environmental resources were not required because the project will occur in the existing right-of-way and cause no change to the water service area. In addition, the project will not impact US Route 40, a National Road, but will connect to new waterlines already under the road. However, Ohio EPA has evaluated the project for potential environmental and cultural impacts and determined there will be no adverse impact to these resources.

**Conclusion**

The proposed waterline replacement project is a water system infrastructure improvement (rehabilitation of existing facilities) that qualifies for a Limited Environmental Review (LER) and meets the following additional criteria for an LER:

*It has no significant environmental effect; it does not require extensive specific impact mitigation; and it has no effect on high value environmental resources.* Most of the construction will be done in the existing right-of-way in locations that lack important environmental resources. Standard construction best management practices will minimize noise and dust. Temporary traffic disruptions will be minimized by standard construction traffic maintenance measures. Temporary water service interruptions will be communicated to affected customers.

*It is cost-effective and not controversial* – The Median Household Income (MHI) in Franklin County is $54,037. The 2019 annual water service fee for this residential area is $619 which is 1.15% of the MHI and is considered affordable.

The project is a more cost-effective way address failing water lines as a new water line will not have to be constantly repaired.

Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about or opposition to this project.
It does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters; it 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; it will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; it will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population. The project will improve existing infrastructure and have no effect on water withdrawal, treatment, discharge or water source.

The proposed project meets all applicable criteria to perform a Limited Environmental Review. The planning activities for the project have identified no potentially significant adverse impacts. 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 (surface waters, coastal zones, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, threatened or endangered species, or state and federal wildlife areas). Applicable construction impact mitigation measures and practices will be followed on all water line replacements.

Contact information

Linda Merchant-Masonbrink
Ohio EPA - DEFA
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049
(614) 644-3656
L.merchantmasonbrink@epa.ohio.gov