



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

October 24, 2022

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Akron – Summit County
University of Akron Water Main Rehabilitation 2023
Loan number: FS390095-0251**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a drinking water project in Akron 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: University of Akron Water Main Rehabilitation 2023

Applicant: City of Akron
166 South High Street
Room 200
Akron, Ohio 44308

Loan Number: FS390095-0251



Figure 1. Summit County

Project Summary

The City of Akron, in Summit County (Figure 1), has requested approximately \$1.98 million from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) to fund the University of Akron Water Main Rehabilitation 2023 project. This project is part of Akron’s overall water main replacement program aimed at replacing aged and deteriorated water mains throughout their public water system (PWS).

History & Existing Conditions

The Akron drinking water system uses Lake Rockwell and upstream reservoirs for its supply source. Akron’s water treatment plant (WTP) treats and supplies 35 million gallons per day (mgd) of treated water to over 300,000 people in Akron, Tallmadge, Stow, Fairlawn, Cuyahoga Falls, Twinsburg, Hudson, Mogadore, and parts of Bath, Boston, Copley, Coventry, Springfield, and Twinsburg townships through 1,300 miles of water mains, 13 storage tanks, and 12 booster stations. In total, Akron’s WTP has a rated maximum capacity of 67 mgd, and the reservoirs have a combined storage capacity of 10 billion gallons.

Due to old age and material, water mains in parts of the distribution system have significantly deteriorated and are prone to breaking. This has led to customer complaints about discoloration and sediment in the drinking water. Water main leaks and breaks also contribute to the overall unaccounted-for water loss within the distribution system, which is estimated to be 15 percent, and can also affect water pressure. Akron intends to improve their distribution system by continuing to replace compromised water mains over the next 20 years. In addition to the ongoing efforts to replace water mains, Akron has an annual lead service line replacement program and regularly replaces lead service lines when encountered during other projects.

This project specifically deals with a 30-inch cement-lined cast iron water main on the University of Akron campus (Figure 2). This water main, originally installed in 1918, is deteriorated and has experienced several breaks in the last few years. This main serves as a major transmission main to downtown Akron and supplies water to multiple campus buildings and residences. Due to its importance, this critical water main requires rehabilitation or replacement.

Project Description

Akron intends to replace approximately 2,600 linear feet of 30-inch water main with 30-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe along with associated fittings, valves, hydrants, other associated appurtenances, and transfer of existing service connections to the new main. This will be coordinated with the University of Akron and conducted in two three-month phases to avoid interruptions to the University's operations. This project will be completed prior to the University of Akron's replacement of brick pavers to prevent disruption to the University's project schedule or new brick pavers. Existing brick pavers that are disrupted during construction will be temporarily restored using stamped concrete.

Implementation

Akron proposes to borrow \$1.98 million from the Ohio WSRLA at the standard rate of 2.52 percent (interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested December award date) to cover the cost of this construction project. Assuming a 30-year loan term, borrowing WSRLA funds at this rate could save Akron roughly \$510,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.82 percent.

The debt associated with this construction project will be recovered from user charges. The average annual water bill for residents served by Akron is \$363. This is 0.94 percent of the median household income for Akron (MHI; \$38,739) and compares favorably to the Ohio average annual bill of \$697.

This project is expected to begin following loan award and be conducted in two three-month phases coordinated with the University of Akron.

Public Participation

Akron provides information on its many water main replacement projects through the city's website, and Akron has continually included the University of Akron water main replacement projects in their capital investment and community development program.

Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about or opposition to this project. Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on the following webpage and will provide it upon request: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements>.

Conclusion

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

Will have no significant environmental effect, will have no effect on high-value environmental resources, and will require no specific impact mitigation. Construction for this project will take place on University of Akron campus where there are no sensitive environmental resources. Specific measures beyond standard construction best management practices to minimize erosion and sediment, noise, dust, traffic disruptions, and related items are not expected to be necessary for this project.

Is cost effective. The existing water main is over 100 years old and has experienced several breaks within the past few years. Water main breaks are costly and timely to repair and cause water service disruptions. By replacing this deteriorated water main, Akron is reducing their long-term costs while also improving water quality and system reliability and safety.

Akron considered various methods of water main rehabilitation and installation, ultimately determining that replacement of the existing water main by the traditional open-cut method is the least expensive and most practical alternative.

Is not a controversial action. This project will have no impact on residential water rates or water service. This project will be completed prior to the University of Akron's replacement of brick pavers to prevent disruption to the university's project schedule or new brick pavers.

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, does not significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, does not substantially increase the volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters, and will not provide the capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population. This project merely involves the replacement of water mains and associated components that serve existing customers and will not otherwise have any effect on Akron's PWS (withdraw, treatment, storage, distribution, usage, etc.).

To conclude, Akron's proposed project is sufficiently limited in scope and meets all applicable criteria to warrant an LER. The planning review of this project identified no potentially short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment and on sensitive resources (surface waters, coastal zones, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic and recreational rivers, prime and unique agriculture lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeological and historically significant sites, threatened and endangered species, and state and federal wildlife areas). Rather, completion of this project will improve the safety and reliability of Akron's PWS, benefiting Akron residents.

Contact information

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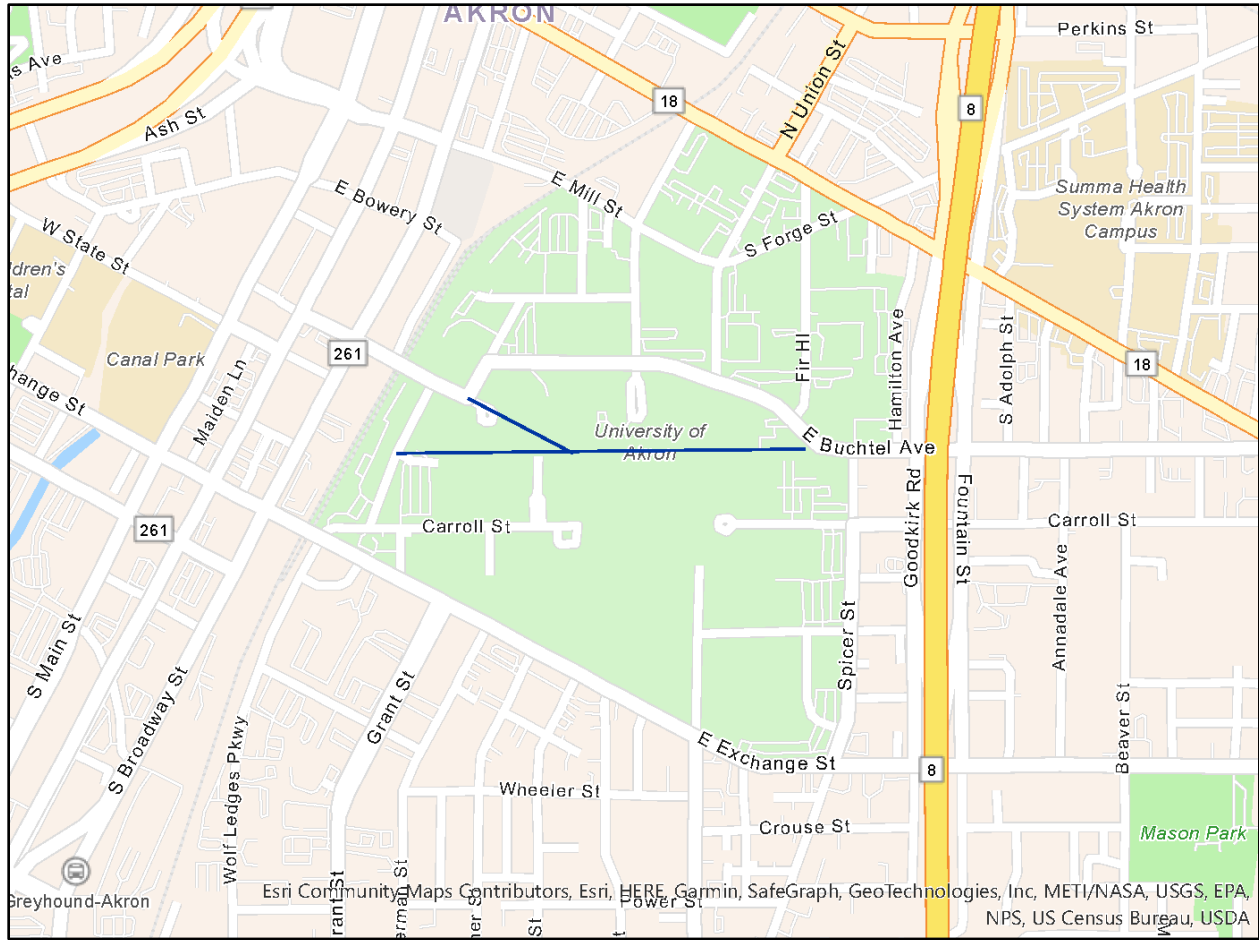


Figure 2. University of Akron, water main location (blue)