



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

January 10, 2023

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Varsity Avenue Area Water Line Improvements
Loan number: FS390274-0392**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a water line 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Varsity Avenue Area Water Line Improvements

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

Loan Number: FS390274-0392

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for general rehabilitation of the water distribution system in the Varsity Avenue area which includes construction of new water mains, abandoning existing water mains, and transferring water service lines. The project is necessary in order to replace water mains that require repeated, regular maintenance.

History & 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. Raw water is sourced from the Scioto River, treated at Dublin Road Water Treatment Plant, and transported through existing water lines to provide water service to the area near Varsity Avenue and Kenny Road.

Columbus has water lines that are deteriorated and in need of replacement to reduce regular repairs. If not addressed, the flow and water quality of the lines will decrease. Water line breaks will continue and require more costly maintenance.

Project Description

This project will involve the replacement of the 63- to 66-year-old water lines with a high break frequency in the Varsity Avenue area to provide a longer and more cost-effective service life.

Approximately 9,000 linear feet of 8-inch, 6-inch, and 2-inch new water lines will be constructed, allowing for existing water lines to be abandoned at each project's completion. Existing water service lines will be transferred to the new water line. Replacement of these water lines will improve water service and reduce water loss. The new ductile iron pipe in the replacement water lines 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, valves, and fire hydrants will also be installed.

The construction footprint for these projects will remain within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside and within the roadway and existing water line, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control

dust, erosion, and sedimentation, and maintain local traffic during construction.

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

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$2,838,264 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$445,184 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.93%, compared to the market rate of 4.18%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested January loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$544/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated projects are expected to increase to approximately \$596/year, or 1.1% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$54,902.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in January 2023. Construction is expected to begin following loan award and be completed by October 2023.

Public Participation

Public notices were posted on the City of Columbus's Public Utilities webpage which detailed the proposed water line construction and contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns. Notices are also to be distributed to affected residents prior to construction.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> 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 criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, an action which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing water distribution infrastructure. Furthermore, the projects meet 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 not require extensive specific impact mitigation.*
The project includes replacement water lines within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside or within 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 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, as the overall costs and benefits of replacement of the water mains outweigh the temporary advantages of rehabilitation. Taking no action would allow the flow and water quality of the existing main to decrease and continue to accumulate maintenance costs, which average \$5,000 per break. DEFA 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 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 help to ensure the safety and efficiency of water distributed to the Columbus area.

Contact information

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

Exhibit 1: Project location map

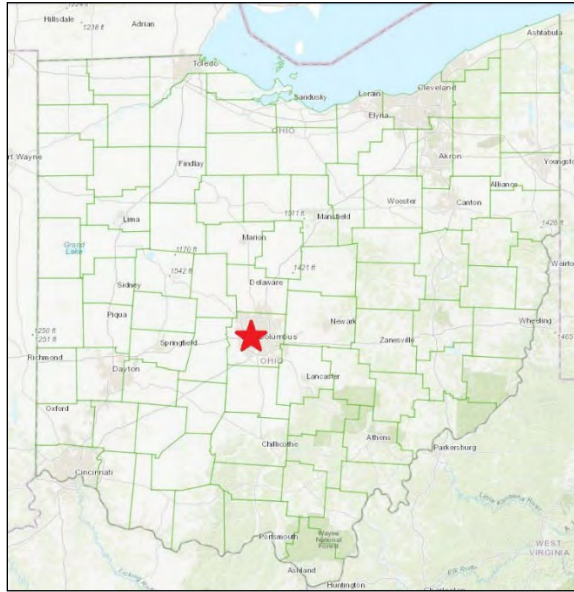


Exhibit 2: Project location map

