Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

June 29, 2018

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT TO ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT DUGWAY REGULATORS AND RELIEF SEWERS (DRRS) CS391430-0146

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comments on Ohio EPA's preliminary decision that a Supplemental Environmental Study is not required to implement the recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a general plan submitted by the entity mentioned above.

How were environmental issues considered?

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the general plan, as well as through the general plan review process and during site inspections. The Agency's preliminary Environmental Assessment found that the project does not require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Study.

Why is a Supplemental Environmental Study not required?

Our environmental review concluded that significant environmental impacts will not result from the action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the general plan or have been reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Assessment.

How do I get more information?

A map depicting the location of the project is included as part of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the action and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person listed in the back of the Environmental Assessment.

How do I submit comments?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at the letterhead address. We will take no action on this general plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

What happens next?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The entity will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this agency.

Please bring any information that you feel should be considered to our attention. We appreciate your interest in the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

for Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
Dugway Regulators and Relief Sewers (DRRS)
CS391430-0146

Applicant: **Ms. Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer**
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
3900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Project Summary

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) has applied to Ohio EPA for financial assistance from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the Dugway Regulators and Relief Sewers (DRRS) project, here forward referred to as the DRRS project. The DRRS project is located in the cities of Cleveland, East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and includes approximately 1,800 linear feet (LF) of sanitary sewers, 650 LF of storm sewers, regulator replacement and modification, a new sewer drop shaft structure, and associated near-surface sewer structures. The DRRS project is one of several projects NEORSD has completed, has under construction, or is planning, to implement its Consent Decree to address combined sewer overflows (CSO)[1]. The total estimated project cost is $5,400,000. Debt for the project will be repaid from monthly service charges. Ohio EPA anticipates awarding a WPCLF loan to NEORSD for the DRRS project in August 2018. Construction of the DRRS project will begin in the autumn of 2018 and last approximately 18 months.

Existing Conditions

NEORSD is responsible for three wastewater treatment facilities (Southerly WWTP, Westerly WWTP and Easterly WWTP) and the interceptor sewers in the greater Cleveland Metropolitan Area. This service area encompasses the City of Cleveland and all or portions of 61 suburban municipalities in Cuyahoga, Summit, Lake, and Lorain counties. Each portion of the wastewater interceptor system conveys wastewater to its respective WWTP. Wastewater from the DRRS project and service areas will be conveyed to the Easterly WWTP.

Between 1998 and 2002, NEORSD developed the *Easterly District CSO Phase II Facilities Plan* to characterize the extent of CSO overflows in the Easterly District. The Easterly District service area comprises an area of approximately 48,700 acres east of the Cuyahoga River. About forty percent of the service area has combined sewers, with the remainder served by separate sanitary sewers. The tributary sewers discharge to the Easterly WWTP located on the Lake Erie shoreline at East 140th Street. The Easterly District includes all of the communities of Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, South Euclid, Lyndhurst, Highland Heights, Mayfield Heights, University heights, Bratenahl, and the east side of Cleveland. Sections of Shaker Heights, Beachwood, Gates Mills, Mayfield, Richmond Heights, and Pepper Pike are also tributary to the Easterly WWTP.

The *Easterly District CSO Phase II Facilities Plan* developed a recommended CSO control plan to control CSO discharges in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) CSO Policy and the Ohio EPA CSO Control Strategy. The

[1] Combined sewer systems are sewers that are designed to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage and industrial wastewater in the same pipe. Most of the time, combined sewer systems transport all of their flow to a sewage treatment plant where it is treated and then discharged to a water body. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt the combined flow volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant. For this reason, combined sewer systems are designed to overflow occasionally (combined sewer overflow) and discharge excess combined sewage directly to nearby streams, rivers or other water bodies.

recommended CSO control plan consists of an integrated program of relief sewers, pump station and storage tank improvements and CSO storage tunnels. The control plan is designed to reduce CSO discharges to four or fewer District-wide in a typical year of rainfall.

As a first step in implementing the recommended CSO control plan, NEORSD developed the *Easterly Tunnel Storage Advanced Facilities Plan* (AFP). The purpose of the AFP was to prepare preliminary designs for selected portions of the recommended CSO control plan including the following:

- Euclid Creek Storage Tunnel
- Dugway Storage Tunnel
- Shoreline Storage Tunnel
- Doan Valley Storage Tunnel
- Dugway East Interceptor Relief Sewer
- Dugway West Interceptor Relief Sewer
- Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station
- Euclid Creek Pump Station Upgrade

Individual Advanced Facilities Plans were prepared for each of the above projects, which represent the major components of the recommended CSO control plan for the Easterly District.

Furthermore, in 2011, NEORSD entered into a Consent Decree with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and Ohio EPA to implement, within a 25-year period, a long-term control plan (LTCP) to control CSO currently impacting Lake Erie and its tributaries within the District's service area. The main component of the LTCP consists of a network of deep tunnels to temporarily store CSO during critical storm events then release for eventual treatment at NEORSD WWTP facilities. The DRRS project is part of Control Measure #6, identified in Appendix 1 of NEORSD's Consent Decree.

Alternatives

A "no-action alternative" is not feasible, since it would violate NEORSD's Consent Decree to control CSOs impacting Lake Erie and its tributary streams. This would result in continued threats to human health and the environment related to CSO events and enforcement, including fines.

NEORSD evaluated various alternatives, including: relief sewer alignments, length and size of relief sewers, open cut versus directionally bored excavations, increasing average annual CSO volume reductions, length and size of storm sewers, sewer separation, various shaft locations, and green infrastructure. Alternatives also evaluated construction disturbance, community impacts, existing utilities and infrastructure, and sensitive environmental and cultural areas. The various alternative actions and alignments were

developed, modeled and evaluated, accompanied by preliminary sizing based on estimates of wastewater and stormwater runoff. Finally, the difference in construction, operation and maintenance (O&M), and life cycle costs was estimated for each alternative, and advantages and disadvantages were defined as necessary to develop a preferred alternative.

The cost analysis of the alternatives included the development of total construction, O&M and life cycle costs of all alternatives evaluated. The cost figures developed not only facilitated the direct comparison between alternatives but also indicated the magnitude of the cost for implementing each alternative. The cost estimates were based on conceptual layouts of each alternative which were developed to a concept level to determine the quantities for major site work, regulators, shafts, combined sewers, green infrastructure facilities, and storm sewers required to implement each option.

Selected Alternative

The DRRS project is a fractional component of the *Easterly District CSO Phase II Facilities Plan*, part of the Euclid Creek and Dugway Storage Tunnel systems, and will control and reduce combined sewage overflows at CSOs 231 and 232, provide surcharge relief, and improve conveyance of combined flows during peak storm events. Flows from the DRRS project will be conveyed to the Easterly WWTP for treatment.

In summary, the work consists of the following:

Project E-39 Work:

- Replacement of existing regulator, E-39, to reduce CSO.
- Installation of approximately 30 LF of combined sewer, along with minor storm sewer improvements.

Project Superior/Euclid Work:

- Replacement of existing regulators, D-86 and D-77, and installation of new regulator, D-76B to reduce CSO.
- Installation of approximately 1,800 LF of combined sewer, along with minor storm sewer improvements.
- Installation of a sewer drop shaft structure and connection to the existing Heights Interceptor.

Project Superior South Work:

- Modification of existing regulator, D-85, and separation of storm flow from the system to reduce CSO.
- Installation of approximately 600 LF of storm sewer and 50 LF or storm water outfall pipe.
- Replacement of an existing, failing storm water headwall, and replacement of existing rock channel protection.

General

- Manhole installation
- Erosion control work
- Site restoration
- Pavement restoration
- Utility relocations

Implementation

The total estimated cost of the DRRS project is $5,400,000, all of which NEORSD proposes to borrow from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF). The project service area qualifies for the standard WPCLF below-market interest rate on 20-year construction loans, which for June is 2.15 percent (WPCLF loan interest rates are set monthly and the rate may change for this loan). Borrowing at 2.15 percent will save NEORSD approximately $814,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.4 percent.

The sewer service charges for NEORSD customers are driven by the total indebtedness of NEORSD (and annual operation and maintenance costs), as opposed to the specific indebtedness of any particular project. NEORSD will not enact a special increase in user rates specifically to pay for this project; instead, rates were increased in 2017 to cover debt expected during the period of 2017-2021, which includes debt for this and other projects.

NEORSD Monthly Sewer Service Charge Rates

Rates Effective	2018	2019
Cleveland	$96.62	$103.98
Suburbs	$97.87	$104.92

The median household income of the benefitting properties is $45,289. The annual sewer bill based on 1,037 cubic feet of monthly water use is $1,159.00. This represents 2.56% of the MHI.

Environmental Impacts

Unaffected Environmental Features: The project will have no adverse secondary (development-related) environmental impacts, including conversion of agricultural land to other uses, since it is not designed to serve growth in undeveloped areas. No state-designated scenic rivers or state-designated or federally-designated wildlife areas are present in or near the work sites. No wetlands are present in or near the work sites. No Sole Source Aquifers are present under the project, and residents obtain their drinking water from the City of Cleveland.

The project has the potential to affect the following features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained in the following.

Surface Water and Ground Water: The majority of the DRRS project will not have significant adverse long-term impacts on surface water resources as the majority of work involves no stream crossings and will be performed under urban streets and street rights-of-way, in which the predominant cover is pavement, gravel, sidewalks, or lawn. Minor, short-term impacts from construction could occur. Excavation of the regulators, shafts, bored sewers, and trenches could lead to erosion and deposition that will be minimized as outlined in the project's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Dewatering of ground water to enable below grade work may be necessary, but engineering controls are part of the specifications to minimize these effects. NEORSD is replacing an existing, failing headwall structure and replacing existing rock channel protection in an unnamed, intermittent stream as part of this project, and has obtained a Nationwide Permit Number 3 for maintenance of the structures from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Surface water protection will be implemented in this location as part of the project's SWPPP. Once construction is complete, the area surrounding the project areas will be restored and returned to pre-construction conditions.

Based on the above, the proposed DRRS project will not result in significant adverse long-term impacts to surface or ground waters.

Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates that the project is within the range of the Indiana bat (federally endangered) and northern long-eared bat (federally threatened). Trees within the project areas are a mixture of isolated street trees and larger mature trees, including two potential bat roost trees, in an urban industrial, residential, and park setting. Limited removal of trees within project areas will take place. However, project design and placement, as well as construction barriers, will limit the number of trees removed and affected. Tree clearing will be limited to those that are necessary for the project. Other mature trees are located outside of the work areas and within the industrial, residential, and park corridors of Greater Cleveland, and would provide alternative habitat. Removal of the very limited number of trees identified as potential bat habitat is permitted to occur October 1 through March 31 or in coordination with USFWS. These tree clearing restrictions will further reduce any potential impacts to Indiana bats or northern long-eared bats.

Cuyahoga County is within the range of the Kirtland's warbler, a federally endangered species. In addition to the tree clearing restrictions related to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat species, clearing, removal and/or modification of any scrub/shrub or forested habitat will not occur between April 22 to June 1, and August 15 to October 15. These additional tree clearing restrictions will further reduce any potential impacts to the Kirtland's warbler.

While Cuyahoga County is within the ranges of the piping plover (federally endangered), and red knot (rufa) (federally threatened), this project is located under urban streets, street rights-of-way, urban park, lawn grass, gravel drives, and areas of high motorist, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. These locations would not provide the habitat necessary for these species.

Based on this information, the project will have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on terrestrial habitat or endangered species.

Air Quality, Dust, Noise, and Odors: Cuyahoga County is designated in "non-attainment" of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone and lead. Cuyahoga County meets air quality standards for the remaining four regulated air pollutants. The proposed project will result in a temporary increase of dust and fumes from construction activities. This will be mitigated using standard construction best management practices, such as emissions controls on motorized equipment. With these mitigation measures, any effects on air quality will be short-term, ending when construction is complete.

Effects from dust, noise and odors will be unavoidable but temporary. Construction noise and vibrations will be controlled using strict specifications included in the construction documents to manage these effects. Work will be restricted to daytime Monday through Saturday unless special approval is granted. Work areas will be cleaned to minimize airborne dust and dust suppressant will be used as needed. Emissions controls on motorized construction equipment will reduce diesel odors. Once the project is complete, the sewer system will operate with no excessive noise, dust or odors beyond that of a typical sewer system.

Therefore, the project will neither have significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts to air quality, nor will there be short-term or long-term significant adverse long-term impacts from noise, dust, and odors.

Archaeological and Historical Resources: The proposed DRRS project will be implemented exclusively in an urban commercial, residential, and park setting that has undergone extensive historical grading and filling. The predominant cover is pavement, gravel drives, sidewalks, and lawn. Excavation and installation of large-diameter sanitary sewers and storm sewers, as well as other utilities, including water, gas, electric, and fiber optic lines have taken place in these locations and received periodic maintenance and repair activities. Contract specifications include geotechnical monitoring, physical inspections of potentially affected resources and, as necessary, remedies for affected resources. The project includes work within Forest Hill Park for replacement of an existing, failing headwall structure and existing rock channel protection. A Phase I archaeological survey was performed for work in these locations, and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office concurred with the determination that no properties listed or eligible for listing on the national Register of Historic Places will be adversely affected by the proposed undertaking.

In the event that archaeological remains are found during construction, contractors and subcontractors are required under Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 to notify OHPO of any such discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with that entity (and with Ohio EPA) in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate.

Based on this information, the Ohio Historical Preservation Office, NEORSD and Ohio EPA believe that the proposed project will have no effect on unrecorded archaeological sites, or properties eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Safety and Traffic: The DRRS project locations are aligned with existing public rights-of-way and well-defined utility easements. A detailed traffic control plan will be coordinated with the local municipalities and impacted property owners. The plan will then be implemented during construction to manage traffic disruptions and prevent public safety problems. It will include temporary detours for lane closures caused by the project and will require the provision of emergency access at all times. NEORSD has a good history of working closely with local officials on projects that will impact local roads and has taken measures to minimize the duration and impact of these effects.

Once construction is complete, the DRRS project areas will be restored and returned to pre-construction conditions and use. Therefore, the project will have no long-term change or adverse impacts on safety and traffic.

Local Economy: The median household income of the benefitting properties is $45,289. The annual sewer bill, based on 3,111 cubic feet of quarterly water use, is $1,159. This represents 2.56% of the MHI, which is considered affordable given the strong public need for the project and the favorable funding.

Public Participation

NEORSD has a long history of working with the general public and local public officials when proposed projects are to be located in their community. Extensive outreach has taken place with the cities of Cleveland, East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights to discuss the project, alternatives, and measures to minimize community impacts. NEORSD has several publications and an internet website that serve to keep the members of their district informed of upcoming projects, and this project has received extensive coverage in the local media. NEORSD has also conducted public participation by advertising for bids and providing bid updates on their website, and by advertising for bids in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Public notifications regarding the project will be distributed shortly after issuance of a construction Notice to Proceed. A public notice announcing the availability of this Environmental Assessment will be posted on NEORSD and Ohio EPA – Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance websites. The public notice for the Environmental Assessment will be open for a 30-day public comment period. Thus, there have been adequate opportunities for information dissemination and public participation.

The following agencies reviewed this project's planning information:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ohio Historic Preservation Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Conclusions

Based on the planning documentation, associated correspondence, public participation and the comments from interested agencies, the proposed project as designed will have no significant adverse long-term impacts on farmland, coastal zones, surface water, ground water, floodplains, wetlands, aquatic or terrestrial habitat, endangered species, state or federal wildlife areas, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, cultural properties, air quality or the local economy. It will have no significant adverse long-term impacts with respect to noise, dust and odors. It will have long-term water quality benefits that will be associated with the prevention of a public and environmental health threat related to the exposure to untreated sewage via combined sewer overflows.

For further information, please contact:

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Figure 1: General project location, in red

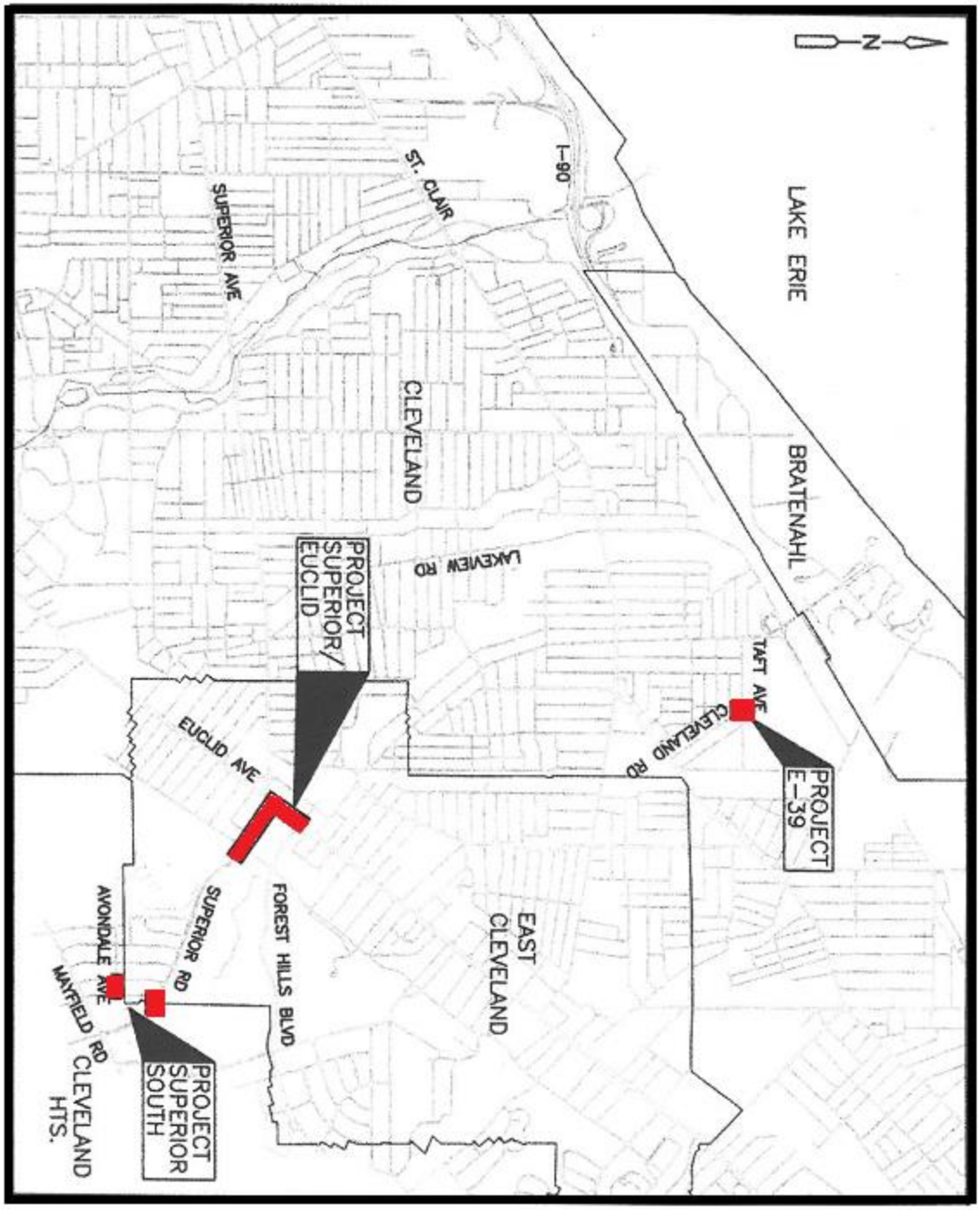

Figure 2: Project locations and details, in red