June 20, 2019

Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

Hocking County
Rockbridge Force Main
Loan Number: CS390037-0013

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a sewer infrastructure improvement project in Hocking County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA’s environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program, as stated in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-150-06.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WPCLF program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to me at the letterhead address. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, Hocking County can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Hocking County – Rockbridge Force Main

Applicant: Sandra Ogle, President
Hocking County Commissioners
1 E. Main Street
Logan, OH 43138

Loan Number: CS390037-0013

Project Summary

The Hocking County Commissioners have requested financial assistance from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to install force main (pressurized sanitary sewers) along Chieftain Drive in Rockbridge, which is an unincorporated area in Falls Township, Hocking County. Rockbridge’s existing sanitary sewers are experiencing high inflow and infiltration and the lagoon wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) cannot meet the need for the increased treatment capacity. The proposed force main will carry sanitary waste from the unincorporated area of Rockbridge to the City of Logan’s WWTP, which has the capacity to treat the additional flow.

The WPCLF loan will be combined with funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to pay for the $701,073 project.

Construction will involve trenching along Chieftain Drive and horizontal directional drilling under the Hocking River.

History & Existing Conditions

Rockbridge has sanitary sewers and treats sanitary waste with a lagoon WWTP. The sewer system is currently inundated within flow (excess water from improper connections to the sewer system) and infiltration (excess water from leaking pipes and connections). The lagoon WWTP is currently operating at maximum capacity and is unable to treat additional waste from new sources. Commercial development in the area is being delayed until there is capacity available to treat the resulting increase in sewage production.

Population and Flow Projections

Rockbridge and the City of Logan entered into a treatment agreement that will allow Logan’s WWTP to receive and treat sanitary waste from the Rockbridge area. Logan’s WWTP (see Figure 1) has the capacity to receive and treat waste from surrounding communities and will act as a regional WWTP. Future commercial development in the Rockbridge area was considered when developing the treatment agreement and Logan has the capacity for the anticipated growth.
Alternatives

Doing nothing is not an acceptable alternative because it would prohibit economic development and growth in the Rockbridge area because there is no additional capacity at the existing lagoon plant to receive sewage from new businesses or residents.

The existing collection system could be replaced to address inflow and infiltration and/or the lagoon plant upgraded to handle additional capacity, but both options are very costly and may still not be able to handle all the economic development planned for the area.

Selected Alternative

Considering the need for increased sanitary collection and treatment capacity in the area due to planned commercial development, and taking into account the cost of replacing Rockbridge’s collection system and/or increasing the capacity of the lagoon WWTP, it is more cost-effective for Rockbridge to tie into the City of Logan’s WWTP. The City of Logan and Hocking County have entered into a treatment agreement.

Implementation

This project will install 12,000 linear feet of 6-inch force main along Chieftain Drive (see Figure 2) to transport sanitary waste from the Rockbridge area to the City of Logan’s WWTP. The Rockbridge lagoon plant will continue to operate and serve existing residential customers. The new force main will receive sanitary waste from new businesses as economic development occurs.

Figure 1 – Logan WWTP location
Hocking County has requested $449,500 from the WPCLF at the standard interest rate of 1.78%. During the 30-year loan period, Hocking County will save approximately $109,824 by using WPCLF funding at this rate compared to the market rate of 3.08%. Hocking County will receive $250,000 in grant fund from the ARC to help pay for this project.

Based on an anticipated loan award date in July 2019, the project is expected to commence in August 2019 and be completed by October 2019.

Public Participation

The Logan Daily News published an article on November 10, 2017, titled “Rockbridge Sewer System Stalling New Growth.” This project has been discussed at multiple Hocking County Commissioners monthly meetings which are open to the public.

As part of its State Environmental Review Process, Ohio EPA will post this Environmental Assessment to the Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) web page located at: [http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx#169638769-wpclf-documents-for-review-and-comment](http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx#169638769-wpclf-documents-for-review-and-comment). Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to this project.

Environmental Impacts

This project will provide additional sewer service capacity for new commercial development which would have been impossible with Rockbridge's existing sewer system and lagoon WWTP. Installation of the new force main along Chieftain Drive will primarily occur in narrow trenches within or adjacent to the road right-of-way. The project will cross under the Hocking River using horizontal directional drilling.
No coastal zones, state-designated scenic rivers or state- or federally-designated wildlife areas are present in or near the project area. No farmland losses are expected from this project. It will have no impact on ground water resources since the work will primarily occur in shallow trenches approximately 5-feet deep except when horizontal directional drilling. The proper floodplain development permit was obtained for this project from the local floodplain administrator.

Air Quality: There are no new permanent air contaminant sources being installed as part of this project. There will be short-term increases in dust and exhaust emissions from heavy equipment operations and construction activities which will be controlled with best management practices. For these reasons, the project should have no significant short or long-term adverse impacts on the local air quality.

Archaeological and Historical Resources: There are no Ohio Historic Inventory properties within the project disturbance area. In the event of any archaeological find, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the SHPO on archaeological and historic surveys and in salvage efforts when appropriate. Ohio EPA has determined that the project will not cause any significant adverse effect to archaeological or historical resources (properties listed or eligible for the listing in the National Register of Historic Places).

Endangered Species and Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats: The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates that the endangered Indiana bat and threatened northern long-eared bat can be found in the project area. Tree clearing will only be done if necessary and only between October 1 and March 31 to protect sensitive bat species.

Horizontal directional drilling will avoid impacts to the river and riparian areas and there is no suitable habitat for the following threatened, endangered species of concern where trenching will occur along paved roads and rights-of-way: bald eagle, northern monkshood, timber rattlesnake, American burying beetle, running buffalo cover, and small whorled pogonia.

Surface Water and Wetlands: Construction will not have significant adverse long-term impacts on surface water resources as there will be no in-water work and no wetlands are present in the project area. Work will be predominately be performed in paved roads and lawn grass. Erosion and sedimentation impacts from construction are unlikely because contractors will use standard controls to minimize the potential for excavated soil to enter surface water or stormwater conveyances. All stream crossings will be horizontally directional drilled.

Dust, Noise, Odors, Safety and Traffic: Construction noise will be audible but insignificant compared to normal vehicle traffic and only during daytime hours. Public safety will be ensured by proper traffic management in the construction area and by covering or filling trench excavations at the end of each workday. Local aesthetics will be unchanged after construction and restoration are complete; road surfaces will be repaved, and the off-road easement will be planted with grass.

Local Economy: This project will have no impact on customer sewer rates. New customers will pay a fee to tap into sewer service.
Conclusion

Based on the review of general planning, design, and other information for this project, Ohio EPA concludes that no significant short-term or long-term adverse direct environmental impacts will result from the project as related to the environmental features discussed in this Environmental Assessment. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts of construction will be temporary and mitigated.

The project equally serves the entire project area and no segment of the community will be faced with additional adverse impacts or be deprived of environmental benefits, compared to any other segment.

For these reasons, this project, alone or in combination with other projects, is not expected to result in any significant indirect or cumulative short-term or long-term adverse environmental impacts.

Ohio EPA expects the economic impact of the project on the average user to be acceptable because it will not impact customer sewer rates and it provides a necessary service that would otherwise be unavailable for new development at a reasonable cost.

Contact

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