



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

August 23, 2017

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

**MUSKINGUM COUNTY
RURALDALE WATER MAIN EXTENSION
FS390060-0023**

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 Supply Revolving Loan Account 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,



Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For
Muskingum County**

**Ruraldale Water Main Extension
Loan Number FS390060-0023**

**Applicant: Don Madden
Muskingum County Projects Director
401 Main Street
Zanesville, Ohio 43701**

Existing Need

The Muskingum County Water Department (MCWD) owns and operates the water distribution system that serves more than 8,000 homes and businesses over large portions of Muskingum County, Ohio through a network of more than 300 miles of waterlines, 12 water storage tanks and 7 pump stations. This includes areas to the north of U.S. 40 and west of the Muskingum River. The county's water system, whose source water is from County wells, has been upgraded to be able to provide up to 4 million gallons per day (MGD); the water plant currently operates at about half capacity on an average day.

The proposed Ruraldale (AKA: Rural Dale) Water Main Extension project, here forward referred to as the Ruraldale project, would provide safe drinking water to residents primarily along Bethlehem Road and Ruraldale Road, in Blue Rock Township. Residents in the project area currently draw water from private wells and cisterns. Problems with the private water supplies in this area include acid mine waste contamination, wells contaminated with coliform bacteria, and low production. As a result, the residents sometimes rely on unsafe sources such as springs and ponds, or they must pay for hauled water. Many of these residents have petitioned MCWD to resolve these problems by providing them with public water. The nearby Blue Rock State Park recently received funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to extend MWCD water lines to the park to address algal contamination in the park's drinking water source. Waterline extension to the park, in turn, made extensions to the Ruraldale project area more financially feasible. MWCD proposes to extend approximately 12,745 linear feet (LF) of waterlines to the approximately 32 residences and businesses in the rural and relatively sparsely populated project area. The total estimated cost for the Ruraldale project is \$410,000.

Discussion of Alternatives

1) No-Action

Due to the above-described existing conditions for potable water services within the project area, the No-Action alternative of continuing with the current situation would leave citizens with unsafe, limited or expensive water sources, which is not a viable option.

2) Connection to the Muskingum County Water Department

The MCWD's 2 MGD water plant and southeast system has more than enough capacity to serve the project area, has nearby water transmission lines, will not require pump stations or storage tanks, will result in minimal environmental impact and be cost effective.

Selected Alternative

The Ruraldale project will connect approximately 32 residences and businesses to the MCWD's existing water main located at the intersection of Nettie Moore Lane and

Bethlehem Road via approximately 12,745 LF of 3-, 4-, and 6-inch water main. 11,995 LF of the of the water main will be open trenched and 750 LF of directionally bored in the areas of Bethlehem Road, Rockville Road, Rural Dale Road and Hickory Street. The majority of the project will take place in previously disturbed road rights-of-way. The project includes directional bores of streams, roads and culverts, and open cut excavation within easements on private properties. Residents will not be required to connect to public water.

Implementation

The total estimated cost for the Ruraldale project is \$410,000. Muskingum County is eligible for 75% Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) principal forgiveness for the project to address human health issues present in the project area. Muskingum County proposes to borrow the remainder of the project amount from the WSRLA in the estimated amount of \$102,500, and qualifies for a 30-year, zero-percent interest rate. Borrowing the estimated \$102,500 balance at zero-percent, in combination with the 75% principal forgiveness, will save MCWD approximately \$453,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.13 percent. Muskingum County is also applying for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to help with funding for individual household connections.

Construction of the proposed project is estimated to begin early in 2018 and is expected to be completed in four months. The new water lines will be owned and maintained by the MCWD. Those connecting to the system will receive a metered water bill from the MCWD.

Environmental Impacts

Unaffected Environmental Features: The installation and operation of the Ruraldale project will have few if any indirect (development-related) impacts. This is because the current and expected levels of population growth are low in the region as a whole, and because of geographic limitations to development within the project area (e.g., a significant portion of the available land in the project area lies on steep grades, and the entire project area lacks a public sewer system). No state-designated scenic rivers or state-designated or federally-designated wildlife areas are present in or near the work sites. No in-water work will take place as part of this project. No wetlands are located in the project area. The project is not located in the Lake Erie coastal zone. No sole source aquifers are present under the project.

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

Surface Water: The majority of the Ruraldale project will not have significant adverse long-term impacts on surface water resources, as there will be no in-water work, no wetlands are present in the project area, and work will be performed within road rights-of-way and limited easements on private properties, in which the predominant cover is

pavement, gravel and lawn grass. Minor, short-term impacts from the open-cut construction and directional boring could occur. Excavation of the trenches and pits could be prone to erosion and deposition if construction mitigation is not followed. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which describes the measures that will be taken to prevent pollution caused by runoff into surface waters, is required, as is a frac-out contingency plan for horizontal drilling, which describes how inadvertent escapes of drilling slurry to the surface (known as “frac-outs”) will be managed. Dewatering of ground water to enable work below grade may be necessary, but engineering controls are part of the specifications to minimize the impacts of discharging pumped ground water to a river or stream.

Based on the above, the proposed Ruraldale project will not result in significant adverse impacts to surface waters.

Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species: The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates that the project is within the range of the Indiana bat (endangered) and northern long-eared bat (threatened). Trees within the project area are primarily small to large-sized street trees and scrubby roadside brush. Tree clearing and trimming will be limited to those that are necessary for the project. Other mature trees are located outside of the work area and would provide alternative habitat. Tree removal will only be permitted to occur October 1 - March 31 or in coordination with USFWS, and tree removal is limited to only those trees necessary for completion of the project (e.g., trees within the excavation location or within the path of heavy equipment, etc.). These tree clearing restrictions will further ensure that any potential impacts to Indiana bats or northern long-eared bats are avoided.

The project is within the range of the sheepsnose, fanshell, and snuffbox, all federally endangered mussels; rabbitsfoot, a federally threatened mussel; Ohio pigtoe, wartyback, long-solid, sharp-ridged pocketbook, and wartyback, all state endangered mussels; fawnsfoot, black sandshell, and threehorn wartyback, all state threatened mussels; northern madtom, a state endangered fish; paddlefish, mountain madtom and channel darter, all state threatened fish; and eastern hellbender, a state endangered and federal species of concern salamander. While multiple stream and drainage crossings are present within the project area, no in-water work will take place as part of this project. All crossings will utilize directional drilling methods to install the water line, adhering to the SWPPP and frac-out contingency plan to minimize potential impacts to these aquatic species.

The project is within the range of the eastern spadefoot toad and the northern harrier, both state endangered species. However, due to the location of the project and the lack of appropriate habitat present, these species are not likely to be impacted.

The project is within the range of the black bear, a state endangered species. Due to the mobility of the black bear, this project is not likely to impact this species.

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

Air Quality: Muskingum County air quality meets standards for the six regulated air pollutants (carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, particulate matter, and ozone). During construction, dust and vehicle exhaust will be insignificant sources of local air pollution. Dust due to excavation in dry weather will be controlled by good housekeeping measures (minimizing the area of disturbed soil, road sweeping, dust suppression with water or other benign dust suppressant). Because of its temporary nature and the use of emissions controls on motorized equipment, construction vehicle exhaust will be an insignificant pollution source compared to background sources of motorized vehicle exhaust in the greater project area.

Based on this information, the project should have no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

Dust, Noise and Odors: Motorized equipment will be used for the majority of project work, generating noise, dust and odors that will be unavoidable but temporary. Noise will be controlled by using equipment that does not generate excessive noise or vibration. Work will be restricted to weekdays from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Work areas will be left clean enough to minimize the generation of 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 waterline extensions will operate with no noise, dust or odors.

Based on this, the project will have no short-term or long-term significant adverse effects from noise, dust and odors.

Safety and Traffic: Construction in road rights-of-way will cause temporary traffic disruption and potential threats to public safety. Contract documents require contractors to implement standard traffic controls to minimize traffic disruption and public safety problems. For example, contractors are required to cover or close trenches overnight, to maintain access for emergency vehicles at all times, and utilize traffic direction devices such as flaggers, cones, and barricades. With these precautions, the project is unlikely to create significant traffic disturbance or threats to public safety.

Once construction is complete, the project areas will be restored and returned to pre-construction conditions. The project will not permanently alter traffic patterns. Therefore, the project will have no long-term change or adverse impacts on safety and traffic.

Archaeological and Historical Resources: Ohio EPA has also concluded, based on the extensive pre-design review and historic structure avoidance that went into the routing of the waterline project, combined with proposed waterline installation occurring primarily in previously-disturbed areas, and through the completion of a limited Phase I Cultural Resource Management survey, that no features listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places will be adversely impacted by the proposed project.

Based on this information Muskingum County and Ohio EPA believe that due to the extent of disturbance in the project area, unrecorded archaeological sites or properties eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places are not likely to be present.

In the event that archaeological properties are found during construction, contractors and subcontractors are required under Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 to notify the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (and Ohio EPA) and to cooperate with those entities in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate.

Local Economy: Debt for this project will be repaid from Muskingum County's Water Fund, without rate increases based on this project. The median household income (MHI) of the project area is \$39,156. Under the water rates that are effective in 2017, the average residential water bill is expected to be \$30.00 per month, or \$360.00 per year, based on 4,500 gallons per month usage. This annual water bill represents 0.92% of the MHI, which is considered affordable.

Residents will be responsible for paying for connection fees, per household, of \$500 if paid prior to the start of project construction, \$600 if paid during project construction, and \$1,000 if paid after project construction is completed, and are also responsible for their own service laterals, which has an estimated cost of \$2,000. CDBG funds are anticipated, which would pay for the connection fees and service laterals for low to moderate income (LMI) residents. Residents will also be responsible for paying \$65.00 for Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department water inspections of their connections. Residents of this project area are neither required to connect to this public drinking water source nor abandon private wells if they connect to public water.

Public Participation

MCWD has been petitioned to provide public water by many of the residents of the project area that are currently served by private water systems, the Board of Muskingum County Commissioners gave notice of its intent to file an application for financial assistance in multiple public meetings, and Muskingum County has also posted notifications of the project on the county website. A public notice announcing the future availability of this Environmental Assessment will be posted on Muskingum County 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 the project's planning information and raised no objections:

- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- Ohio Historic Preservation Office
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Conclusion

Based on the planning documentation, associated correspondence, public participation and the comments from interested agencies, the proposed project as designed will have no adverse long-term effect 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 long-term adverse effects with respect to noise, dust and odors. It will have long-term benefits associated with the provision of a safe and adequate supply of potable water that is maintained according to the standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act and is capable of providing adequate and reliable water pressure to support the needs of residential customers and businesses throughout the project area.

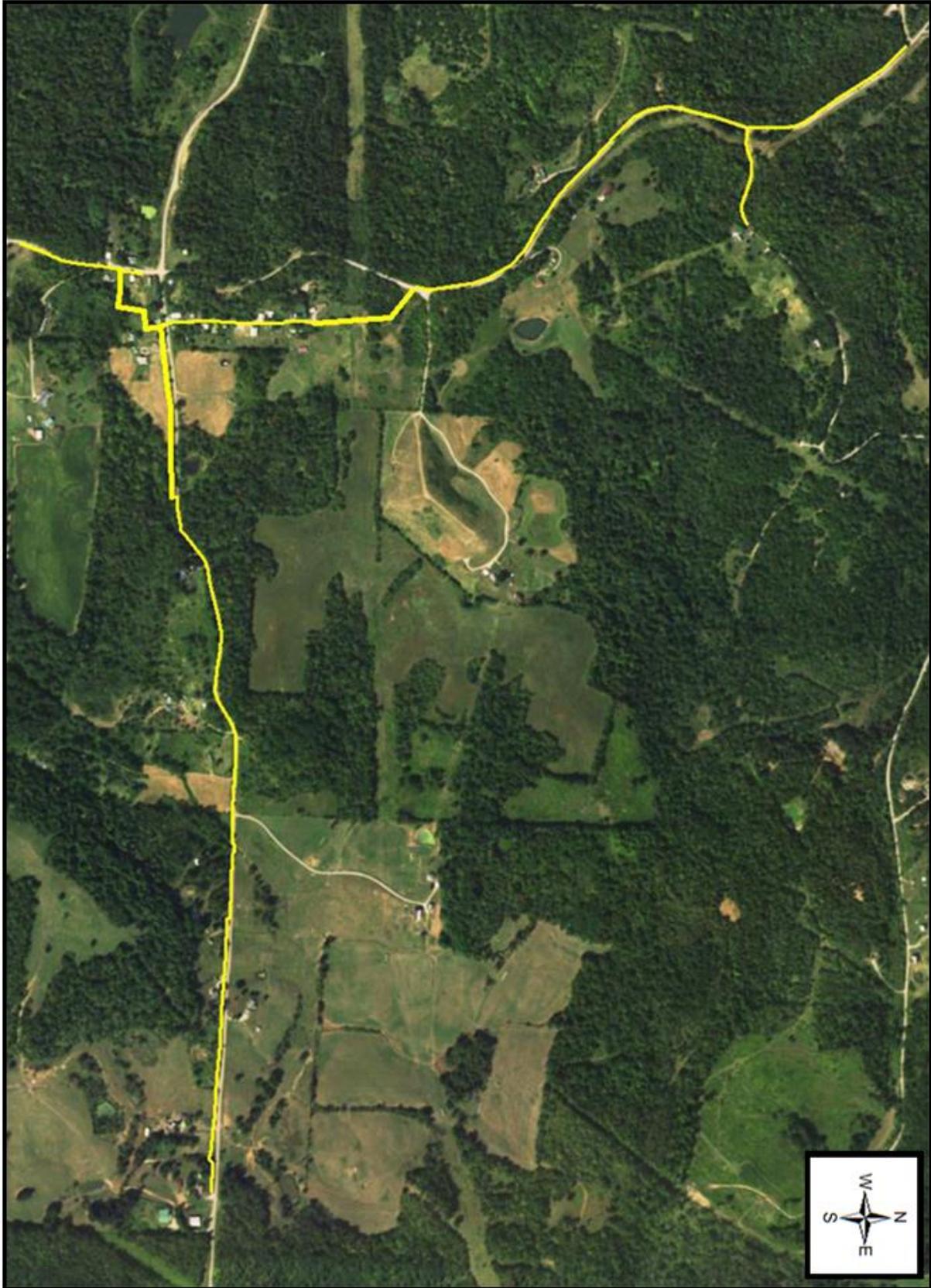
For further information, please contact:

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General project area (in red)



Proposed waterlines (in yellow).