Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Anne M. Vogel, Director

February 3, 2023

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

Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District – Washington, Morgan, and Noble Counties
Phase 6 Water Line Extension
Loan Number: FS391353-0013

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a water storage tank construction and water line extension project in the Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District 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 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.

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. 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 the email address of the contact named at the end of the EA. 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, the Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District can then proceed with its application for the WSRLA loan.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Courtright

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Phase 6 Water Line Extension

Applicant: Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District
5772 Buchanan Road
Waterford, Ohio 45786

Loan Number: FS391353-0013

Project Summary

Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District (Tri-County) has requested $4,003,021 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for construction of a water storage tank and a water line extension. This project is eligible for up to 50% principal forgiveness. Phase 6 of this water line extension project will continue extension of water service from the district's existing water lines within the region to local customers to ensure a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. The addition of a water storage tank will provide needed water storage for the community. Two generators will be installed to ensure backup power to the district's water treatment plant during power outages.

History & Existing Conditions

Tri-County provides public drinking water to a population of approximately 3,225 in Washington, Noble, and Morgan counties. The water system is currently comprised of approximately 175 miles of 2-inch to 10-inch water lines, one water treatment plant, five elevated storage tanks, and three booster stations. There are also various meter and pressure-reducing stations throughout the system.

The district requires extensions to its existing water lines to provide more customers with clean and safe drinking water, especially those who currently rely on contaminated individual ground water wells. The district currently has minimal potable water storage and is in desperate need of additional storage capacity.

Currently, Tri-County has no backup power supplies. Regular power outages pose risks to water quality at the water treatment plant (WTP) and halt distribution throughout the system. As a result, the district's minimal potable water storage is drained and leaves thousands of residents, businesses, and industries without potable water. The addition of two generators will allow Tri-County to maintain service during power outages.

Population and Flow Projections

Tri-County water district averages about 15.5 million gallons usage per month, which equates to approximately 520,000 gallons per day. The population is increasing each year and Tri-County will continue to expand their system based on need and interest. Tri-County is always alert to possible

water line extensions that will provide water to new customers. As the demand for water grows, the district will expand their system as necessary to meet these demands.

Alternatives

- *No Action:* Doing nothing, the "no action" alternative, would leave local residents without a reliable source of potable water as they continue to use their individual ground water wells. Therefore, this is not a feasible alternative.
- *Water line extensions and an additional water storage tank:* Tri-County water district can utilize their existing water distribution system in place to add increased water storage and extend service to customers in need of a reliable and safe water supply.

Selected Alternative

Tri-County water district will add an additional water tank for storage, line extensions to provide service to more customers, and two generators to deal with power loss.

This project will involve the installation of approximately 17,115 linear feet of 6-inch, 20,610 linear feet of 4-inch, and 8,520 linear feet of 3-inch water lines as well as valves, hydrants, services, and other necessary appurtenances. This project also consists of one permanent WTP generator and one portable generator.

The lines to be extended were chosen based on water request forms to ensure the maximum number of customers who want water service will receive it. All new water lines have been sized to be at least three inches to meet current and anticipated demand.

Additionally, the district will install a 200,000-gallon water storage tank at the intersection of Buchanan Road and Stevens Road in Waterford Township, Washington County. This will be a composite elevated tank with a single concrete pedestal supporting a bolted glass-fused to steel container. Composite tanks offer benefits by requiring a smaller construction footprint, having interior ladder systems, aesthetic appearance, long-term maintenance costs, and storage areas available in the base of the tank pedestal. The glass-fused-to-steel technology offers the lowest ownership cost because the tank doesn't need sand blasting and painting.

The project will address deficiencies with water distribution and backup power. The additions will benefit the entire system and allow for a much larger reach of service.

The majority of the construction for the water line extension will remain in previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside existing public roadways. The project will include one river crossing and three planned stream crossings which will be conducted by horizontal directional drilling. The contractor shall commit to minimizing dust, sedimentation and erosion, and maintaining traffic through the duration of construction.

Maps of the project location are located in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Tri-County plans to borrow $4,003,021 from the WSRLA. This project is eligible for up to 50% principal forgiveness with the remainder of the loan at 0% interest rate. Tri-County will save by using

WSRLA dollars compared to the current market rate of 4.18%. This project will also receive a $250,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Project Schedule
The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2023 with construction beginning soon after.

Public Participation

Information regarding this project was provided to local residents during regular board meetings. Community members were encouraged to attend and provide input. Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to the project.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Environmental Assessment (EA) is available from the project contact named below.

Environmental Impacts

Construction of this project could affect environmental features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

Air Quality
Washington, Noble, and Morgan counties are in attainment for criteria pollutants, which will be affected by the construction of this project. The contractor will prevent unnecessary creation of dust from construction activities and shall prevent dust attributable to the operations from entering the atmosphere. Dust on unsurfaced streets or parking areas and any remaining dust on surfaced streets shall be controlled with water as needed. Because of this approach, there will be no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

Archaeological and Historical Resources
A Phase 1 Archaeological Survey has been previously conducted for this phase and other previous phases of the Tri-County waterline extension project. The area consists of rugged terrain with ridges, steep slopes, and areas of previous disturbance. Due to the terrain and the planned usage of underground water line construction, there should be no effects to standing structures. No further archaeological work is needed.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, 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 Office in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate. Work will not resume until a survey of the find and a determination of its value and effect has been made, and Ohio EPA authorizes work to continue.

According to the SHPO database, no registered historical properties are located within the potential viewshed of the proposed elevated storage tank.

Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species
Seven federally listed species occur in the Tri-County region of Washington, Noble, and Morgan counties: the endangered Indiana bat, the threatened northern long-eared bat, threatened American

burying beetle, and the following endangered mussel species: fanshell, pink mucket pearly, sheepnose, and snuffbox.

The Indiana and northern long-eared bats have similar summer maternity and roosting habitat preferences (trees with large crevices or loose, sloughing bark higher than ten feet above the ground). If necessary, tree and vegetation removal will occur from October 1 through March 31 when bats are presumed absent from the area. The temporary construction of underground water lines will not have any permanent impact on the American burying beetles' habitat. Although threatened and endangered mussels are found within the Muskingum River and smaller present streams, planned construction underneath the river and streams by horizontal directional drill will eliminate any impacts to these mussel species. Based on this information, the project will have no significant adverse short-term or long-term effect on terrestrial habitat or endangered species.

Farmland Protection

Based on the review of the project planning and design, no prime farmland losses are expected as a result of this project.

Floodplains

According to project planning and design, no permanent structures are scheduled to be constructed within designated flood hazard zones.

Ground Water Resources

To avoid adverse impacts to ground water resources, the construction contract includes specifications for appropriate and safe dewatering of deep excavations and management of ground water.

Safety, Noise, Traffic, and Aesthetics

The contractor shall develop a traffic plan prior to commencing construction which shall include all proper warning signs and lane closures and a commitment to minimize both the extent and duration of the disruption of traffic and disturbance to the neighborhood during construction. For these reasons, the project will not adversely affect noise, traffic, public safety, or aesthetics.

Surface Water Resources

The project includes a Class A stream crossing across the Muskingum River, as well as three Class E stream crossings which will be horizontally directionally drilled to minimize impacts to aquatic resources.

An Ohio EPA General Storm Water NPDES Permit for Construction Activities shall be obtained if necessary and the contractor shall minimize soil from eroding or otherwise entering onto all paved areas and into natural watercourses, ditches, and public sewer systems.

Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers will be unaffected by this project as there are none located within the project's vicinity.

Wetlands

According to a review of project planning and design and the Ohio Wetlands Inventory, this project will contain no in-wetland work and therefore will have no impacts on wetland areas.

Energy Use

This project will have little to no effect on local or regional energy supplies as the county plans to utilize the existing Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District water distribution system.

Local Economy
WSRLA funding and the receipt of up to 50% principal forgiveness will allow the Tri-County customers to have affordable water rates in an economically stressed area.

Conclusion

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

The project will provide residents with a safe, stable, and reliable supply of potable water.

Contact information

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Exhibit 1: Project location map

Exhibit 2: Project location map

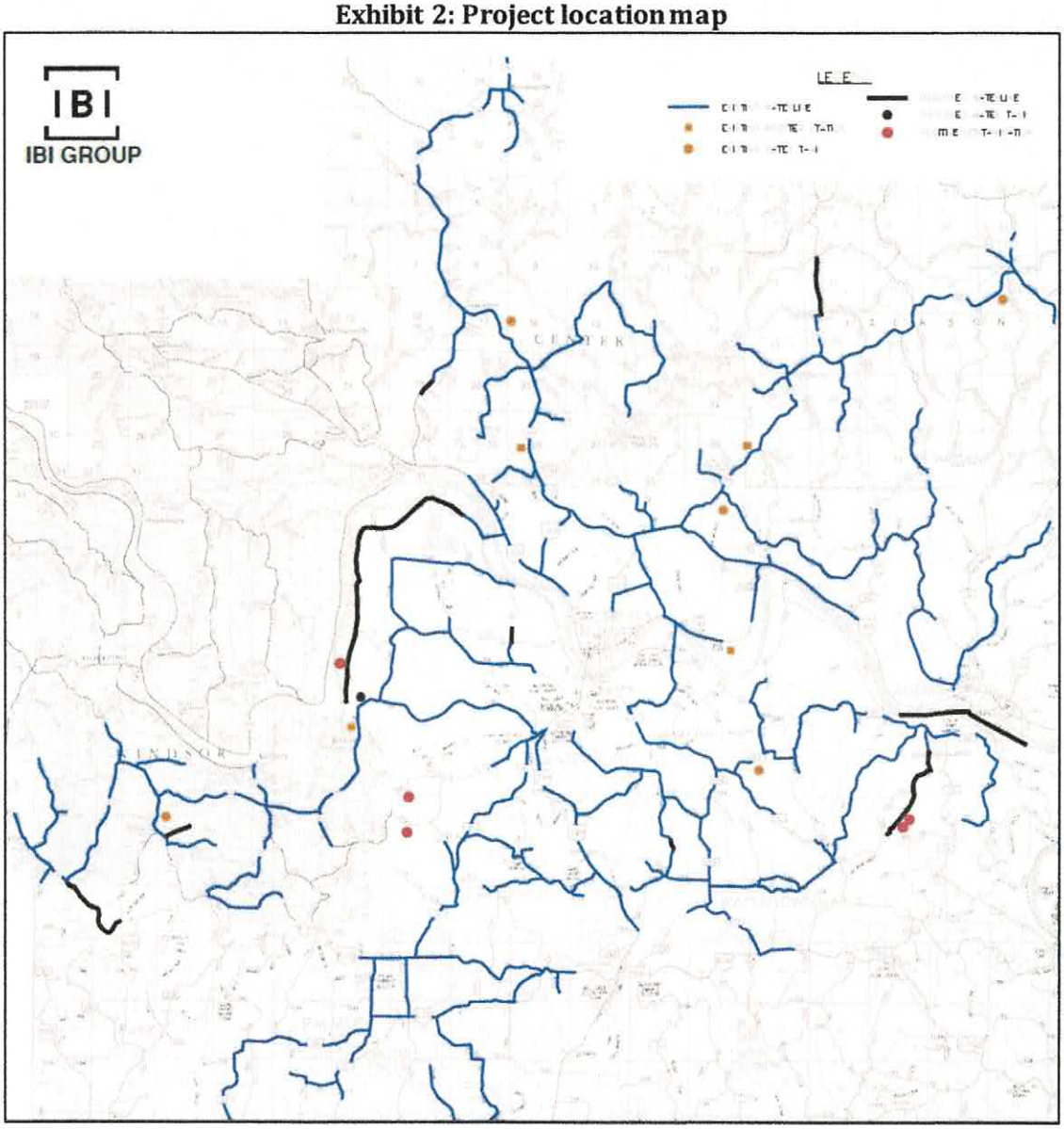

Exhibit 3: Proposed water tower location