March 11, 2024

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

Village of Baltic – Tuscarawas County
Brickyard Road Water and Sewer Replacement
Loan Numbers: FS390132-0004 and CS390132-0005

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a joint water and sewer installation project in Baltic which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) and Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan programs. The EA describes the projects, their costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the projects. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for these loan programs.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WSRLA and WPCLF program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed projects 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 these projects 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 Village of Baltic can then proceed with its application for its WSRLA and WPCLF loans.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Courtright

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Brickyard Road Water and Sewer Replacement

Applicant: Village of Baltic
102 West Main Street
Baltic, Ohio 43804

Loan Numbers: FS390132-0004 and CS390132-0005

Project Summary

The Village of Baltic has requested funding for two infrastructure improvement projects from the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) and Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) programs. The projects are located near the headwaters of Brush Run, which lies in the Upper South Fork of Sugar Creek watershed and is a tributary of the Tuscarawas River.

The two proposed projects will provide safe drinking water and public sewer to five unserved properties along Brickyard Road. Residents rely on water from private wells and household sewage treatment systems. The village is also proposing to concurrently install sanitary sewers with this proposed project to serve the new Gerbers Feed Mill located at 100 North Ray Street.

On this basis, the village's sanitary sewer extension component of the overall water and sewer replacement project is consistent with the regional water quality management plan for this part of Ohio. Construction of the two proposed projects is expected to require about six months.

Design and construction of the water line component of the overall project is expected to cost about $283,000. For the similarly located wastewater project consisting of new storm sewers and new sanitary sewers, the construction is estimated to cost about $229,000. The village will repay its anticipated WSRLA and WPCLF construction loans with revenues collected from its customers in the form of user charges.

Overall, the proposed projects will not result in significant, adverse, direct or indirect environmental or socioeconomic impacts.

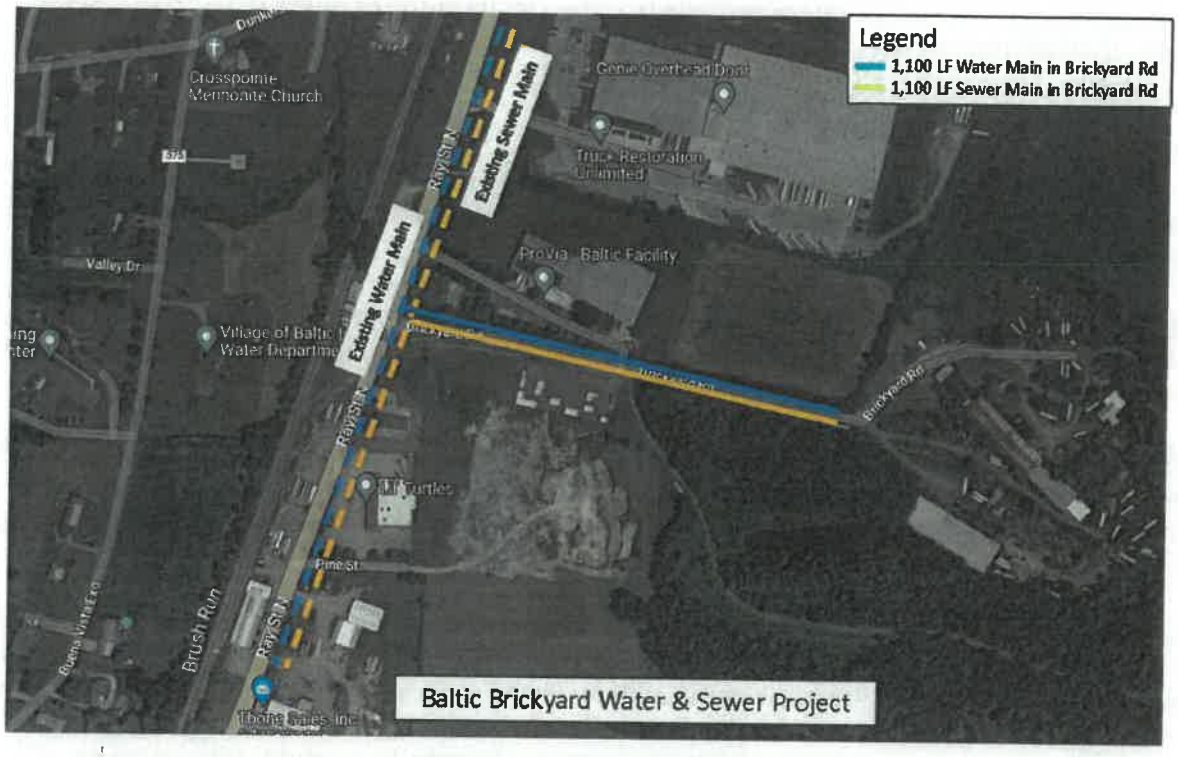

Figure 1. Project location

History & Existing Conditions

The Village of Baltic is a small 175-year-old community with a population under 1,000 people located in three counties: Coshocton, Holmes, and Tuscarawas. Baltic receives its drinking water from two groundwater wells located near the village's water treatment plant (WTP). The WTP services 334 residential customers, 26 commercial customers, one school, and one church.

The same customers are also served by the wastewater system, which includes a wastewater treatment facility (WWTP) constructed in the late 1970s.The northern part of the village is served by water and sewer mains located under State Route (SR) 93, also known as Ray Street. Brickyard Road is located at the northeast end of the village and lacks the water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure needed to serve existing and future developments in the area. Residents along that road rely on household sewage treatment systems (HSTS) and drinking water wells.

Population and flow projections

The village is planning for one or more future light industrial developments located along Brickyard Road. A street improvement project along this section of Brickyard Road is proposed to begin within the next month. These new water/sewer lines are being designed to have as little impact as possible on existing pavement in the project area.

The village of Baltic has indicated that its population is not expected to grow and should remain at a population of 959 people. Overall, the most important aspects of the village's planning information is that the village expects commercial growth to occur in the project area shown above in Figure 1. In contrast, the village does not expect the number of residential and industrial customers, and

associated water demand or sewer capacity to differ significantly in twenty years from what it is now. On that basis, the demand for its drinking water and the resulting wastewater flows are expected to increase only slightly during that interval.

Alternatives

The following alternatives have been identified for this project that will include installation of new sewer and water lines to customers without those services:

Do Nothing (the no-action option). This option would delay pipe extensions and limit commercial and industrial development opportunities along Brickyard Road. Limited types of small residential developments may be able to be constructed using well and septic systems.

Water and Sewer Mains option. This option would entail constructing approximately 1,100 linear feet (lf) each of eight-inch diameter water line and eight-inch diameter sanitary sewer line in Brickyard Road east of Highway 93 to provide utility services to existing and future developments in the area.

Regionalization. Regionalization of water and wastewater systems were evaluated. Regionalization is not practical in this area due to the extended distance between water systems. With the extended distance between water systems, water quality would be reduced, and a disinfection booster station would need to be provided to boost the chlorine levels within the new water line. Even with regionalization, construction of the 1,100 lf of water and sewer lines would still need to be performed.

Selected Alternative

This project is intended to construct approximately 1,100 lf each of 8-inch water and sewer mains in Brickyard Road and to provide water and sewer service to existing residents and proposed commercial buildings in the project area. This will allow residents and businesses in this area to be served by public water and sewer. All HSTS and drinking water wells will be abandoned.

Implementation

The Village of Baltic intends to finance its water, stormwater, and wastewater improvements through an Ohio WSRLA loan of $253,000 and a WPCLF loan of $229,000. The village is expected to receive an interest rate of 2.2% for both loans. WPCLF and WSRLA interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award. Ohio EPA expects that the village will save a total of $170,986 when compared to a market-rate loan of 4.0% for a 30-year loan.

The debt associated with the village's proposed improvements will be recovered from user charges. The average monthly water bill for the new customers served by Baltic will be $8.75 per 1,000 gallons with a flat fee of $10. The average monthly sanitary sewer bill will be $7.25 per 1,000 gallons with a flat fee of $9.15, and a $1 monthly fee for stormwater improvements. An average residential customer using 4,000 gallons per month pays $540 annually for water, which is higher than the Ohio average water bill of $477. The average sanitary sewer customer pays $469 annually which is lower than the Ohio average sewer bill of $490.

The average water bill is about 0.88 percent of the median household income (MHI) for Baltic (MHI; $61,625) and the sewer bill is 0.76 percent.

Public Participation

The village has discussed the project at several public meetings, including meetings in April and May 2023. Currently, the village is discussing the county taking ownership of the village's water and sewer system. As indicated in the village's February newsletter, the village's mayor announced that this should be done by summer of 2024. Based on the information in the newsletter, residents apparently do not have any concerns or questions about the village's proposal to allow the county to take over the village's water and sewer systems by the end of this year.

Additionally, the village indicated that public participation and comments are encouraged at regular meetings, which are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about or opposition to this project. Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance will make a copy of this document available to the public on the following webpage and will provide it upon request:
https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements

Environmental Impacts

The village's projects have the potential to affect the following features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

Air Quality, Noise, Traffic, and Local Aesthetics
Temporary construction impacts on noise, dust, traffic, and air emissions will be minimized. In particular, the detail plans and specifications for the combined water line extension, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer project indicate that noise will be reduced by limiting construction activities to daytime hours and providing construction equipment with proper intake silencers and mufflers. Further, air emissions will be limited by making sure that all construction equipment has proper emission control devices and that they are properly maintained. Any unpaved areas will be wet down (as necessary) during construction to minimize dust generation. Traffic control will be accomplished by requiring that one lane of traffic must be maintained, that emergency vehicles have access to the construction sites, and that other traffic control practices in the detail plans are followed. Local aesthetics should not be significantly impacted because the project area will be returned to original condition.

Archaeological and Historical Resources
Based on Ohio EPA's coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Ohio EPA and SHPO concluded that the proposed project will have no effect on any properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and that no further coordination is required unless the project changes or archaeological remains are discovered during the course of the project. Should such a situation arise, both Ohio EPA and SHPO need to be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat and Surface Water Resources
Baltic's project is located in the Upper South Fork of Sugar Creek watershed which include Brush Run and several tributary streams in the vicinity. Based on Ohio EPA's review of the detail plans, there are no concerns associated with construction of either the water line extension project or the sanitary sewer project because the nearest stream is not within the project area.

While no direct impacts are expected, both the water and sanitary system extension projects are to serve proposed light industrial development and so are a potential concern from an indirect and

cumulative impact standpoint. However, by serving this area with new water lines and sanitary sewers rather than small water or wastewater package plants, these new infrastructure improvements will eliminate the need for a new discharge to Brush Run. Further support for this is based on our conclusion that impact mitigation is included in the detail plans and specifications and because the proposed improvements will be located adjacent to existing road rights-of-way.

Endangered Species and Fish and Wildlife Species

Five federally listed species are present in Holmes County. Of these species, the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat are federally endangered, the tricolored bat is proposed endangered species, the monarch butterfly is a candidate species, and the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (Platanthera leucophaea) is a federally listed threatened plant species. Ohio EPA has determined that these five species will not be adversely affected by the proposed project's construction for the following reasons.

Foremost, Ohio EPA reviewed the village's proposed project and determined that because there is no suitable habitat along the project alignment in the project area and that no tree removal is required to construct the proposed water, sanitary, and storm sewer improvements that the project is not likely to adversely affect the listed bat species In addition, we found that because the proposed project will be limited to road rights-of-way that there should be no significant, adverse, direct impacts on the monarch butterfly Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid.

Regarding the state listed species whose ranges overlap that of the project area, none of these listed species are expected to be adversely affected by the proposed project's construction and the related light industrial developments. This conclusion was reached primarily because suitable habitat is either absent or the proposed construction techniques used for installing any of the proposed infrastructure improvements as shown in the project area shown in Figure 1 will not involve any in-water work.

In particular, installation of underground utilities will use open cut trenches in prior-disturbed areas such as under existing streets and under rights-of-way in the project area to avoid directly impacting potential suitable habitat that may be in the project area; stormwater infrastructure will be developed with best practice engineering standards and as a mitigation control to increased surface area runoff to avoid potential affects to the property.

Further, Ohio completed a review to determine if any hibernacula used by bat species would be affected by the project. This review concluded that the project is not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened bat species that may be present.

Terrestrial Habitat

Direct Impacts. No adverse impacts are expected because the proposed project will be limited to land prior converted from a wooded character.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts. Based on available maps and aerial photos of the area adjacent to Brickyard Road and an existing railroad spur owned by Ohio Central Railroad, Ohio EPA has seen that there are several parcels owned by the Swiss Valley Lumber Company and the Brush Run Holdings LLC, among others. These several parcels total about 70 acres of potentially developable land, including land that has already been converted from woodlands to an area totally cleared of vegetation. As this area is relatively small in size and most of the area is privately owned, there is a potential for future land use changes from wooded to other types of vegetation. However, when taken in a broader context of the State of Ohio and how much land has been returned to a more

natural state since this part of Ohio was mined, it appears that any conversion to commercial and light industrial land uses should not result in any significant adverse indirect and cumulative impacts to terrestrial habitat found in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Safe Drinking Water, Ground Water Resources, and Sole Source Aquifers
Ohio EPA has concluded that there will be no significant, adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on these resources because all the proposed improvements and any development associated with the Gerber Mill development will be limited to an area paralleling Brickyard Road and the Ohio Central Railroad which parallels it. In part, this is based on our review of available information that indicates that there are no known wells, water supply intakes, or source water protection areas in the immediate project area. While this is the case, t care does need to be taken to assure that any spills are properly attended to. By including language covering spill control in the detail plans and specifications, this concern has been addressed.

Safety
The proposed project detail plans and specifications included all of the necessary safety guidance and related materials to assure that the project is performed according to all applicable federal and state safety laws and regulations.

Local Economy
The new water customer will be charged $1,600 for tying into the new system and all new sewer customers will be charged $800 to $1600. For water customers, the tap fees include the cost of the tap and the installation of the tap. They do not include additional costs such as underground boring, excavation, road repair, and meter pits, which are the responsibility of the property owner. Upon tapping into the water lines of the village, an EPA-approved backflow prevention device must be installed. The same applies for any sewer laterals which will be needed to connect the new development to the proposed sanitary sewer.

Finally, all installation and maintenance costs of the water and/or sewer lines from the village's water or sewer main at the curb to the buildings or property are the property owner's responsibility.

Prime Farmland, Wetlands, Floodplains, and Wild and Scenic Rivers
There are none in the project 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 direct 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 direct impacts will be temporary and mitigated. Similarly, no major indirect and cumulative effects on these resource types are anticipated by Ohio EPA. Overall, the village's proposed combined project consisting of water, wastewater, and storm sewer improvements in the project area, and the associated development, is expected to result in improvements in the Village of Baltic's water distribution system, sanitary sewer system, storm sewers, and other critical infrastructure. The proposed project will provide water and sewer for unserved properties in the project area shown in Figure 1 above, and thus are expected to have a positive effect on human health.

Contact information

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