



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor  
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

May 27, 2021

**Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact**

**City of Columbus - Franklin County  
Olentangy River Road Water Main Phase 2  
Loan number: FS390274-0316**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a waterline replacement project in Columbus 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 LER describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program, as described in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-150-05.

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. This project's relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies it for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment, as described in OAC 3745-150-06. More information can be obtained by calling or writing the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination, award of funds may proceed without further environmental review or public comment unless new information shows that environmental conditions of the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

*Jonathan Bernstein*

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Name: Olentangy River Road Water Main Phase 2

Applicant: City of Columbus  
910 Dublin Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Loan Number: FS390274-0316

### **Project Summary**

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$4,129,009 from the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for construction of a new water main along Olentangy River Road. The project is intended to replace an inefficient and deteriorated existing water main. The project limits include no sensitive environmental resources. For most of the project, a trench will be dug adjacent to the existing mains to be replaced within the road right-of-way.

### **History and Existing Conditions**

Columbus operates an extensive water treatment and distribution system that serves the city and most of Franklin County, delivering 50 billion gallons of water per year to its service area. Prior to treatment, water is sourced from reservoirs, wells, rivers, and creeks, including Big Walnut Creek. An existing 20-inch water main located along Olentangy River Road provides water service to an area near Olentangy River Road and Lane Avenue. The existing water main ranges from 65-92 years of age and will be abandoned at the project's completion. This existing water main is in need of replacement to reduce the regular maintenance due to deteriorated conditions. If not addressed, the flow and water quality of the existing main will decrease. Water main breaks will continue and require more costly maintenance.

### **Project Description**

This project involves installing approximately 5,800 linear feet of new 24-inch water main to replace the existing 20-inch water main. Water service lines on Olentangy River Road between Old Ackerman Road and a point north where the existing water main crosses State Route 315 will be transferred to the new waterline. The new 24-inch water main will have an estimated service life of 100 years and will significantly reduce the regular maintenance required by the existing main. New copper water taps and fire hydrants will also be installed.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway and existing waterline, therefore minimizing effects on environmental resources. To protect endangered bat species, tree clearing will occur between October 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control dust, erosion and sedimentation, and maintain local traffic during construction.

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

## **Implementation**

### *Project Costs*

Columbus plans to borrow \$4,129,009 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period Columbus will save approximately \$575,911 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.75%, compared to the market rate of 2%.

### *Local Economy*

The current Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$534/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated water projects are expected to increase to approximately \$608/year, or 1.2% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$51,612.

By using WSRLA financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

### *Project Schedule*

The anticipated loan award will occur in June 2021. Construction is expected to begin immediately and to be completed by May 2022.

## **Public Participation**

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed waterline construction along Olentangy River Road and contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns. Notices are also to be distributed to affected residents prior to construction.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx> (Under the "What's New" tab, scroll to: "Documents Available for Review and Comment – WSRLA Documents for Review and Comment") and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Limited Environmental Review (LER) is available from the project contact named below.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing mechanical equipment. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

- *Has no significant environmental effect, no effect on high value environmental resources, and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation.*

The project replaces waterlines within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway and existing waterline, therefore areas lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work is scheduled to occur, and there will be no new construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. If necessary, tree clearing is to occur within seasonal clearing dates to protect endangered bat species located in the area. The contractor is responsible for dust control, sedimentation and erosion control, and maintenance of traffic during construction.

- *Is cost-effective and not controversial.*

The proposed project is cost-effective, as the overall costs and benefits of replacing the water mains outweigh the temporary advantages of rehabilitation. Taking no action would allow the flow and water quality of the existing main to decrease and continue to accumulate maintenance costs, which average \$5,000 per break. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will improve the safety and efficiency of a continuous supply of potable water to customers.

- *Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, and does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, or substantially increase the volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters.*

This project involves the replacement of the existing waterline which services the area. It does not otherwise alter Columbus's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or usage of potable water).

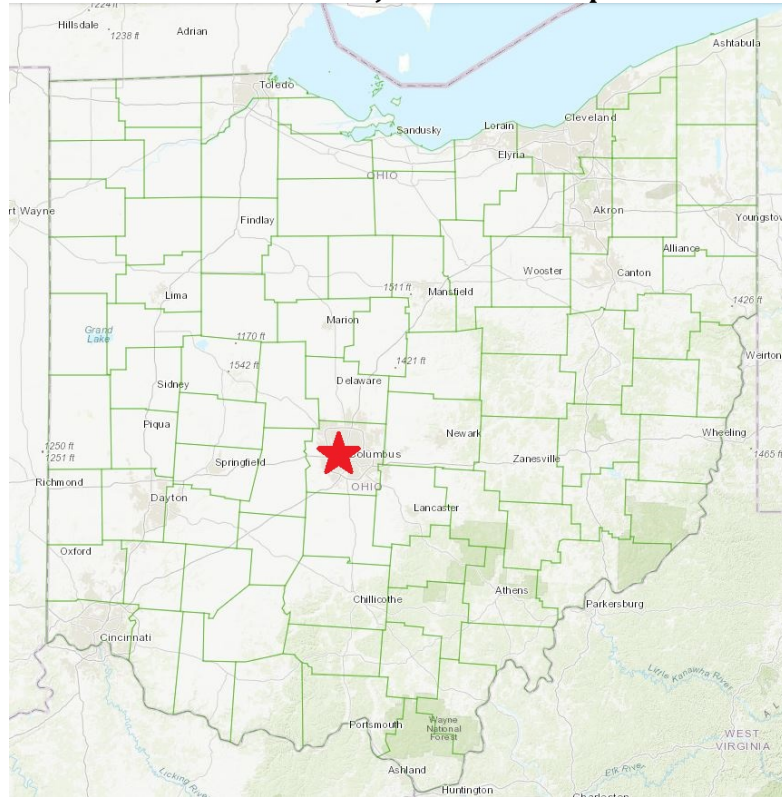
Based upon the available planning information for this project and the materials presented within this LER, Ohio EPA concludes that the proposed project will not result in any significant adverse impacts to any environmental features. The project is expected to have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources such as surface waters, coastal zones, riparian areas, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species.

This project will help to ensure the safety and efficiency of water distributed to the Columbus area.

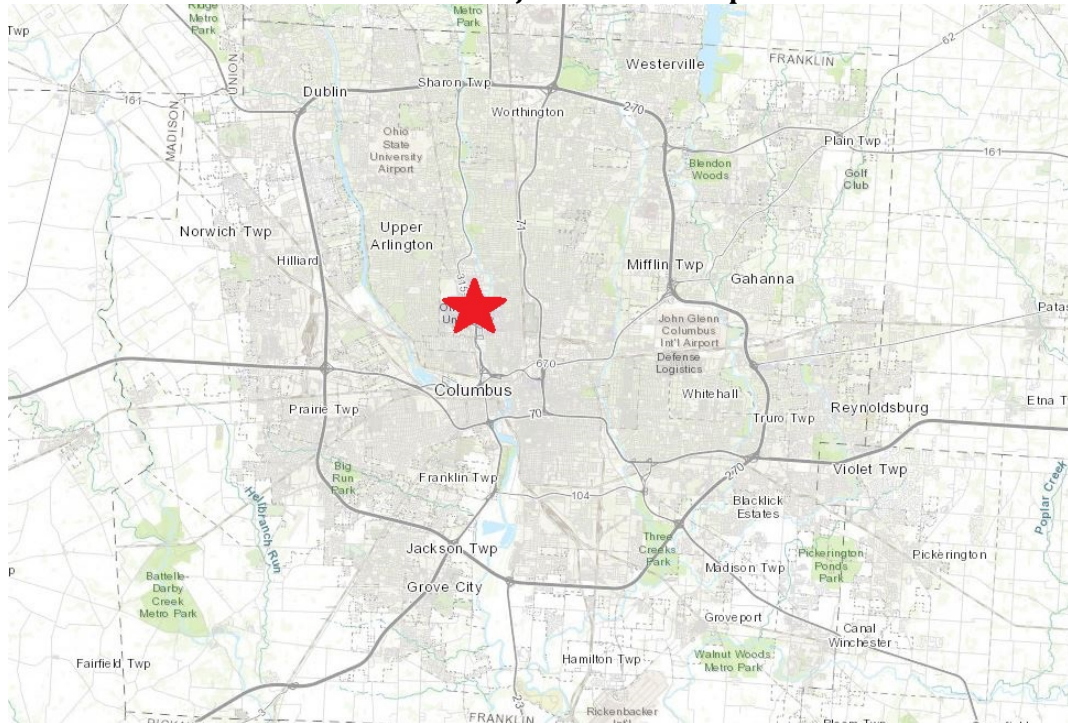
### **Contact Information**

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**Exhibit 1: Project location map**



**Exhibit 2: Project location map**



### Exhibit 3: Project location map

