



February 1, 2024

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Riverview Drive Water Line Improvements
Aragon Avenue Water Line Improvements
Elizabeth Avenue Water Line Improvements
Loan numbers: FS390274-0438, FS390274-0350, FS390274-0442**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for water line replacement projects 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 projects, their costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER 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 projects should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The projects' relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies them for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. 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 projects have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Columbus Water Line Improvements

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

Loan Number: FS390274-0438, FS390274-0350, FS390274-0442

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for water line improvement projects in the following areas:

- Riverview Drive Area for \$3,891,346
- Aragon Avenue Area for \$3,897,921
- Elizabeth Avenue Area for \$4,337,166

History & 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.

Columbus has water lines that are deteriorated and in need of replacement to reduce regular repairs. If not addressed, the flow and water quality of the lines will decrease. Water line breaks will continue and require more costly maintenance.

- **Riverview Drive Area:** Raw water is sourced from Big Walnut Creek, treated, and transported through existing water lines in the Riverview Drive area to provide water service to the area near Riverview Drive and Brentnell Boulevard.
- **Aragon Avenue Area:** Raw water is sourced from Big Walnut Creek, treated, and transported through existing water lines located in the Aragon Avenue area to provide water service to the area near Aragon Avenue and Simpson Drive.
- **Elizabeth Avenue Area:** Raw water is sourced from Big Walnut Creek, treated, and transported through existing water lines located in the Elizabeth Avenue area to provide water service to the area near Barnett Road and Elizabeth Avenue.

Project Description

These projects will involve the replacement of the existing water lines to provide a longer and more

cost-effective service life. New water lines will be constructed, allowing for existing water lines to be abandoned at each project's completion. Existing water service will be transferred to the new water line.

Specifically, each project will see the replacement of the following:

- **Riverview Drive Area**
8,481 linear feet of 2-inch, 6-inch, and 8-inch water lines
- **Aragon Avenue Area**
9,500 linear feet of 6-inch and 8-inch water lines
- **Elizabeth Avenue Area**
9,500 linear feet of 6-inch and 8-inch water lines

The new ductile iron pipe in the replacement water lines 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, valves, and fire hydrants will also be installed.

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

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

Implementation

Project Costs

The cost of each project is detailed below:

- **Riverview Drive Area**
Columbus plans to borrow \$3,891,346 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save \$596,441 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.47%, compared to the market rate of 3.72%.
- **Aragon Avenue Area**
Columbus plans to borrow \$3,897,921 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save \$597,448 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.47%, compared to the market rate of 3.72%.
- **Elizabeth Avenue Area**
Columbus plans to borrow \$4,337,166 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save \$664,773 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.47%, compared to the market rate of 3.72%.

Interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus annual residential water bill is approximately \$547. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of these projects are expected to increase to approximately \$622, or 1.1% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$54,920.

By using WSRLA financing for these projects, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

Project Schedule

The construction schedule for each project is as follows:

- **Riverview Drive Area**
The anticipated loan award will occur in February 2024. Construction is expected to begin following loan award and be completed by April 2025.
- **Aragon Avenue Area**
The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2024. Construction is expected to begin following loan award and be completed in about a year.
- **Elizabeth Avenue Area**
The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2024. Construction is expected to begin in the following loan award and be completed by July 2024.

Public Participation

Public notices were posted on the City of Columbus's Public Utilities webpage which detailed the proposed water line construction 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: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> 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 projects meet the criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, they are actions which involve the functional replacement of and improvements to existing water distribution infrastructure. Furthermore, the projects meet the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed projects:

Have no significant environmental effect, no effect on high value environmental resources, and do not require extensive specific impact mitigation.

The projects include replacement water lines within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside or within the roadway and existing water line; therefore, areas lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work is scheduled to occur, and there will be no 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.

Are cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed projects are cost effective, as the overall costs and benefits of replacement of 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.

Do not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, and do 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, and will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.

These projects involve the replacement of the existing water lines which service the area. They do not otherwise alter Columbus's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or usage of potable water).

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

These projects 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 - Water line improvements area

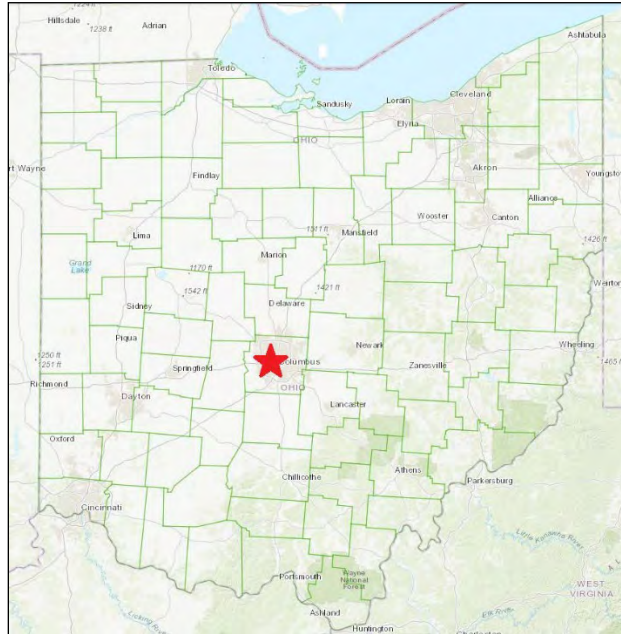


Exhibit 2: Project location map - Riverview Drive area



Exhibit 3: Project location maps - Aragon Avenue area

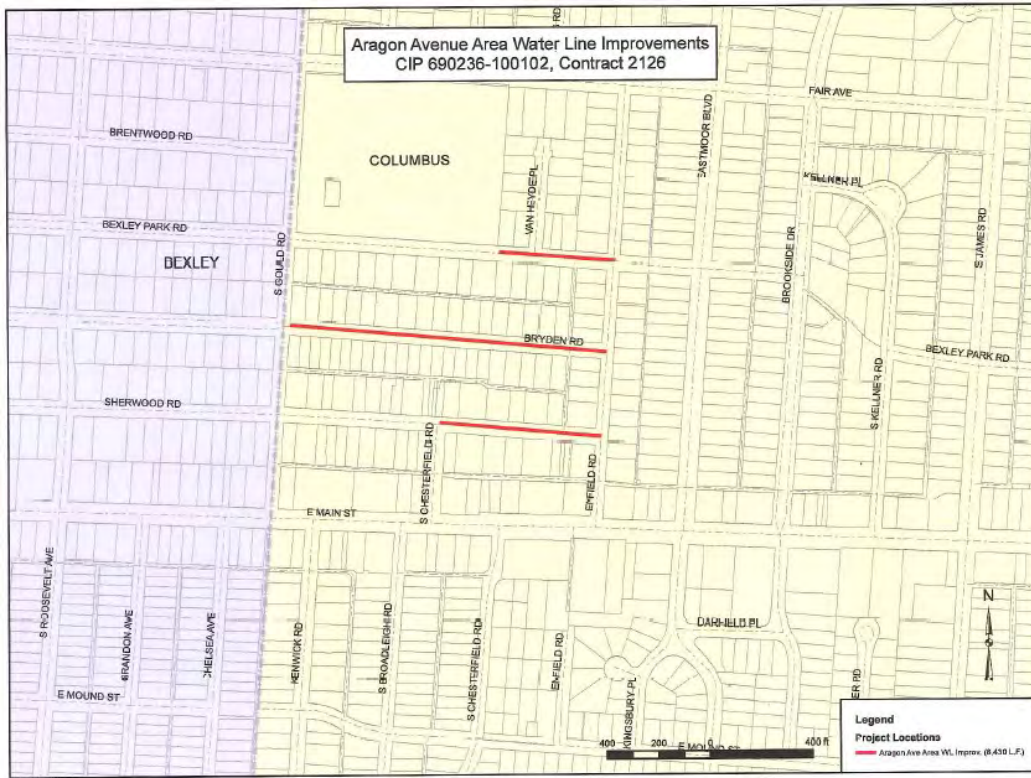
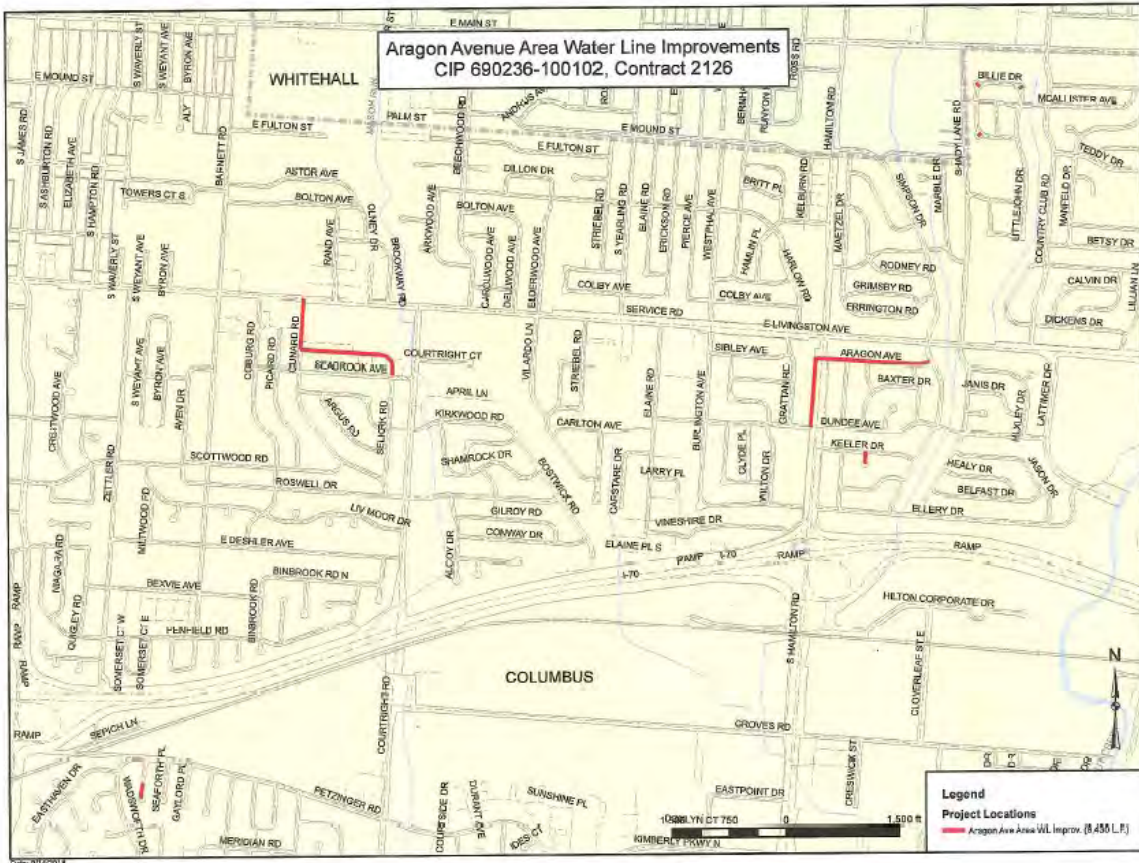




Exhibit 4: Project location map - Elizabeth Avenue area

