



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

May 17, 2021

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

**Village of North Baltimore – Wood County
Elevated Water Tank and Water System Improvements
Loan Number: FS390686-0008**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a water treatment plant improvement project in Wood County 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 Village of North Baltimore can then proceed with its application for the WSRLA loan.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bernstein

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Elevated Water Tank and Water System Improvements

Applicant: Village of North Baltimore
205 North Main Street
North Baltimore, Ohio 45872

Loan Number: FS390686-0008

Project Summary

The Village of North Baltimore has applied for funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the Elevated Water Tank and Water System Improvements project. The project is intended to increase water storage and improve flows within the service area by constructing a 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank and 2,100 linear feet (LF) of water distribution lines. The project will also remove lead service lines. The estimated construction cost of the project is \$2,928,711, with construction scheduled to begin in the summer of 2021 and to be completed in twelve months.

History & Existing Conditions

The Village of North Baltimore, located in Wood County (see Figure 1), owns and operates a water treatment and distribution system that serves a population of 3,432. The Class 3 water treatment plant (WTP), constructed in 1970 and expanded in 1998, utilizes two upground reservoirs fed by Rocky Ford Creek for its source water. The WTP has a design capacity of 1.66 million gallons per day (MGD), and an average daily demand of 0.488 MGD, and drinking water distribution system of over 107,000 LF that serves its customer base, as well as providing an interconnection with Northwestern Water and Sewer District.

North Baltimore has a 500,000-gallon elevated water tank in the northeastern section of the village for water storage, and a second, smaller tower on the western edge of the village that is aged and no longer in service. Due to the single water tank being in service, and the single water transmission main that connects the tower and town, there is no source of back up water storage in the event of a break or shutdown of the lines or tank. The village also experiences water pressure fluctuations during periods of high demand. These factors all leave water supply and pressure vulnerable during periods of maintenance and emergency events.

Additionally, the village has a portion of private and public water lines that are known to be lead. To protect public health, these will need to be removed.

Population and Flow Projections

North Baltimore is not aware of any large developer projects in the project area, and the 20-year projected average and peak growth is anticipated to be relatively low as population increases in this

service area are less than one percent annually. Therefore, the proposed water storage and distribution improvements are not expected to have impacts on the existing water demands. Given the low projected growth in demand and the large water supply, North Baltimore can provide water to the expected 20-year service population without expanding the infrastructure.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: This alternative includes repairs and improvements to the existing, aged, and currently out-of-service water tower. The total estimated project cost is lower than for new tank construction, but the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs would be significantly higher on this aged structure. Additionally, the tank is in poor condition, undersized for the village's water needs, and has undersized water mains which limit water distribution and tank refilling.

Alternative 2: This alternative includes the construction of a new 500,000-gallon elevated water tank near the North Baltimore WTP.

This alternative also includes the replacement of approximately 2,100 LF of 12-inch water distribution lines, and the replacement of lead service lines.

Selected Alternative

Construction of a new elevated water tank was the chosen alternative due to the poor condition of the aged and undersized water tank and high O&M.

The Elevated Water Tank and Water System Improvements project (see Figure 2) includes the installation of a 160-foot elevated water storage tank with 500,000 gallons of storage capacity. Work at the tower site includes electronic controls, waterline connections, valves, a gravel access drive, fencing, and restoration activities. The project also includes approximately 2,100 LF of 12-inch water distribution lines, replacement of lead service lines, hydrants, valves, fittings, 800 LF of storm sewer replacement, meters, service connections, and restoration activities. Open-cut construction activities will take place in a formerly developed area that has since been razed, roads and road rights-of-way, and limited easements on private properties, in which the predominant cover is pavement, gravel, and lawn grass, that otherwise support no wetlands, forested areas, or aquatic habitat.

Implementation

The total estimated construction cost of the project is \$2,928,711. North Baltimore proposes to borrow the entire project amount from the WSRLA. The project service area qualifies for the small system long-term WSRLA below-market interest rate on 30-year loans, which in May is 0.4 percent. The standard rate is changed monthly to reflect bond rates and may be slightly different in July 2021, the anticipated month of loan award. Borrowing at 0.4 percent will save North Baltimore approximately \$905,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 2.2 percent. North Baltimore is also eligible for a lead service line discount for related project activities. These activities will be identified during the process of waterline replacement.

Debt for the project will be repaid from the North Baltimore Water Fund without rate increases for the specific areas served by the improvements. The local median household income (MHI) is \$43,304. Under the water rates that are effective in 2021 and based on average water usage of 2,909 gallons of water per month, the average residential water bill is \$43.96 per month, or \$527.52 per year. This represents 1.22 percent of the MHI.

Public Participation

This project has been discussed in numerous village council and committee meetings that are open to the public, and no negative feedback has been reported. Residents in the areas of construction will receive written notification ahead of construction activities once they have been scheduled. This Environmental Assessment will be posted on North Baltimore 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.

Environmental Impacts

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 proposed 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 primarily be performed within a formerly developed area that has since been razed, roads and 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 could occur. Excavation of the trenches and pits could be prone to erosion and deposition if construction mitigation is not followed. 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 project will not result in significant adverse impacts to surface waters.

Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species: The U.S. 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. Little to no tree clearing or trimming is expected as part of the project. If conditions change and tree removal is necessary, it 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 bald eagle, a federally protected species. As the project team is not aware of any nesting locations in the area of the project, this project is not likely to impact this species.

Air Quality: Wood 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 the hours of 7:00 AM through 5:00 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 complete, the project actions 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 maintain, at a minimum, temporary driveways, bridges, and crossings to accommodate public and private access to private driveways, and to keep the police and fire department continuously informed of intentions to close streets. 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: The Ohio Historical Preservation Office, Village of North Baltimore, and Ohio EPA have concluded that no features listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places, or resources within the elevated tank's viewshed will be adversely impacted by the proposed project based on the following: extensive pre-design review, and that the project will occur primarily in previously disturbed areas, including a former factory location, roads and road rights-of-way, and areas with existing utilities.

Based on this information the Ohio Historical Preservation Office, Village of North Baltimore, 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 the project will be repaid with revenue generated by North Baltimore's Water Fund. Various alternatives were examined, and this project is the most cost-effective based on technical merits and the drinking water needs of the community.

Unaffected Environmental Features: The project will have no adverse secondary (development-related) environmental impacts since it is not designed to serve growth in undeveloped areas. No state or federal wild or scenic rivers are present in or near the work sites. No wetlands are present in or near the work sites. No sole source aquifers are present under the project, and residents obtain their drinking water from the Village of North Baltimore.

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. This project serves the entire North Baltimore service area, and no particular segment of the community will be faced with additional adverse impacts or be deprived of environmental benefits, compared to any other segment.

This project is intended to benefit local public health and the environment by replacing an aged and undersized water tank that is no longer in service, replacing undersized water mains, and replacing lead service lines within the water distribution system. This project will improve water storage, pressure, and flow, and eliminate potential exposures to lead in drinking water.

Contact information

R. Eric Schultz
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049
email: eric.schultz@epa.ohio.gov



Figure 1: Project general area, in red



Figure 2: Specific project area, showing the tower and waterline locations in red