



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

February 23, 2022

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Edsel Avenue Area Water Line Improvements
South Weyant Avenue Area Water Line Improvements**

Loan numbers: FS390274-0345, FS309274-0333

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

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: Columbus Water Line Improvements

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

Loan Numbers: FS390274-0345 (Edsel Avenue Area)
FS390274-0333 (South Weyant Avenue Area)

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:

- Edsel Avenue Area for \$4,387,203
- South Weyant Avenue Area for \$3,875,371

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.

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.

- **Edsel Avenue Area:** Raw water is sourced from groundwater treated at the Parsons Avenue water treatment facility and transported through existing lines located in the Edsel Avenue area to provide water service to the area near Edsel Avenue and Koebel Road.
- **South Weyant Avenue Area:** Raw water is sourced from Big Walnut Creek, treated, and transported through existing water lines located in the South Weyant Avenue area to provide water service to the area near South Weyant Avenue and Main Street.

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:

- **Edsel Avenue Area**
11,500 linear feet of 6-inch, 8-inch, and 12-inch water lines
- **South Weyant Avenue Area**
10,700 linear feet of 2-inch, 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 and existing water line, 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:

- **Edsel Avenue Area**
Columbus plans to borrow \$4,387,203 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$605,816 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.58%, compared to the market rate of 1.83%.
- **South Weyant Avenue Area**
Columbus plans to borrow \$3,875,371 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$535,138 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.58%, compared to the market rate of 1.83%.

Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested March loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$534/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of these projects are expected to increase to approximately \$608/year, or 1% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$51,612.

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:

- **Edsel Avenue Area**
The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2022. Construction is expected to begin in the Spring of 2022 and be completed by June 2023.
- **South Weyant Avenue Area**
The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2022. Construction is expected to begin in the Winter of 2022 and be completed by January 2023.

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 project type 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, 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.*
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 the available planning information for these projects and the materials presented within this LER, Ohio EPA concludes that the proposed projects will not result in any significant adverse impacts to any environmental features. The projects are 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.

These projects will help to ensure the safety and efficiency of water distributed to the Columbus area.

Contact

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Exhibit 1: Project location map - Water line improvements area

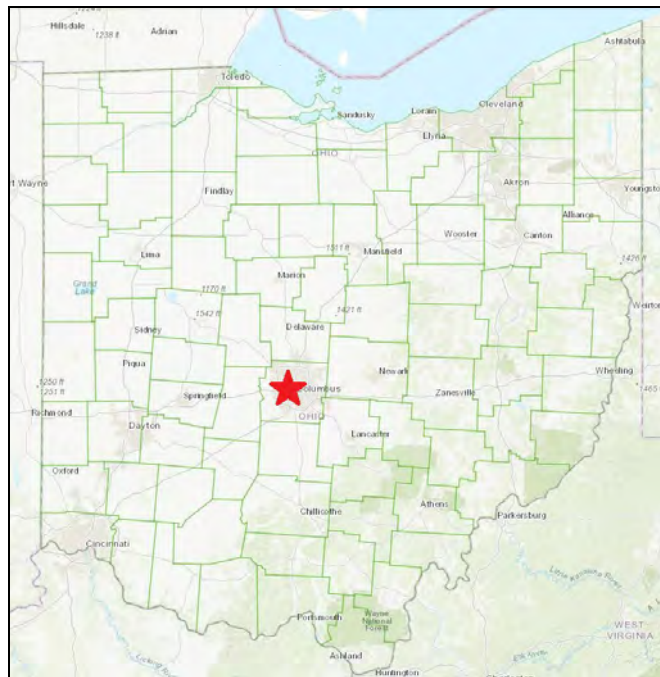


Exhibit 2: Project location map - Edsel Avenue area (Part 1)

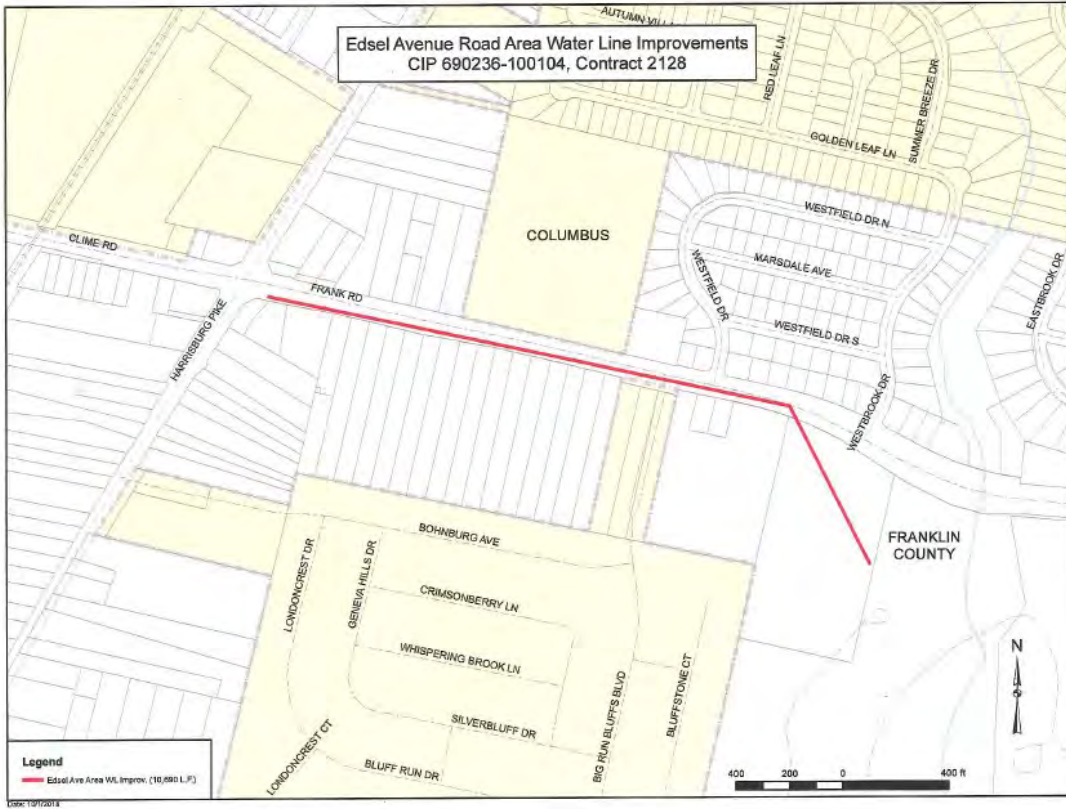


Exhibit 3: Project location map - Edsel Avenue area (Part 2)

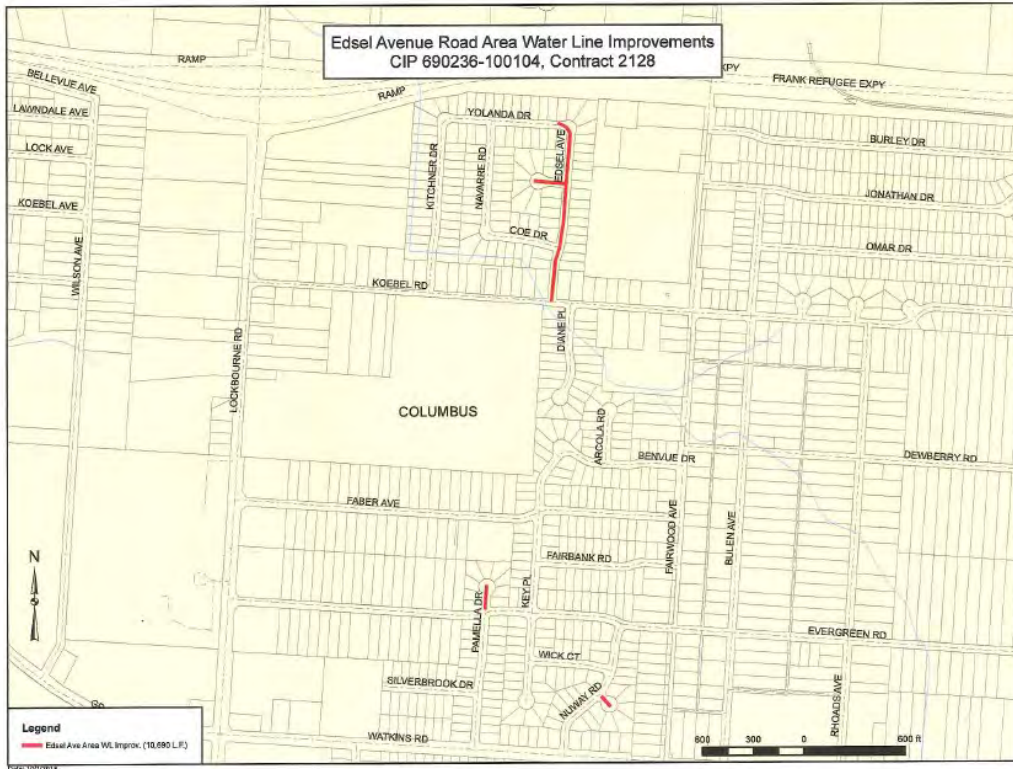


Exhibit 6: Project location map – South Weyant Avenue area

