



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Anne M. Vogel, Director

June 28, 2023

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Village of Russell's Point – Logan County
Water Meter Replacement Project
Loan number: FS390815-0004**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a water distribution system project in Russell's Point 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.

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. 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,

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Water Meter Replacement

Applicant: Village of Russell's Point
433 State Route 708
Russell's Point, Ohio 43348

Loan number: FS390815-0004

Project Summary

In March 2023, the Village of Russell's Point Logan County nominated a water meter replacement project for financial assistance from Ohio EPA's Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) program. As part of that project, the project includes a request for funding replacement of all its manually read water meters in the project area with new water meters and a hand-held water meter reading system. The current estimated cost of the proposed project is \$700,000 to replace all of the existing water meters in the village. Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the village where the proposed improvements to this important part of the village's distribution system will be made. These new water meters will either be installed inside existing buildings or in meter pits just outside them.

All of the proposed work will occur within prior-disturbed locations. Comprising a key component of the village's water distribution system, the proposed water meter replacements and related computer hardware and software are expected to maintain, if not improve, its operation and provide at least a twenty-year solution to the Village of Russell's Point's needs. By completing the proposed improvements during this proposed project, the village expects to be able to better monitor water usage.

Based on the above costs and the proposed WSRLA loan funding Russell's Point has determined that its current average residential water bill of \$44.59 per month should not need to increase to pay for this proposed \$700,000 project. The village estimates that its proposed water meter replacement and related improvements project will require two to three months to complete.

History and Existing Conditions

According to the village, its water treatment plant (WTP) is rated to process 430,000 gallons of water per day (gpd) that is drawn from three ground water supply wells and stored in a clearwell at the village's WTP. Of this daily production, the current average daily water use is 310,000 gpd. In addition to the water meters constituting a vital component of the village's water distribution system, Russell's Point has about 16.7 miles of water mains. With a declining population, the village expects that its WTP will be able to meet the needs of its existing water customers for the foreseeable usage without any additional expansion. However, as the village expects a 54-room hotel to be built within

the WTP's service area, the projected flow is 317,000 gpd, which is well within the current capacity of the Russell's Point WTP.



Figure 1. Village of Russell's Point's water meter project area

Russell's Point has not had a major water meter upgrade since about the Year 2000. Currently, village staff physically read every meter. On average, the Village of Russell's Point's water loss was about 28% of the total water produced by the village's water treatment plant.

Project Description

After determining that a no-action alternative would not address the Village of Russell's Point's problems with its water meters, the village evaluated whether or not to replace all of its existing water meters. This decision was made over a year and included comparisons of major water meter brands and the computer hardware and software they support. Ultimately, the village chose to replace all of its roughly 900 water meters serving 815 residential and 74 commercial customers. Significantly, all of the condominiums in the village will not be replaced. Also, the village has indicated that it also serves water customers outside the village.

During this water meter replacement project, the contractor will be responsible for the installation of the new water meters and any minor piping modifications that may be required. The village's water meters with a hand held device will collect the data and download it to the village's database located at the village's main building at 433 State Route 788. Once collected at the central location, the individual water meter data can be utilized for tracking water use and billing purposes. Part of the project also includes installing billing software and hardware located at the municipal building to process and utilize the metering data that is received.

With the village advertising for bids in June, a contractor will provide water meters, software, and training, while a contractor to be determined will provide the installation.

Implementation

Originally estimated at a total project cost of \$700,000, the village expects to borrow the entire amount in the form of a WSRLA loan from Ohio EPA. Currently, Russell's Point qualifies for a WSRLA interest rate of 2.5%.

Assuming the project funding presented above, Ohio EPA expects that the village will save about \$107,000 when compared to a market-rate loan of 3.75%. Interest rates are set monthly and could change for the month of loan award. By proposing to fund its project in this way, Ohio EPA anticipates that the Village of Russell's Point should be able to generate enough revenue under its current water rate structure to continue to own, operate, and maintain its water distribution and treatment systems well into the future.

Currently, an average village residential water customer using about 2,014 gallons per month pays \$44.59 per month or \$535 annually. When expressed as a percentage of the village's latest median household income (MHI) figure of \$46,774, this total annual water fee is about 1.28% of the village's MHI.

WSRLA funds are expected to be awarded in August 2023, so that construction can commence soon thereafter. The village estimates that completion of this project will take two to three months.

Public Participation

According to the Village of Russell's Point, it plans to hold city council meetings on this project and notify its residents. The WSRLA project loan application and specific funding proposal was discussed at the village board of public affairs meeting held on June 12, 2023. This meeting gave the public opportunities to learn about the proposed construction and funding of the village's proposed water meter replacement project. The village also proposes to implement a communications plan consisting of such techniques as a website, door hangers, and flyers to inform the public about the proposed project.

On this basis, and the limited scope of the project covered by this document, Ohio EPA has determined that no additional public review and comment on the proposed project is necessary. All potentially interested parties appear to have been given adequate opportunity to review and comment on this project and its costs.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its announcements web page (<https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements>) and will provide it upon request. A copy may also be posted at the village's municipal building and on its web site (if available).

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action in a community with public water systems that is for functional replacement of existing mechanical equipment. As all the proposed improvements will be limited to previously disturbed locations, the proposed construction is expected to result in no short- or long-term, direct or indirect adverse environmental impacts. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Will have no effect on high-value environmental resources. Given the proposed water meter replacement project's generally limited scope within prior-disturbed areas in the Village of Russell's Point, the village's proposed water meter installations and related improvements will have no effect on high-value environmental resources. For example, no stream crossings or tree removal is proposed and access to the water meters needing replacement will be through existing meter pits or inside existing buildings during construction. Overall, the project area lacks important natural features.

While there are historic structures and archaeological sites in the project area, the nature of the proposed project is such that there will be no adverse effect on these resources.

Will have no significant negative environmental effects and will require no specific impact mitigation unique to the assistance proposal because construction activities generally are limited to prior-disturbed locations in or near existing buildings in the project area shown in Figure 1. The proposed work to complete this project is straight-forward and the specifications for the proposed project include the impact mitigation needed to address any concerns that could arise during water meter installation and related improvements. In particular, village residents may experience short-

term noise during installation, but these effects on the human and natural environment are expected to be minimal.

Is cost effective and not a controversial action. In comparison to the no-action option briefly considered during project planning, the chosen improvements were selected by the village as more cost effective on the basis of costs and non-monetary factors. Moreover, the proposed improvements constituting this project are non-controversial because they will not adversely impact the environment, or the residential rates for water customers.

Will not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters, or cause pollution of surface or ground waters. It will also 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. The village's proposed project will not result in either new, relocated, or additional discharges of wastewater to either surface or ground water on a permanent basis. Similarly, the project is not expected to increase water demand or withdrawals. Rather, the purpose of this project is to help ensure that Russell's Point can provide all its residents and other water customers with a reliable water meter and accurate billing, so as to reduce the amount of water loss in the overall distribution system.

Will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge, or the loading of pollutants, from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters. The limited scope of the village's proposed project is not designed to facilitate future population growth in or around Village of Russell's Point, but rather to help address the village's responsibilities under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Will not provide capacity village to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population. Russell's Point is not expected to experience substantial population growth over the next twenty years. As such, the purpose of this project is to replace all the village's existing water meters and not to provide for future growth. On this basis, this criterion has been met.

To conclude, the village's proposed project is sufficiently limited in scope and meets all applicable criteria to warrant an LER. The planning activities for the proposed project identified no potentially significant, direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts. The proposed project is expected to have no short- or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources such as air quality, floodplains, wetlands, archaeologically or historically significant sites, prime farmland and other agricultural areas, or threatened or endangered species. Rather, the Village of Russell's Point's proposed project will enable the village to reduce water loss in its distribution system and so continue to address its responsibilities under the Safe Drinking Water Act well into the future.

Contact information

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