



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

August 25, 2022

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

**Columbiana County
Hanoverton Sanitary Sewer System
Loan Number: CS390015-0007**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a sanitary sewer infrastructure improvement project in Columbiana County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) 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 WPCLF 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, Columbiana County can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Hanoverton Sanitary Sewer System

Applicant: Columbiana County Commissioners
105 South Market Street
Lisbon, OH 44432

Loan Number: CS390015-0007

Project Summary

The Village of Hanoverton is located in Columbiana County and currently relies on privately owned residential and commercial wastewater facilities. To address the human health concerns related to the failing household sewage treatment systems (HSTS) in the village and adjacent township areas, the county has determined that the cost-effective solution is construction of a central wastewater collection system to convey the village's wastewater to Columbiana County's Kensington wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). To assist the village with this important project and help pay for the needed improvements, the county proposes to use \$4 million in principal forgiveness funding from Ohio EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF), and borrow about \$227,000 in a 0%, 20-year loan. Other grant funding is expected to make up the balance of the project's costs.

In terms of potential environmental impacts, Ohio EPA has reviewed the county's proposed project and determined there will be no significant adverse environmental impacts, as discussed in the conclusion.

History & Existing Conditions

The Village of Hanoverton is a small, unsewered community located in southwestern Columbiana County near the headwaters of Sandy Creek. One business operates a small treatment plant and discharges treated wastewater to an unnamed tributary of Sandy Creek under a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The remainder of the homes and businesses in the village use septic tanks. Many of these private systems are failing and have caused untreated wastewater to discharge into nearby waterways. This resulted in the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issuing Findings and Orders to the village on December 20, 2005, to provide centralized wastewater collection and treatment for the community. Currently, the county's Kensington WWTP requires additional hydraulic capacity to serve the existing needs of the project area.

Population and Flow Projections

In 2021, the population of the Village of Hanoverton was estimated at 391 people in 160 homes. As minimal growth and development are expected in the village over the next 20 years, the design-year average daily flow is 55,000 gallons per day (gpd). This flow estimate corresponds to the amount of hydraulic capacity needed at the Kensington WWTP to serve the village's population.

Alternatives

In the project planning completed for this proposed project, the county considered options for both wastewater collection and treatment. These options are summarized below.

- **Collection System Options**

The county originally evaluated six collection system options. These alternatives included conventional gravity, low-pressure sewer with grinder pumps, vacuum sewers, septic tank effluent pumping (STEP) system with low-pressure sewers, STEP system with shallow gravity sewers, and shallow gravity sewer with new septic tanks. Of these, three alternatives were chosen for further evaluation (conventional gravity, shallow gravity with septic tanks, and vacuum sewers). Each collection alternative was evaluated based on both economic and non-economic factors. Information on the selected collection system is presented below.

- **Wastewater Treatment Options**

As part of a study conducted for the project area ten years ago, the county considered multiple wastewater treatment alternatives. These options included cluster systems, two lagoon systems, and two mechanical systems. Non-monetary factors related to permitting concerns and land area needs resulted in the elimination of cluster systems and lagoon systems from further consideration. The two mechanical treatment alternatives were evaluated on the basis of monetary and non-monetary factors. Regional and local treatment locations were initially considered, but with construction of a county WWTP in Kensington in 2018, the need for treatment in Hanoverton was eliminated. The selected alternative is described below.

Selected Alternative

Based on the county's facilities plans prepared in 2012 and 2020, eliminating the privately owned HSTS and building a conventional gravity sanitary sewer system, pump station, and force main is the cost-effective and best overall alternative for the village. This conclusion reflects both the cost of the project and non-monetary considerations.

The gravity sanitary system will be comprised of about 24,400 linear feet of eight-inch diameter plastic sewer pipe and precast concrete manhole structures that will convey the collected wastewater to a duplex pump station. The pump station will then convey these flows through about 4,800 linear feet of four-inch diameter force main to a manhole on the northeast side of the unincorporated area of Kensington. From that point, the flows will be conveyed through the county's sanitary sewer until they reach the county's Kensington WWTP, where a 50,000 gallon-per-day expansion to this facility will be built as part of this project. At the county's Kensington WWTP, the wastewater flows from the area shown in Figure 1 below will be treated and then discharged to the main stem of Sandy Creek. Sandy Creek is designated as a warmwater habitat stream at this location. With construction of this project, water quality and human health concerns in the project area will be addressed. The homeowners in the project area will be responsible for septic tank abandonment, private lateral construction, and their associated costs.

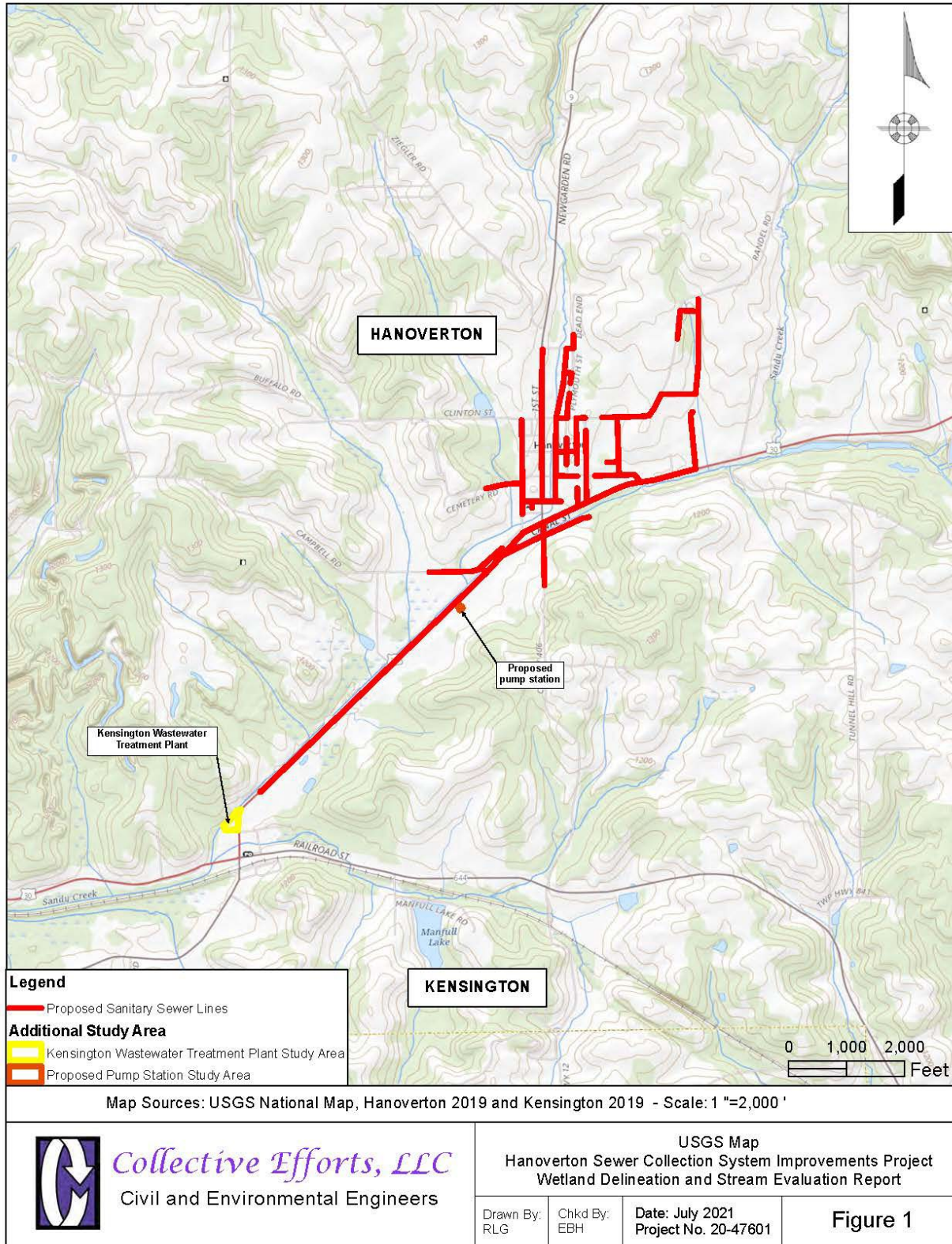


Figure 1. Project map

Implementation

The total estimated cost of the regionalization project is \$5.6 million, of which nearly the total amount is expected to be financed through Ohio EPA principal forgiveness (\$4 million), Appalachian Regional Commission grant (\$250,000), and Army Corps of Engineers (\$950,000) grant funds. The county is eligible for a 0%, 20-year interest rate loan for any remaining costs. On this basis, the residents of the project area for this proposed regionalization project are not expected to have to pay the county for anything other than their share of the annual operation, maintenance, and replacement costs, or a flat fee of \$58.05 per month. This figure does not reflect private homeowner costs for lateral construction and septic tank abandonment which can vary depending on the conditions found on each property in the project area.

Under the county's proposed project schedule, WPCLF funds are expected to be awarded in the next few months, so that construction can commence soon thereafter. Construction of the proposed improvements is estimated to require about a year and a half to complete.

Public Participation

Over this project's long history, the village and the county have held numerous meetings on the proposed wastewater improvements. These public participation activities have included monthly village council meetings, county commissioner's weekly meetings, newspaper articles, and village newsletter articles. On this basis, the county and the village appear to have adequately provided for public involvement during the planning for this project, and no additional public review and comment on the proposed project is necessary. Project information is available from the Ohio EPA contact named below.

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 county's offices, the village's municipal building, and on their web sites (if available).

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. The project's chosen alignment is based on installing the sanitary sewers within public rights-of-way as much as possible, but there are a few stretches of sanitary sewer main that required obtaining permanent easements. Limited occupation and construction easements are also necessary.

Air Quality

Columbiana County is currently in full attainment for all six priority air pollutants regulated under the Clean Air Act. From a direct impact perspective, the county's proposed sanitary sewer system project is not expected to result in significant increases in air pollutants during the estimated 18-month construction period. Ohio EPA reached this conclusion primarily because any increases in construction traffic and resulting air pollution are expected to be short in duration and intermittent. Further, the detail plans and specifications include the mitigative measures necessary to control dust and vehicle emissions that may be generated during construction.

Because the proposed project is intended to address an existing wastewater problem in the village and has been designed with minimal capacity for future growth, Ohio EPA has concluded that no significant, indirect or cumulative impacts on regional air quality in the project area will result from the proposed project or population growth that it could facilitate.

Archaeological and Historical Resources

Together, archaeological and historical resources comprise the cultural resources of a project area. In this project's case, the potential for direct construction impacts on cultural resources was deemed minimal since the construction activities will occur in the streets and rights-of-way in the Village of Hanoverton where possible. Further, pump station and force main construction will occur within a prior disturbed area and the right-of-way of US Route 30 between the village and the Kensington WWTP. Sanitary sewers within the village's historic district will be placed in private easements at the rear of properties to avoid impacts to the brick streets, large trees, and historic buildings along Plymouth Street. In particular, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) found that construction activities related to the sanitary sewer system will not impact the significance or integrity of the National Register-listed Hanoverton Canal Town District in a way that would alter its National Register status. To conclude, Ohio EPA and SHPO concur that the county's proposed project should have no adverse effect on historic properties. Should any cultural resources be found during construction, contact with the State Historic Preservation Office should be made and appropriate coordination steps completed as noted in Ohio law. On this basis, Ohio EPA has concluded that no significant adverse direct or indirect impacts on cultural resources are expected during the county's proposed project.

Aquatic Habitat/Surface Water Resources

In the project area shown in Figure 1, floodplains, streams, and wetlands have been found. Together they represent the aquatic habitat in and around Hanoverton.

Floodplains: Based on available maps, parts of the project area are Zone A floodplains that do not have known base flood elevations. However, as the county's sanitary sewer system project will be constructed below grade and contours will be restored, no significant, adverse floodplain and floodway effects are expected during gravity sewer and force main construction. Furthermore, any spoil disposal will occur outside of area floodplains consistent with the list of prohibited construction activities in the detail plans. The county's proposed pump station and WWTP expansion will be built at elevations needed to protect against flooding events of 1131 and 1117 feet above mean sea level (msl) respectively within known flood prone areas. In the case of the pump station site, three or more feet of fill may be needed to elevate the site above the estimated base flood elevation. No further filling will be necessary at the county's WWTP site where the existing elevation is 1119 feet msl. The county will be responsible for obtaining any appropriate floodplain permits prior to start of construction.

Streams and wetlands: While multiple (nine) stream crossings are included in this proposed project, no adverse impacts to aquatic habitats are expected from proposed construction activities. Compliance with a storm water pollution prevention plan will help assure this. Directional boring will occur at stream crossings, wetland areas, and floodplain areas to avoid impacts to water resources and aquatic life. As a result, no in-water work associated with open-cut stream crossings will occur. Areas near the five streams that may be disturbed by construction activities will be returned to preconstruction contours. Overall, no permanent, adverse impacts to streams are

expected and best management practices to reduce erosion and stormwater run-off will be implemented during construction to protect water quality of the non-navigable streams and the five known Category 1 and 2 wetlands found in the project area.

Operation of the new sanitary sewer system will include discharge of treated water to Sandy Creek from the county's Kensington WWTP. A long-term beneficial impact to water quality is expected by elimination of the existing failing on-site septic systems which have been shown to be a source of contamination of waterways within the project area.

Endangered Species and Fish and Wildlife

Three federally listed species are present in Columbiana County as a whole. Of these species, the Indiana bat is federally endangered, the northern long-eared bat is federally threatened, and the monarch butterfly is a candidate species. Ohio EPA determined that these three species will not be adversely affected by the proposed project's construction for the following reasons.

Foremost, the county's proposed project was reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2020. They found that the project is not likely to adversely affect the federally listed endangered Indiana bat or the threatened northern long-eared bat. This conclusion was reached on the county's commitment to only cut and remove suitable habitat trees greater than or equal to three inches in diameter between October 1 and March 31. Further, the detail plans include provisions to implement this approach or situations where seasonal cutting may have to occur outside this time period. Overall, tree removal is not expected during this project because trees are absent from the sites chosen for the proposed improvements.

Regarding the state listed species whose ranges overlap that of the project area, none of these species are expected to be adversely affected by the proposed project. This conclusion was reached primarily because suitable habitat is either absent or the proposed construction techniques used (such as boring and jacking or horizontal directional drilling of stream crossings) will not involve in-water work. Further, coordination was completed to determine if any hibernacula used by bat species would be affected by the project. This review concluded that there would be no effect.

Energy, Noise, Traffic, and Aesthetics

During the expected construction period of about 18 months, it is unavoidable that energy use, noise levels, and traffic patterns will undergo change. While this is recognized, the detail plans and specifications for the project include the mitigative measures needed to reduce noise levels and traffic pattern changes to acceptable levels. Through proper maintenance of equipment, energy consumption should be consistent with normal activities and not be excessive. Overall, the proposed project is expected to result in a net improvement in local aesthetics. For these reasons, no significant adverse impacts on these four attributes are expected to result from the project's construction and operation of these facilities.

Ground Water Supplies

Use of private wells for water supply needs is expected to continue in the project area and not be affected by any construction activities based on the geology of the area.

Land Use and Terrestrial Habitat

These resource attributes were considered during planning for the proposed project. Based on the results of these reviews, Ohio EPA has concluded that no adverse impacts on land use and terrestrial habitat will occur. Land use in the project area is typical of small villages in Ohio with a mixture of residential, commercial, and governmental activities. Any terrestrial habitat effects from street tree removal will be minimal as efforts have been made to avoid the most significant trees in the village and protect the others during construction.

Based on the project's scope and location, the county's proposed project will have no effect on coastal areas, land in agricultural production, safe drinking water, ground water, sole source aquifers, and wild and scenic rivers. These environmental attributes are not in the project area.

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.

Overall, the proposed project is expected to result in improved water quality and address human health concerns by conveying all wastewater collected within the project area about one mile to Columbiana County's expanded Kensington WWTP. Subsequently, the county will enable elimination of failing HSTS in the project area.

Contact information

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