



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

August 24, 2015

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TO ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS, ORGANIZATIONS,
AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

MORROW COUNTY
INTERSTATE 71 AND STATE ROUTE 95 SEWER EXTENSION PROJECT
WPCLF # CS390059-0005

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comments on Ohio EPA's preliminary decision that a Supplemental Environmental Study is not required to implement the recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a wastewater facilities plan submitted by the municipality identified above.

How were environmental issues considered?

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the facilities plan, as well as through the facilities plan review process and during site inspections. The Agency's preliminary Environmental Assessment found that the project does not require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Study.

Why is a Supplemental Environmental Study not required?

Our environmental review concluded that significant environmental impacts will not result from the action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the facilities plan or have been reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment.

How do I get more information?

A map depicting the location of the project is included as part of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the proposed action and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person listed in the back of the Environmental Assessment.

How do I submit comments?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at the letterhead address. We will not take any action on this facilities plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

What happens next?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The entity will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this agency.

Please bring any information that you feel should be considered to our attention. We appreciate your interest in the environmental review process.

Sincerely,



Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Ohio EPA
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance
Office of Financial Assistance

Attachment

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For**

**Morrow County
Interstate 71 and State Route 95 Sewer Extension Project
CS390059-0005**

Applicant: Patricia Davies
Director of Operations
Morrow County Economic Development Office
80 North Walnut Street
Mouny Gilead, Ohio 43338

A. Proposed Project

1. Summary

The Morrow County Commissioners in Morrow County, Ohio have requested \$917,935.25 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to construct a sanitary sewer along State Route 95 (SR 95) between the village of Chesterville and Interstate 71 (I-71). The sewer extension will serve existing businesses and residences along the route and allow for business expansion along the I-71 corridor.

The project is located in the southeast part of Morrow County, about seven miles southeast of Mount Gilead. The northwestern portion of the sewer project is located along SR 95, beginning just west of the intersection of I-71 and SR 95 at the Knights Inn Mt. Gilead (Rose Motel) and extending along SR 95 to east of the interchange at the Duke Travel Plaza. The southeastern portion of the sewer project begins at the existing Wenmor Development Inc. (Wenmor) wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), proceeds along the southern and eastern property line to SR95 and then continues along SR 95 into the village of Chesterville. The northwestern and southeastern portions of the project are connected by the existing gravity sewer system in the Morrow Meadows Development, which will be incorporated into the project. The village of Chesterville currently owns and operates the WWTP that will be receiving flows generated by this project.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are expected to result from this project. Proposed mitigation will help minimize any impacts associated with project construction. Please see the "Environmental Impact" section of this document for further details regarding expected environmental impacts and proposed mitigation.

Figure 1 shows the project location topographic map. Figure 2 shows the project location aerial map. Figure 3 shows the northwest detail map. And Figure 4 shows the southeast detail map.

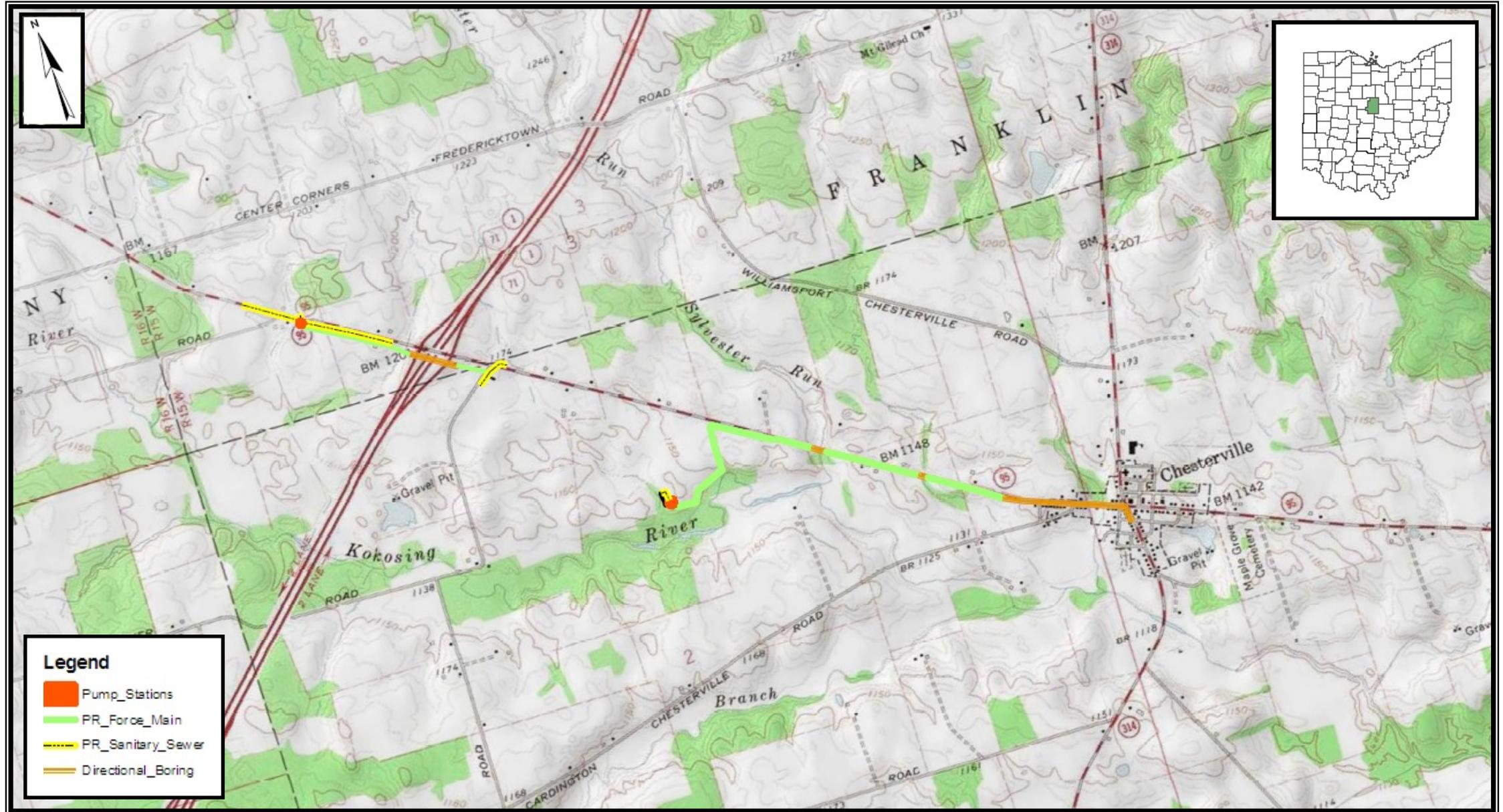


Figure 1. Project Location Topographic Map



Figure 2. Project Location Aerial Map



Figure 3. Northwest Detail Map



Figure 4. Southeast Detail Map

2. Project Background and History

The I-71 and SR 95 interchange area is home to approximately forty seven acres of currently developed commercial property and six residential properties. Twelve commercial properties are serviced by a number of small wastewater treatment facilities. The Leaf Enterprises, Inc., Knights Inn, Sunoco Station, Mt. Gilead KOA and Duke – Mt. Gilead Travel Plaza currently maintain and operate their own wastewater treatment facilities respectively. Six other commercial properties near the interchange are serviced by the Wenmor Development Inc. collection and wastewater treatment system. The remaining commercial properties and all six residential properties own and maintain individual septic systems. Currently the estimate of users or Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) who will be connected as part of this project is 131.

The Wenmor collection and treatment system is approximately 25 years old and many of the treatment system components are nearing the end of their useful life. The Duke – Mt. Gilead Travel Plaza WWTP is also approximately 25 years old and most of the treatment system components are also nearing the end of their useful life, including the sludge holding tank, which currently needs to be replaced. The age and condition of the smaller treatment plants and septic systems are unknown but it is anticipated they are similar in condition and age as the two plants described above. The Mt. Gilead KOA Campground, which was built in 1975, received a Notice of Violation on March 26, 2008 for the inadequate operation of its wastewater treatment system. It was subsequently closed and sits vacant, waiting for the implementation of this project to allow a new owner to potentially re-open the campground.

All of the existing wastewater treatment systems drain to un-named tributaries, which flow into the Kokosing River within approximately 2.5 miles or less. As many of the privately-owned systems and components are nearing the end of their useful life, it can be expected that the Kokosing River and its tributaries will be adversely affected in the near future without improvement to the existing situation. Therefore, upgrading wastewater collection and treatment is important for the reliability and service of the area, as well as the long-term health of the watershed.

Population Projections

Morrow County has experienced a steady rate of growth from 1940 to 2000, with a spike between 1970 and 1980 of almost 20 percent. Per estimates from the former Ohio Department of Development (now Ohio Development Services Agency, or DSA), the population in the county is expected to grow at a more moderate rate. The DSA projects the unincorporated area of Chester Township to grow at a much higher rate than the rest of Morrow County. While the village of Chesterville experienced a negative growth rate from 1990 to 2000, the DSA still projects a growth rate comparable to the rest of the county in the future.

It is reasonable to assume that a major factor for projected growth in Chester

Township is related to expected growth around the intersection of I-71 and SR 95. However, growth in this area is currently restricted due to the lack of public sewers and the problems associated with malfunctioning on-site treatment systems. The projections for population growth in Morrow County, the village of Chesterville and the unincorporated areas of Chester, Franklin and Harmony townships have been extrapolated to estimate the total service area population in 2012, which was 511. By 2032, it is anticipated that the service area population will grow to an estimated 617.

3. Discussion of Alternatives

Three alternatives for collection of wastewater from the interchange area were defined and evaluated. All collection alternatives are based on the transport of wastewater to a nearby existing plant.

- a. Collection System Alternative #1: Gravity sewer system that ties into the existing Morrow Meadows Industrial and Commercial Park

This alternative assumes the acquisition of the existing private sewers in Morrow Meadows with an outlet at a pump station near the existing Wenmor WWTP.

Major elements of the gravity sewer system include the following:

- Approximately 5,450 lineal feet (lf) of new 8-inch diameter sewer line.
- Approximately 900 lineal feet of 10-inch diameter sewer line.
- One lift station located near the entrance to the KOA – Mt. Gilead campground.
- Approximately 3,000 lf of force main
- Back-up power source

Estimated cost of installing the gravity sewers is \$781,700. The estimated annual operations and maintenance (O&M) cost for this alternative is \$8,000.

- b. Collection System Alternative #2: Gravity sewer system to a new pump station near Sylvester Run

This alternative routes the gravity sewer to a pump station near Sylvester Run approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the village of Chesterville.

Major elements of the gravity sewer system include the following:

- Approximately 3,025 lf of 8-inch diameter sewer line
- Approximately 5,620 lf of 10-inch diameter sewer line
- One lift station located near the entrance to the KOA – Mt. Gilead campground
- Approximately 3,000 lf of force main
- Back-up power source

Estimated cost of installing the gravity sewers is \$938,500. The estimated annual O&M cost for this alternative is \$8,000.

c. Collection System Alternative #3: Low Pressure Sewers

In a low pressure sewer system, all wastewater flows under pressure, so sewers do not need to follow the existing topography. Low pressure sewers can be installed at a standard depth below the surface or at variable depths as local conditions dictate. The pressure to convey wastewater is induced by grinder pumps located on the premises of each individual customer or small cluster of customers. Low pressure sewers use smaller diameter sewer pipes than comparable gravity sewers.

Major difficulties of low pressure sewer systems as compared with gravity sewers is the issue of installation, ownership and responsibility of the grinder pump units. In general, it is preferable that the grinder pumps are procured, installed and maintained by the public sewer agency. However, this requires extensive acquisition of easements so that the government-funded work is not done on private property. Each grinder pump also requires connection to the property-owner's electrical supply, making it vulnerable to individual, as well as, system-wide power outages. Thus, while this alternative may be considered for the individual residents as they tie into the proposed system, due to the commercial and industrial nature of the service area, this option is not feasible for most potential customers.

Four alternatives for the treatment of wastewater from the interchange area were evaluated. The suitability of each alternative was examined for a start-up average design flow of 42,000 gallons per day with a peak flow of 168,000 gallons per day.

a. Wastewater Treatment Alternative #1: Acquire and Expand the Wenmor WWTP

A regional wastewater treatment alternative is to convey all wastewater from the interchange area to the Wenmor Wastewater Treatment Plant located approximately one half mile from CR 252. Since the Wenmor plant is privately owned, the County would have to purchase the plant and assume the management, operations and maintenance. A utility building would need to be constructed to provide storage and a laboratory for minor analysis. The plant site is situated for relatively easy immediate and future expansion.

Estimated cost of installing this alternative is \$729,700. The estimated initial annual O&M cost is \$45,000.

b. Wastewater Treatment Alternative #2: Acquire and Expand the Duke – Mt. Gilead Travel Plaza WWTP

Another wastewater treatment alternative is to convey the wastewater west of I-71 to the Duke – Mt. Gilead Travel Plaza WWTP located approximately one quarter mile from I-71 and north of SR 95. Since the plant is privately owned, the County would have to purchase the plant and assume the operations. The existing sludge holding tank is failing and would have to be replaced, and a small utility building would be needed to provide storage and a laboratory for minor analysis.

A potential problem with this option is the plant is extremely limited in terms of expansion. Therefore, future flows west of I-71 would have to be routed to another treatment plant. For this reason, the alternative was not evaluated further.

c. Wastewater Treatment Alternative #3: Conveyance and treatment of all wastewater at the Chesterville WWTP

Another regional wastewater treatment alternative would be to convey the wastewater to the Chesterville WWTP. The village of Chesterville built their WWTP in 2003. It is a 90,000 gallon per day, Parkson Biolac system that is a versatile and expandable facility. The advantage to regionalization here is that the treatment system is currently in operation and receiving only approximately 20,000 gallons per day. Thus, the system could use the additional wastewater flow from the interchange to increase operating efficiency.

Major elements of the transport system needed to convey the collected wastewater to this facility, plus plant upgrades, include the following:

- Approximately 9,225 lf of 6-inch diameter force main
- One lift station located near the Wenmor WWTP
- Upgrades to Pump Station #1 on West Street in the village of Chesterville
- Upgrades to the existing WWTP for sludge handling
- Back-up power source

Estimated cost of installing this alternative is \$762,500. The estimated initial annual O&M cost is \$11,000.

d. Wastewater Treatment Alternative #4: Convey and treat the interchange wastewater at the Chesterville WWTP, while leaving the privately-owned Wenmor WWTP to service its existing customers

A non-regional wastewater treatment alternative would be to utilize both WWTPs in the project area. The un-served interchange properties and any new development would be transported to the Chesterville WWTP,

while the existing Wenmor WWTP would continue to operate just as it does today with no disruption.

Major elements of the WWTP transport system and upgrades include the following:

- Approximately 3,150 lf of 6-inch diameter force main
- One lift station located near Sylvester Run
- Upgrades to Pump Station #1 on West Street in the village of Chesterville
- Upgrades to the existing WWTP for sludge handling
- Back-up power source

Estimated cost of installing this alternative is \$422,500. The estimated initial annual O&M cost is \$11,000.

4. Description of Selected Alternative

The key goal of the project is to provide wastewater service to the northwest side of the I-71 and SR 95 interchange. Secondly, the solution would solve the current Ohio EPA violations at the campground, while providing a feasible alternative to the costly and aging wastewater systems on the east side of the interchange.

Based on the present worth analysis and average annual cost per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU), the selected project alternative includes a combination of one collection system (Alternative #1) and one treatment system (Alternative #3).

The project flanks the I-71 interchange by 0.5 miles northwest on SR 95 and southeast approximately 2.25 miles along SR95 into the village of Chesterville.

The project includes the demolition of the existing Wenmor WWTP, which serves Morrow Meadows. A pump station will be constructed in its place to transport wastewater to the village of Chesterville from existing commercial properties near the I-71 and SR 95 interchange, via a 6" force main along the right-of-way of SR 95. 2,700 lf of 8-inch diameter gravity sewer and a second, but smaller, pump station will be installed on the west side of the interchange, which will convey wastewater via a 4-inch diameter force main to the east side of the interchange, then into the existing gravity sewer system at the Morrow Meadows Development, to the proposed new pump station at the existing Wenmor WWTP, and ultimately to the village of Chesterville WWTP. 1000 lf of 8-inch diameter sewer will be installed to serve existing businesses east of I-71.

The selected improvements are in conformance with accepted engineering standards and will have minimal adverse environmental impacts.

5. Implementation Costs of Selected Alternative

The total project cost of the Morrow County I-71 and SR 95 Sewer Extension project is

estimated to be \$1,706,550. The Morrow County Commissioners have applied to WPCLF, administered by Ohio EPA, to finance \$917,935 of the cost. The Ohio Public Works Commission will fund another \$499,999. The County also anticipates receiving a Community Development Block Grant for \$10,000 and \$100,000 from the Local Government Innovation Fund. The County will also be receiving local share and special assessments financing.

The project schedule is as follows:

Advertise for Bids -----	June 2015
WPCLF Loan Award -----	September 2015
Start Construction-----	Fall 2015
Complete Construction -----	September 2016

C. Environmental Impacts of the Selected Alternative

A wide variety of environmental resources could potentially be impacted by the construction of Morrow County's I-71 and SR 95 Sewer Extension project. Therefore, Ohio EPA conducted an environmental review of the proposed project in order to help determine its conformance with WPCLF requirements. This review examined both known and anticipated environmental impacts associated with completion of the proposed project, including secondary (indirect) development impacts. Since the project service area is already developed, and since only limited additional growth is anticipated at this time, the project should not result in any significant secondary impacts that might adversely affect any of the area's existing natural resources.

All disturbed areas will be re-graded to original contours to ensure proper drainage. Thus, project installation should not result in any significant adverse land form changes.

The proposed project could affect the following attributes:

1. Agricultural/Land Use

The existing land use within the project area consists of two populated areas. The interchange area is almost exclusively commercial or industrial in nature, while the village of Chesterville is almost exclusively residential. The outer areas of the project are mostly agricultural, with residential properties scattered intermittently. The project mainly runs along the SR 95 right-of-way. Impacts to prime or important farmland are not anticipated as part of this project. There is no prime forestland or prime rangeland in Ohio, nor are there any other formally classified lands within the project area. Land disturbances associated with the project will be temporary in nature and all land will be returned to pre-construction conditions.

2. Air Quality

Existing air quality in Morrow County meets all federal and state primary and secondary standards according to the Ohio EPA, Division of Air Pollution Control's

website. Pollutants monitored for air quality are: ozone, particulates, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, and carbon monoxide.

No permanent air emissions will be produced by the proposed project and there will be no long-term impact on air quality in Morrow County. Dust produced by the installation of sewer lines will temporarily affect air quality. This will be mitigated using standard construction best management practices (BMPs), such as dust suppressants and use of properly-operated equipment in good working order. With these mitigative measures in place, any potential effects on air quality will be short-term, ending when construction is complete; therefore, no significant adverse impact to air quality will result from project implementation.

3. Archaeological and Historical Resources

The proposed project has been submitted for review by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) with respect to potential impacts on historical or archaeological resources. Ohio EPA has concluded that the project will not affect historic properties. Therefore, construction of the project should not have any short- or long-term adverse environmental impacts on archaeological or historical resources in the project area.

4. Surface Waters and Aquatic Habitat

Surface hydrology of southeast Morrow County consists of the rivers, streams and impoundments of the Kokosing River watershed. The Kokosing River is located south of the project and near the existing Wenmor WWTP. Sylvester Run is located west of Chesterville and east of the interchange. The proposed sewer will be directionally drilled beneath Sylvester Run, which flows north to south underneath SR 95, to the Kokosing River. Both the Kokosing River and Sylvester Run are designated as warmwater habitat, meaning they are capable of supporting typical populations of fish, other vertebrates, invertebrates, and aquatic plants on an annual basis.¹

All stream crossings will be directionally bored to avoid adverse impacts from trenching through them and disturbing the habitat. Runoff from project construction work will be addressed by mitigation measures that include sedimentation and erosion controls. Construction equipment and extraneous fill material will be stored on an upland site, away from streams. The inclusion of proper erosion and sediment controls, along with all other appropriate construction BMPs and mitigative measures, in all contract documents and detailed plans, is necessary for all WPCLF loan approvals.

¹ "Warmwater habitat" (WWH) is an aquatic life use designation. These are waters capable of supporting and maintaining a balanced, integrated, adaptive community of warmwater aquatic organisms. This use designation defines the "typical" warmwater assemblage of aquatic organisms for Ohio rivers and streams; WWH also represents the principal restoration target for the majority of water resource management efforts in Ohio.

Based on the above, no adverse impacts to surface waters or their aquatic habitat are expected as a result of this project.

5. Terrestrial Habitats

Terrestrial habitat in the project area includes commercial and some residential property, farmland, wooded areas, and riparian areas along the Kokosing River and Sylvester Run.

A review of the project was conducted in accordance with Section 7 (a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, and a determination of no effect on the following species that are known to inhabit parts of the project area.

- **Indiana bat** (state & federally endangered)
- **Northern long-eared bat** (federally threatened)

Due to the nature and location of the project elements, impacts to the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat are not expected to occur. Other fish and wildlife species in the area will not be adversely affected by the project, due mainly to avoidance of potential habitat or use of special construction techniques, like directional drilling under streams. For potential Indiana bat habitat, trees found with exfoliating bark or similar preferred characteristics along the Wenmor WWTP property line will be saved where possible. When they must be cut, cutting will not occur between April 1 and September 30.

The project area contains no known unique ecological sites, state nature preserves, geologic features, animal assemblages, state parks, state forests, or scenic rivers.

Based upon the nature of the project and mitigative construction techniques to be employed for the project, no significant adverse impacts with respect to terrestrial and aquatic habitat will occur as a result of this project.

6. Noise, Traffic and Aesthetics

Although project construction will temporarily increase noise levels, this will cease once construction is complete, so there will be no significant long-term adverse noise impacts. To reduce the short-term impacts, construction activity will be limited to daytime hours.

The project will have a temporary effect on transportation due to road cuts to install new sewer pipes. Lines crossing under state highways will be bored. All but one of the lines crossing SR 95 will be bored. One of the lines crossing SR 95 will be open cut. New sewer pipes will be placed in or adjacent to road rights-of-way. After completion of construction the roadway surface will be restored. The proposed disturbance is limited in scope and temporary in nature.

A short-term increase in traffic may be noticeable in the area due to delivery of

equipment and materials during construction. It is not anticipated that traffic flow will be significantly impacted. Where work is being done in road rights-of-way, at least one lane of traffic will be open at all times. When it is required that a street or road be closed to traffic, the Contractor shall furnish, erect, maintain, and remove barricades, suitable and sufficient traffic control lights, and other lights or reflecting material at the limits of the project. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to traffic will occur as a result of the project.

Due to the nature and location of the project elements, it is not expected to adversely impact visual aesthetics. Once construction is complete, disturbed areas will be restored to their pre-construction condition wherever possible, further reducing potential aesthetic impacts.

Use of the proposed mitigative measures should help reduce short-term impacts and further ensure that completion of the project will not have long-term adverse effects on noise levels, traffic flow, or the aesthetics of the project area.

7. Local Economy

According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, the median household income (MHI) for the Morrow County is \$51,484.

The total cost of the proposed project is estimated to be \$1,706,550. To help reduce the financial impacts of the project, the Morrow County Commissioners have applied to the WPCLF to finance \$917,935 of the cost using WPCLF's hardship interest rate of 0%. Morrow County will save approximately \$370,750,000 over 20 years compared to a standard 3.54% market rate loan.

A new sewer sub-district within the Morrow County Sanitary Sewer District has been formed and includes all users in the service area of the I-71 and SR 95 Area Sewer District. The village of Chesterville entered into an agreement with Morrow County for the provision of wastewater treatment services for the new I-71 and SR 95 Area Sewer District. Users will be billed on a monthly basis. Initially, residential users will have a current minimum base charge of \$65.00. The rate may be adjusted by resolution of the Board of Commissioners after construction of the project is completed.

D. Public Participation

Morrow County and the village of Chesterville have held numerous public meetings to make the public aware of the project. The information presented at these meetings identified the reasons for undertaking the proposed project, how the project would be constructed and operated, the costs involved with construction, likely sources of funding, and the expected cost to system users as a result of the proposed project.

The general consensus was that most of the residents wanted to move ahead with the project proposal and, to Ohio EPA's knowledge, no significant opposition to the proposed project was expressed at any of the meetings or at any other time.

Additionally, a number of articles where the project was outlined or mentioned were published in the local newspaper, the *Morrow County Sentinel*.

The following agencies have reviewed and commented on the general plan and related project documents:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Historic Preservation Office

E. Conclusion

It is concluded that there will be no significant adverse environmental impacts from the proposed Sewer Extension project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. Due to the highly-developed nature of the existing commercial area in the northwestern portion of the project and the residential area in the southeastern portion of the project, a general lack of environmentally-sensitive features in the project area, and the proposed measures to mitigate identified environmental effects, any impacts from the construction activity should be short-term and insignificant. The project is cost-effective and is not a controversial action. No significant secondary development impacts are expected, as most of the service area is already developed, and the proposed system is sized primarily to serve these existing properties, plus some moderate future development.

F. For further information, contact:

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