



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
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APRIL 22, 2016

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

VILLAGE OF McCONNELSVILLE, PHASES IV AND V COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW
IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, WPCLF LOAN # CS390550-0011

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 entity mentioned 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 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 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 general 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
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A. Project Identification

Name: Village of McConnelsville
Phases IV and V Combined Sewer Overflow Improvements Project

Address: Mr. John Thompson
Village Administrator
9 West Main Street
McConnelsville, Ohio 43756

Loan No.: CS390550-0011

B. Project Summary

In the context of a ten-year design storm event, the Village of McConnelsville has, since 2007, completed three prior phases of an overall five-phase effort to reduce, if not eliminate, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) from within its existing sanitary sewer service area.¹ These various projects have to date reduced overflow activations from as many as eight of the village's eleven originally known active CSOs, leaving three to be addressed by this project. While elimination (defined as no further discharge of combined sewage, but not physical closure) of some CSOs may be possible after construction of the Phase IV (Eighth Street) and V (Tenth Street) projects focusing on CSOs 16 (Seventh Street) and 17 (McConnell Run Lift Station), minor activations of any of the existing CSOs still could occur. Accordingly, under the terms of the village's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), it is required to perform twelve months of post construction monitoring after each phase of the overall effort and to report to Ohio EPA on the results of its CSO and other flow monitoring results. A final report reflecting these earlier findings will indicate the condition of each of the village's CSOs (e.g., active or not) and for those CSOs still active, how frequently and how much they discharge to area rivers. Any future needed work, if any, will be determined at that time. Readers should also note that the original phasing established in the LTCP is used throughout this document to refer to projects, even though the village nominated this project as its "Phase IV CSO Improvements." Upon completion of this proposed project, the village expects to no longer have any active CSOs in its sewer system and anticipates meeting the terms of its current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance schedule and its LTCP, as defined in those documents. Together, these five phases of improvements are expected to result in water quality improvements and human health benefits for area residents.

¹ The completed projects include Phase 1 (Fourth Street), Phase 2 (Kennebec Avenue), and Phase 3 (Kennebec Avenue West and Seventh Street). Future Phases 4 and 5 have sometimes been considered as a single project, including the area between 8th Street and 10th Street, and from Union Avenue down to the Muskingum River.

The main purpose of this proposed project is to improve the reliability of the village's collection system and conveyance of peak wet-weather flows to its wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). In so doing, it will minimize the discharge of untreated water pollutants through overflows from the collection system. As a result, the village will realize significant reductions in public health risks, improve water quality, and complete the steps needed to meet its regulatory requirements. This objective will be accomplished mainly by installing new storm sewers, which will allow the existing combined sewers to be dedicated to serving as sanitary sewers full time in the area of the village between 8th and 10th Streets. As with the village's other compliance schedule driven wastewater projects, this one is consistent with the regional water quality management plan for this part of Ohio. Construction of the proposed project is expected to require between 120 and 150 calendar days.

More details on the other planning, design, and construction components of the NPDES permit schedule of compliance can be found below in the "Project Planning and Discussion of Feasible Alternatives" part of this document. Funding from multiple federal and state sources, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), and Ohio EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) has been used before by the village to minimize wastewater service fee increases, to finance the three prior projects, and is expected to be used again for this project.

Based on the bids recently received for the village's project, the construction of this project is expected to cost about \$683,555, with the total project cost estimated at \$872,055. This figure does not include the cost of the planning and design work (\$223,418) the village paid for itself through an Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) loan. Of this total project cost, the village qualifies for an Ohio EPA, 20-year, 0% hardship interest-rate WPCLF loan for construction of this project estimated at \$381,071. The balance of the project cost is proposed to be financed by a CDBG \$116,000 grant, and approximately \$374,984 in OPWC grant and loan funds (43% of the project total). The village expects to repay its anticipated WPCLF loan with revenues collected from its wastewater customers in the form of sanitary sewer service charges. Please see the "Selected Alternative," "Project Implementation," and the "Local Economy" sections of this document for more information on the project's costs.

Overall, the environmental review of this proposed project conducted by Ohio EPA described in this document indicates that the proposed project will not result in significant, adverse, direct or indirect environmental or socioeconomic impacts. More specific information on the project's potential environmental impacts and mitigation, and the village's public participation activities can be found below.

C. Existing Conditions

As a combined sewer system, the village's sewer system has connections between the sanitary and storm sewers that otherwise function independently during dry weather.

During and following rain storms, the amount of raw wastewater and storm water rises to the extent that these combined sewers discharge to the environment without adequate treatment. This condition can lead to water quality and potential human health concerns in the Muskingum downstream of McConnellsville. Since 2007, when the village first identified its active CSOs, the village has reduced, but not yet eliminated, activations from eight known CSOs (CSO 008 through CSO 017) listed below.

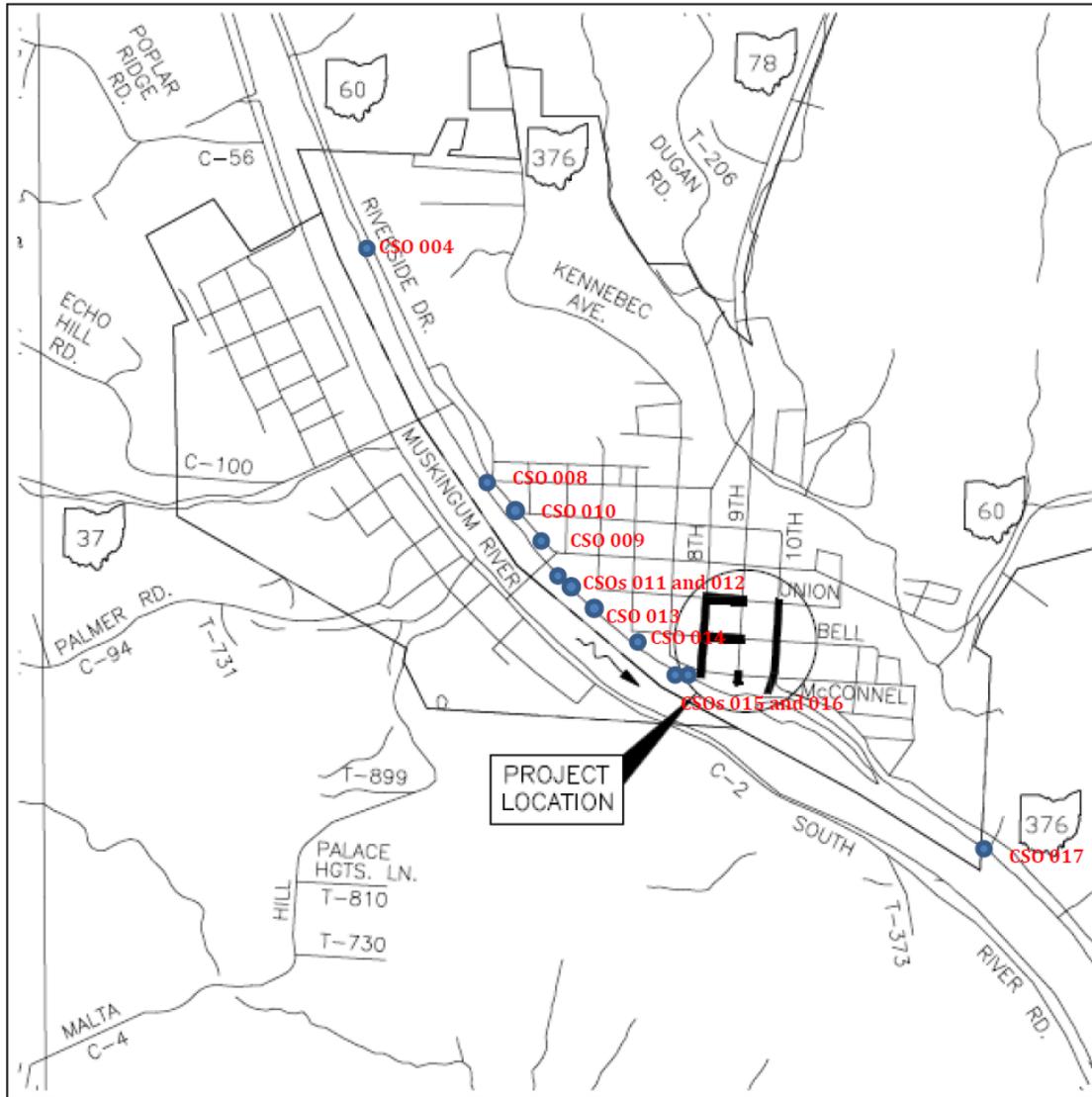
Given recently completed improvements to Malta’s combined sewer system, CSO 004 and CSO 017 at two out of three of McConnellsville’s lift stations are expected to cease operating after this project’s construction. See Figure 1. At present, only four of these CSOs (004, 008, 016, and 017) are permitted to discharge under wet weather conditions and the village’s NPDES permit when flow exceeds the sewer system’s capacity (p. 17).

| CSO # | Description |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 004 | North Riverside Drive Lift Station |
| 008 | Jefferson Street at State Route 60 |
| 009 | Between Second and Third Streets |
| 010 | State Route 60 at Liberty Street |
| 011 | Third Street at Main Street |
| 012 | Between Third and Fourth Streets |
| 013 | Fourth Street Lift Station |
| 014 | Fifth Street |
| 015 | Kennebec Avenue |
| 016 | Seventh Street |
| 017 | McConnel Run Lift Station |

Figure 1, List of Known CSOs in McConnellsville (See LTCP, Page 1-1)

More information on the conditions in McConnellsville and the development of this proposed project can be found in the project planning section of this document. As noted in Ohio EPA’s 2006 State Water Quality Management Plan, the Village of McConnellsville does not have a designated facilities planning area in Morgan County. According to previous environmental assessments, the village’s WWTP service area includes the Village of Malta and a few adjacent, unincorporated areas in Morgan County. With Malta’s recently completed sewer projects, McConnellsville expects to be able to close off CSOs 013 and 017 upon completion of this project.

Figure 2 below shows the locations of McConnellsville’s eleven known CSOs.



LOCATION MAP

SCALE: 1" = QUARTER MILE

Figure 2, CSO Locations in McConnellsville

D. Future Needs

Given the scope of the proposed project and its main purpose to help address the CSO activations within the village's collection system, there is very little residential population growth associated with it. Rather, in order to address these wet-weather needs, the village proposes to continue to make specific improvements to its collection system. In the future, the village is required under its NPDES permit compliance schedule to complete the following additional work:

1. Notify the Ohio EPA, Southeast District Office of completion of Phases IV and V within seven days of project completion.
2. Implement the Post Construction Monitoring Plan as specified in the amended LTCP upon completion of this project. A report on the monitoring of the CSOs shall be submitted to Ohio EPA within 18 months following completion of each phase. The report shall include the condition of the CSOs in the village's combined sewer system (e.g., are they still active; if so, how frequently do they activate and how much volume do they discharge). As part of this report, the village needs to evaluate its wastewater collection system, including recommendations and an implementation schedule for additional wastewater collection system improvements necessary to address the remaining active CSOs, monitor their condition, and meet the requirements of its compliance schedule.

E. Project Planning and Discussion of Feasible Alternatives

Starting in 2007, the Village of McConnelsville began addressing the CSOs in its collection system. First among these CSO control efforts was the LTCP completed in September 2007 and amended in December 2007, which outlined the ten-year series of steps to maximize the control of CSO discharges to the Muskingum River, or alternatively to eliminate them entirely. This report was approved by Ohio EPA in April 2008 and was followed by the completion of three phases of improvements to the village's combined sewer system that began the process of separating the storm water and wastewater into dedicated sewer systems. In addition, the village has been working to identify existing dedicated sanitary sewers subject to excessive infiltration and inflow (I/I)² of storm and ground water in need of repairs through sewer lining or replacement. Wastewater and other flows that do not overflow to the Muskingum River through the village's permitted CSOs are processed at the village's 500,000 gallons per day average daily flow WWTP (1.5-1.7 mgd peak flow) before discharge to this warmwater habitat and primary contact recreation designated river. Roughly 2400 people in Malta and McConnelsville are served by the latter's WWTP.

According to the village's compliance schedule, the two remaining phases, Phases IV and V, need to be completed by December 31, 2017.³ Should any problems develop with completing Phases IV and V before January 2018, the

² Infiltration/inflow (I/I) is defined as extraneous, clear water that enters a sanitary sewer system through surface or subsurface locations. Inflow may include clear water entering the system through manhole covers, roof or foundation drains, direct storm sewer connections, etc. Infiltration usually occurs when clear water enters the system below ground through cracked or broken pipes and manholes, poorly sealed or misaligned pipe joints, damaged or poorly connected sewer laterals, etc.

³ Originally, the village's LTCP called for completion of Phase IV by December 31, 2015 and Phase V by December 31, 2017.

village has until no later than July 1, 2020 to cease all discharges of combined sewage from the village's CSOs. Afterwards, the village will no longer be authorized to discharge sewage from the combined sewer outfalls, subject to the emergency conditions found in its NPDES permit.

Alternatives Analysis. McConnelsville and its engineering consultants did not consider a no-action alternative more than briefly, since it would not address the human health risk and water quality degradation posed by the village's CSOs, nor its responsibility to complete the proposed sewer separation projects included in its NPDES permit compliance schedule and LTCP. Instead, the village evaluated other options to reduce CSO events and lower the volume of wet-weather flows discharged from its existing CSOs in order to work towards meeting regulatory requirements. The LTCP options evaluated to determine a cost-effective solution to meet the village's needs included:

Treatment of Overflows at CSO Locations Alternative

This alternative would provide treatment of each overflow at the CSO point, prior to discharge to the river. At normal pool level, there would not be enough physical space to implement this option. Therefore, formal evaluation of cost for this alternative was not conducted due to implementation constraints.

Equalization Basin (EQ Basin) at Village's WWTP to handle Wet-Weather Flows Alternative

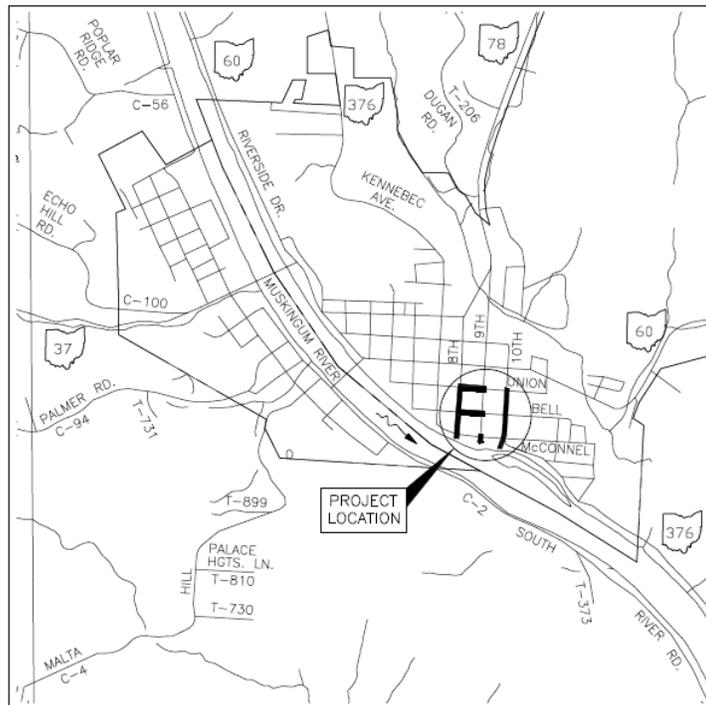
The second alternative evaluated by the village would involve construction of a flow-equalization basin at the WWTP to store wet-weather flows for slow-release treatment. The village's WWTP is located on a confined space of land in the village, and is built into a hillside. Physically, no room exists for an EQ basin at this location. In addition, the village received Federal Emergency Management Agency Funds to fix the slipping hillside where the plant is located, which further eliminated the EQ Basin alternative due to the unstable nature of the site. Therefore, formal evaluation of cost for this alternative was not conducted due to implementation constraints.

Phased Separation of the Sewer System Alternative

The final alternative evaluated was phased separation of the sewer system that would allow the village to separate one area at a time, thereby spreading the costs over ten years. Building a separate storm sewer and utilizing the existing sewer as a dedicated sanitary sewer would allow the use of the existing sanitary sewer laterals already connected to the combined sewer, thereby eliminating the cost to residents needing to construct new laterals. The village's LTCP outlines a plan to use the existing sanitary sewers for wastewater flow and to construct new storm sewers to handle the storm water flow. The village already has a

curb and storm water inlet system that would allow storm water to sufficiently be diverted to a new storm sewer. The sewer would be constructed in street rights-of-way (ROW), thereby lessening environmental impacts normally associated with construction in off-pavement areas.

Of these alternatives, the village selected the option of phased separation of sewers throughout the entire community and completing site-specific I/I removal projects because they would ultimately eliminate its long-term liability of managing and monitoring CSOs in perpetuity. As the only other option left, more information on the village's proposed Phases IV and V project can be found in the next section.



LOCATION MAP

SCALE: 1" = QUARTER MILE

Figure 3, Selected Alternative Location and Scope

F. Selected Alternative

After completing its planning activities described above to address its CSO problems, the village chose to construct improvements within its collection system in phases as funding became available. The currently proposed project includes approximately 3,228 feet of improvements to combined sewers varying in size between 18- and 30-inches in diameter along 8th Street, Bell Avenue, Union Avenue, 9th Street, Riverside Drive, 10th Street, and McConnell Avenue. The improvements involve installing new storm sewer and redirecting stormwater away from existing combined sewers to reduce the number of combined sewer

overflow events, and to lead to dedicated sanitary and storm sewer systems during a 10-year, 1-hour storm event. As a result, the existing combined sewer would be utilized for sanitary sewer and new storm sewers will be constructed to handle storm water only. Storm water would then be discharged to the Muskingum River through two new below-grade wingwall-type outlets and riprap bank protection. The current, as-bid construction cost is \$683,555, with the total project cost estimated at \$872,055. Any future work needed to eliminate any remaining CSOs that persist after Phases IV and V are completed will need to be established at that time in terms of the scope of work and costs (see Future Needs).

Within the project area shown in Figure 3, Ohio EPA expects that the construction activities will be limited to prior-disturbed, urban areas with street trees, sidewalks, and paved roads, and a small area of floodplain with a few native trees and maintained landscape vegetation along the Muskingum River. More specifically, the storm water pollution prevention plan indicates that only 0.53 acres of land is needed overall for construction of entire project, including the two new storm sewer outfalls between 8th Street and 10th Street. Further, the amount of impervious surface (80%) in the project area is expected to remain unchanged after the project is completed. Storm sewer trench excavations about 10-15 feet wide and construction easements between 30 and 48 feet wide are expected to be needed for the new storm sewers replacing the existing combined sewers throughout the project area.

On the basis of the project scope shown in Figure 3, Ohio EPA anticipates that the impacts associated with the construction of this proposed project can be satisfactorily mitigated by the provisions in the contract documents. With the specific steps the village and its consultants have proposed to mitigate these possible impacts, McConnelsville has shown that these concerns can be adequately addressed. For more information on the possible environmental impacts of each project and the means to mitigate them, please refer to the "Environmental Impacts" section of this document.

G. Project Implementation

The as-bid costs for this project came in below the engineer's estimate of \$1.2 million. Assuming the village borrows approximately \$381,071 from the WPCLF at an interest rate of 0% payable over 20 years, the estimated annual WPCLF debt service associated with this project after construction is completed will be \$19,054. WPCLF loan award is anticipated in May 2016. Construction is expected to be initiated in June 2016 and is expected to require four to five months to complete, ending in November 2016 or earlier.

After its last rate increase in March 2011, the Village of McConnelsville enacted sanitary sewer fee increases on July 2, 2013 in anticipation of this proposed

project and other infrastructure improvements called for in its NPDES permit compliance schedule. These sewer utility rate increases approved by village council enabled the village to make important investments in the wastewater collection and treatment systems over the past several years, including the planning for this project, while also keeping up with the impacts of inflation in the general operation of the system and meeting increased regulatory requirements. Having raised the base fee twice in 2013, the village also put in place a 3% rate increase per year starting in 2015 to account for increases in operation, maintenance, and replacement costs due to inflation. These rate increases are not intended to cover any future expenses associated with other capital improvements to its sewer systems.

Under the current rates, a typical residential customer using on average 4,500 gallons per month is presently paying a monthly fee of \$49.63 in 2016, or about \$595.56 per year. This current annual fee reflects the four rate increases implemented in January 2013, August 2013, January 2015, and January 2016. Using the 3% increase enacted in 2013, this sewer fee is expected to increase to \$50.74 per month, or \$608.88 a year in 2017. When expressed as a percentage of the village's latest median household income figure of \$30,997, these annual sewer fees are about 1.96% of the village's 2009-2013 MHI. As noted on the village's sewage rates web site, all residents of the village's sewerage system currently pay for sewage service at a base rate of \$37.13, plus a \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons charge to be billed and collected on a monthly basis.

Additional context for this proposed project's related economic impacts can be found in the following "Environmental Impacts" section of this document. The village will operate and maintain the new storm sewer and existing sanitary sewer system.

H. Environmental Impacts of the Selected Alternative

The environmental review conducted in part by Ohio EPA and other review agencies, described herein, indicates that the proposed improvements within McConnellsville's Phases IV and V CSO Improvements project area will not result in significant, adverse direct or indirect environmental impacts on the areas shown in Figures 2 and 3 above. To address those concerns that did arise, mitigation has been proposed by the village and its engineering consultant to reduce the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that were identified. More specifically, they include, appropriate provisions in the detail plans and specifications covering at a minimum (1) prohibited construction activities, (2) erosion/sediment control, (3) traffic control, (4) air pollution/noise control, (5) tree and vegetation protection, (6) dewatering, (7) spoil disposal sites, and (8) archaeological and historical resources. Where there is any potential for direct impacts on any resources in either the natural or human environment

categories, an analysis can be found below in the following summary of Ohio EPA's environmental reviews.

The following natural features will not be affected, for the reasons given. The project is too small in scope to alter major landforms (i.e. plains, mountains, valleys, etc.), and wetlands are absent from the proposed storm sewer alignments. Next, minimal site grading and bank stabilization is proposed for the storm sewers and two new outfall sewers located within the 100-year floodplain of the Muskingum River. Finally, the project is generally not located in or near any coastal zones, national wildlife reserves, or state wildlife reserves. As a condition of project approval, disturbed areas will be graded to reflect original drainage patterns following completion of site work. Thus, pre-construction topography will be restored and soils will be largely unaffected by this project.

McConnelsville's sewer separation project also was reviewed by Ohio EPA for indirect (secondary) impacts on the environment. Overall, the village's proposed project is not expected to result in any significant, indirect adverse environmental impacts for the reasons cited below. This conclusion was reached mainly because of the lack of any significant natural resources in the project planning area (see Figures 2 and 3) that could be threatened by potential urban development, and Ohio EPA's expectation that this project will not adversely affect local land use patterns through increasing population, development, impervious surface area, and storm water runoff. Furthermore, because the proposed project is not intended to induce population growth, conversion of farmland to non-rural uses is not anticipated.

1. Topography, Grading Activities, and Soils

Current estimates are that 2270 cubic yards of excess excavated material (soil) will be generated by this proposed project and will need to be transported via trucks from the construction areas to the previously reviewed and approved spoil disposal site within the county fairgrounds track. No other sites are yet approved for this activity. Given the proposed use of this prior disturbed site within the Muskingum River's floodplain for this activity, no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on significant environmental attributes are expected to occur during spoil disposal. The balance of suitable material will be returned to the storm sewer excavations as backfill.

As stockpile sites and contractor equipment laydown areas are required to meet applicable storm water pollution prevention plan requirements, no adverse impacts from this part of the project on topography and soils are expected. Further, as the proposed storm sewers and new outfalls will be located under existing streets and rights-of-way, and all disturbed areas will be returned to pre-existing contours following the project installation, Ohio EPA has concluded

that no significant, direct, adverse impacts from site grading of area soils are expected to result from this proposed project.

Prohibited construction activities include restricting disposal of spoil material removed from any excavations to previously disturbed areas such as the track and golf course at the county fairgrounds area (see Figure 4 below). As a condition of Ohio EPA's project approval, none of the excess excavated soil expected to be generated during the village's proposed project can be used to fill any wetlands, depressions, or floodplains.

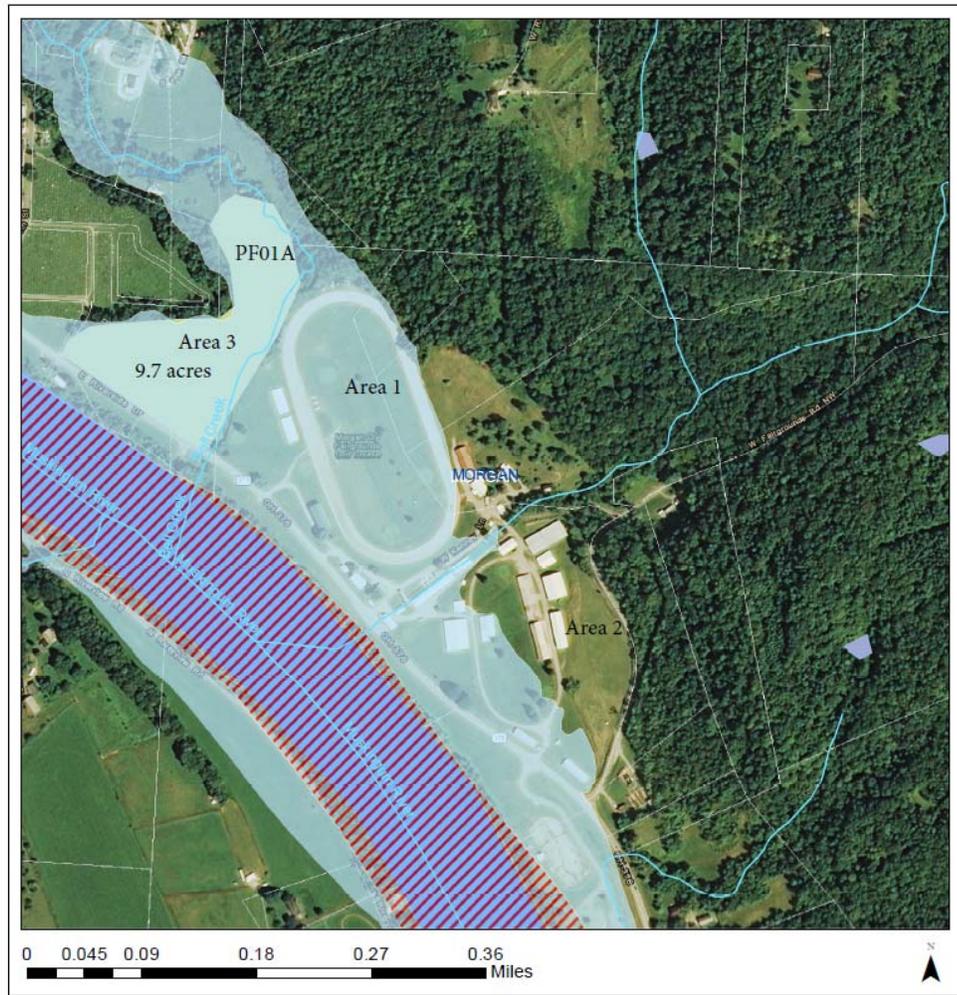


Figure 4, Accepted Spoil Disposal Area 1 and Adjacent Rejected Areas (2 and 3)

2. Surface and Ground Water

➤ Surface Water

The locations of the proposed improvements within the previously-disturbed project areas shown in Figures 2 through 4 above, along with

the avoidance of any open-cut crossings of streams and wetlands during this project, indicates that the village's proposed project should not result in any significant, adverse, direct environmental impacts on surface water resources, including the Muskingum River, within the project area. Rather, the reduction (if not total elimination) of CSOs during a 10-year storm event is expected to benefit the health of village residents and surface water quality in the Muskingum River, both inside McConnellsville and downstream of the project area.

In addition, standard mitigative measures (e.g., perimeter silt fences, storm water inlet protection, trench and excavation dewatering, and temporary and permanent seeding and mulching of bare soil areas) to address storm water runoff, erosion, and sedimentation impacts during the proposed four to five month construction period, plus enforcing prohibited construction activities over this same timeframe, will help minimize the amount of sediment that directly enters catch basins, storm sewers, and streams in the village's project area, where prior disturbance has already modified local site conditions. Important to the success of these measures is the requirement that the contractor install and maintain appropriate erosion and sedimentation controls in accordance with all applicable storm water pollution prevention and erosion control plans in the contract documents. The contractor will solely be responsible for complying with the general storm water pollution prevention plan permit. Finally, as no increase in impervious surface area is expected following completion of construction and restoration, Ohio EPA expects that no adverse, direct impacts on water quality from this activity in the project area will result. Any fill activities associated with installing rip-rap below the ordinary high water mark of the Muskingum River to stabilize the bank will follow the applicable conditions of nationwide permit activities authorized under the Rivers and Harbors Act and the Clean Water Act.

As a result of these contract provisions and the conditions in the project area, Ohio EPA anticipates that no significant, adverse, direct impacts on surface water features will result from the village's proposed project. For information on any indirect impacts on surface water features, please see the following section on terrestrial and aquatic habitat.

Based on the above information, there should be no significant, short-or long-term, direct or indirect, adverse impacts to surface water resources as a result of the construction of the village's proposed project, and a net improvement in surface water conditions upon reducing the number of CSO activations taking place in the project area.

➤ Ground Water

Ground Water Dewatering: Given the proximity of the Muskingum River and the location of its aquifer adjacent to a part of the project area, it is likely that ground water will be encountered. As a result, temporary site dewatering during construction of the proposed project may be necessary to temporarily lower the ground water table and provide dry work conditions. To minimize adverse direct impacts from the discharge of pumped groundwater, such as the discharge of contaminated or sediment-laden water, or the discharge of water that is less than ambient temperature, all dewatering flows will be filtered before discharge to storm sewers or other stabilized sites and will conform to all relevant parts of the contract documents such as erosion control, the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and any NPDES permit (pretreatment) requirements. Any variations from this proposed dewatering plan may require additional review and approval by Ohio EPA. Once construction is completed in about six months, the dewatering activities will cease, and ground water levels are expected to return to their pre-construction levels. In addition, the village is served by a public water system, so few impacts on individual, private wells are expected. There are no sole source aquifers in the project area.

Based on the above, the proposed project should not result in significant, short-or long-term, direct adverse environmental impacts to ground water quality or quantity. In addition to no direct effects on ground water, the proposed project should also not indirectly affect any ground water resources through either related infrastructure improvements or property development.

3. Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Critical Habitat, including Floodplains and Wetlands

➤ Aquatic Habitat

Based on the limited scope of the village's proposed project, the urban area where the storm sewer improvements will be made, the underground alignments selected for the storm sewers, and the two locations of the outfalls to the Muskingum River, no direct, significant, adverse impacts on surface aquatic habitats (streams, floodplains, or wetlands) are expected to result. The main reason for this conclusion is that areas of aquatic habitat are absent from the bulk of the project area, and where they are present, mitigation has been proposed to address the potential impacts from land disturbing activities that could occur. Further support for this is that Ohio EPA has reviewed the proposed storm sewer outfall alignments and locations and found that the area to be converted permanently to this use for storm water discharge is

relatively small and generally above the ordinary high water mark of the Muskingum River.

Adherence to a storm water pollution prevention plan for this project is expected to assure that appropriately timed site restoration activities occur and that aquatic habitats are not subject to significant, short-or long-term, direct adverse environmental impacts. Overall, a long-term benefit to aquatic habitats around the Muskingum River and downstream is the expected outcome of this proposed project. In particular, trench grading and properly timed seeding of exposed areas within the linear alignments, excavated material, and spoil disposal sites should help reduce short or long-term, direct impacts on aquatic resources to insignificant levels.

➤ Terrestrial Habitat

The most notable terrestrial habitat feature in the project area is the presence of scattered riparian area trees along the Muskingum River and street trees. As the village's consultant has indicated that none of the trees along the river bank will need to be removed to facilitate the storm sewer outfall's construction, no significant, short-or long-term, direct (or indirect) adverse environmental impacts to the riparian area during this proposed project are expected. Similarly, the detail plans indicate that no more than six street trees over 18-inches in diameter in the project area will need to be removed to facilitate this project's construction. As the village has indicated that it currently has no plans to replace the street trees due to their proximity to the new storm sewers and concerns over possible future root intrusion, the removal of these trees is a permanent and unavoidable aspect of this proposed project. However, when put in the context of the number of street trees in the village and the health benefit, the loss is not considered a significant, adverse impact.

In summary, on the basis of these findings for aquatic and terrestrial habitats, Ohio EPA has determined that the village's proposed project will have no significant, direct, adverse environmental effects on any unique terrestrial or aquatic habitat features. Similarly, given the limited growth potential of the project area shown above in Figure 3, the potential for indirect and cumulative impacts is low.

➤ Critical (Suitable) Habitat for Federal and State Listed Species

A review of the project was conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The US FWS and ODNR outlined specific issues that could affect species based upon habitat and construction issues. Based upon the nature of the

project, its location, and the criteria outlined by US FWS and ODNR, no significant adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species would occur as a result of the project.

The proposed project is in the range of the Indiana bat and the Northern long-eared bat, two federally-listed endangered and threatened species. Important habitat for this species includes dead or live trees and snags, with peeling or exfoliating bark, stream corridors, riparian areas, and upland woodlots, which provide forage sites. No clearing of native trees meeting these species' needs is required to construct the project, so it is unlikely the project would have an impact on either species.

The project area also lies in the range of the Bald Eagle; however, given there are no recorded nests in the project area, it is unlikely to affect this species.

Endangered aquatic species in the Lower Muskingum River include the fanshell mussel and pink mucket pearly mussel. The sheepsnose mussel, a federal candidate species, is also located in the Lower Muskingum. The project is also in the historical range of the Eastern spadefoot toad, a state-endangered species. Threatened species include the Threehorn Wartyback and Fawnsfoot. Species of concern include the Eastern Sand Darter and Salamander mussel. Since the project would not involve disturbance to the river and sediment and erosion controls would be used throughout the project, no impacts on these species are expected.

Based upon review of the conditions of the project area, significant impacts to fish and wildlife are not likely since the sewers will be constructed adjacent to the existing sewers and nearly all of the locations are in street and street ROW.

To conclude, based upon the nature of the project and the area affected, no significant adverse impacts to threatened or endangered species should result from construction of the project.

4. Land Use (including Open Space) and Agriculture

Based on a review of this proposed project and the village's existing zoning for the project area, Ohio EPA has concluded that the project should have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on either land use or agriculture production on prime farmland since no land use changes in this generally urban area of residential and commercial properties are expected to occur during or in response to activity.

5. Air Quality

The proposed project will be constructed in central Morgan County, which is in attainment with all six measured air quality indices.⁴ The project may result in a minor amount of short-term, localized air pollution produced by construction vehicle exhaust, but this should be insignificant and mitigated by the traffic and air quality provisions in the contract documents. A short-term increase in dust may be expected during construction of the storm sewer, but would be mitigated by spraying a misting of water on exposed areas. Once construction is complete, ROW areas will be re-seeded and air quality should return to pre-construction levels. Therefore, no significant, long-term adverse impacts to air quality should occur as a result of the project.

Ohio EPA supports the conclusion that this proposed project is consistent with the objectives of water quality planning under the Clean Water Act, and with the State of Ohio's State Implementation Plan under the Clean Air Act. These assurances also indicate that any projected future growth in the project planning area should not induce adverse indirect environmental impacts on air quality. A benefit of this proposed project will be the reduction of odors associated with the village's CSOs.

6. Noise, Traffic & Aesthetics

Noise levels in the project area are typically from traffic traveling through town. The major route in McConnelsville is State Route 60, which can experience high levels of through traffic. In that sense, traffic patterns are typical of rural towns in Ohio. A temporary increase in noise levels and a change in traffic patterns may be noticeable in the area due to the close proximity to downtown businesses and residences. However, construction will take place during normal work hours to help minimize disturbance, and mufflers and other noise abatement devices would be used, where practical. Noise impacts will be short-term in duration, ending when construction is complete. Therefore, no significant, long-term adverse impacts with respect to noise levels should result from construction of the project.

No significant impacts to traffic flow should occur based upon the short duration of the construction project and since access to residences would be maintained at all times. At least one lane of street would remain open throughout construction.

The village has some parkland and open space for recreational activities. It also has mature trees lining its streets. No designated natural areas or scenic rivers are located within the project area. The majority of trees in the project area are

⁴ Readers should note that there is a small area of non-attainment for sulfur dioxide in an area on the eastern side of the county, but this project will have no effect on that area's status.

not expected to be impacted since the project is in streets and ROW. Adverse impacts to aesthetics should not result from the project, as the work will take place primarily under streets and rights-of-way. Only six street trees are expected to be removed from the entire project area to facilitate construction. Finally, the CSOs in the village will be significantly reduced upon this project's completion and their elimination will result in aesthetic improvements; however, the CSOs may activate during emergency situations, and so result in temporary aesthetic impacts.

7. Energy Use

Based on the planning information provided by the village, construction of this proposed project is not expected to require a significant amount of non-renewable energy. As such, the planned four to five-month construction period, with its energy use in the form of fuel consumption, is unavoidable if the wastewater needs of the project area are to be addressed. On this basis, no significant, short- or long-term adverse environmental impacts on energy use are expected to result from the construction activities involved in the village's project. Ohio EPA has drawn a similar conclusion about the long-term energy use required by the village's collection system, especially its pump stations. With less extraneous (storm water) flows entering the collection system upon project completion, non-renewable energy use is expected to be less than current usage, and not expected to result in any direct or indirect adverse environmental impacts.

To conclude, the operation of the proposed storm sewer improvements is not expected to have any significant short- or long-term adverse effects on the production and availability of non-renewable energy, or the air pollution energy production creates within this context. This conclusion was reached primarily because the energy demands from these new facilities are expected to be within the range of electrical energy already currently available.

8. Archaeological and Historic Resources

Ohio EPA's review found that this proposed project will not adversely affect archaeological and historic properties in the project area shown in Figure 3. The primary basis for this conclusion is that the proposed storm sewer improvements are within previously disturbed locations. Accordingly, the potential to find any as-yet undiscovered, archaeological and historic resources listed in, nominated to, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the project area appears low. Furthermore, most of the proposed work will take place away from the part of the village designated in June 1979 as a historic district for its residential and commercial architecture representative of

rural Ohio in the 19th century.⁵ The one minor exception is the area along Ninth Street where the brick pavement has been identified as historical. The construction documents require that the bricks be carefully removed and reused after installation of the storm sewer is completed. In the overall, since the proposed project will be located under streets, in ROW and other disturbed areas, with many existing utilities already located in these areas, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on other existing archaeological or historic resources. Further, the project area in the floodplain of the Muskingum River has been disturbed due to construction of the existing sanitary sewer, and is unlikely to hold significant archaeological resources.

Should any cultural resources appear during the project's construction, the detail plans include a provision for the contractor to stop work and coordinate with the appropriate authorities at the State Historic Preservation Office in Columbus. Ohio EPA concurs with this approach. On this basis, any direct or indirect impacts on these types of resources should not be adverse.

9. Local Economy

As documented earlier, and as part of the village's LTCP, the proposed project is related to addressing CSOs within McConnelsville's combined sanitary and storm sewer system and not to providing capacity for future growth. Also, as noted above in the "Project Implementation" section of this document, the long-term costs of this near-final CSO elimination project are not expected to have any significant, adverse effect on the local economy. This conclusion is based on the fact that the village increased its sewer rates in anticipation of this project, that the resulting fees are expected to be affordable for an average village resident, and that the village will save approximately \$138,272 over 20 years by using the WPCLF instead of a 3.21% market rate loan.

I. Public Participation

As described in this document, previous phases of the village's proposed storm sewer improvements project and its proposal to finance the project using

⁵ "The quiet county seat of McConnelsville is notable for its fine town square surrounded by early commercial buildings, a fine opera house and the Morgan County Courthouse. East and west from the square the area is mixed residential and commercial structures. At the extreme east end of the district the area turns to all residential and park. The south end of the district approaches the Muskingum River and to the north area extends along Kennebec Street up a steep hill. The area diminishes north and east as the hills come into meet the town streets. The residences along Main Street (now Kennebec Street) were those of some of the early merchants, many dating from the 1830s. The town, nestled in between the river and rolling hills, is picturesque. The town remains quite intact and is representative, architecturally, of the tastes and developments of the seat of this rural community."

WPCLF and CDBG funds were reviewed before by the following agencies for technical input, or for conformance with legislation under their jurisdiction:

- * Army Corps of Engineers
- * Ohio Department of Natural Resource
- * Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- * State Historic Preservation Office
- * U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

As no negative comments about the direct or indirect impacts of the village's previous phases of proposed improvements were received from these review agencies, Ohio EPA has concluded that any potential concerns were addressed during project planning, as indicated in the environmental impacts section of this document. In preparation for this near-final proposed CSO elimination project, the village completed public notification and involvement activities, including village council and proposed CDBG funding meetings. These have occurred over the past several years and focused on the village's CSO long-term control plan activities.

On this basis, the village and its consultant have provided project planning area residents with ample opportunity to have their questions about this and related CSO long-term control plan projects answered during the public review and comment period. Accordingly, Ohio EPA has concluded that the public participation requirements of the WPCLF program have been met and that the village has appropriately involved the public in the decision making process for its proposed collection system improvements project.

J. Reasons for a Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon our review of the village's project planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, Ohio EPA has concluded that there will be no significant adverse direct impacts from the village's proposed sewer separation project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. Through avoidance of the most environmentally-sensitive areas and the use of mitigative measures described in this document, the impacts from the project's construction should generally be relatively short-term and insignificant. Given the limited scope and purpose of the proposed project, no significant, adverse indirect or cumulative impacts are expected. Ongoing village initiatives to implement local zoning and storm water controls, as well as enforcement of existing federal and state regulatory frameworks under the federal Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and existing state law also should help assure that these objectives are met. The village's proposed project will provide significant benefits by reducing CSO pollutant loading to the Muskingum River, and lowering the health risk associated with public exposure to untreated wastewater.

K. For further information or to comment on this document or the project, please contact:

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