



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

August 10, 2022

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Village of Hiram – Portage County
Water Tower Replacement
Loan number: FS390451-0003**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a drinking water project in Hiram which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The LER describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WSRLA program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. This project's relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies it for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. More information can be obtained by calling or writing the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination, award of funds may proceed without further environmental review or public comment unless new information shows that environmental conditions of the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Water Tower Replacement

Applicant: Village of Hiram
11617 Garfield Road
P.O. Box 65
Hiram, Ohio 44234-0065

Loan Number: FS390451-0003



Figure 1. Portage County

Project Summary

The Village of Hiram, in Portage County (Figure 1), has requested \$491,000 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) to fund the Water Tower Replacement project. This project involves the replacement of Hiram's 340,000-gallon standpipe water storage tank.

History & Existing Conditions

Hiram owns and operates a public water system (PWS) that consists of a water treatment plant (WTP), a network of distribution lines, and a 340,000-gallon standpipe water storage tank. The WTP treats ground water from three nearby wells with the addition of chlorine prior to a pre-treatment contact tank, addition of potassium permanganate followed by greensand filtration and ion exchange softeners, and lastly the addition of zinc orthophosphate and chlorine prior to entering the distribution system and water storage tank. Hiram's PWS serves approximately 1,400 people with an average daily production of 56,000 gallons per day.

Hiram's storage tank, located west of the village along State Route 82 (Figure 2), was constructed in 1986 and is the village's only storage tank. The tank is showing signs of its age and has experienced leaking over the past several years. Hiram has worked around the leaks by lowering the operating level of the tank below that of the most significant leak. This temporary solution has reduced the overall storage capacity of the tank. Additionally, the original cathodic protection is believed to be damaged, and the water mixer installed several years ago no longer functions due to a failed motor.

To ensure continued reliable water storage for the village, the tank will either need to be rehabilitated or replaced. Hiram considered both alternatives and determined it most cost effective to replace the tank.

Project Description

Hiram intends to replace the existing 340,000-gallon storage tank with a new glass-lined steel tank with the same capacity. The existing storage capacity exceeds Hiram's average daily demand, so no increase in capacity was determined to be necessary. The new tank will also be a standpipe water storage tank and will be constructed adjacent to the existing tank. The new tank will include a

cathodic protection system, water mixer, valve vault, control building, and other associated appurtenances. Other general site work will include the construction of a new driveway and installation of fencing around the storage tank.

The existing tank will remain in service until the new tank is completed and tested, at which point the existing tank will be demolished. This will reduce the likelihood of service disruptions and ensure water storage and fire protection is maintained throughout the entirety of construction.

Implementation

The total estimated cost of this project is \$1,341,000. Hiram proposes to borrow \$491,000 from the Ohio WSRLA at the small-community rate of 1.86 percent (interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested September award date) to cover a portion of the cost of engineering services, design, and construction for this project. Borrowing WSRLA funds at this rate could save Hiram roughly \$103,000 over the 20-year loan term compared to the current market rate of 3.61 percent. Hiram also expects to receive \$850,000 from the Ohio Public Works Commission for this project.

The debt associated with this construction project will be recovered from user charges. The average annual water bill for residents served by Hiram is \$672. This is 0.96 percent of the median household income for Hiram (MHI; \$69,853) and compares similarly to the Ohio average annual water bill of \$697.

Under Hiram's current codified ordinances, water rates were successively scheduled to increase annually by 0.5 percent from January of 2018 to January of 2022. The ordinances contain no automatic rate increase set to begin in 2023.

Construction is expected to begin following loan award and be completed by September 2023.

Public Participation

This project has been discussed at village council meetings throughout 2021 and 2022, including the passing of a resolution authorizing the village administrator to apply for and enter a WSRLA agreement to fund this project. Village council meeting minutes are available on Hiram's website.

Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about or opposition to this project. Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on the following webpage and will provide it upon request: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements>.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action within an existing public water system which involves the replacement of a water storage tank. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Will have no significant environmental effect, will have no effect on high-value environmental resources, and will require no specific impact mitigation. The new tank site, adjacent to the existing tank, is a cleared parcel currently used for farming. This area lacks suitable habitat for state

and federally listed endangered and threatened species, unique terrestrial and aquatic habitat, surface waters, archaeological and historical resources, and other sensitive and valuable resources. Standard construction best management practices will be implemented to minimize erosion and sediment, noise, dust, and traffic disruptions.

Is cost effective. Both repair and replacement of the existing storage tank were considered. Although the present worth analysis favors repair of the existing tank, replacement of the tank was determined more cost effective. This is due to the uncertainty of the service life of the necessary repairs, as compared to the expected service life of a new tank, and the jeopardy of being without water storage and fire protection during completion of repairs.

Is not a controversial action. User rates are not anticipated to increase due to this project, and there is no known opposition to the project. By keeping the existing tank in service until completion of the new tank, Hiram will reduce the likelihood of service disruptions and ensure water storage and fire protection for the village is maintained throughout the entirety of construction.

Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, does not substantially increase the volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters, and will not provide the capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population. This project merely involves the replacement of Hiram's storage tank with a new storage tank of the same capacity and will not otherwise have any effect on Hiram's PWS (e.g., withdrawal, treatment, storage, distribution, usage, etc.).

The planning review of this project identified no potentially significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources (surface waters, coastal zones, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeological or historically significant sites, threatened or endangered species, or state and federal wildlife areas). Rather, completion of this project will support Hiram's continued ability to provide reliable, safe water service to residents.

Contact information

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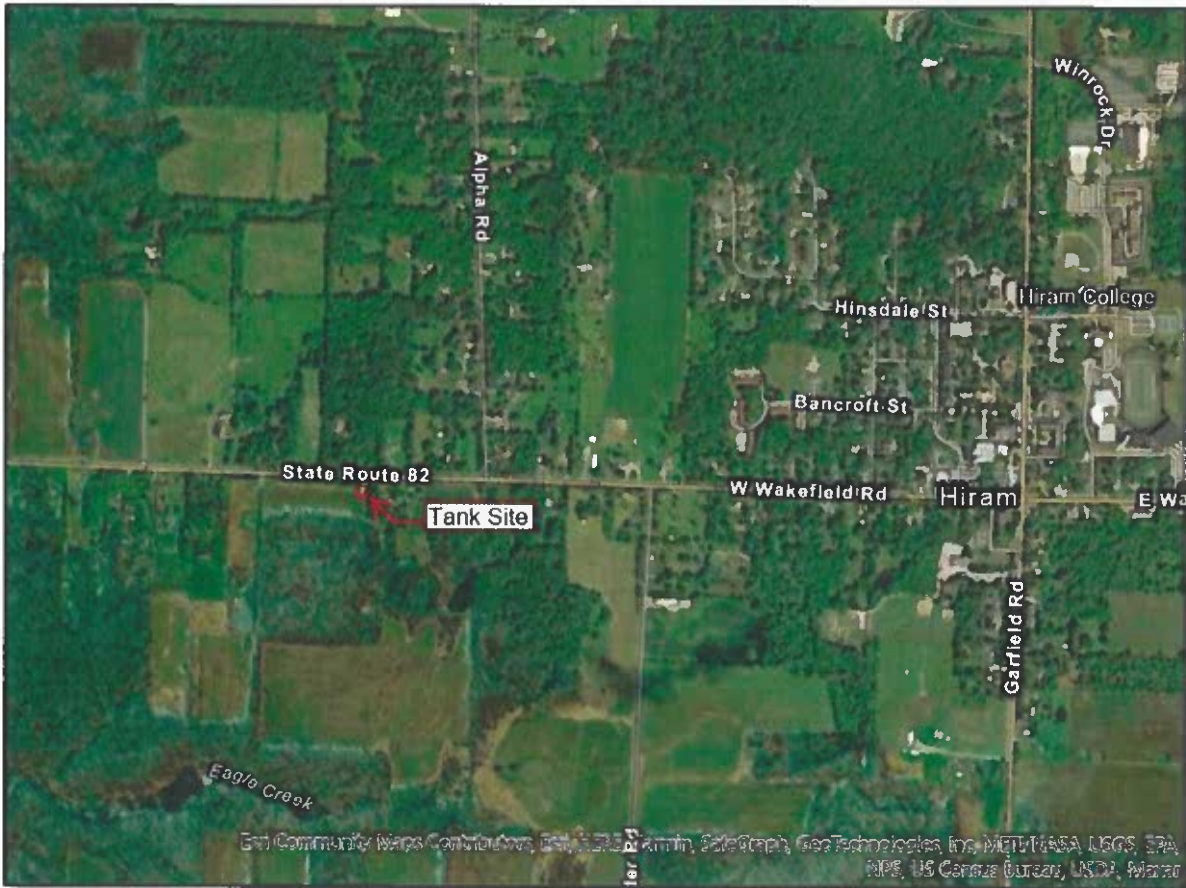


Figure 2. Tank site (red)