September 2, 2025

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

City of Johnstown – Licking County
Water Treatment Plant Expansion
Loan Number: FS390482-0006

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a water treatment plant expansion project in Johnstown 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 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 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, the City of Johnstown can then proceed with its application for the WSRLA loan.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Courtright

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Water Treatment Plant Expansion

Applicant: City of Johnstown
599 South Main Street
Johnstown, Ohio 43031

Loan Number: FS390482-0006

Figure 1. Licking County

Project Summary

The City of Johnstown has requested $43.5 million from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) to fund the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Expansion project. The project includes upgrades to the WTP to increase the plant's approved capacity to meet increasing demands from residential and commercial users. Due to the nature and location of construction, as well as proposed protection measures to be implemented, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated, as discussed in the conclusion.

History & Existing Conditions

The City of Johnstown, in Licking County (Figure 1), owns, operates and maintains a WTP with a capacity of 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD), sourcing water from three groundwater wells located at Belt Park adjacent to the plant. The WTP, constructed in 1995, serves approximately 5,000 residents. The current lime softening treatment process and associated equipment have been reliable and the city has been able to provide consistent high-quality drinking water.

The current process includes sending lime solids from the solids contact clarifier to a sludge holding tank. Lime solids are settled in the tank and then an acid is added to adjust the pH such that the tank can be decanted to a nearby stream. Lime solids are periodically pumped into a tanker truck for liquid agriculture land application. Availability of land application sites can sometimes be limited.

The existing WTP treatment process includes minimum automation and monitoring. All chemical additions are manually set and checked every two hours without any automated supervisory reporting, control, or alarming. Implementation of a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system will provide automated, consistent water quality throughout treatment operations with the ability to trend data over time for further analysis and optimization.

The current Johnstown WTP typically experiences maximum daily treatment demands during summer months, with usual maximum daily demands around 650,000 gallons per day (GPD), which is 65% of the approved capacity. However, the city has seen an increase over the summers of 2020 and 2021 with maximum daily treatment demands of over 800,000 GPD (80% of approved capacity). The

city desires to increase their approved capacity rating from 1.0 MGD to 3.0 MGD to accommodate the recent population demand increases while also being able to safely provide water in emergency conditions, as well as attracting additional industries for development or accommodating existing industries that may switch over to city provided water.

Population and Flow Projections

The City of Johnstown has seen population growth and development interest in the area since 2000 and is anticipated to continue to grow. The city experienced an 11% population increase from 2010 to 2021.

Alternatives

1. *Lime Softening Expansion*
   This alternative includes a mixture of refurbishment of the existing treatment equipment and replacement of equipment that has reached end of useful life. A future expansion would add a third treatment train of softening secondary clarifier and recarbonation equipment.

2. *Membrane Softening Addition*
   This alternative adds a 1.5-MGD membrane softening system (train) in parallel with the existing lime softening system. Similar to Alternative 3, Ion Exchange Softening Addition, this train will treat half the water with a different process than the lime softening train. The trains will have different treated water qualities, however, the treated water from both will ultimately blend to meet the water quality goals. Use of a membrane system requires disposal of a concentrate stream (e.g. sewer discharge). Upwards of 2.0 MGD water into the train will be required to produce 1.5 MGD treated due to this concentrate stream.

3. *Ion Exchange Softening Addition*
   This alternative adds a 1.5-MGD ion exchange (IX) softening system (train) in parallel with the existing lime softening system. Similar to Alternative 2, Membrane Softening Addition, this train will treat half the water with a different process than the lime softening train. The trains will have different treated water qualities, however, the treated water from both will ultimately blend to meet the water quality goals. Use of an IX system requires disposal of a regeneration stream (e.g. sewer discharge).

4. *Regionalization*
   Several nearby water systems were surveyed in the area, and it was determined that the only practical systems for interconnection consideration were DelCo Water and the Newark WTP. Interconnection would require a 4.0-MGD pump station and 12-inch distribution piping. Due to the distance between these utilities and Johnstown, costs for these proposed interconnections are significantly higher than any other considered alternative.

Selected Alternative

The proposed project includes the lime softening alternative (Alternative 1). This alternative entails demolishing the existing lime silo and replacing it with a new lime silo that will provide roughly 22 days of storage. New unit processes and facilities, similar to the existing WTP, will be provided to complete the WTP expansion. Additional work includes:

- Two new raw water pumps installed into existing wells 2 and 3
- One new raw water pump installed into new well 4
- One new solids contact clarifier
- One new recarbonation stabilization tank
- Four new dual media filters
- Removal and replacement of finished water pumps and filter backwash pump
- New storage and feed systems for all chemicals
- New bulk water station
- Site-civil improvements such as yard piping stormwater management, site grading, etc.
- Instrumentation and control improvements including new plant-wide SCADA system

See Figure 2 for the proposed project area.

Implementation

Johnstown proposes to borrow $43.5 million from the Ohio WSRLA at the small-community discount rate of 3.33%. During the 30-year loan period, Johnstown will save $16,586,197 by using WSRLA dollars at this rate, compared to the current market rate of 5.13%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

The debt associated with this construction project will be recovered from user charges; however, no rate increases will occur due to this project. Under the current ordinance, there is a 5% increase annually from 2024 to 2030. Johnstown reports that the expected average annual residential sewer bill in 2028 will be $1,150 ($95.78 monthly), which is 1.8% of the median household income for Johnstown (MHI; $64,744) and is greater than the Ohio average annual water bill of $477.

Construction is expected to begin after loan award and will be completed by the end of 2026.

Public Participation

This project has been brought to the attention of the public at several city council meetings over the past few years. In March of 2025, the city voted to move forward with this proposed project. City council meetings are open to the public and are posted on YouTube for public viewing. The proposed project was also mentioned throughout the city's 2024 comprehensive plan, which is posted for the public on the City of Johnstown website.

Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to this project. This Environmental Assessment (EA) and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) will be posted on the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance website. Additionally, the EA and FNSI have

been provided to the City of Johnstown to be made available according to their public notification procedures.

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.

Noise, air, traffic, safety, and aesthetics

Heavy machinery that can emit temporary daytime noise may be involved and some traffic interruptions may occur by the construction entrance; however, all work will occur within the existing WTP property. Temporary, insignificant increases in fugitive dust and local air pollution from construction vehicle exhaust, like that of vehicles regularly transiting the area, are expected. It will be the contractor's responsibility to implement construction best management practices to limit erosion, sediment, noise, dust, traffic disruptions, and like factors throughout the duration of the project. Disturbed surfaces will be restored upon construction completion.

Local Economy

By using favorable financing, Johnstown has minimized the project cost and economic impact on residents. An increased WTP capacity will also provide the city the opportunity to attract additional industries by marketing available water. For Johnstown, this could include new industries constructed or existing industries that switch to city water from well water.

Groundwater Resource

Johnstown will be able to provide enough water to support the requested pump capacity increases for Well J-2 and Well J-3, as the deep sand and gravel aquifer can support two 950-gallons-per-minute (GPM) production wells. Well J-4 was installed in February 2023 and was determined to be able to support the additional capacity. Any combination of two deep aquifer wells will be able to provide 1,900 GPM to the system.

Unaffected Resources

The following resources are not present and therefore will not be impacted by this project: Archaeological and Historical Resources, Aquatic Habitat, Coastal Zones, Endangered Species, Farmland Protection, Fish and Wildlife, Floodplains, Sole Source Aquifers and Source Water Assessment and Protection areas, Recreational Land use, Surface Water Resources, Terrestrial Habitat, Wetlands and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Additionally, there will be no change in current Energy Use as it pertains to public space, nor will there be any impacts to drinking water.

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. The completion of this WTP improvements project will

aid in having long-term benefits associated with the provision of safe and adequate water supply to support the needs of Johnstown's water customers.

Contact information

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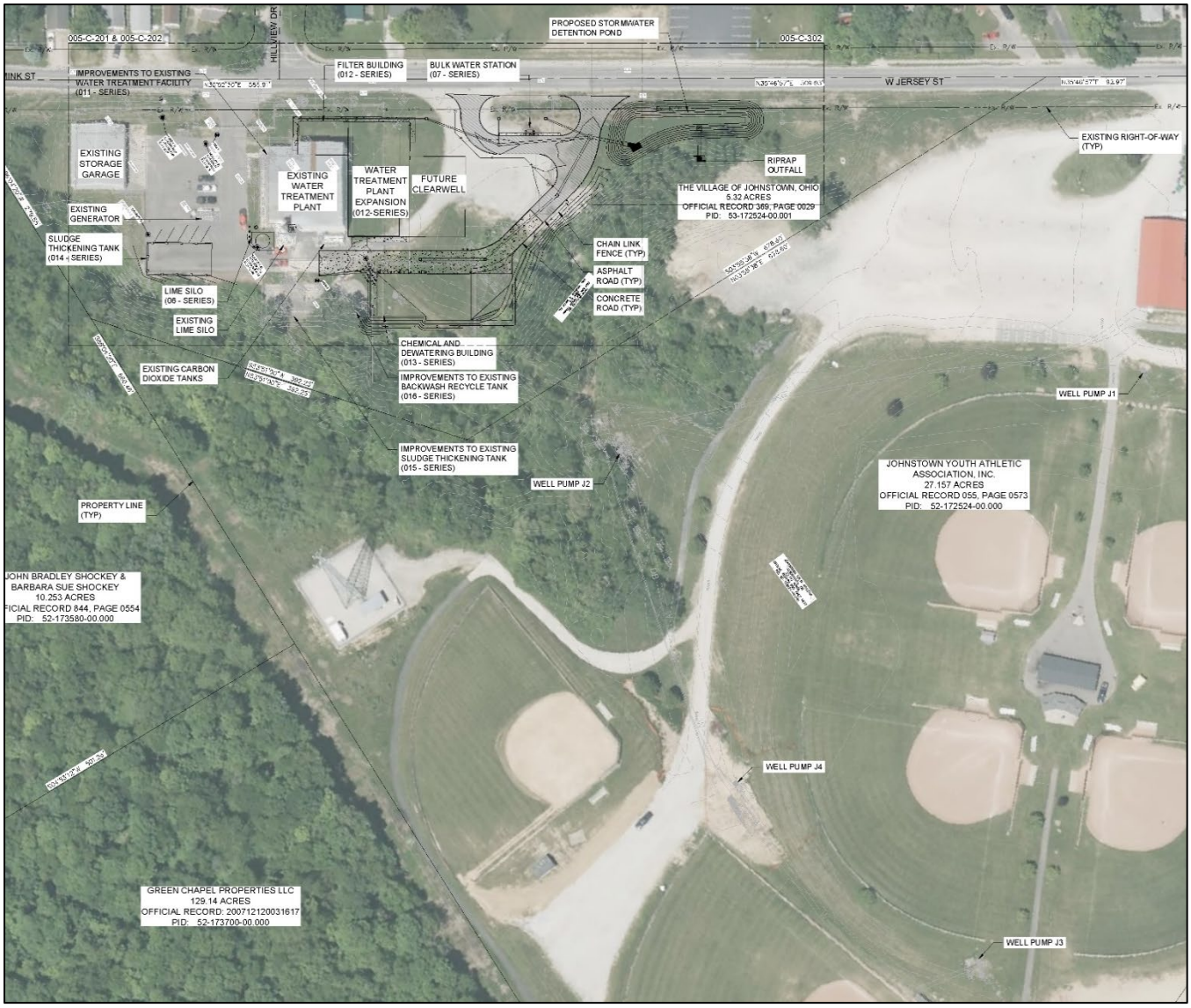

Figure 2. Proposed WTP improvements project area