



August 28, 2025

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

**Village of Magnetic Springs – Union County
Central Sewer System
Loan Number: CS390557-0002**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a new central sewer system and regionalization project in Magnetic Springs which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its 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 Village of Magnetic Springs can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Central Sewer System

Applicant: Village of Magnetic Springs
30 West Magnetic Street
Magnetic Springs, Ohio 43036

Loan Number: CS390557-0002



Figure 1. Union County

Project Summary

The Village of Magnetic Springs is requesting a \$5,000,000 loan through Ohio EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to construct a new central gravity sewer system to replace failing household sewage treatment systems (HSTS). The project also includes the construction of a new pump station and sanitary force main that will be used to carry wastewater from Magnetic Springs to the Village of Richwood for treatment. This project is eligible for principal forgiveness (i.e., money that does not have to be repaid) in the amount of \$4,000,000.

History and Existing Conditions

Magnetic Springs is a village located in Leesburg Township, Union County (Figure 1). The primary wastewater treatment is individual on-lot treatment systems. Many of these systems are currently failing or undersized and do not function correctly. Some of the wastewater has been found to be leaching into the stormwater system which discharges to Bokes Creek.

Population and Flow Projections

According to the 2021-2022 American Community Survey, Magnetic Springs has a population of 306 people. However, data provided by the applicant states that the population is 255. Projected flows for this project are based on 40 gallons per day per person using the more conservative population report. This equates to approximately 0.01 million gallons per day (MGD). Wastewater from this project will be transported via force main to the Village of Richwood wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), which has a design flow of 0.38 MGD and a peak flow of 2.0 MGD. The average daily flow is 0.20 MGD. The current design flow is sufficient to accommodate the additional flow from Magnetic Springs. Furthermore, since this is a new sewer project, inflow and infiltration will not be a concern, and, therefore, will not impact Richwood's peak flow limit.

Union County is rapidly growing. Target industries include agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, and small businesses. Major employers include Honda of America, The Scotts Miracle Grow Company, Marysville Exempted Village School District, and Ohio Reformatory for Women. This project will improve the general welfare of the residents of Magnetic Springs by encouraging reinvestment in the

community and will provide roughly 255 low-and moderate-income people with new access to sanitary sewer facilities in the neighborhood.

Alternatives

Several alternatives for both wastewater collection and treatment are presented in the Sanitary Sewer Preliminary Engineering Report dated June 2020. Alternatives considered for wastewater collection include a gravity sewer system, low pressure sewers, minimum grade effluent sewers, and septic tank effluent pump sewers. Wastewater treatment alternatives evaluation includes an aerated lagoon, oxidation ditch, sequencing batch reactor plant, and regionalization with the Village of Richwood.

Selected Alternative

Ultimately, the village determined that the most feasible and cost-effective alternative is to construct a gravity collection system within the village proper that will connect to a newly constructed force main from the Village of Magnetic Springs to the Village of Richwood. Because of the geography of the area and costs associated with installation, operation, and maintenance, a gravity system is more cost-effective than the other alternatives considered. Under this alternative, the village proposes to install 8,801 LF of 8-inch PVC gravity pipe and 34 manholes to collect wastewater throughout the Village of Magnetic Springs.

As for treatment, the Village of Richwood agreed to take the wastewater from Magnetic Springs. Richwood has the capacity and capability to treat this additional flow. The terrain in this area is relatively flat, and pumping the wastewater should not present any challenges. Therefore, this project will construct a sanitary sewer collection system within the community and a pump station that will transport the wastewater to the Village of Richwood's collection system where it will be treated at the Richwood WWTP. The pump station includes a permanent backup generator. The force main will consist of 28,842 linear feet of 6-inch high-density polyethylene pressure pipe and will start at the lift station and be primarily installed via a trench in a north-northwest direction along SR 37 and SR 4 towards the Village of Richwood.

Figures 2 through 4 at the end of this document show the project layout.

Implementation

The estimated overall project cost is \$5,000,000. Magnetic Springs' financing package includes \$750,000 in grants from the Department of Development and \$4,000,000 in WPCLF principal forgiveness, a type of loan that does not need to be repaid. Since Magnetic Springs intends to transport its wastewater treatment to the Village of Richwood, it qualifies for a regionalization incentive. Therefore, any additional funding that is needed can be borrowed from the Ohio WPCLF at an interest rate of 0%.

The Village of Magnetic Springs will be subject to the sewer rates based on an agreement between the two villages. There will be no connection fees or fees for removing and/or abandoning old HSTS infrastructure for residents; these costs will be covered by the project funding. The minimum average annual sewer bill for Magnetic Springs residents will be \$270. This rate is approximately 0.43% of the

median household income, which is \$62,250. This is less than the Ohio average annual sewer bill of \$528.

Construction is scheduled to begin upon receiving the loan and will be completed in approximately 24 months.

Public Participation

Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to this project. This project is regularly discussed at village council meetings. These meetings are open to the public and the agenda and minutes are published on Magnetic Springs' website. The village also has a tab on its website that provides "construction updates" so that the public can stay aware of the project status once work begins.

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 for 30 days to allow the public to review and provide comments should anyone choose to do so. Additionally, the EA and FNSI have been provided to the Village of Magnetic Springs to be made available according to their public notification procedures.

Environmental Impacts

This project is located within existing roads and previously disturbed road rights-of-way; therefore, environmental impacts are minimal. Impacts to sensitive environmental features located within the project area will be avoided and disturbances will be restored to pre-construction conditions. The below features were considered for this review.

Air Quality: Neither construction nor operation of the proposed new sanitary sewer, lift station, or force main will add significant air pollutants. Contractors will ensure fugitive dust is minimized during construction by applying water or other environmentally benign dust suppressants. The local air pollution contribution by construction vehicles will be temporary and similar to that of vehicles regularly transiting the construction area. For these reasons, the project should have no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

Archaeological and Historical Resources: Ohio EPA reviewed this project and determined that no historic structures will be impacted, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with this assessment. No further coordination will be required unless the project scope changes, or archeological remains are unearthed. In the event of archaeological discoveries during construction, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify SHPO of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the Office in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate. Work will not resume until a survey of the find and a determination of its value and effect has been made, and Ohio EPA authorizes work to continue.

Aquatic Habitat and surface water resources (not including wetlands): Two streams are located in the project area: Bokes Creek and Fulton Creek. Bokes Creek is designated warmwater habitat in terms of aquatic life use. However, the stream is impaired and does not meet this designation. A major cause of

impairment to Bokes Creek, as identified in the *Total Maximum Daily Loads for Bokes Creek* final report dated September 2002, includes organic enrichment/dissolved oxygen, which is directly attributed to failing on-site septic system discharges from Magnetic Springs. A centralized sewer collection system will eliminate this source of impairment and improve water quality in the Bokes Creek watershed.

Crossings for both streams will be accomplished using a horizontal direction drill and will, therefore, not be directly impacted by project construction.

Coastal Zones: The project is not located in a coastal area; therefore, there are no impacts to consider. The only coastal zone within Ohio is located along Lake Erie. Union County does not border Lake Erie.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The gravity and force main routes are located in previously disturbed areas that are regularly mowed or paved. The project does not propose any tree cutting, clearing, or any other removal of natural habitat. If trees need to be removed, cutting will only occur between October 1st and March 31st to protect threatened and endangered roosting bat species.

Energy: The construction phase of this project will require the temporary impacts to energy for power tools and the newly installed generator and pump station will have long-term energy usage; however, neither activity is expected to result in significant impacts on regional energy consumption.

Farmland Protection: The project scope entails activities in a previously developed neighborhood, village, and road rights-of-way. Farmland conversion will not occur as a result of this activity.

Fish and Wildlife: The gravity and force main routes are located in previously disturbed areas that are regularly mowed or paved. The project does not propose any tree cutting, clearing, or any other removal of natural habitat. If trees need to be removed, cutting will only occur between October 1st and March 31st to protect roosting bat species. There are two stream crossings associated with this project. Both crossings will be completed using horizontal directional drilling. This project does not involve any instream work; therefore, there will be no impact on fish species.

Floodplains: Part of the project is located in the 100-year floodplain. Floodplain impacts are expected to be minimal since the force main will be installed via underground, directional boring under streams where the floodplain is present. Bore ingress and egress locations will be restored to pre-construction elevations.

Groundwater Resources: This project will have no permanent impact on groundwater. There may be minimal impact through the temporary lowering of the water table from trench dewatering activities during pipe and manhole installation. Any necessary dewatering will be done to allow the water to remain in the watershed and water table levels should return to normal following completion of active dewatering.

Land use: Union County is predominantly characterized by agriculture land use which accounts for approximately 86% of the total area. Wooded and shrub-scrub is the next highest land use type at approximately 12% of total area followed by urban at 0.68%. This project will not result in a conversion of land use since disturbed areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions.

Local economy: This project will have an impact on the local economy by imposing a new monthly sewer bill on residents. The village has made great efforts to ensure that user charges stay relatively low compared to statewide rates. Due to favorable funding through the WPCLF, Magnetic Springs residents will not be financially responsible for the tie-in fees and HSTS abandonment costs.

Noise: Noise impacts will be temporary and include equipment operation and other common sounds associated with construction. There will be no permanent increase in noise levels. Noise producing construction activities will be limited to daytime hours.

Traffic: At least one lane of traffic will be maintained along the travel route to the construction site and access for emergency vehicles will be maintained at all times. Construction areas where road access may be disrupted will be adequately marked with appropriate signage, lights, and reflectors. These mitigative measures will offset any temporary impacts to traffic as a result of this project.

Aesthetics: Aesthetics will be disrupted through the tearing up of roads and other earth disturbance activities such as digging dirt for a trench. However, this will be temporary and will be stabilized and returned to pre-construction conditions upon project completion.

Safety: This project will not impact public safety such as police, fire and emergency medical services. During construction activities, access for safety services will be maintained.

Safe Drinking Water: Village residents get their drinking water from wells. This project will provide a potential benefit to safe drinking water in that it will eliminate failing on-lot septic systems that could contaminate drinking water wells.

Sole Source Aquifers: This project will not impact sole source aquifers since these resources are not present in or adjacent to the project area.

Terrestrial Habitat: The gravity and force main routes are located in previously disturbed areas that are regularly mowed or paved. Areas subject to earth disturbance activities will be restored to pre-construction conditions. Therefore, there will be no impact on terrestrial habitat.

Wetlands: Wetlands have been identified in the Bokes Creek floodplain. The force main will be installed via underground directional boring underneath Bokes Creek; therefore, wetland impacts will be avoided.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: This project will not impact wild and scenic rivers since these resources are not present in or adjacent to the project area.

Conclusion

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

Overall, this regionalization project will result in water quality benefits to Bokes Creek by eliminating nutrient and bacteria contamination and will protect human health by eliminating failing HSTS.

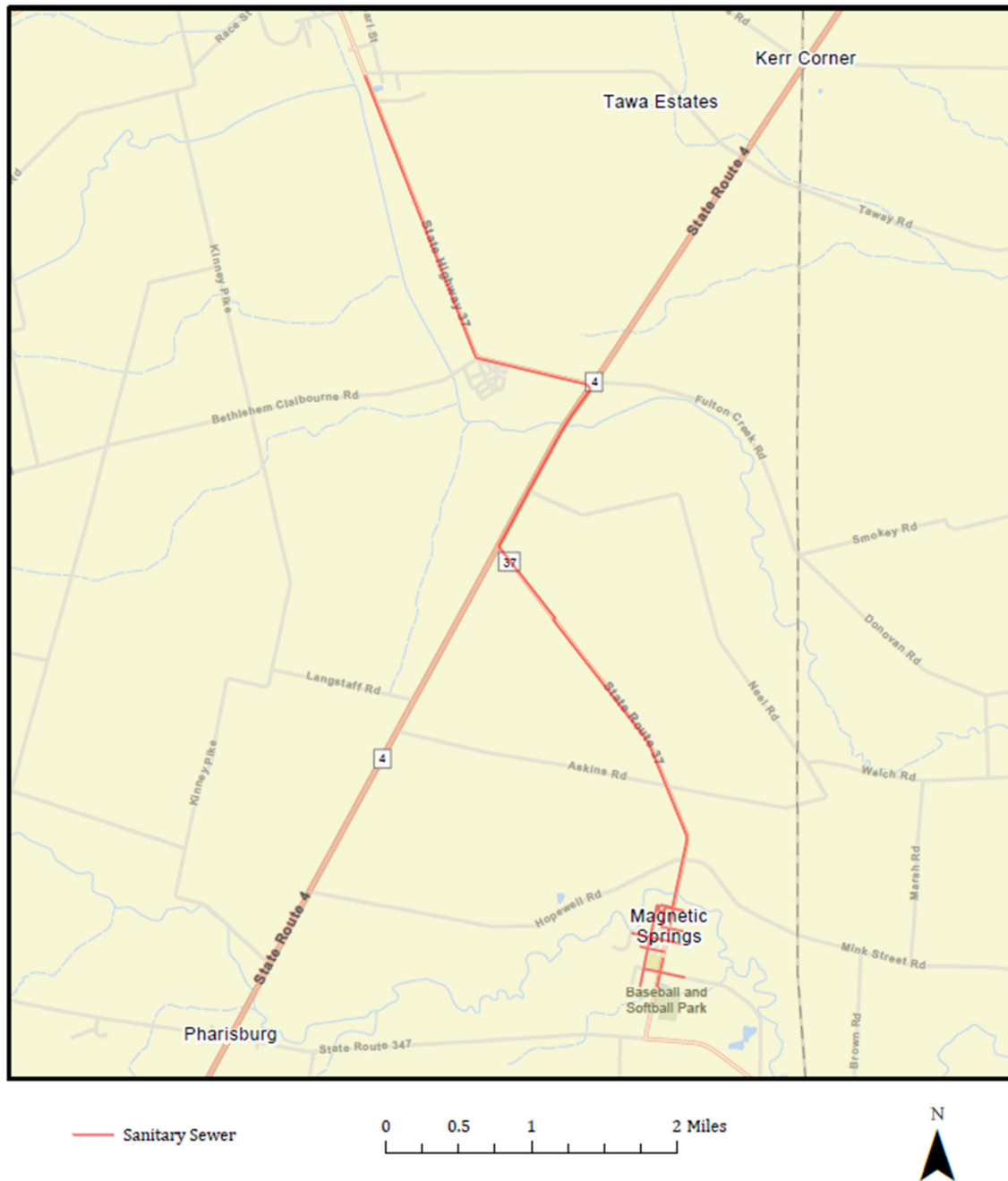
Contact information

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Magnetic Springs Central Sewer System



Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

Figure 2. Overall layout of Magnetic Springs Central Sewer System project.



Figure 3. Gravity sewer layout.

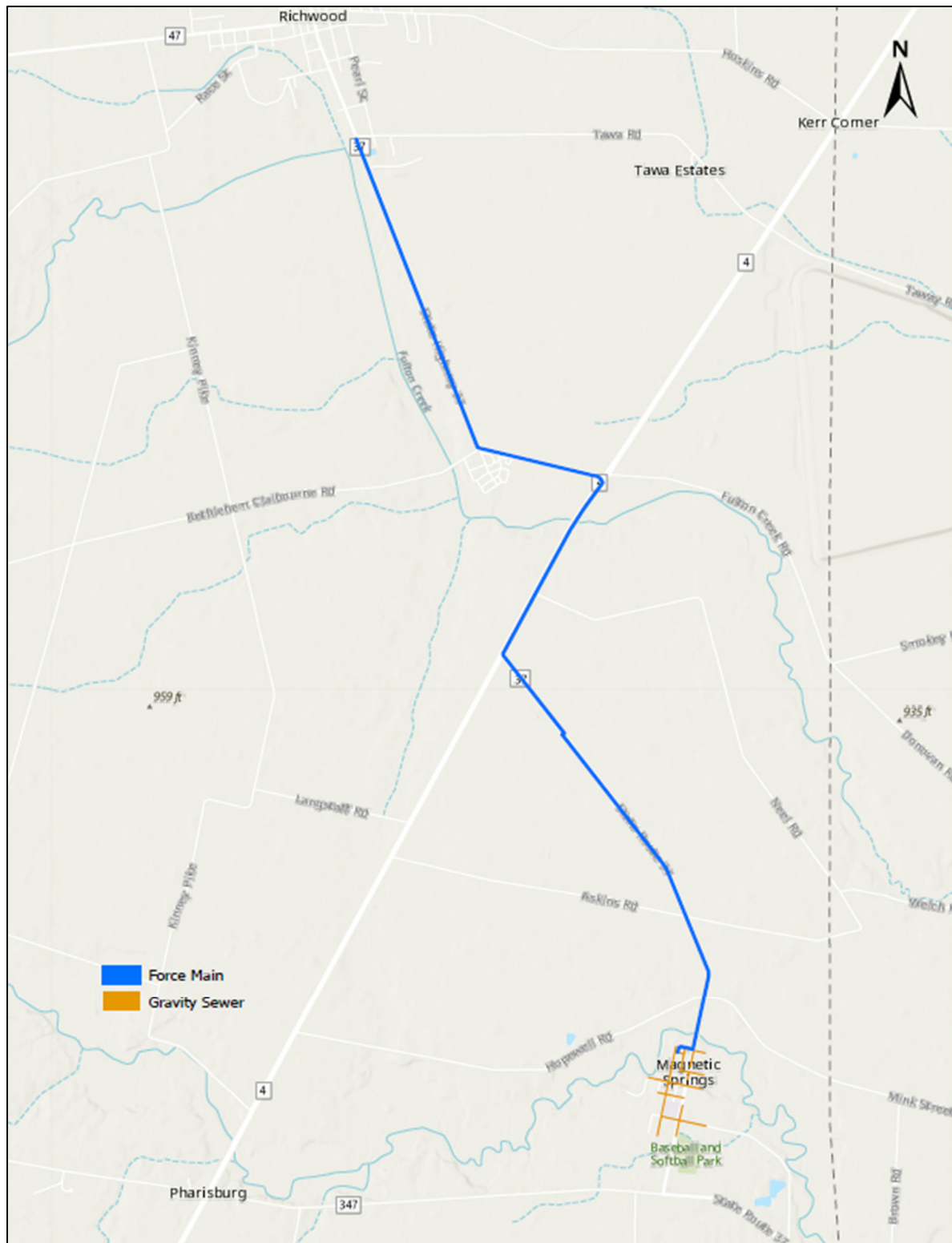


Figure 4. Force main route.