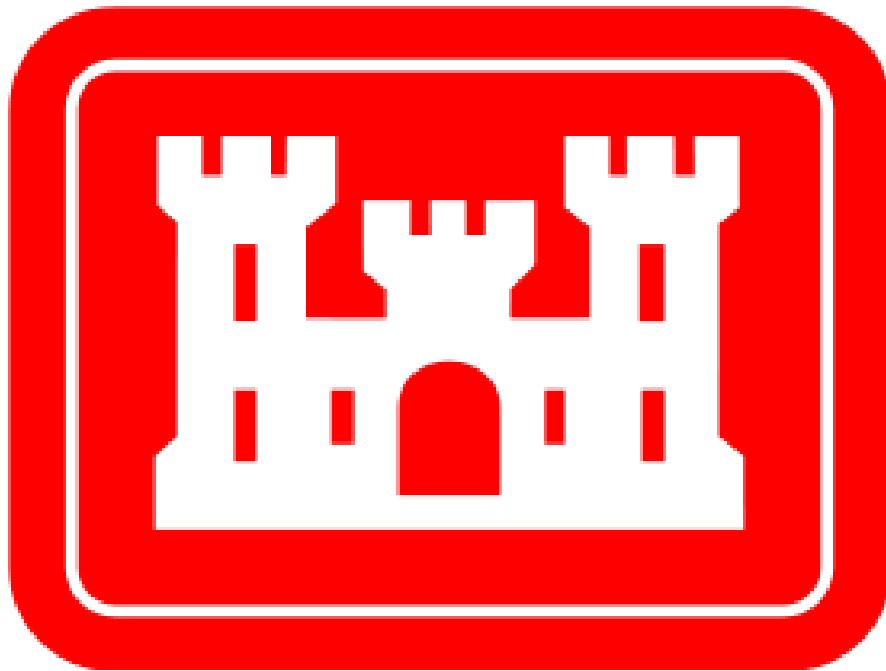


Draft Environmental Assessment  
Section 594 Harrison County Commissioners  
Village of Freeport Sanitary Sewer System Project  
Harrison County, Ohio



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Huntington District  
Huntington, West Virginia  
April 2021



**Environmental Assessment**  
**Section 594 Harrison County Commissioners**  
**Village of Freeport Sanitary Sewer System Project**  
**Harrison County, Ohio**  
**Executive Summary**

The Harrison County Commissioner's Office is proposing to design and construct a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the Village of Freeport that would replace the existing individual septic systems and limited capacity package plants that serve individual properties. The Ohio Environmental Agency (Ohio EPA) issued the Village of Freeport a Notice of Violation (NOV) on 8 December 2016 for confirmed raw sewage contamination in the storm water system as a result of failing septic systems and unpermitted connections. The proposed design and infrastructure would eliminate the discharge of raw sewage associated with unpermitted septic system connections, assist with bringing the Village of Freeport into compliance with the Ohio EPA's water quality effluent requirements, and increase system capacity to allow for continued growth.

The Proposed Action Alternative would include the construction of a 75,000 gallon per day Aero-Mod extended aeration treatment plant and a sanitary sewer collection system. The sanitary sewer collection system would consist of a conventional gravity sewer containing approximately 4,160 linear feet of ¾-inch pipe for low-pressure force main, 5,250 linear feet of 2-inch PVC low-pressure sewer, 850 linear feet of 4-inch PVC force main, 17,200 linear feet of 8-inch PVC sanitary sewer, 57 standard sanitary manholes, 8,160 linear feet of 6-inch service connection laterals, 26 1-HP simplex grinder pumps; 13 residential electrical panel upgrades, one lift station, 7,700 square yards pavement repair, and site restoration.

The proposed project is a partnership agreement between the Harrison County Commissioners and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), established under the authority of Section 594 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-53), as amended, which provides authority for the Corps to establish a program to provide environmental assistance to Non-Federal entities in Ohio. This law provides design and construction assistance for water related environmental infrastructure projects to Non-Federal interests in Ohio. Funding, as established under Section 594, shall be shared 75% Federal and 25% Non-Federal (State and Local).

This Environmental Assessment is prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) and the Corps Implementing regulation, ER-200-2-2.



SECTION 594 HARRISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
VILLAGE OF FREEPORT SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM PROJECT  
HARRISON COUNTY, OHIO  
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*The brief and concise nature of this document is consistent with the 40 CFR requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to reduce paperwork and delay by eliminating duplication with existing environmental documentation, incorporating pertinent material by reference, and by emphasizing interagency cooperation. The majority of data collection and analysis in this document was performed by Ohio Rural Community Assistance Program (Ohio RCAP) in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).*

## **1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

The Village of Freeport is located in Harrison County, Ohio. The Village of Freeport currently has no existing sanitary sewer collection system or treatment facilities. In addition, there are no nearby sanitary sewer collections or treatment systems that could accept the Village of Freeport's wastewater. The Village of Freeport currently manages their wastewater through individual septic systems and limited capacity package plants that serve individual properties. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to the Village of Freeport on 8 December 2016 for confirmed raw sewage contamination in the storm water system as a result of failing septic systems and unpermitted connections.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed construction of a wastewater treatment plant and sanitary sewer collection system within the Village of Freeport as proposed by the Harrison County Commissioners. The purpose of this EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). An EIS is typically conducted where significant human or natural resources exist and the implementation of a proposed project may have significant effects to those resources. An EA typically involves projects where no significant resources occur or the project is expected to have less than significant impacts to the human and natural environment. In both EISs and EAs, additional project actions can be implemented to help avoid, minimize, or mitigate for potential project impacts.

### **1.2 Purpose, Need, and Authorization**

The purpose of the proposed project is to construct a sanitary sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant for the Village of Freeport. The proposed project would eliminate the need for individual septic systems that have resulted in contamination of local streams and storm water systems. As designed, the proposed infrastructure would eliminate the discharge of raw sewage associated with failing septic systems and unpermitted connections, assist with bringing the Village of Freeport into compliance with the Ohio EPA's water quality effluent requirements, and increase system capacity to allow for continued growth.

The proposed project is a partnership agreement between the Harrison County Commissioners and the Corps established under the authority of Section 594 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 (Public Law 106-53), as amended, which provides authority



for the Corps to establish a program to provide environmental assistance to Non-Federal entities in Ohio. This law provides design and construction assistance for water related environmental infrastructure projects to Non-Federal interests in Ohio, including projects for wastewater treatment and related facilities, water supply, water storage, water treatment, water distribution facilities, and surface water resource protection and development.

This EA is prepared pursuant to NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Corps implementing regulation, ER 200-2-2.

## **2.0 ALTERNATIVES DISMISSED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

### **2.1 Wastewater Treatment Lagoon**

This alternative considered the use of a facultative lagoon treatment which would consist of a system of ponds contained in earthen embankments. Pretreatment would consist of coarse screening at the inlet. The pond would be lined with a layer of plastic, clay, or bentonite to prevent percolation of unfinished wastewater into aquifers. Effluent from the lagoon would be dispersed via a spray irrigation system. A partial-mix aerated lagoon design was also considered which is similar to a facultative lagoon but has added aeration equipment near the surface to deliver the oxygen demand required by the wastewater inflow. The added biodegradation from aerobic bacteria would allow the lagoon to handle a higher areal loading of Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), effectively shrinking the volume and footprint, and allowing the effluent to be discharged to surface water. The lagoon and spray irrigation alternative is challenged by the land limitations of high slopes, poor soil filtration, inadequate distance to water table and the presence of bedrock. This alternative was rejected as the treatment method is unlikely to meet compliance with BOD standards, Total Suspended Solids (TSS) standards, and ammonia effluent quality standards.

### **2.2 Individual Advanced Septic On-Site Treatment Systems**

This alternative considered the use of individual advanced septic on-site treatment systems, which would consist of installing new septic tanks for each home which are fitted with technology to produce effluent meeting water quality standards. NextGen, a Cincinnati based company, offers an advanced septic system that treats each household's wastewater with aeration, biological membrane filtration, and ozone disinfection. This system includes a septic tank, a treatment box (above or below grade), and two submersible pumps. The effluent can recharge groundwater if soil drainage permits or discharge to a storm drain. This alternative would not require a collection system; however, construction challenges would include space limitations and acquisition of individual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits which would be required for each septic system should the discharge be released into a storm drain or surface water. This alternative was rejected as the individual maintenance and attention required to maintain the individual systems would place a burden on the Village of Freeport.



### **3.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

#### **3.1 Proposed Action Alternative (PAA)**

The Proposed Action Alternative would include the construction of a 75,000 gallon per day Aero-Mod extended aeration treatment plant and a sanitary sewer collection system. The sanitary sewer collection system would consist of a conventional gravity sewer containing approximately 4,160 linear feet of 3/4-inch pipe for low-pressure force main, 5,250 linear feet of 2-inch PVC low-pressure sewer, 850 linear feet of 4-inch PVC force main, 17,200 linear feet of 8-inch PVC sanitary sewer, 57 standard sanitary manholes, 8,160 linear feet of 6-inch service connection laterals, 26 1-HP simplex grinder pumps; 13 residential electrical panel upgrades, one lift station, 7,700 square yards pavement repair, and site restoration.

#### **3.2 No Action Alternative (NAA)**

Under the NAA, the Corps would not provide funding for the project and the Harrison County Commissioners would not construct an aeration treatment plant and sanitary sewer collection system. Without this proposed project, the Village of Freeport would continue to be in non-compliance with the Ohio EPA's water quality effluent requirements. In addition, human health and environmental conditions would continue to be degraded due to contaminated discharge from failing and unpermitted systems. The NAA would trigger legal action against the Village of Freeport for non-compliance if the concerns described in the Ohio EPA's NOV are left unaddressed. However, it is included in the alternatives analysis to establish a baseline condition for existing human and natural environmental conditions, to allow comparison between future without and with project actions, and to determine potential environmental effects of proposed with project alternatives.

### **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND CONSEQUENCES**

This section discusses the existing conditions by resource category and any potential environmental impacts associated with the NAA as well as with implementation of the PAA.

The Corps took context and intensity into consideration in determining potential impact significance, as defined in 40 CFR part 1508.27. The intensity of a potential impact is the impact's severity and includes consideration of beneficial and adverse effects, the level of controversy associated with a project's impacts on human health, whether the action establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effects, the level of uncertainty about project impacts and whether the action threatens to violate federal, state, or local laws established for the protection of the human and natural environment. The severity of an environmental impact is characterized as none/negligible, minor, moderate, significant, or beneficial. The impact may also be short-term or long-term in nature.

- None/negligible – No measurable impacts are expected to occur.



- Minor – A measurable and adverse effect to a resource. A slight impact that may not be readily obvious and is within accepted levels for permitting, continued resource sustainability, or human use. Impacts should be avoided and minimized if possible, but should not result in a mitigation requirement.
- Significant – A measurable and adverse effect to a resource. A major impact that is readily obvious and is not within accepted levels for permitting, continued resource sustainability, or human use. Impacts likely result in the need for mitigation.
- Adverse – A measurable and negative effect to a resource. May be minor to major, resulting in reduced conditions, sustainability, or viability of the resource.
- Beneficial – A measurable and positive effect to a resource. May be minor to major, resulting in improved conditions, sustainability, or viability of the resource.
- Short-Term – Temporary in nature and does not result in a permanent long-term beneficial or adverse effect to a resource. For example, temporary construction-related effects (such as, an increase in dust, noise, traffic congestion) that no longer occur once construction is complete. May be minor, significant, adverse or beneficial in nature.
- Long-Term – Permanent (or for most of the project life) beneficial or adverse effects to a resource. For example, permanent conversion of a wetland to a parking lot. May be minor, significant, adverse or beneficial in nature.

The Corps used quantitative and qualitative analyses, as appropriate, to determine the level of potential impact from proposed alternatives. Based on the results of the analyses, this EA identifies whether a particular potential impact would be adverse or beneficial, and to what extent.

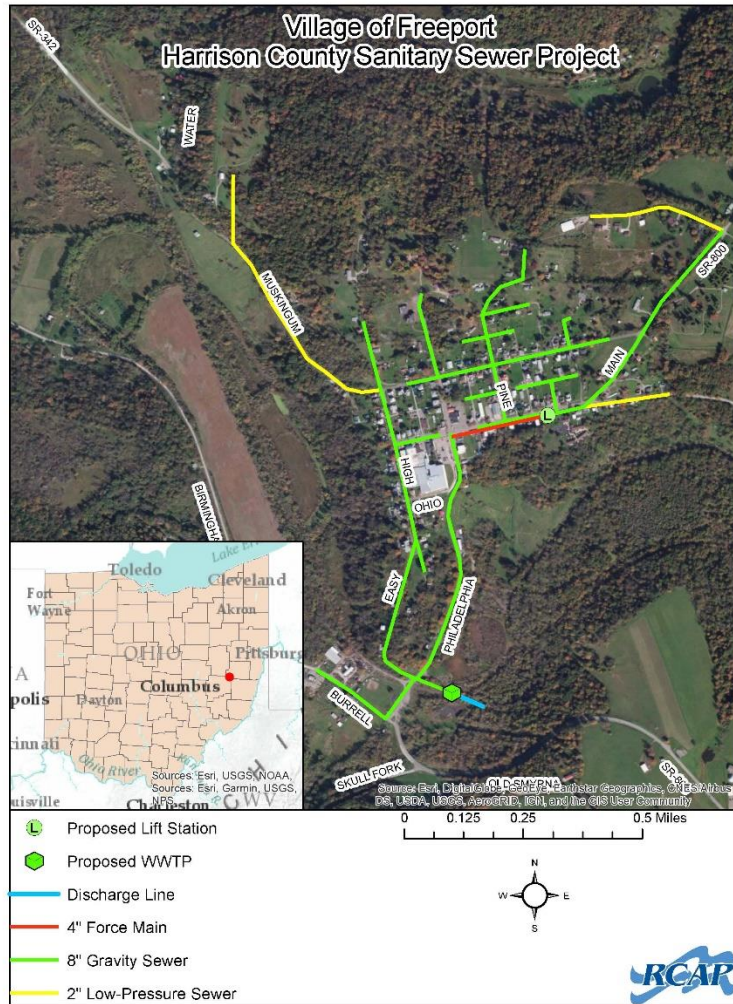
#### **4.1 Location**

The proposed project is located within the Village of Freeport, Harrison County, Ohio. All of the sanitary sewer collection system lines would be located along road right-of-ways within the Village of Freeport. The lift station would be located along East Main Street (40.210580 latitude, -81.23819 longitude). The wastewater treatment plant would be located east of the Easy Street and South Philadelphia Street intersection (40.204219 latitude, -81.267318 longitude)(Figure 1). See Appendix A for additional project location maps.





Figure 1. Village of Freeport Sanitary Sewer System Project Location Map



## 4.2 Land Use

Land use in the vicinity of the PAA consists primarily of commercial and residential development. The surrounding land use consists primarily of forest, agricultural land, and rural residential homes. The proposed sanitary sewer system and force main would be constructed in road right-of-ways or previously disturbed areas. The proposed wastewater treatment plant area consists of a vacant former railroad bed that has been severely disturbed by previous activities. As designed, there would be no significant impacts to land use as a result of either the PAA or NAA.



### **4.3 Climate**

On average, the winter temperature in Harrison County is approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit while the average summer temperature is 71 degrees Fahrenheit. The county receives approximately 38 inches of precipitation and 34 inches of snow annually.

Only short duration, minor discharges of carbon based pollutants would occur during construction activities that could contribute to greenhouse gases. The NAA or PAA would not involve any activity that could significantly affect the environment in regards to climate change and would not likely be influenced by future changes in climate. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to climate or climate change would occur as a result of the PAA or NAA.

### **4.4 Terrestrial Habitat**

The PAA would be constructed primarily in previously disturbed areas, including road right-of-ways. Construction activities would require a limited amount of grass and vegetation removal; however, impacts to vegetation are expected to be minimal and temporary. Areas would be returned to pre-construction conditions upon completion of construction activities.

Approximately 0.5 acre of land would be cleared in conjunction with the construction of the wastewater treatment plant and associated discharge pipe/outfall. The majority of this area includes brush; however, limited tree clearing would be required. Any necessary tree clearing would be limited to those that are necessary for the project and only occur between October 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> to avoid impacts to federally threatened or endangered bat species. Only minor impacts to existing vegetation during construction are anticipated to occur. No significant long-term impacts to terrestrial habitat are anticipated as part of the PAA or NAA.

### **4.5 Floodplains**

Executive Order 11988, as amended, requires Federal agencies to consider the potential effects of their proposed actions to floodplains. In order to determine the PAA's potential floodplain impact, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) were reviewed. Based on this review, the sanitary sewers along Burrell Avenue and the discharge pipe/outfall structure associated with the wastewater treatment plant would be located within the floodplain of Stillwater Creek (<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>). This area is described as Zone A, 1% annual chance flood hazard. The remaining project components would be located in an area of minimal flood hazard, which is described as Zone X. No above-ground buildings would be placed within the floodplain and underground infrastructure such as sewer lines are expected to have no adverse impact to the floodplain as they would be buried and result in no change in grade or elevation. A Flood Hazard Area Development Permit would be acquired by the project sponsor prior to construction activities. The PAA meets the intent of EO 11988 and no significant impacts to floodplains are anticipated to occur from the PAA.

There are no impacts to floodplains anticipated as part of the NAA.



#### **4.6 Prime and Unique Farmland**

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to minimize the conversion of prime and unique farmland to non-agricultural uses. The majority of the project area follows road right-of-ways, and previously disturbed areas. In addition, the Village of Freeport is currently committed to urban development. The Corps' Huntington District has determined that due to the majority of the area being pre-disturbed, the FPPA would not apply to this proposed project and no impacts on prime or unique, statewide, or locally important farmland is expected to occur. On 8 February 2021, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) determined that the proposed project would not be subject to FPPA as 'all sections are along roads and/or are in urban areas and/or rights of way.' No impacts to prime and unique farmland are anticipated as part of the PAA or the NAA.

#### **4.7 Aquatic Habitat/Water Quality**

The Village of Freeport is located within the Tuscarawas River Watershed (HUC 8 – 05040001). Waters on-site drain to Stillwater Creek, which is a direct tributary to the Tuscarawas River. Stillwater Creek drains 485 square miles through Belmont, Carroll, Guernsey, Harrison and Tuscarawas County. According to the Ohio EPA Biological and Water Quality Study of the Stillwater Creek Basin, there is excessive mine drainage from historic coal mining in the area. Out of twenty-one locations tested for *Escherichia coli* (E. Coli) bacteria in the watershed, seven (7) met applicable geometric mean criterion. A majority of the sampling locations are located in areas without centralized sewage treatment. Thus non-attainment is likely due to unsanitary conditions from poorly treated waste.

Via a letter dated 8 December 2016, the Ohio EPA issued a NOV to the Village of Freeport for evidence of raw and/or partially treated sewage discharging into surface waters from the storm sewer system. Water sampling of the storm sewer discharge found that E. coli counts exceeded 576 per 100 ml. Stillwater Creek has been designated warmwater habitat (WWH); however, the discharge of raw and/or partially treated sewage will continue to degrade water quality if left unaddressed.

A surface water delineation report was completed for the proposed project area by Hull and Associates, Inc. in July 2020. The delineation identified 0.14 acre of one (1) emergent wetland (Wetland A) and 231 linear feet of one (1) perennial stream (Stillwater Creek) within the project area. The proposed project would involve minor surface water impacts to Stillwater Creek for the construction of the discharge outfall structure associated with the wastewater treatment plant. As designed, the outfall would be placed above the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) of Stillwater Creek; however rip-rap would be placed below the OHWM in order to protect the area from erosion. In order to minimize impacts to aquatic species, the project sponsor has proposed to prohibit any work within Stillwater Creek from April 15 to June 30. In addition, the project sponsor would implement best management practices to prevent runoff and erosion downstream of construction areas. Prior to construction, authorization from the Corps' Regulatory Branch shall be completed under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and a State Water Quality Certification (Section 401 Clean Water Act) shall be obtained by the local sponsor. In addition,



the project sponsor would obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Ohio EPA for the proposed discharge into Stillwater Creek.

Based on the above, implementation of the PAA would not result in significant adverse long-term environmental impacts to aquatic habitat and water quality. In the long-term, implementation of the PAA is expected to have a long-term beneficial impact on the aquatic habitat and water quality within the project area. Implementation of the PAA would eliminate the discharge of raw and/or partially treated sewers from entering the stormwater system.

Under the NAA, untreated discharge from the failing septic systems would continue to negatively impact the water quality of downstream aquatic resources.

#### **4.8 Wetlands**

As described above, 0.14 acre of one (1) wetland (Wetland A) is located within the project area. Wetland A consists of palustrine, emergent habitat and is considered a Category 1 wetland as evaluated under the Ohio Rapid Evaluation Method for Wetlands (ORAM). There are no proposed impacts to Wetland A. In addition, the wetland would be identified on design plans with notes to avoid the area during construction. Temporary impacts may include increased sedimentation during construction; however, temporary impacts are expected to be minimal due to the use of best management practices (BMPs). Therefore, no long-term impacts to wetlands are expected under the PAA.

No impacts to wetlands are anticipated as part of the NAA. However, there is potential for increased risk of contamination to wetlands that may be located downstream of existing wastewater systems if failing systems are left unaddressed.

#### **4.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers**

No designated State Wild or Scenic Rivers are present within the project area. Therefore, no impacts to these resources are anticipated as part of the PAA or NAA.

#### **4.10 Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW)**

A Limited Phase 1 HTRW Investigation Report was conducted for the Village of Freeport Sanitary Sewer System Project to identify environmental conditions and the potential presence of HTRW contamination located in the project's construction work limits. Based on the report completed by Hull & Associates, Inc., six (6) properties were investigated during a visual field inspection. These properties were Family Dollar #10747, T&J Gas N Go, Freeport Press, Inc., Hardings SOHIO, Jones Equipment, and the Freeport Village Dump. It is recommended that the contractor work closely with T&J Gas N Go prior to construction activities to identify areas of avoidance such as underground storage tanks, above ground storage tanks, and monitoring wells.

The Corps HTRW staff determined that the Limited Phase 1 HTRW Investigation Report is acceptable and that no further action is necessary. Therefore, no impacts to HTRW are



anticipated with the PAA. A clearance memorandum was signed by Corps HTRW staff on 19 January 2021.

There are no impacts to HTRW anticipated as part of the NAA.

#### 4.11 Cultural Resources

The project sponsor coordinated with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (Ohio SHPO) and tribes listed within Harrison County. No comments were received from the Tribes. Via a letter dated 24 April 2020, the Ohio SHPO stated “it is our opinion that no historic properties will be affected by the overall project.” Based on the submitted information, the Corps has determined that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed project. In accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d), the Huntington District submitted an effects determination to the Ohio SHPO on 24 February 2021. Coordination under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would be completed prior to issuance of a FONSI.

If unanticipated archaeological deposits or human remains were discovered during construction, all work near the location of the discovery would cease and the Project Manager and Huntington District Archaeologist would be contacted immediately. The Ohio State Police, the Harrison County Coroner, and Ohio Historic Preservation Office would also have to be notified immediately if human remains were discovered.

No impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to occur as part of the NAA.

#### 4.12 Threatened and Endangered Species

Based on a review of the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system, the project area is within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). The following species of trees have relatively high value as potential Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat roost trees; shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), shellbark hickory (*Carya laciniata*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus Americana*), shingle oak (*Quercus imbricaria*), northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*), American elm (*Ulmus Americana*), eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), and white oak (*Quercus alba*).

The proposed project would occur primarily within previously disturbed areas; however, limited tree clearing may be required at the proposed wastewater treatment plant site and at the discharge line/outfall areas. Tree removal would only take place between October 1—March 31 to minimize potential impacts to federally listed bat species. Based on this information, the Corps has determined that the proposed action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat. In an email dated 22 March 2021, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with the Corps’ determination. No further coordination under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act is required.



The project sponsor coordinated the proposed project with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) via a letter dated 20 March 2020. The ODNR provided comments to the project sponsor on 6 May 2020. Per the Ohio Mussel Survey Protocol, all Group 2,3, and 4 streams require a mussel survey. Group 1 streams and unlisted streams with a watershed of five (5) square miles or larger should be assessed using the Reconnaissance Survey for Unionid Mussels to determine if mussels are present. If in-water work is proposed within streams meeting this criteria, a mussel survey would need to be conducted in order to ensure the project would have no impact to freshwater native mussels at the project site. In addition, the ONDR recommends no in-water work within perennial streams from April 15—June 30 to reduce impacts to indigenous aquatic species and their habitat. The proposed project is within the range of the upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), which is a state endangered bird. Habitat for the upland sandpiper includes dry grasslands including native grasslands, seeded grasslands, grazed and ungrazed pasture, hayfields and grasslands established through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The ODNR recommends that if suitable habitat exists within the project area, construction should be avoided during the nesting period of April 15 – July 31. The proposed project area does not include habitat for the upland sandpiper as construction is limited to disturbed land and right-of-ways. Due to proposed impacts associated with the construction of an outfall, Hull & Associates, Inc. completed a mussel reconnaissance survey in Stillwater Creek. Based on a review of the survey, no mussels were identified within the project area. Via an email dated 29 July 2020, the ODNR accepted the report and stated that no further mussel work would be required. Only negligible short-term impacts to threatened and endangered species are expected as a result of the PAA.

The NAA would result in the continued contamination of downstream water resources, which could pose a threat to aquatic species and habitat conditions; however, no effects to threatened or endangered species are expected as a result of the NAA.

#### **4.13 Air Quality**

According to the Ohio EPA website, Harrison County is classified as “in attainment” (maintaining applicable standards) for all criteria pollutants. Emissions from construction equipment would occur during the construction period. Contractors would operate all equipment in accordance with local, state, and Federal regulations. The PAA is exempted by 40 CFR Part 93.153 from making a conformity determination, since estimated emissions from construction equipment would not be expected to exceed de minimis levels, direct emissions of a criteria pollutant, or its precursors. Any impacts would be short-term, localized, and would occur only during construction phase activities. Impacts to air quality under the PAA would be temporary during construction and minor.

No impacts to air quality are anticipated to occur as part of the NAA.



#### 4.14 Noise

Noise associated with the PAA would be limited to that generated during construction. The noise associated with construction would be short in duration and would only occur during daylight hours. Noise is measured as Day Night average noise levels (DNL) in “A-weighted” decibels that the human ear is most sensitive to (dBA). There are no Federal standards for allowable noise levels. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development Guidelines, DNLs below 65 dBA are normally acceptable levels of exterior noise in residential areas. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) denotes a DNL above 65 dBA as the level of significant noise impact. Several other agencies, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, use a DNL criterion of 55 dBA as the threshold for defining noise impacts in suburban and rural residential areas. According to Dr. Paul Schomer in his 2001 *A White Paper: Assessment of Noise Annoyance*, while there are numerous thresholds for acceptable noise in residential areas, research suggests an area’s current noise environment, which has experienced noise in the past, may reasonably expect to tolerate a level of noise about 5 dBA higher than the general guidelines. The Corps Safety and Health Requirements Manual provides criteria for temporary permissible noise exposure levels (see Table 1 below), for consideration of hearing protection or the need to administer sound reduction controls.

Duration/day (hours)	Noise level (dBA)
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1.5	102
1	105

Construction noise would be similar to that of farm equipment and other small machinery used in the local area. A backhoe, end loader, road grader and/or vibratory roller are examples of equipment that is likely to be used during construction. Each emits noise levels around 85 dBA at 45 feet. Construction equipment would be operated during daylight hours; therefore a reasonable exposure time of two hours would be expected during the time residents may be home during the day. Peak outdoor noise levels ranging from 78-90 dBA would occur during the time in which equipment is directly in front of or in proximity to homes and businesses (within 25-100 feet). A maximum noise exposure of approximately 98 dBA, for one hour could occur if equipment were within 10 feet of homes and business. The noise projections do not account for screening objects, such as trees, outbuildings or other objects that muffle and reduce the noise being emitted. The outdoor construction noise would be further muffled while residents are inside their homes. While the construction noise generated would be considered unacceptable according to HUD and FAA standards, these limited exposures and time intervals are still within allowable Corps safety levels. Further, they are similar to typical neighborhood noise generated by gas powered lawnmowers in the local area, which could range from 90-95 dBA at three feet



and 70-75 dBA at 100 feet. Residents being exposed to these noise levels would occur if and/or when residents are home and outdoors.

Due to daytime construction and the short and limited duration of elevated noise levels associated with the PAA, impacts from the noise to local residences would be temporary and minor.

There would be no change in noise and thus no impact under the NAA.

#### **4.15 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children**

Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, as amended, requires Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2014-2018 American Community Statistics, the population estimate for the Village of Freeport is 374. The percent of individuals under the age of 18 was estimated to be 19.5% of the total population. Approximately 99% of the population is white, with two or more races comprising 0.5% of the population. The Village of Freeport has a median household income of \$36,591 compared with the median household income of \$52,407 for the State of Ohio. The poverty rate within the Village of Freeport is 15% compared to a poverty rate of 13.1% for the State of Ohio.

EO 13045, as amended, requires each Federal agency “to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children” and “ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks.” This EO was prompted by the recognition that children, still undergoing physiological growth and development, are more sensitive to adverse environmental health and safety risks than adults. The potential for impacts on the health and safety of children is greater where projects are located near residential areas.

The proposed sanitary sewer system would serve the entire project area. Implementation of the PAA would provide residents and children with a safe, reliable wastewater system, thereby improving the living environment for all residents. No homes or buildings would be impacted by the proposed project; therefore, the PAA meets the directive of EO 12898 and EO 13045 by avoiding any disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations or children.

The NAA would result in residents being exposed to untreated wastewater from the existing septic systems, which could pose safety and long-term health risks.

#### **4.16 Aesthetics**

Temporary disturbance of the local aesthetics would be anticipated during construction of the sanitary sewer system; however, the excavated sites would be restored to original conditions following construction. In addition, the only above ground infrastructure associated with the pump station would include control panels which would not be considered visually unappealing





or intrusive to the current area. The wastewater treatment plant would be constructed within a rural area that has been previously disturbed. No adverse effects to aesthetics are expected as a result of the proposed wastewater treatment plant construction as no residential homes or businesses are located within close proximity of the site. The PAA is expected to have minor effects on aesthetics.

The NAA would have no effect on aesthetics.

#### 4.17 Transportation and Traffic

The proposed force main and gravity sewers would be constructed within road right-of ways. Construction of the PAA in and along existing road right-of-ways would involve some delays and potential detours in the normal traffic flow; however, these detours would be temporary and minor in nature. Construction would be in compliance with standard traffic controls to minimize traffic disruptions and avoid public safety problems. Impacts anticipated to occur from the PAA would be considered short-term and minor in nature.

No impacts to transportation and traffic are anticipated to occur from the NAA.

#### 4.18 Health and Safety

The PAA has been designed to provide a safe, reliable wastewater system to serve residents within the Village of Freeport that are currently utilizing failing septic systems. The PAA is anticipated to have a long-term, beneficial impact on health and safety for the residents in the project area.

Under the NAA, residents would continue to utilize failing septic systems which pose health and safety concerns that have the potential to negatively affect the health of residents and property values within the community.

### 5.0 Status of Environmental Compliance

The PAA will be in full compliance with all local, state, and Federal statutes as well as Executive Orders prior to issuance of a FONSI. Compliance is documented below in Table 2.

Table 2 - Environmental Compliance Status			
Statute/Executive Order	Full	Partial	N/A
National Environmental Policy Act (considered partial until the FONSI is signed)		X	
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	X		
Endangered Species Act	X		
Clean Water Act	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	X		
Clean Air Act	X		



National Historic Preservation Act		X	
Archeological Resources Protection Act			N/A
Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act	X		
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act	X		
Toxic Substances Control Act	X		
Quiet Communities Act	X		
Farmland Protection Act	X		
Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management	X		
Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands	X		
Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations	X		
Executive Order 13045 Protection of Children	X		

## 6.0 REQUIRED COORDINATION

### 6.1 Agencies Contacted

Direct coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USFWS, NRCS, Ohio SHPO, and ODNR was completed prior to publication of the EA. Direct coordination with the Ohio SHPO is ongoing and will be completed prior to the issuance of a FONSI. Agency correspondence is included in Appendix B.

### 6.2 Public Review and Comments

The EA and FONSI will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days, as required under NEPA. A Notice of Availability will be published in the local newspaper, "The Times Leader," advising the public of this document's availability for review and comment. A copy of the EA will also be placed in the Clark Memorial Branch Library, and made available on-line at <http://www.lrh.Corps.army.mil/Missions/PublicReview.aspx>. The mailing list for the EA is located in Appendix C.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The Harrison County Commissioner's Office is proposing to construct a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the Village of Freeport that would replace the existing individual septic systems and limited capacity package plans that serve individual properties. By providing a safe and reliable sanitary sewer system, the proposed project is anticipated to have long-term beneficial impacts on health and safety for residents in the project area and the surrounding area by eliminating failing septic systems which pose contamination risks for downstream aquatic resources. No significant, adverse impacts have been identified as a result of implementation of the proposed improvement project. The NAA was considered unacceptable due to health and safety hazards for the community in the proposed project area.



The majority of the proposed project would take place on previously disturbed land. Health and safety would be realized immediately with project implementation. Effects associated with construction would be minor and temporary. BMPs would be implemented during construction to minimize impacts to residents and the environment. Therefore, the PAA would not be expected to have significant impacts on the human or natural environment.

## **8.0 LIST OF INFORMATION PROVIDERS AND PREPARERS**

The following agencies were involved in preparation of the EA.

Ohio Rural Community Assistance Program  
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership  
1817 State Route 83, Unit 423  
Millersburg, Ohio 44654

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District  
Planning Branch  
502 Eighth Street  
Huntington, WV 25701

## **9.0 REFERENCES**

Council for Environmental Quality  
1996 Draft Guidance for Addressing Environmental Justice under NEPA. 1996.

Council for Environmental Quality  
1997 Considering cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Federal Emergency Management Agency 2019 Floodplain Maps Website:  
<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>

Hull & Associates, Inc.  
2020 Limited Phase I Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HRTW) Investigation Report, Village of Freeport, Village of Freeport Sewer System Improvements, Harrison County, Ohio

Hull & Associates, Inc.  
2020 Surface Water Delineation Report

Hull & Associates, Inc.  
2020 Mussel Reconnaissance Survey Review Request for the Proposed Freeport Sanitary Improvements Project, Freeport Township, Harrison County, Ohio; HCY005.0027

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
2017 Biological and Water Quality Study of the Stillwater Creek Basin 2012 Tuscarawas, Harrison, Guernsey, Belmont, and Carroll Counties, Ohio.



Schomer, Paul  
2001 A White Paper: Assessment of Noise Annoyance. Schomer and Associates

U.S. Census Bureau  
2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Data Profile Website:  
<https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2018/>

U.S. Census Bureau  
Quickfacts Application Website:  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2019 National Wetlands Inventory website:  
<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2019 Information for Planning and Conservation website:  
<https://www.fws.gov/ipac>

U.S. Geological Survey  
2019 StreamStats: Streamflow Statistics and Spatial Analysis Tools for Water- Resources  
Application. StreamStats Application Website:  
<https://streamstats.usgs.gov/ss/>