



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY  
LANSING



PHILLIP D. ROOS  
DIRECTOR

April 22, 2024

TO: All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

SUBJECT: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
**Muskegon County Board of Public Works  
Whitehall Township Water Main Extension  
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Project Number 7800-01**

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comment on a preliminary decision by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to implement recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a water supply project planning document submitted by the applicant mentioned above.

#### **HOW WERE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES CONSIDERED?**

Part 54, Safe Drinking Water Assistance, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, being Sections 324.5401 to 324.5418 of the Michigan Compiled Laws Annotated, requires EGLE to evaluate all environmental implications of a proposed water supply project. EGLE has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental impact of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. A project planning document was prepared by the applicant and reviewed by the State. EGLE has prepared the attached Environmental Assessment and found that the proposed project does not require the preparation of an EIS.

#### **WHY IS AN EIS NOT REQUIRED?**

Our environmental review concluded that no significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the project planning document or will be reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment.

#### **HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

A map depicting the location of the proposed project is attached. This information is also available on our website at [Michigan.gov/DWSRF](https://Michigan.gov/DWSRF) under "Additional Links." The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the proposed action, and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing one of the contact people listed below.

#### **HOW DO I SUBMIT COMMENTS?**

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at EGLE, P.O. Box 30457, Lansing, Michigan 48909-4957. We will not

take any action on this project planning document 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 applicant will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this Agency to construct the proposed project.

Any information you feel should be considered by EGLE should be brought to our attention. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Brown, the project manager, at 517-231-8916; [BrownS93@Michigan.gov](mailto:BrownS93@Michigan.gov); or you may contact me. Your interest in this process and the environment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Dan Beauchamp*

Dan Beauchamp, Section Manager  
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section  
Finance Division  
517-388-3380

Attachment

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY**  
**Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)**  
**Muskegon County Board of Public Works, Muskegon County**  
**Environmental Assessment**  
**April 2024**

**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION**

**Applicant:** Muskegon County Board of Public Works

**Address:** 990 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, Michigan 49442

**Authorized Representative:** Darrell Paige, Board of Public Works Chair

**Project Number:** 7800-01

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Whitehall Township (Whitehall) is located in Muskegon County approximately 56 miles northwest of the city of Grand Rapids. According to the 2020 United States Census, Whitehall's population total was 1,768 and covers 9.4 square miles. West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission estimates a 0.04 percent growth rate per year.

Muskegon County Resource Recovery Center (MCRRC), via the Muskegon County Board of Public Works (BPW), is seeking funding from the DWSRF administered by the Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for a proposed project which will include extending Whitehall's water distribution system to areas along Silver Creek Road (Silver Creek) and Mill Pond Trail (Mill Pond) where wells have been contaminated by the closed Whitehall Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) (Figure 1). Recent monitoring for contaminants including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) found detections above the applicable criteria in some monitoring wells and residential wells in the affected area. This project will abandon the residential wells and connect residents to Whitehall's water system in the affected area. The DWSRF was able to offer a loan to finance the entire project cost of \$6,300,000 and award up to \$5,119,250 in loan principal forgiveness with funds made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for projects addressing emerging contaminants (EC) in water systems.

**PROPOSED PROJECT**

**A. Project Need**

MCRRC operated the former WWTP located at 2000 Holton-Whitehall Road in Whitehall Township from 1972 until 2003. Starting in 2003, all Whitehall-area wastewater was sent to the MCRRC Metro, and the WWTP was decommissioned. In the 1970s and 1980s, groundwater at the former WWTP was contaminated due to lagoon leakage and wastewater infiltration and irrigation. The source of contamination was an industrial waste discharge to the WWTP. MCRRC operates a groundwater purging system on-site and discharges the groundwater to the White River. The discharge is monitored in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued to MCRRC. The contaminants of concern for the residential wells include ethylene glycols. In addition, recent monitoring found PFAS compounds within the residential wells in the affected area.

Residents of Whitehall along Silver Creek and Mill Pond have experienced the impacts of industry-generated contamination via the former WWTP for years. Affected residents have been provided bottled water and carbon filters for decades. Muskegon County has implemented various strategies to mitigate the contamination at the former WWTP site. The proposed extension of the Whitehall's water distribution system will provide a safe, reliable source of potable water to the affected area.

Whitehall's water system is supplied by the city of Whitehall (city) community water supply. Whitehall maintains a contract agreement with the city for water, which is currently set at a maximum of 313,000 gallons per day (GPD). Whitehall's average demand is 32,300 GPD. The expected increase in demand from the proposed expansion of the system is estimated to be approximately 13,750 GPD, which is below Whitehall's contract agreement limit.

## **B. Alternatives Considered**

### No-action Alternative

Residents affected by the former WWTP contamination have been provided carbon filters and bottled water for many years. The MCRRC continues to operate a groundwater collection system for contaminated groundwater resulting in energy use and continued assurance of the NPDES permit requirements. The no-action alternative is not desirable, as it results in continued actions as described above. A permanent solution has benefits for the affected Whitehall residents as well as the MCRRC.

### Regional Alternative

The affected properties are located approximately two miles from the existing Whitehall water main on Silver Creek. This provides an opportunity for a regionalized solution rather than construction of a separate water system to service affected properties. The existing Whitehall water system, supplied by the city, has available source capacity and more than sufficient hydraulic capacity to serve the project area. Benefits of a regionalized water system include fiscal efficiency due to economies of scale, existing managerial capacity utilized for operation of the water system, history of compliance demonstrated through years of water testing, and increased technical capacity (e.g., storage volume, backup power, interconnect).

### Optimization of Existing System

The affected area of Whitehall could be studied for construction of a replacement groundwater source (i.e., replacement wells) that are free from contamination to service affected properties. However, the search for new water source is often time consuming and costly especially in areas of known contamination. An alternate aquifer would be required due to the contamination from the former WWTP and the lack of a good producing deeper aquifer. This broadens the potential search for new source water to other areas of Whitehall. Construction of a replacement source also requires construction of water distribution piping to connect the new source water wells to the affected properties. This new water supply would likely be classified as a new community water supply. This would require establishing new ownership, administration, and operations oversight by some entity. These efforts all increase the cost and complexity of this alternative. Construction of a new water system is not preferred when a regional water system solution is available.

## **C. Selected Alternative**

Based on a review of the existing facilities, identification of project needs, and analysis of alternatives, regionalization was the selected alternative. This will be completed by

constructing a water main extension from the existing Whitehall water system. A 12-inch diameter water main is proposed on Silver Creek, extending from the existing main approximately 1.7 miles north and across Silver Creek. An 8-inch diameter water main is proposed on Mill Pond, extending from the new 12-inch diameter water main on Silver Creek approximately 1 mile east to the cul-de-sac end. Connection of 32 properties is proposed.

**D. Project Cost and Implementation**

The DWSRF is able to offer Muskegon County BPW a \$6,300,000 30-year loan at 2.75 percent interest with \$5,119,250 in principal loan forgiveness with funds made available by the BIL for projects addressing EC. The MCRRC user rate will likely increase by approximately \$0.14 per month. Residents connecting to the Whitehall water system will likely have a new water payment of approximately \$40.50 per month for an average household.

Table 1 – Estimated Project Cost

Category	Cost
Construction	\$4,230,000
Property Acquisition (easements)	\$150,000
Engineering, Administration, Legal, Contingencies	\$1,920,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,300,000</b>

**PROJECT IMPACTS**

**A. Water Quality Impacts**

While residents in the study area near the former WWTP have dealt with significant water quality problems, the city water system has not experienced or identified water quality issues that would constrain their ability to service the proposed project area. It is common to see a reduction in disinfectant residual near dead ends in the system due to longer residence time. For 7,000 linear feet (lft) of 12-inch diameter water main on Silver Creek and an additional 5,200 lft of 8-inch diameter water main on Mill Pond, the estimated water travel time to the end of Mill Pond Trail is approximately 7 days. To reduce the travel time, automatic flushing devices are proposed to be installed at the dead-ends on Mill Pond as well as Silver Creek. These devices will be programmed to run on a specified interval, resulting in water turnover and reduced risk of water quality degradation. Other design standards will be followed such as fire hydrant spacing, valve spacing, depth of bury, thrust restraint, and separation from potential sources of contamination. The city’s system has not experienced orders of enforcement with EGLE or other entities.

The potential for impacts primarily exists with the proposed crossing of Silver Creek. The preliminary design is for a horizontal directional drill (HDD) crossing, selected to minimize impacts to the stream. Should HDD prove to be a nonviable alternative, open cut across the stream would be necessary. For any open cut stream crossings, all necessary permits will be obtained and mitigation of impacts to the stream and adjacent habitats will be conducted. This often includes installation of a turbidity curtain downstream, and restoration of the stream with non-erodible material such as field stone.

**B. Construction Impacts**

A full review and site evaluation has been completed by State Historic and Preservation Office, and it was determined that there are no known protected historic or archaeological

features within the project impact areas. The Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and proper tribal authorities were also contacted, and there were no known impacts were identified. Species identified through the United States Fish and Wildlife Services and Michigan Natural Features Inventory review will be protected by practicing the recommended procedures. Tree removal will be restricted during the bat breeding season to ensure no impacts to the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat breeding habitat, and wildlife-friendly erosion control and site restoration materials are required to protect the Eastern massasauga rattlesnake.

The proposed project is not intended to extend or construct new roads to previously undeveloped lands within the work areas. Based on general knowledge of groundwater depths in the area, dewatering is not anticipated for the proposed project. Soil borings indicate some higher groundwater near the crossing of Silver Creek, and if dewatering is needed, all necessary water withdrawal and discharge permits will be obtained.

Short-term construction impacts are expected to be minimal. Typical construction disturbances including noise, dust, and traffic will occur. Contractor will control noise, dust, traffic, and surface restoration according to local ordinances and contract specifications. The construction and rehabilitation will be planned so that service disruptions can be minimized.

### **C. Secondary Impacts**

No significant secondary impacts are anticipated for this project. Aesthetics of the distribution system will not be significantly affected, and efforts will be taken to match existing systems. No changes in land use or impacts to sensitive features should occur.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A public meeting notice was published to the MCRRC Facebook page as well as Whitehall's website on April 21, 2023, more than 10 days prior to the public meeting. A copy of the project planning document was available at the Whitehall Township Hall and at the MCRRC offices during the public comment period. The public meeting took place at 4:00 pm on May 4, 2023, at the Muskegon County BPW Board meeting and included a presentation that described the project alternatives, impacts, construction, financing, and estimated costs. All questions were addressed prior to the end of the meeting. The resolution was passed to adopt the planning document and implement the selected alternative at the conclusion of the meeting.

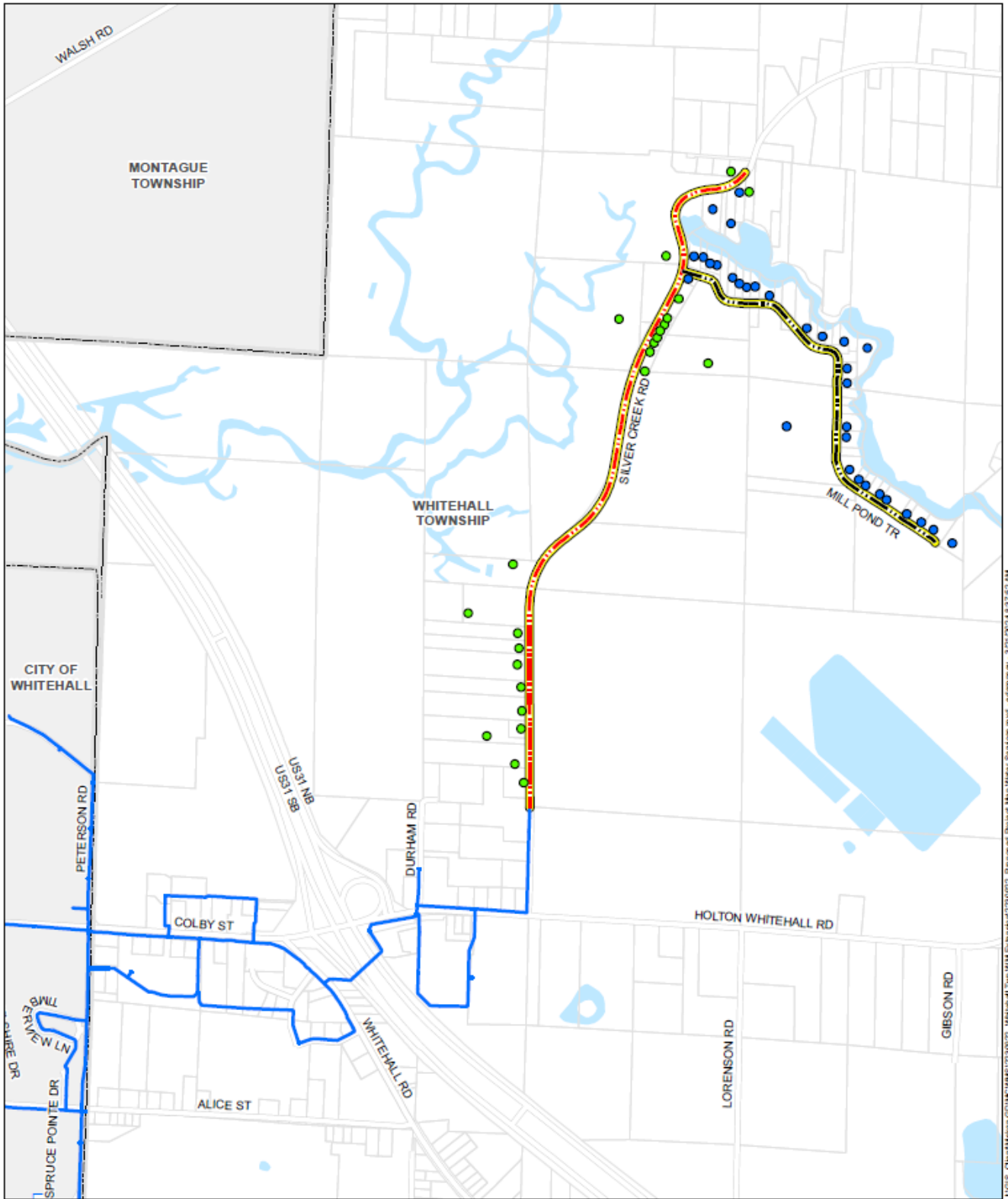
## **REASONS FOR CONCLUDING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

The project will present no long-term significant impacts associated with its construction. The project will not significantly increase the demand on the city's water supply. Long-term positive impacts include residents near the closed WWTP will have properly treated water supply from a regional facility reducing the need for carbon filters and bottled water.

Questions regarding this Environmental Assessment should be directed to:

Sara Brown, Project Manager  
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section  
Finance Division  
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy  
P.O. Box 30457  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-4957  
Telephone: 517-231-8916  
Email: [BrownS93@Michigan.gov](mailto:BrownS93@Michigan.gov)





Figure 1: Water Main Extension and Service Lines



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 SCALE: 1" = 1,500'

**LEGEND**

- Water Service to Existing Residence
- Water Service to Property Line
-  Proposed 8" Watermain
-  Proposed 12" Watermain
-  Proposed Project Area
-  Existing Watermain

**WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP**  
 MUSKEGON COUNTY, MI  
**PROPOSED WATERMAIN EXTENSION**  
 Prein&Newhol  
 MARCH 2024



Figure 2: Water Main Size and Locations

