

August 7, 2019

Members of council,

The Southeastern Ohio Port Authority believes the Route 7 transportation Corridor to be one of the most viable opportunities for economic growth in our county.

The transportation advantages and available acreage to the north of Marietta has long been identified as a growth opportunity, and given the limited areas for industrial and commercial development, utility extension, particularly sewerage is a much needed and required piece for future planning. Our last county strategic plan identified the proposed project area as a priority, and our board of directors seeks to support the county and its municipalities in their efforts to attract businesses.

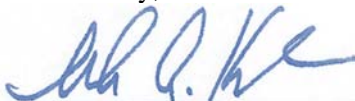
For this reason we are pledging financial support and planning support on this project. We do feel it necessary to stress the realities of this endeavor. When originally theorized there were job creation figures projected due to a business relocation possibility. Those jobs (120) are no longer viable and the manufacturer that was theorized for the developmental acreage that this line would service is no longer a possibility. When the project was first pitched to OWDA in 2016 this was more of a possibility, however, the target changed course and we more or less shelved the project. It came as quite a surprise that in February of this year, a project we hadn't touched since late 2016, was miraculously given grant financing for the bulk of the project's estimated cost. My office, along with the City of Marietta engineer Joe Tucker, have been working feverishly to bring the project back to life. We are doing all we can to live up to the original standards put forth in the application, but I would be remiss if I said that was likely. Despite this unlikelihood, we do however believe that this proposed sewer line is an essential piece to our overall county development goals, and without extended sewer lines to vacant property on Ohio State Route 7, we will not be able to compete with our statewide, regional, national cohorts on economic development attraction and expansion targets. For this reason we are pursuing the project as it currently stands.

All of this being said, we do still have significant need for the funding, and it is my hope that with the Corps' commitment we can convince our affected businesses and townships to participate in a sewerage along the Rt. 7 N Corridor. Our city engineer Joe Tucker also feels strongly and is doing his best to ensure the initial financing is secured so we can proceed with the engineering portion of the project. Recognizing our community, like the rest of Appalachia, is slow to see the benefits of municipal utility extension, we are hoping to mitigate future costs by at least having the engineering portion completed.

It is my understanding that Mr. Tucker has been in contact with you regarding the desire to proceed with the engineering portion of the project in isolation, and our overall concerns about the ability to construct the line in the near term.

The SeOPA Board is in agreement that we want to co-finance a portion of the local match for this project, but want to make it clear, that we understand actual construction of the line will be difficult because of a lack in community buy-in and we want to ensure the Council and Corps know that the job creation targets associated with this project initially are unlikely to be reached.

Sincerely,



Andy Kuhn  
Executive Director