



June 24, 2025

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Blueprint Hilltop Lateral Lining Palmetto/Westgate
Loan number: CS390274-0568**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sewer lateral lining project in the Palmetto/Westgate area of Columbus which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The LER describes the project, costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER fulfills the 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. In accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3745-150-05, this project meets the criteria for an LER rather than the more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Final Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination, award of funds may proceed without further environmental review or public comment unless new information shows that environmental conditions of the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

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

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Blueprint Hilltop Lateral Lining Palmetto/Westgate

Applicant: City of Columbus
910 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Loan Number: CS390274-0568



Figure 1. Franklin County

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County (Figure 1) has requested \$9,150,000 from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for sanitary sewer lateral lining within the Hilltop Palmetto/Westgate neighborhood. This project will prevent stormwater from infiltrating the sanitary sewer system through leaky joints and cracks in lateral pipes. As the project involves rehabilitating existing sewer laterals in residential yards that have been previously disturbed, environmental impacts are expected to be limited.

History & Existing Conditions

The City of Columbus owns, operates, and maintains a complex sewer system that includes both separated and combined sewers. Wastewater is treated at one of the city's interconnected treatment plants, either the Jackson Pike Wastewater Treatment Plant (JPWWTP) or the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP). After treatment, effluent is released to the Scioto River.

In 2002 and 2004, the City of Columbus entered into two consent decrees with Ohio EPA to eliminate sewage backups into homes and overflows of untreated sewage into rivers during wet-weather events. The city submitted its wet-weather management plan (WWMP) to Ohio EPA in 2005 to outline how the city planned to meet the compliance criteria established within its consent decrees. The WWMP contained strategies to address sewer overflows including expansion of wastewater treatment plants, construction of additional sewer tunnels and relief pipes, and upsizing, lining, and rehabilitating existing pipes.

Due to the high cost of the proposed improvements, the city explored other alternatives. In 2013, with Ohio EPA approval, the Columbus Division of Sewerage and Drainage (DOSD) developed Blueprint Columbus as its integrated planning approach to incorporate stormwater and green infrastructure into the WWMP. The four pillars of the Blueprint Columbus program as outlined in the September 2015 Integrated Plan and 2015 WWMP Update Report are sewer lining, roof drain redirection, sump pump installations, and green infrastructure. Implementation of these four pillars will reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the city's sanitary sewer systems and contribute to minimizing sewer overflows and

water-in-basement (WIB) occurrences throughout Columbus. Surveys conducted by the city determined that over 50% of the I&I of stormwater into the collection system can be traced to private sources, mostly in residential neighborhoods. Therefore, Blueprint Columbus seeks to address the root cause of overflows instead of constructing infrastructure to cater to these excess flows.

The sewer line and manhole lining pillar is one component of a larger package of projects that will upgrade the collection system to provide a more than a 10-year level of service for WIB occurrences, which, according to 20-year model simulations, are estimated to be reduced from 152 occurrences to zero. The sanitary sewer lining addressed in the Blueprint Columbus program is estimated to be 90% effective at removing infiltration.

Blueprint Columbus consists of 17 study areas, each roughly 1,000 acres in size. Every study area is broken into four to five project areas. Blueprint Hilltop is one of those 17 study areas, with Palmetto/Westgate as the project area.

Project Description

The Palmetto/Westgate project area is the western portion of the Blueprint Hilltop 1 project area and is bordered to the north by West Broad Street, to the east by Hague Avenue, to the south by Sullivant Avenue, and to the west by Derrer Road. The area is primarily residential.

This project will install lateral liners into sanitary sewer laterals to residential homes to reduce I&I of stormwater through leaky joints and cracks during wet-weather conditions. This will prevent additional stormwater from joining the sanitary sewer system and therefore reduce the risk of wet-weather overflows, WIB occurrences, or backups into streets or properties. Approximately 775 laterals will be rehabilitated as part of this project with an estimated total of 51,000 linear feet of sewer pipe being lined.

Construction for this project will largely remain within the footprint of the existing sewer laterals in previously disturbed residential yards, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources.

See Figure 2 below for a map of the project area.

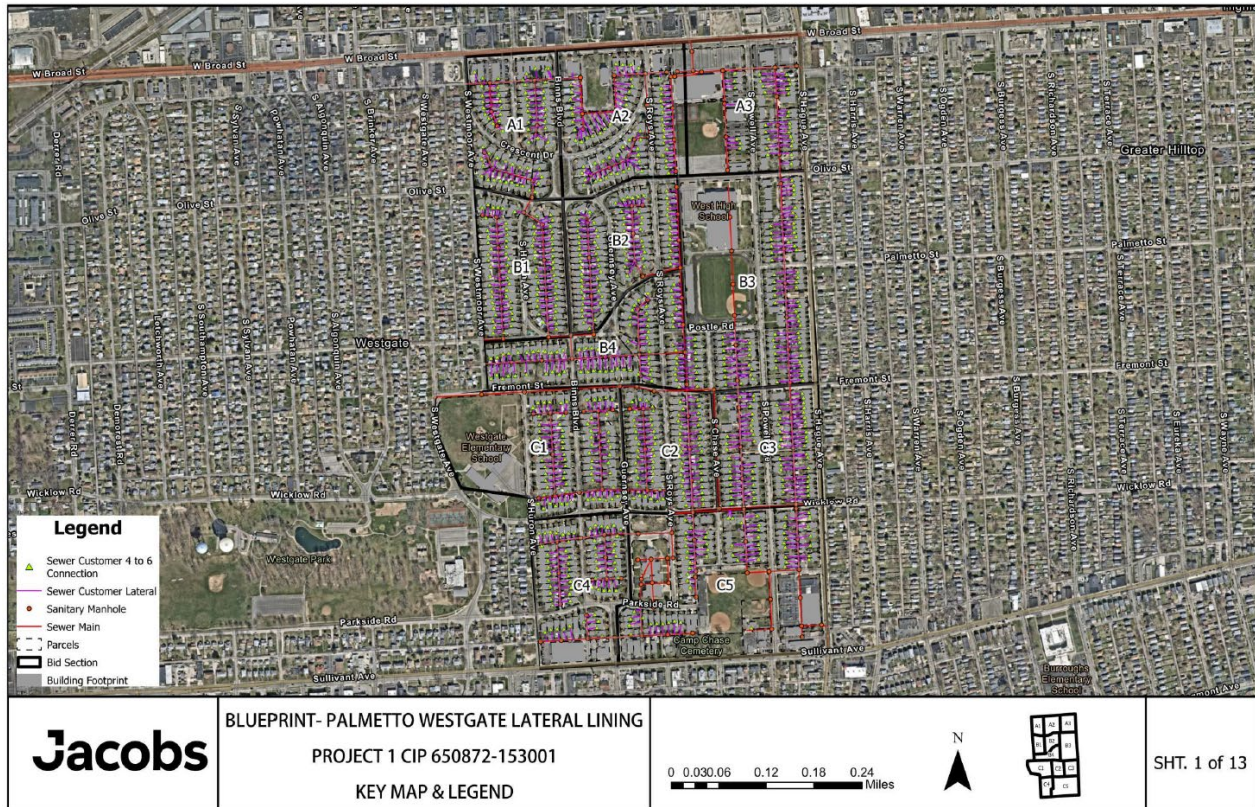


Figure 2. Project location

Implementation

Columbus will receive \$9,150,000 from the WPCLF over a 20-year loan period at the standard rate of 3.44%. When compared to the market rate of 4.69%, Columbus will save over \$1,470,000. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for a different loan award date.

The current annual Columbus residential sewer rate is approximately \$769. Residential bills with the implementation of this and other associated wastewater projects are expected to increase to approximately \$794, or 1.3% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$62,994. By using WPCLF financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

The anticipated loan award will occur in July 2025; construction will begin following loan award and is expected to be completed by September 2026.

Public Participation

The City of Columbus has created a website for Blueprint Columbus to present information about the program, its initiatives, and provide a place for neighborhood updates and answers to frequently asked questions. Multiple public meetings regarding Blueprint have been held over the past few years where lateral lining has been discussed. Private property access is required for this project and affected area residents have been notified.

Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to this project. The Limited Environmental Review (LER) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) will be posted on the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance website. Additionally, the LER and FNSI will be provided to the City of Columbus to be made available according to their public notification procedures.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the criteria for an LER; namely, it is an action within an existing public wastewater collection system, which involves improvements to existing infrastructure. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Will have no significant environmental effect, no effect on high-value environmental resources, and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation.

Construction will take place in previously disturbed residential yards, which lack important environmental features. No tree clearing, stream crossings, or in-wetland work is scheduled to occur, and there will be no new construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. The contractor is responsible for dust control, sedimentation and erosion control, and maintenance of traffic during construction.

Is cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed project is the best feasible alternative as rehabilitating existing sanitary sewer laterals is less expensive than total replacement. Taking no action would allow stormwater to continue infiltrating the system, resulting in continued wet-weather overflows and water-in-basement events. DEFA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project.

Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters, and will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.

This project involves rehabilitation of existing collection infrastructure and will not create a new or increase wastewater discharges, nor provide capacity to serve a greater population. There will be no change in pollutant loading.

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Limited Environmental Review, 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.

This project will continue to implement Blueprint Columbus' plan to reduce sanitary sewer overflows and WIB events.

Contact Information

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