



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

February 1, 2021

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Blueprint Near South Area – Main Line Lining
Loan number: CS390274-0319**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sewer rehabilitation project in Columbus 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 LER describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER 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 WPCLF program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. This project's relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies it for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. More information can be obtained by calling or writing the person named at the end of the attached LER

Upon issuance of this 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,

Jonathan Bernstein

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: Columbus – Blueprint Near South Area – Main Line Lining

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

Loan number: CS390274-0319

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$8,551,000 from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for rehabilitation of existing sanitary sewer mains and associated manholes within the Near South Blueprint area. The goal of this project is to reduce the amount of inflow and infiltration of non-sewerage waters to the sanitary sewer system thereby reducing occurrences of water-in-basement (WIB) and sewerage overflows to area streams and rivers. Construction will occur within previously disturbed rights-of-way in the location of existing sewer lines.

History and Existing Conditions

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 their consent decrees. The WWMP contained strategies to address the sewer overflows within their sanitary sewer and combined sewer systems. This plan consisted of building 28 miles of sewer tunnels and upsizing, lining, and replacing 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 study and incorporate green infrastructure (GI) into the WWMP. Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that mimics the natural water cycle and includes rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, and bioretention areas.

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 Near South is one of those 17 study areas. The project area is generally bounded by Markison Avenue on the north, Wall Street on the west, Refugee Road on the south, and Fairwood Avenue on the east, in the areas of Hungarian Village, Vassor Village, Edgewood, Innis Garden Village, and Reeb-Hosack. This area is mostly residential with some industrial/commercial.

Blueprint Near South's study area sanitary and storm water infrastructure dates from the early 1900s up through the 1950s and is stressed during wet weather events. The challenges associated with the sanitary and storm sewer systems in the Near South area include the project area's nine designed sewer relief (DSR) points, approximately 392 documented water-in-basement (WIB) complaints, inadequate storm sewer conveyance capacity, and sanitary sewer deficiencies. Additionally, extraneous clear water entering sanitary sewers through illicit connections to storm sewers or via

leaky manholes (inflow) or through cracks in pipes (infiltration) can overflow sewers and cause overflows.

Project Description

The Blueprint Columbus Plan includes rehabilitating existing sanitary sewers, rehabilitating existing sanitary laterals, redirecting roof runoff away from sanitary laterals, and installation of green infrastructure for water quality improvement and runoff mitigation. The first work to be completed in a Blueprint project area is the rehabilitation of existing sanitary sewers.

Approximately 85,000 linear feet of 8-inch to 33-inch existing sanitary sewer mains in the Blueprint Near South area will be rehabilitated using cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining that is installed inside the existing sewer pipe. Approximately 450 existing manholes will be rehabilitated by cementitious lining on the inside of the manhole. These are trenchless technologies performed within the in-situ structures. The project is necessary due to the continued inflow and infiltration (I/I) that occurs within the service area. An estimated 90% reduction of I/I is expected with the lining of these sewer lines and manholes. The project should provide a 10-year level of service for sewer reliefs and decrease the amount of WIB incidences to zero.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing sanitary sewer system, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control erosion and sedimentation and minimize the creation of dust during construction.

Maps of the project location are provided in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$8,551,000 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$1,177,274 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 0.53%, compared to the market rate of 1.78%.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately \$565/year. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated wastewater projects are expected to increase to approximately \$737/year, or 1.5% of the median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$49,478.

By using WPCLF financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in February 2021. Construction will start following loan award and is expected to be completed by August 2022.

Public Participation

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed construction project. Area residents will receive notifications prior to the work being performed. The

notifications will give information on timing of the work, contact information, and a request to restrict water usage for the short time (8-10 hours) while sewer main is being CIPP lined. Ohio EPA does not oppose the project.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx> (Under the “What’s New” tab, scroll to: “Documents Available for Review and Comment – WPCLF Documents for Review and Comment”) and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Limited Environmental Review (LER) is available from the project contact named below.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for an LER; namely, it is an action for the replacement of existing treatment works. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

- *Has no significant environmental effect, no effect on high value environmental resources, and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation.*
Construction for the project is limited to previously disturbed residential areas in the footprint of the existing sanitary sewer system within roadways and public rights-of-way, which lack important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices during construction will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety.
- *Is cost-effective and not controversial.*
The proposed project is cost-effective as it involves seeking rehabilitation to the existing sanitary sewer system to improve the overall wastewater treatment system process. DEFA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will improve wastewater and stormwater collection and prevent water in basement occurrences.
- *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 the rehabilitation of existing sewer lines within the wastewater collection system. The project will not increase wastewater discharges, nor provide capacity to serve a greater population. There will be no change in pollutant loading. Rather, the project will minimize I/I entry into the sanitary sewer system and eliminate the number of WIB occurrences due to insufficient wastewater treatment system capacity.

Based upon the available planning information for this project and the materials presented within this LER, Ohio EPA concludes that the proposed project will not result in any significant adverse impacts to any environmental features. The project is expected to have no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment or on sensitive resources such as surface waters, coastal zones, riparian areas, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, prime or unique agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeologically or historically significant sites, or threatened or endangered species.

This project will provide improvements to the city’s sanitary sewer system to improve efficiency of wastewater collection and treatment and eliminate public health concerns from WIB occurrences.

Contact

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Exhibit 1: Project Location Map



Exhibit 2: Project Location Map

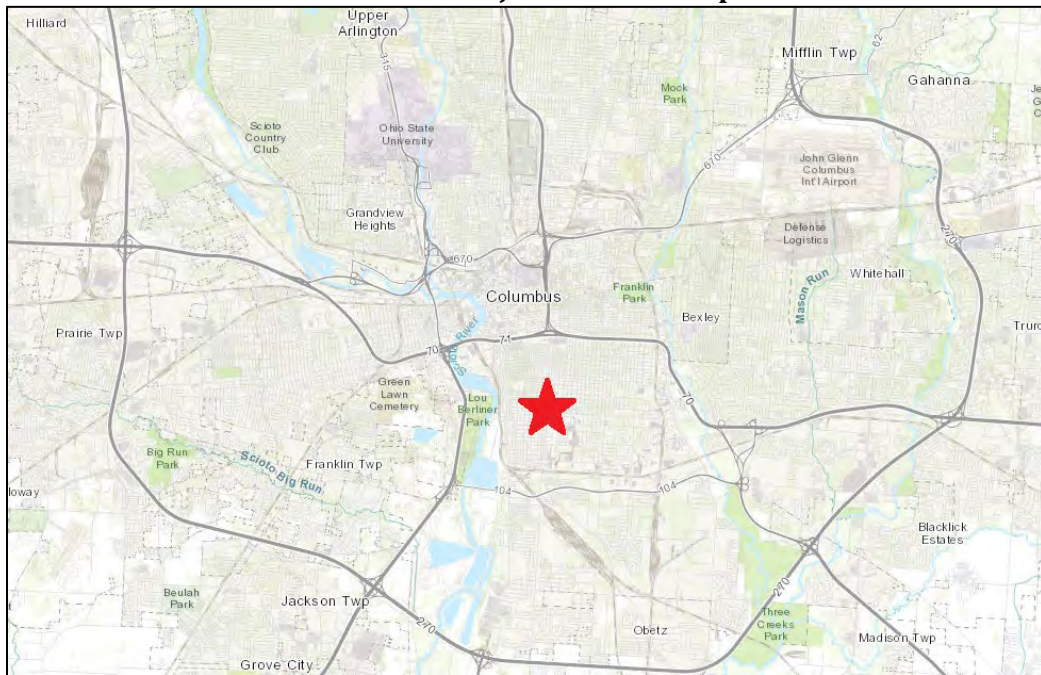


Exhibit 3: Project Location Map

