



April 22, 2025

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Blueprint Hilltop 1 – LL - Eureka/Fremont Project 6
Loan number: CS390274-0507**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sewer repair project in 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,

Steve Malone, for

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Blueprint Hilltop 1 – LL - Eureka/Fremont Project 6

Applicant: City of Columbus
910 Dublin Road, 4th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Loan Number: CS390274-0507

Project Summary

The City of Columbus is requesting \$11,290,000 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for a lateral lining project in the Hilltop Eureka/Fremont area.

History & 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 U.S. EPA consent decree. The WWMP contained strategies to address the sewer overflows within their sanitary sewer and combined sewer systems. This plan consisted of gray solutions only, including building 28 miles of sewer tunnels and upsizing, lining, and replacing pipes, among others.

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 address sewer overflows and water-in-basement (WIB) occurrences. The four pillars of Blueprint are sewer lining, roof drain redirection, sump pump installations, and green infrastructure.

Implementation of the four pillars of the Blueprint Columbus program as outlined in the September 2015 Integrated Plan and 2015 WWMP Update Report will reduce infiltration and inflow (I/I) in the City of Columbus' sanitary sewer systems. The mainline sanitary sewer lining addressed in the Blueprint Columbus program is estimated to be 90% effective at removing infiltration. The mainline 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 water-in-basement occurrences, which, according to 20-year model simulations, are estimated to be reduced from 152 to 0.

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 Columbus seeks to address the root cause of

overflows instead of building tunnels to deal with excess flows. The Hilltop neighborhood of Columbus is one such project area that has suffered from extensive stormwater flooding in recent years. The area has separated sewers that were constructed in the early 1900s and are in need of repair. Surveys conducted by the city determined that over 50% of the I/I from stormwater in the system can be traced to private sources, mostly in residential neighborhoods.

Project Description

The project will take place in the Eureka/Fremont area of Hilltop. The project will line approximately 931 sanitary sewer laterals totaling approximately 76,163 linear feet. All work will be performed from the main sewer line. No access to private property will be needed. See figures 1 and 2 for the project area.

Implementation

The City of Columbus proposes to borrow \$11,290,000 from the WPCLF for the Eureka/Fremont project. This project qualifies for a standard interest rate of 3.25% on a 20-year loan. This will save the city approximately \$1.7 million over the life of the loan compared to the market rate of 4.5%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

The projected 2027 average annual sewer rate is \$896 per year. The median household income (MHI) of Columbus is \$62,994. In 2027, the annual sewer bill will be 1.4% of the MHI.

Construction is expected to be completed within 18 months.

Public Participation

Several public meetings were held during the design phase. Additionally, just before the construction of green infrastructure in the project area, the city conducted another public meeting where they mentioned the upcoming lateral lining project and explained the benefits. During the public meetings, the city gave presentations explaining how the lateral lining project will prevent excess stormwater from entering the city's sanitary sewer system, thereby eliminating water in basements. Project information is also available on the city's website.

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 have been 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 the improvement to existing infrastructure. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Will have no significant environmental effect, will require no specific impact mitigation, and will have no effect on high-value environmental resources because none are present in the pre-disturbed areas where existing home sanitary laterals will be lined.

Is cost effective because repairing sewer laterals is less expensive than replacing them.

Is not a controversial action because sewer lining to prevent stormwater from entering the sewer lines is a cost-effective way to address basement backups and sewer overflows.

Does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters, and 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 because the project does not impact discharges.

Will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population because this project just addresses existing sewer laterals to existing homes.

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 reduce basement backups and sewer overflows.

Contact Information

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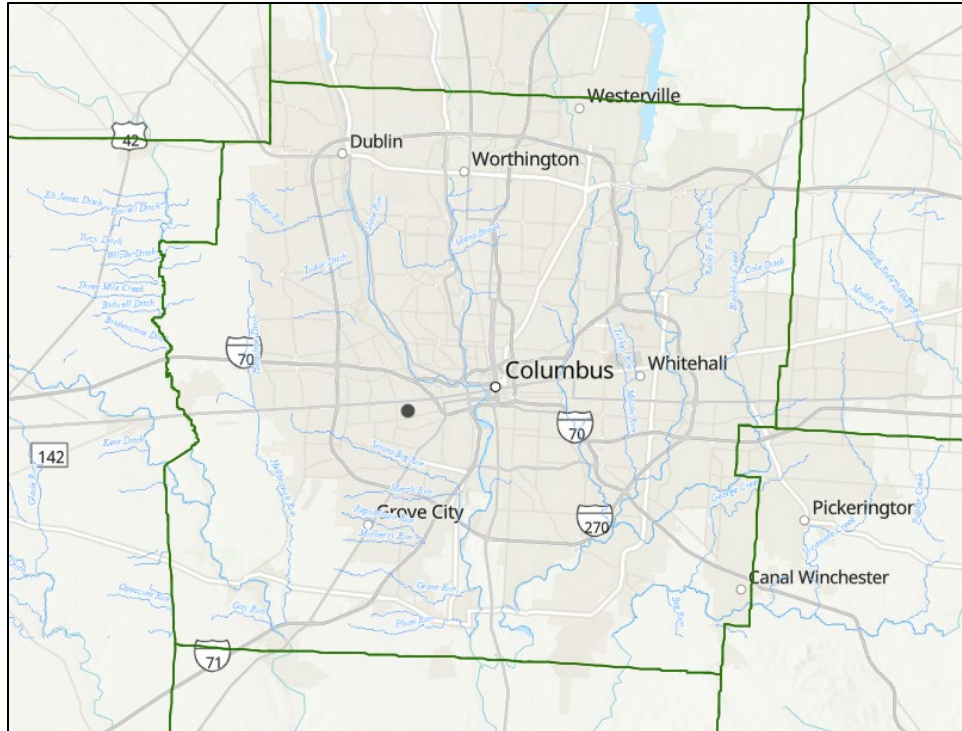


Figure 1. Location of the two project areas

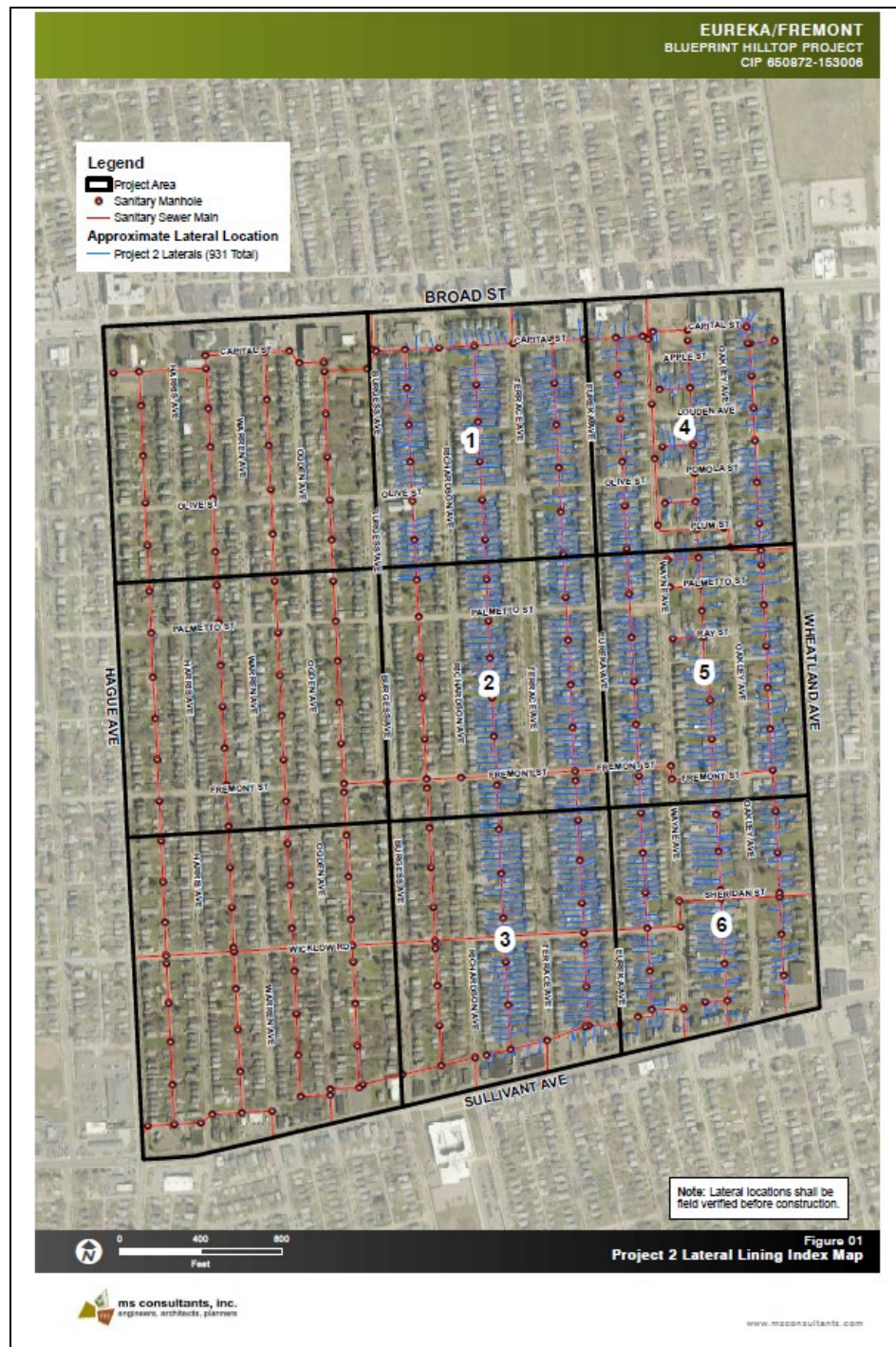


Figure 2. Approximate location of the laterals in the Eureka/Fremont project area