June 4, 2026

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

City of Columbus – Franklin County
Walhalla Ravine Stream Restoration
Loan number: CS390274-0463

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a stream restoration and stormwater conveyance 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,

Kathleen Courtright

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LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Walhalla Ravine Stream Restoration

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0463

Figure 1. Franklin County

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County (Figure 1) has requested approximately $2.76 million from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the restoration of two sections of the Walhalla Ravine stream to reduce erosion, improve bank stability, and ultimately decrease the amount of Total Suspended Solids (TSS) entering the Olentangy River.

History and Existing Conditions

The City of Columbus owns, operates, and maintains a complex sewer collection system that includes both separated and combined sewers. 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.

Walhalla Ravine is a stream in the Blueprint Columbus project area of Tulane/Findley. The Walhalla Ravine stream receives flows from four storm sewer outfalls and flows southwest for 0.8 miles before discharging to the Olentangy River. The stormwater drainage area is 0.3 square miles and is primarily urban with a small fraction of wooded area located adjacent to the project site. There is also a combined sewer overflow (CSO) at the head of the project site which activated 46 times between 2002 and 2017. The stream is actively eroding which contributes total suspended sediment load (TSS) to the Olentangy River.

Project Description

A stream stabilization/restoration plan has been designed for two reaches of Walhalla Ravine based on natural channel design principles. Primary design goals are to prevent future sediment loading, promote natural sediment transport, convey flood flows, and enhance riparian zone vegetation. The Walhalla Ravine restoration will contribute to sediment reduction needs in the Blueprint Columbus project area. Existing environmental, geomorphic, and hydraulic conditions were assessed to inform design recommendations.

Restoration work along the banks and channel is proposed for two separate reaches of Walhalla Ravine. The upstream reach (Reach 1) will begin at the East Longview Avenue culvert crossing and extend approximately 600 linear feet downstream to the intersection of Clinton Heights and Walhalla Road. The downstream reach (Reach 2) begins approximately 115 linear feet upstream from the culverted driveway crossings of 310 Walhalla Road and ends at the driveway crossing.

The project will use a series of natural channel design features to stabilize the eroding streambanks and channel bed. Log and rock riffles, mini vanes, stone toe bank stabilization, live branch layering, and proper grading of channel and banks will be used throughout the project to protect banks, direct flow, and provide grade control. An approximately 800 linear foot retaining wall and guardrail will be installed along the left bank of Reach 1 to protect Walhalla Road and other infrastructure along the left bank.

Five water service laterals cross the proposed restoration area and will be relocated at an elevation below the proposed streambed. Three sanitary laterals cross the proposed restoration area but are located below the proposed grade and will not need to be relocated. Full pavement replacement is proposed for the impacted area of the roadway. Native seeding and planting will occur within designated planting zones within the project's limits of disturbance.

Construction for this project involves work within Walhalla Creek, a direct tributary of the Olentangy River. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) reviewed this project in accordance with Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and determined that this project will not involve activities subject to its requirements. However, the project will include the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into waters of the United States subject to the requirements of Section 404. It was determined this project meets the criteria for Nationwide Permit 27 (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration). Special conditions of this permit must be met during construction.

Coordination was also completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Trees that will be removed for this project will be removed within seasonal clearing dates to avoid impacts to endangered bat species. Several state endangered birds are present within the project area and construction should be avoided during summer nesting periods if applicable habitat is impacted. No in-water work is proposed in a perennial stream of sufficient size to impact endangered mussel species. Due to these reasons, there will be no adverse effects to environmental resources.

See Figures 2 and 3 below for maps of the project area.

Figure 2. Project area

Figure 3. Project area

Implementation

Columbus will receive approximately $2.76 million from the WPCLF over a 20-year loan period at the standard rate of 3.25%. When compared to the market rate of 4.50%, Columbus will save over $440,000 over the life of the loan.

The current annual Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately $834. Annual residential bills with the implementation of this and other associated sewer projects are expected to increase to approximately $984, or 1.5% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is $65,327. By using WPCLF financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

The anticipated loan award will occur in June 2026; construction will begin following loan award and is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2027.

Public Participation

Several public meetings were held with residents living along the Walhalla Ravine in the Clintonville area of Columbus from the beginning of project design. A pre-construction meeting will be scheduled to discuss upcoming construction and road closures with the public.

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 stormwater system, which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing infrastructure. 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.
A permit was obtained from USACE for construction work within Walhalla Creek. Standard construction best management practices will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety.

Is cost effective and not controversial.
This project is cost effective as it utilizes green infrastructure to reduce sediment in the Olentangy River. Ohio EPA 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 will not impact 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 LER, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to environmental features. 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 restore the Walhalla Ravine to reduce erosion, improve bank stability, and decrease sedimentation in the Olentangy River.

Contact Information

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