Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

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

August 2, 2021

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

City of Columbus – Franklin County
East Franklinton, Phase 3, CS390274-0378
East Franklinton Waterline Improvements Phase 3, FS390274-0346

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sanitary and storm sewer improvement and waterline replacement project in Columbus which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) and Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan programs. 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 the loan programs, as described in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-150-05.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WPCLF and WSRLA 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, as described in OAC 3745-150-06. 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,

Kathleen Courtright, for

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: East Franklinton, Phase 3
East Franklinton Waterline Improvements Phase 3

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0378
FS390274-0346

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested $8,638,089 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to rehabilitate sanitary sewers and install new storm sewers and $6,244,289 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) to install new water mains in city rights-of-way within the East Franklinton area.

This project will renew sewer and water infrastructure in one of the oldest sections of Columbus and prepare the area for redevelopment.

History and Existing Conditions

East Franklinton is located west of the Scioto Peninsula, bounded by State Route 315 on the west, the river on the south, and railroad tracks to the north and east. The area contains residential, commercial, and industrial properties with buildings in varying conditions as the area is part of the oldest neighborhood in the city. A historic decline in population and household numbers due in part to Scioto River flooding was solved by construction of the floodwall with the West Columbus Local Protection Project in 2004.

In recent years, East Franklinton has seen increased reinvestment and plans for large-scale redevelopment. However, infrastructure initiatives are needed to support full redevelopment. The entire East Franklinton area is drained by combined sewer mains. These sewer mains provide adequate sanitary service but contain numerous stormwater connection points, causing overflows which represent challenges to water quality. The destination of the combined flow is a system of regulators and sewage pump stations near Dodge Park. Sanitary flow is collected and pumped through a force main that crosses the river and enters the Olentangy-Scioto Interceptor Sewer on the eastern bank. This system handles the stormwater network in the plan area drainage boundary. To help protect the sewage pump station from potentially heavy combined flows originating upstream, an 18-inch overflow pipe to the stormwater pump station was put in place. This connection creates a combined sewer overflow (CSO) point where the 72-inch storm pipe empties into the Scioto River. The Scioto River is currently designated as Warmwater Habitat Aquatic Life Use in Ohio Water Quality Standards and is currently maintaining partial attainment of this designation. Eliminating CSO discharges will aid in the improvement of this stream's water quality.

Despite these connections, streets in this area continue to be deficient in the number of stormwater drainage points to prevent flooding. A Stormwater Master Plan dated June 2016 determined the discharge of stormwater from the planning area under future development conditions would exceed the capacity of the receiving storm and combined sewer systems within the East Franklinton area.

Upon completion of this project, Columbus seeks to manage excess stormwater runoff from the Scioto Peninsula, in conjunction with future redevelopment throughout the planning area. These upgrades will primarily involve separation of stormwater and sanitary flows within the local collection system by constructing dedicated storm or sanitary sewers.

Project Description

These projects will include the installation of approximately 2,200 feet of 8-inch through 30-inch sanitary sewer and 3,100 feet of 10-inch through 48-inch storm sewer as well as sewer and manhole rehabilitation to strengthen the area's wastewater collection system and provide a higher level of service for stormwater conveyance and preventing water-in-basement occurrences. Installation of these storm sewers will help renew collection system assets to prepare the area for further development.

Additionally, 10,300 feet of 6-inch through 12-inch waterline will be constructed. Water distribution service will be transferred to these new water mains, service lines will be connected to the new pipes, and the older mains will be abandoned.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway bounded by existing commercial and residential buildings, therefore minimizing effects on environmental resources. To protect endangered bat species, any necessary tree clearing will occur between October 1st and March 31st. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control dust, erosion and sedimentation, and maintain local traffic during construction.

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

Implementation

Project Costs
Columbus plans to borrow $8,638,089 from the WPCLF to install new sewer lines and $6,244,289 from the WSRLA for replacement waterlines. During the 20-year loan period Columbus will save approximately $1,189,973 by using WPCLF funding and $860,206 by using WSLRA funding at the standard rate of 0.54%, compared to the market rate of 1.79%.

Local Economy
The current Columbus residential sewer bill associated with this system is approximately $605/year, and the residential water bill is approximately $472/year. Projected residential bills with the implementation of this and other associated projects are expected to increase to an approximately $753/year sewer bill and $513/year water bill, which is approximately 1.5% and 1% respectively of $51,612, the median household income (MHI) of Columbus.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in August 2021. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2021 and is expected to be complete by the spring of 2023.

Public Participation

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed storm sewer and waterline installation and contact information was provided for any public questions or concerns.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx 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 within an existing public wastewater collection and water distribution systems, which involves improvements to the stormwater, sanitary, and water distribution systems. 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.*
  The project involves installing and replacing sanitary, storm sewer, and waterline segments within the previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside the roadway, in areas lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work is involved, and there will be no construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. If necessary, tree clearing is to occur within seasonal clearing dates to protect endangered bat species located in the area. 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 cost-effective, as it involves alleviating capacity concerns through the replacement and installation of sewers and water mains to increase the performance of the wastewater collection system and water distribution system in the area. Taking no action will continue to limit their performance, lead to public health impacts, and will continue to accumulate maintenance costs. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will improve the safety and efficiency of wastewater and potable water transport.

- *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; and will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.*
  This project involves the separation of existing combined sewers which service the area. It does not create or relocate a discharge to surface or ground waters, will not extend service into undeveloped areas, nor increase the volume of current wastewater discharges. Additionally, the project involves the replacement of existing water mains and will not result in any increased withdrawals from either surface or ground waters.

Based upon the available planning information for this project and the materials presented within this LER, Ohio EPA concludes that the proposed projects will not result in any significant adverse impacts to any environmental features. The projects are 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.

These projects will increase the performance of the existing wastewater distribution system and water distribution system, mitigating threats to public health and allowing for the redevelopment and growth of the East Franklinton area.

Contact

Kristin Parrish
Ohio EPA-DEFA
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049
(614) 644-3662
kristin.parrish@epa.ohio.gov

Exhibit 1: Project Location Map

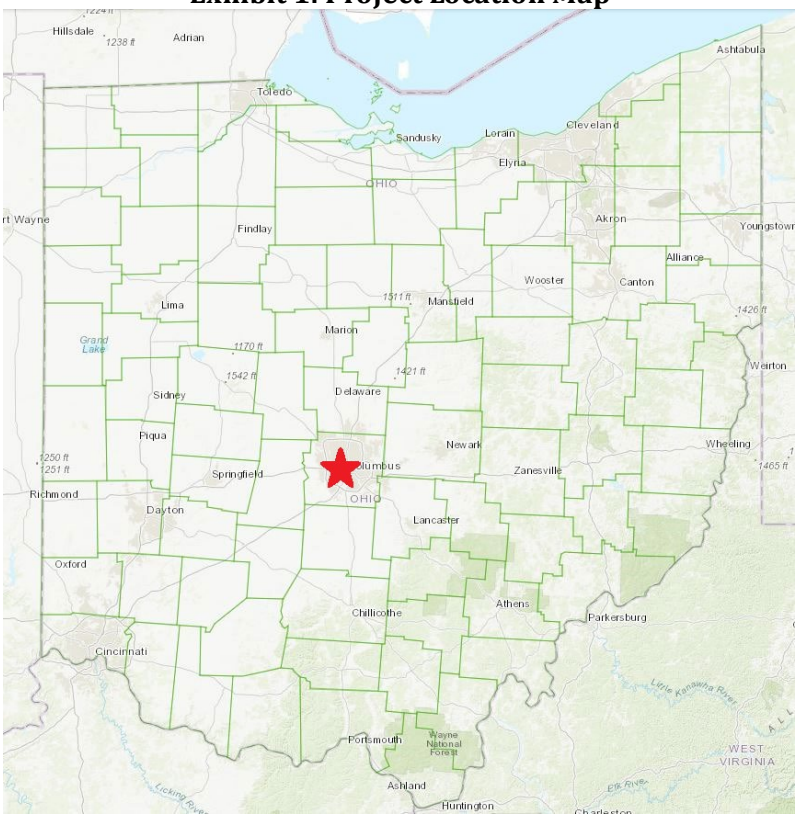

Exhibit 2: Project Location Map

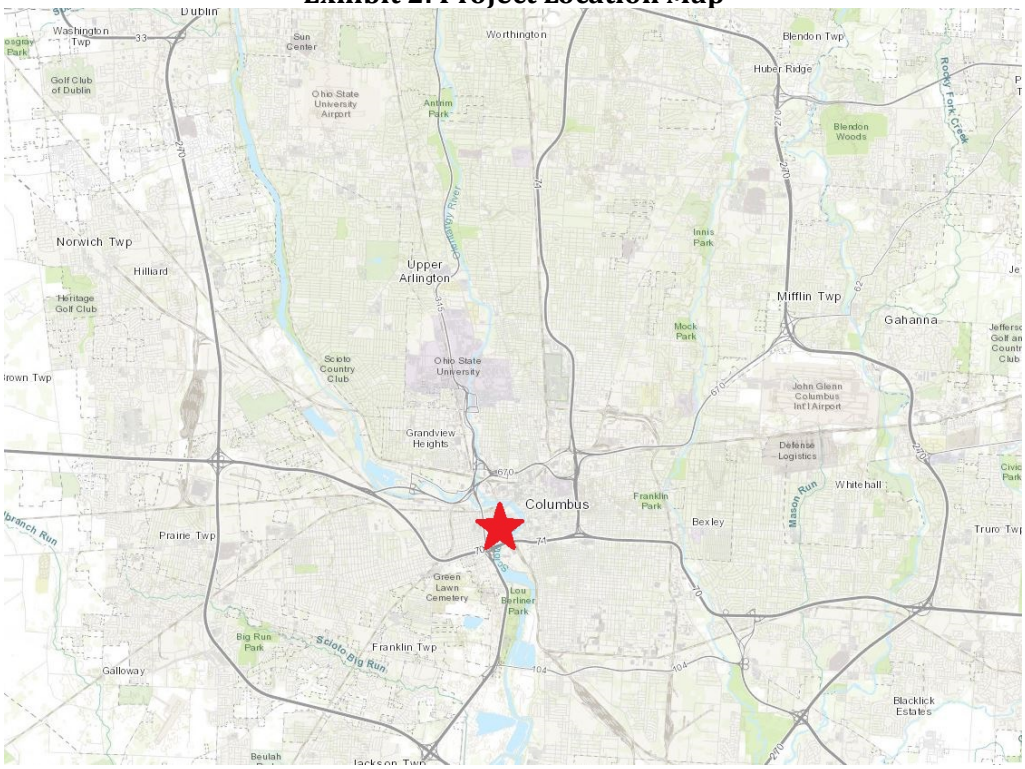

Exhibit 3: Project Location Map