



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

February 25, 2022

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Water Quality Assurance Lab Renovation
Loan number: FS390274-0331**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a water quality lab renovation project in Columbus which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) 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 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. 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

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: Water Quality Assurance Lab Renovation

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

Loan Number: FS390274-0331

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$12,162,000 from the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the construction of renovations to the Water Quality Assurance Lab including updated equipment and ergonomic improvements. Construction will take place within the confines of the laboratory, therefore limiting potential impacts to environmental features.

History and Existing Conditions

The Water Quality Assurance Lab (WQAL), located at 910 Dublin Road in the Dana G. Rinehart Public Utilities Complex, provides water quality testing in support of Columbus' three water treatment plants (Hap Cremean, Dublin Road, and Parsons Avenue) and the water distribution system. The WQAL performs essential functions such as numerous daily tests of the raw water and finished water to ensure that targets for all three water plants and the distribution system are being met.

The WQAL facility consists of office space and laboratory space to accommodate approximately 16 staff plus equipment and tools to conduct a wide range of water quality analysis and research activities. Most of these components are original lab assets from 1984 and are now past their useful life and do not meet current laboratory design or ergonomic standards. Equipment is aging and replacement parts are difficult to produce. When the lab was originally designed, computer workstations were not in use and subsequent installations have not been ergonomically designed.

Anticipated population growth over the next 50 years in the area will increase the laboratory information and data management needs at this facility. Upgrades to the lab are necessary to improve workflow/efficiency, address ergonomic needs, better accommodate current equipment, meet data management needs, and prepare the facility for future analytical testing requirements.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to renovate the Water Quality Assurance Lab to meet current and anticipated needs and provide a layout that meets current laboratory design standards. The WQAL project will provide renovations to HVAC, electrical, fume hoods, gas/vacuum/air fixtures, cabinetry, and ergonomic upgrades. In addition, the lab will be updated to allow for implementation of a Laboratory Information Management System. New laboratory layouts were evaluated based on capital costs, operational needs, reliability, and non-cost considerations such as safety.

This project will help bring this facility up to current standards so that it can continue to provide mandated testing to support the three Columbus water treatment plants which provide a reliable source of water to Columbus and the surrounding communities.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing WQAL, therefore minimizing effects on environmental resources.

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

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$12,162,000 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period Columbus will save approximately \$1,679,414 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.58%, compared to the market rate of 1.83%.

Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested March loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$534/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated water infrastructure projects are expected to increase to approximately \$608/year, or 1.2% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$51,612.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2022. Construction is expected to begin late in 2021 and to be completed by the end of 2023.

Public Participation

A public notice is posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed construction project. Contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> 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 a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action within an existing public water treatment system, which involves the functional replacement of and improvements to existing mechanical equipment. 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 for the project is limited to the interior of the existing Water Quality Assurance Lab. No environmental impacts will be created.

It is cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed project is cost effective as it involves seeking updates and replacements to existing equipment so that quality and efficiency of water quality monitoring can be improved. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will provide support to Columbus' water treatment plants and allow for distribution of safe potable water to Columbus residents.

Does not create a new, or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, or substantially increase the volume of discharge or 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 replacement of water quality laboratory equipment and does not otherwise alter Columbus's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or usage of potable water).

Contact information

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Exhibit 1: Project location map



Exhibit 2: Project location map

