



July 28, 2023

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Blacklick Creek Interceptor Air Quality Facility Improvements
Loan number: CS390274-0360**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sanitary sewer odor control system construction 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Blacklick Creek Interceptor Air Quality Facility Improvements

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0360

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested funding from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Fund (WPCLF) for construction of an air quality control system along the Blacklick Creek Sanitary Interceptor Sewer (BCSIS). The project is necessary in order to provide air quality and odor control along the BCSIS as well as aid in the reduction of sewer system corrosion. Construction will occur on a previously disturbed construction site, therefore limiting impacts to environmental features.

History & Existing Conditions

In 2016, Columbus began construction of the Blacklick Creek Sanitary Interceptor Sewer (BCSIS) to provide sanitary sewer service to the northeastern portion of Franklin County. This project has installed 23,000 linear feet of concrete tunnel along Reynoldsburg-New Albany Road beginning at the intersection with Morse Road and ending at the southernmost point at the intersection of Blacklick Ridge Boulevard.

Following completion of the BCSIS, a Ventilation and Odor Control Study was performed to evaluate odor and corrosion control recommendations for the recently constructed tunnel and associated force mains. This included a ventilation analysis and recommendation for an odor control facility. The size and type of size and type of facility was determined based on the volume of airflow requiring treatment from the BCSIS, existing sanitary system, and future sanitary connections. Air quality testing at existing manholes was also utilized for this development.

Project Description

Following the results of the BCSIS Ventilation and Odor Control Study, Columbus will construct a new air quality facility for the recently constructed Blacklick Creek Sanitary Interceptor Sewer. The facility will be an approximately 1,000 square foot single story building to house equipment and controls. It will provide improved air quality and odor control for the region by through the removal of foul air contaminants and aid in the reduction of sewer system corrosion by treating hydrogen sulfide generated from within the BCSIS.

The proposed facility has connections to the BCSIS at manholes on the north and south side of Blacklick Ridge Boulevard via air piping. The foul air system will consist of a duct system and fan to

draw foul air from the tunnel to the air quality control facility. Influent air will be balanced and controlled using a biofilter to remove organic and inorganic odor constituents. Fencing will secure the immediate area of the fan control building and biofilter and an access drive will be constructed from Blacklick Ridge Boulevard.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the previously disturbed site associated with the construction of the BCSIS, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control dust, erosion, and sedimentation, and maintain local traffic during construction.

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

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$8,817,985 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$1,364,652 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 2.66%, compared to the market rate of 3.91%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested August loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus annual residential sewer bill is approximately \$647. Projected annual residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated projects are expected to increase to approximately \$866, or 1.6% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$54,902.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in August 2023. Construction will begin following loan award and is expected to be completed by January 2026.

Public Participation

Public notices were posted on the City of Columbus's Public Utilities webpage which detailed the proposed construction, and contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns. Notification letters will also be mailed out in advance to residents located near the project area. These letters will provide detailed information regarding the project and important contact numbers. A public meeting detailing the project was held on March 9, 2022.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/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 criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, an action which involves the construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent or appurtenant to existing facilities. Furthermore, the projects meet the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

Will have no significant environmental effect, will have no effect on high-value environmental resources, and will not require extensive specific impact mitigation.

The project includes construction of a facility within the previously disturbed construction area for the Blacklick Creek Sanitary Interceptor Sewer; therefore, an area lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work are scheduled to occur, and there will be no construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. No tree clearing is necessary for the project. The contractor is responsible for dust control, sedimentation, and erosion control.

Is cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed project is cost effective since the overall costs and benefits of installing an air quality control facility outweigh the future maintenance and rehabilitation needed from sanitary sewer corrosion from hydrogen sulfide if no action is taken. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will aid in improving air quality and odor control in the area.

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.

This project involves the construction of an air quality control facility along the existing Blacklick Creek Sanitary Interceptor Sewer and will not create a new discharge, increase the volume of current discharges, nor create the capacity to serve a greater population than the interceptor sewer was originally constructed to serve.

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 help to improve air quality and odor control for the area surrounding the BCSIS.

Contact Information

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Exhibit 1: Project location map



Exhibit 2: Project location map

