



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

November 16, 2021

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
SWWTP Boiler System Operational Improvements
Loan number: CS390274-0375**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a wastewater treatment plant improvements 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,

Jonathan Bernstein

Jonathan Bernstein, Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Name: SWWTP Boiler System Operational Improvements

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

Loan number: CS390274-0375

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$1,180,115 from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to address deficiencies in the digester gas, safety vent piping, and combustion air systems at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant. Construction will take place within the confines of the existing plant and is not expected to have adverse environmental impacts.

History and Existing Conditions

Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) is one of two large municipal wastewater treatment plants operated by the City of Columbus. Within the plant, the service building boiler train provides heat for a majority of the buildings at the north end of the SWWTP. These boilers were upgraded in 2015. Several issues with the boilers have since been identified.

Project Description

This project includes operational improvements to the SWWTP boiler system such as an automatic blowdown system, modification of the chemical injection system, operational improvements to the feed water tank, modification to the safety vent piping, and an upgrade to the combustion air system.

The project involves rerouting the emergency blow-off piping, installing a common tuning header on the discharge side of the boilers, re-piping the Hartford loops including the chemical dosing piping, upgrading the blowdown system with conductivity sensors to allow for automatic blowdowns, and upgrading the chemical dosing system with sample coolers.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing wastewater treatment plant, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control erosion and sedimentation and minimize the creation of dust during construction.

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

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$1,180,115 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$163,636 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 0.65%, compared to the market rate of 1.90%.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately \$565/year. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated wastewater projects are expected to increase to approximately \$737/year, or 1.4% of the median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$51,612.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in December 2021. Construction will start following the loan award and is expected to last 18 months.

Public Participation

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed construction project. Contact information was provided for any public questions or concerns. Reviews of the respective environmental resources were completed by Ohio EPA, Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA). The review agency does not oppose the project.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx> (Under the "What's New" tab, scroll to: "Documents Available for Review and Comment - WPCLF Documents for Review and Comment") 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 for the replacement of existing treatment works. 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.*
Construction for the project is limited to the previously disturbed footprint of the existing Southerly WWTP, which lacks important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety. Although construction will occur within the floodplain, no new structures will be installed above the existing grade and the contractor will commit to take all necessary precautions to protect project work and equipment against flooding occurrences.
- *Is cost effective and not controversial.*
The proposed project is cost effective as it involves seeking replacements to existing equipment. Operation and maintenance costs to existing equipment will decrease at the completion of this project from the reduction in required labor and maintenance. DEFA 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 involves the replacement of equipment within the footprint of the existing treatment plant. The project will not increase wastewater discharges, nor provide capacity to serve a greater population. There will be no change in pollutant loading.

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 provide operational improvements to the boiler system at Southerly WWTP to allow for continued wastewater treatment efficiency and effectiveness to protect public health and the environment.

Contact

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Exhibit 1: Project location



Exhibit 2: Project location map

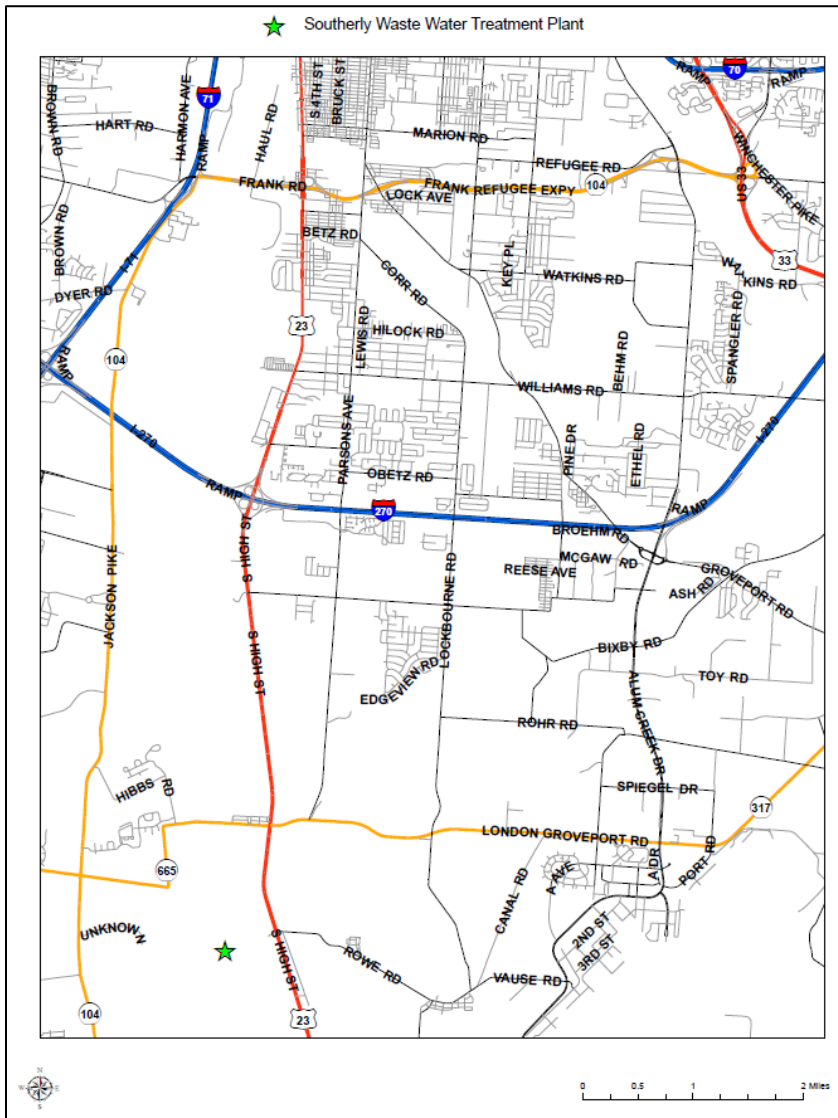


Exhibit 3: Project location within aerial imagery of SWWTP

