



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

May 2, 2022

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio – Hamilton County
MUWWTP Thickening Replacement and Pumping Improvements
Loan number: CS391525-0163**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a wastewater treatment project in Cincinnati 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,

Kathleen Courtright

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: MUWWTP Thickening Replacement and Pumping Improvements

Applicant: Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio
138 E. Court Street, Room 603
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Loan Number: CS391525-0163



Figure 1. Hamilton County

Project Summary

The Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio (Board) has requested funding from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to finance the MUWWTP Thickening Replacement and Pumping Improvements project. Work for this facilities improvement project will include construction that will increase the reliability of equipment within the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). Due to the project work being almost entirely inside the WWTP, environmental impacts are expected to be minimal.

History & Existing Conditions

The Board, based in Hamilton County (Figure 1), is responsible for the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSDGC), also known as the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD). MSD operates a number of different WWTPs within the city of Cincinnati, including the Muddy Creek WWTP (MUWWTP).

At the MUWWTP, MSD identified deficiencies in their Solids Handling Master Plan, intended to address failing assets at the plant. The existing gravity belt thickeners have reached the end of their useful life and will be replaced as part of this project. Thickening building modifications are required to accommodate the replacement equipment. Additionally, waste activated sludge (WAS) at the facility is double pumped and improvements will be made to eliminate this double pumping when replacing pumps.

Project Description

The project consists of construction to increase the reliability of WAS thickening, WAS and primary sludge (PS) pumping, and mitigation of sludge odors in the Secondary Thickening Building. The work includes demolition of the existing gravity belt thickeners and associated piping, WAS pumps, primary sludge pumps, restroom and HVAC system; installation of new rotary drum thickeners, associated piping, and controls; new odor control system and controls; new polymer blending units and controls; new storage totes and containment area; new thickened sludge pumps with variable frequency drives (VFDs); new overhead rolling doors; new HVAC system; new WAS pumps with VFDs and flow meters; and new primary sludge pumps with inline grinders.



Figure 2. Red box outlines the Muddy Creek WWTP where construction will take place

Implementation

The Board proposes to borrow \$3,860,000 from the Ohio WPCLF at an interest rate of 0.86%; interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award. Any potential additional grant funding would decrease correspondingly the WPCLF loan amount. Assuming a 20-year loan, borrowing this amount in WPCLF dollars could save the Board \$541,860 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate (2.11%).

No sewer rate increases are scheduled as a result of this project. Construction is scheduled to begin after loan award and to be completed in 12 months.

Public Participation

MSD informed the Ohio EPA that the public had at least three opportunities to comment and participate in MSDGC's annual Capital Improvement Program adoption and construction funding legislation adoption at Hamilton County's Board of County Commissioners meetings. There were no comments nor participation from the public on this project.

Ohio EPA is unaware of opposition to or controversy about the project. Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its webpage (<https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and->

[offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements](#)) and will provide it on request to interested parties.

Conclusion

The proposed project meets the project type criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action within an existing public wastewater 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, will require no specific impact mitigation, and will have no effect on high-value environmental resources because the construction will be taking place inside and just outside of an existing WWTP that has experienced previous excavation. There are no high-value environmental resources in this developed area.

Is cost effective, is not a controversial action, and will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population because there is no viable alternative to replacing failing mechanical equipment inside a WWTP. Ohio EPA is unaware of controversy about or opposition to this project. As this project is purely mechanical replacement, service will not be extended in any way nor provide additional capacity.

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 because this project merely upgrades existing mechanical equipment in the WWTP and has no other effect on the city sewer system.

Contact information

Anna Johnson
Ohio EPA – DEFA – OFA
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43215

Anna.Johnson@epa.ohio.gov