



June 5, 2024

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
SWWTP SW Switching Station Switchgear Replacement
Loan number: CS390274-0426**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a switchgear replacement project at Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) 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: SWWTP SW Switching Station Switchgear Replacement

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0426

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$2,488,000 from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the replacement of the Southwest Switching Station switchgear at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP). Construction will take place within the confines of the existing plant and is not expected to cause adverse environmental impacts.

History & Existing Conditions

Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) is one of two large municipal wastewater treatment plants operated by the City of Columbus.

The electrical power distribution for SWWTP is reliant upon four existing switching stations, which are located in each quadrant of the plant site. These existing switching stations and associated switchgears are near the end of their useful life.

Specifically, within the plant's Southwest Switching Station (SWSS), the building where the switchgear is housed was found to be clean and well-maintained. The existing switchgear and wiring do not show corrosion to be present. The plant performs routine maintenance on the switchgear per the manufacturer's recommendations. In addition, an outside contractor that specializes in high voltage switchgear performs routine maintenance on the switchgear every two to three years. The HVAC system is relatively new and operational. The building is also equipped with an activated carbon air filtration system that was visually observed to be in good working condition.

However, the switchgear itself contains two stacks which are damaged and currently isolated from the rest of the distribution system. The incoming wiring to the damaged switchgear is disconnected from the damaged main breaker, has been removed from the equipment, and remains stored or connected to spare equipment, and temporary overheard wiring has been installed to continue operations. Additionally, the switchgear requires two control voltages to operate each braker which has become an issue when returning the switchgear to operation.

Project Description

The selected alternative for this project is to replace the existing switchgear in kind with a standard metal clad switchgear. This was determined to be the most cost-effective and time efficient switchgear option. This option will not require a new building to house the new switchgear and the

existing conductors will be able to be reused as long as they are confirmed to be in good condition. Installing the replacement switchgear within the same footprint as the existing switchgear will also reduce the time required for the replacement.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing wastewater treatment plant buildings, 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 \$2,488,000 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save \$386,392 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 2.73%, compared to the market rate of 3.98%. WPCLF interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately \$647 per year. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated wastewater projects are expected to increase to approximately \$866 per year, or 1.5% of the median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$58,575.

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

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in June 2024. Construction will start following the loan award and is expected to be completed by July 2026.

Public Participation

The City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage details proposed Capital Improvement Projects within the Division of Sewerage & Drainage. 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 criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (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 that is beyond its useful service life. Operation and maintenance costs to existing equipment will decrease at the completion of this project from the decrease 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, 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 removal and 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 Ohio EPA’s review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Limited Environmental Review, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

This project will provide new electrical switching stations to accommodate existing and anticipated future plant power distribution needs.

Contact Information

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Exhibit 1: Project location map



Exhibit 2: Project location map

