



August 12, 2024

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Columbus – Franklin County
Moler Street Overflow Interceptor Sewer
Loan number: CS390274-0400**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for an interceptor sewer 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,

Steve Malone, for

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: Moler Street Overflow Interceptor Sewer

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0400

Project Summary

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$51,691,890 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to construct a connection from the Moler Street combined sewer overflow (CSO) regulator to the Olentangy Scioto Intercepting Sewer (OSIS) Augmentation and Relief Sewer (OARS) Shaft 3. Separating the combined sewer flow from the existing storm sewer in Moler Street is necessary to eliminate CSO discharges so that only stormwater is discharged to the Scioto River.

This project will occur within existing roadways and city rights-of-way and no significant adverse environmental impacts are expected.

History & Existing Conditions

The Moler Street Regulator is located north of the Near South sewershed of Columbus. Many sewers in the Near South area are tributary to the South Side Interceptor Sewer (SSIS) and the Moler Street Interceptor Sewer (MSIS), both of which are impacted as part of this project. During normal flow conditions, combined flows (wastewater and stormwater) from the Moler sewer area is conveyed to the Jackson Pike Wastewater Treatment Plant through the SSIS and MSIS.

Under extreme wet weather conditions, the Moler Street CSO Regulator controls the discharge of combined flow to the existing sanitary system by overflowing to a storm sewer that ultimately discharges into the Scioto River. Additionally, it is believed that the current flow restriction between the MSIS and SSIS in conjunction with the Moler Street Regulator overflow weir configuration are contributing to water-in-basement (WIB) occurrences in homes upstream of the Near South sewershed.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to reduce the number of anticipated CSO activations to zero at the Moler Street CSO Regulator and eliminate potential water-in-basement occurrences. A connection will be constructed from the Moler Street CSO regulator to the OSIS OARS Shaft 3. This proposed Moler Street Overflow Interceptor Sewer (MSOIS) will convey overflow from both the SSIS and MSIS to the OARS tunnel Shaft 3 and effectively eliminate CSOs from the Moler Street Regulator. The storm sewer and existing outfall will be disconnected from the Moler Street Regulator and will only convey discharge stormwater to the Scioto River when the MSOIS is complete. Due to the added relief to the SSIS and

MSIS, the MSOIS is anticipated to reduce WIB occurrences in the tributary areas.

Project construction will occur within existing rights-of-way alongside roadways and existing utilities. The contractor will be responsible for dust control and control of erosion and sedimentation during construction. Tree clearing is expected to occur within seasonal timeframes to prevent impacts to endangered bat species.

The project area is generally bounded by West Moler Street on the south, South High Street on the east, the Scioto River on the west, and West Gates Street on the north. Maps of the project location are provided in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Columbus plans to borrow \$51,691,890 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period Columbus will save \$8,023,851 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 2.72%, compared to the market rate of 3.97%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

Local Economy

The current Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately \$661 per year. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this project and other associated sewer projects are expected to increase to approximately \$847 per year, or around 1.4% of 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 August 2024. Construction is expected to begin shortly after loan award and be completed by July 2025.

Public Participation

A public notice is posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed construction project as well as contact information for public questions and 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 within an existing public wastewater collection system, which involves functional replacement of the existing system. 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 sanitary sewer system within roadways and public rights-of-way containing existing utilities, which lack important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices during construction will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety.

Is cost effective and not controversial.

The proposed project is cost effective as there is no alternative to eliminating CSOs and water-in-basement events to improve the overall wastewater treatment system process. Ohio EPA 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.

The project involves the construction of a dedicated stormwater system within the city's wastewater collection system. 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 eliminate a CSO overflow to protect public health and the environment.

Contact Information

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Exhibit 1: Project location map

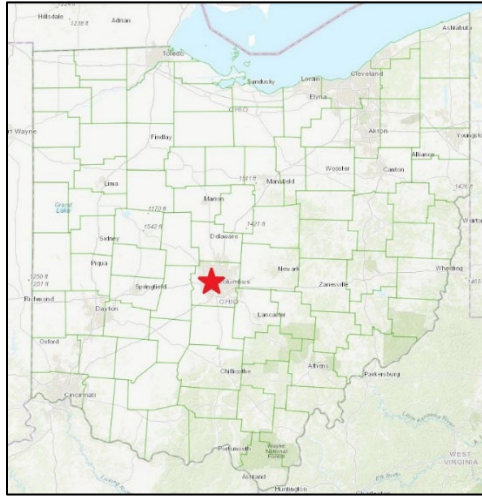
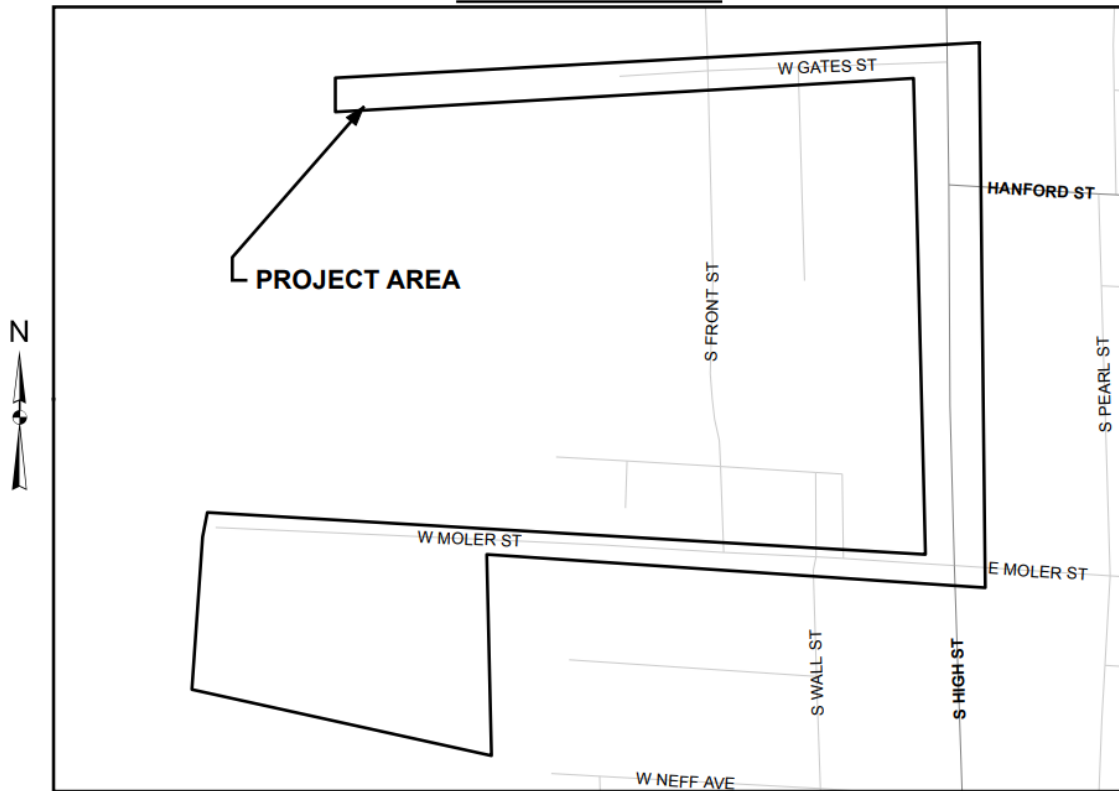


Exhibit 2: Project location map
Moler Street Overflow Intercepting Sewer
CIP 650763-100000



LOCATION MAP
NOT TO SCALE