



February 9, 2024

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Heath – Licking County
Final Clarifier and Solids Storage Building Upgrades
Loan number: CS390439-0008**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a wastewater treatment plant expansion project in Heath 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: Final Clarifier and Solids Storage Building Upgrades

Applicant: City of Heath
1287 Hebron Road
Heath, Ohio 43056

Loan Number: CS390439-0008



Figure 1. Licking County

Project Summary

The City of Heath, in Licking County (Figure 1) has requested funding from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to finance the Final Clarifier and Solids Storage Building Upgrades project. This project is intended to provide the City of Heath with expanded peak capacity at the Heath Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in anticipation of future residential, commercial, and industrial development.

History & Existing Conditions

The City of Heath is located in Licking County approximately 35 miles east of Columbus. Heath owns and operates their own WWTP and collection system. The Heath WWTP was constructed in the 1950s with multiple upgrades over the decades. The last major project was in the early 1990s which included the construction of the new clarifiers and filter building, as well as the perimeter berm. The most recent upgrades were in the early 2000s with solids handling improvements and late 2000s with liquid stream improvements. The Heath WWTP discharges into the South Fork Licking River.

Heath is anticipating future development within Licking County and hopes to be proactive by examining their current WWTP capacity and determining what upgrades could be made to improve that capacity and add redundancy for maintenance purposes. This project consists of equipment upgrades that will allow Heath to raise their peak capacity from 7.0 million gallons a day (MGD) to 10.8 MGD. Average daily capacity of the WWTP will remain unchanged.

Project Description

This project consists of the following upgrades:

1. Construction of two new clarifiers, Return Activated Sludge (RAS) structure, and associated site improvements, including yard piping, paving, regrading, and any dewatering required during excavation.
2. Installation of two new slide gates in clarifier influent diversion structure, including demolition of concrete knockout panels.
3. Demolition of brine tank.

4. Construction of new sludge storage building with a transfer belt conveyor including construction of and a new drain pump station and associated site improvements, HVAC improvements to existing sludge storage building, integration of new conveyor belt control panel with existing control panel in sludge handling building, installation of a fire alarm system, and any dewatering required during excavation.
5. Cleaning of aeration tanks.
6. Structural repairs at the aeration tanks, aerobic digesters, gravity thickener, and digester control building.
7. Conversion of the existing chlorine disinfection system to UV disinfection, to include modifications to the existing chlorine contact basin and installation of new UV disinfection equipment (If funding allows).
8. Replacement of existing RAS pumps, RAS flow meter, and Waste Activated Sludge (WAS) flow meter, to include any modifications necessary to existing equipment pads to accommodate new pumps (If funding allows).
9. Partial demolition of abandoned aeration basins, fill, grading, and surface restoration (If funding allows).

All of the proposed upgrades have been designed to accommodate a future peak flow of 10.8 MGD. With the proposed upgrades, the plant's average daily capacity will remain unchanged. See Figure 2 below for a map of the project area. The improvements will expand the WWTP's footprint slightly to the east.



Figure 2. Heath WWTP

Implementation

The City of Heath proposes to borrow approximately \$15.3 million in Ohio WPCLF funding at the standard interest rate of 2.47%. Assuming a 20-year loan, borrowing at this rate could save Heath approximately \$2.3 million over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.72%. WPCLF interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

Sewer rates will be raised in order to pay for this project. Heath raised rates 3% in 2023, and 3% raises are also planned for 2024 and 2025. The average annual sewer bill for residents served by Heath in 2022 was \$372 and is projected to be \$407 in 2027 after the increased rates are implemented. This is 0.8% of the median household income (MHI: \$51,524) and compares favorably to the Ohio average annual sewer bill, \$490. Construction will begin in March 2024 and will be completed in approximately 13 months.

Public Participation

Public service meetings where the plant expansion and WPCLF loan were discussed occurred on September 26th, 2022, November 28th, 2023, January 23rd, 2023, and February 27th, 2023, at 5:30 pm. These meetings are open to the public, and meeting times and dates are posted on the city website. The agenda is also emailed to the local media. Heath passed a resolution directing the mayor to apply for a WPCLF loan for planning, design, and construction of wastewater facilities and designating a dedicated repayment source for the loan on December 19th, 2022, at 7:30 pm at a public council meeting. No opposition to the plant improvements were noted at public service meetings or council meetings.

The City of Heath employs several methods of informing the public whenever there are water or sewer rate increases. Rate increases are announced at public service meetings, and city council votes on and approves the increases at city council meetings open to the public. The rate increases are then posted on the city website.

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 web page: <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 criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action within an existing public wastewater treatment system, which involves functional replacements and improvements to the WWTP. 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 construction will be taking place inside and beside an existing WWTP property that has experienced previous excavation. There are no high-value resources in this developed area. The area beside the WWTP received a Phase 1 survey and no archaeological artifacts were found. Trees that need to be removed will be

removed in the correct season to avoid impacting endangered bat species. The project is within the 100-year floodplain and has been reviewed by the local floodplain coordinator and approved.

Is cost effective and is not a controversial action because doing nothing was not an option and the WWTP alternatives were evaluated based on best technologies available and appropriate for this project. Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to 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 because this project simply increases peak flow capacity and not average capacity, and has no other effect on discharges. Service will not be extended in any way.

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 result in an expanded capacity WWTP that has improved efficiency and performance.

Contact Information

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