



**July 1, 2025**

**Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact  
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies**

**Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio – Hamilton County  
Locust Street/Muchmore Road Local Sewer  
Loan Number: CS391525-0191**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a sewer infrastructure extension project in Hamilton County 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 EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments 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 program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to the email address of the contact named at the end of the EA. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, the Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### **Project Identification**

Project: Locust Street/Muchmore Road Local Sewer

Applicant: Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio  
1600 Gest Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45204

Loan Number: CS391525-0191



**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 Locust Street/Muchmore Road Local Sewer project. Work for this project includes the decommissioning of a small package wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and the extension of sewer service to five properties.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

The Board, based in Hamilton County (Figure 1) manages the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSDGC), also known as the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD). MSD operates a number of different WWTPs and a collection system within the City of Cincinnati and surrounding areas.

A condominium complex and some of the residential homes surrounding it on Locust Street and Muchmore Road in Columbia Township submitted a citizen petition to MSD to request that they extend sewer service to them. The condominium complex currently utilizes a private sewer that is treated by a package WWTP and discharges to Walton Creek. Other residential homes in the neighborhood are treated by household sewage treatment systems (HSTS), which were all installed prior to December 2004. The package plant has had over 30 permit violations over the past five years, including bacteria violations, making it a high priority for decommissioning in order to protect public health.

### **Population and Flow Projections**

MSD serves a population of about 830,600 people, with no expectations of major population growth.

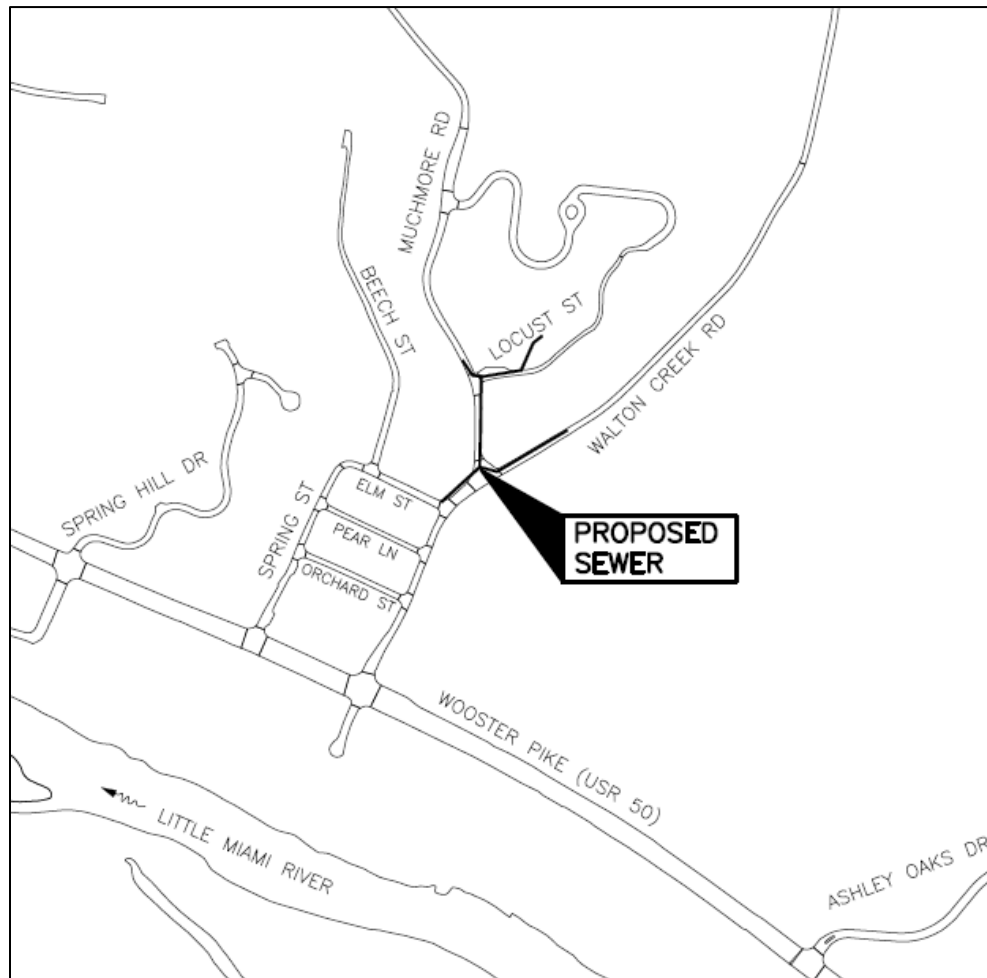
The projected flows for the project are based on 400 gallons per day per home, with the number of existing houses and buildable parcels that could potentially connect in the future totaling 72. This comes out to about 0.12 million gallons per day (MGD) projected additional daily flows for the Little Miami WWTP. This WWTP currently treats an average daily flow of 27 MGD, with plenty of capacity to handle the additional wastewater.

## **Alternatives**

MSD initially considered four different sewer alignments for the project, depending on the topography and condition of the downstream sewer, labeled by MSD as “baseline option,” “road alternate,” “west alternate,” and “alternates combined.” MSD ultimately chose the fourth option, “alternates combined,” which runs along the public right-of-way along Muchmore Road and the west side of the package plant. This option serves all of the affected properties and is the most cost effective.

## **Selected Alternative**

The project will consist of the installation of about 1,150 linear feet of 8-inch gravity sewer main and five 6-inch sewer laterals. One package WWTP and five HSTS will be removed. See Figure 2 below for a map of the project area.



**Figure 2. Map of the proposed sewer extension**

## **Implementation**

The Board proposes to borrow \$1.3 million from the Ohio WPCLF and is eligible for the 0% regionalization discount rate. Assuming a 20-year loan, borrowing this amount could save the Board approximately \$730,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 4.76%.

Homeowners will be responsible for removing their existing HSTS and rerouting their private plumbing as needed. In the future, the local Homeowner's Association (HOA) may also charge its members to decommission the private package plant that this project is bringing offline. There is also a one-time fee of \$480 per property to connect to the new sewer that will be paid at the time of connection.

The Board will not be raising sewer rates in order to pay for this project. The average annual sewer bill for residents served by the Board is \$619. This is 0.9% of the median household income (MHI: \$68,249) and is higher than the Ohio average annual sewer bill, \$528. Construction will begin in June 2025 and is scheduled to be completed in approximately seven months.

## **Public Participation**

This project has been discussed at county commission meetings that are open to the public. In addition, a public hearing was held on May 23, 2024. Four members of the affected HOA board attended the meeting and expressed their support of the project. No objections or opposition to the project was received during the following public comment period. MSD will send out a notice of construction to nearby residents and other entities who may be impacted by construction traffic.

Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to this project. This Environmental Assessment (EA) and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) will be posted on the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance website. Additionally, the EA and FNSI have been provided to the Board to be made available according to their public notification procedures.

## **Environmental Impacts**

The project has the potential to affect the following features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

### **Air Quality**

Contractors will ensure fugitive dust is minimized during construction by applying water or other environmentally benign dust suppressants. The local air pollution contribution by construction vehicles will be temporary and similar to that of vehicles regularly transiting the construction area. For these reasons, the project should have no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

## **Archaeological and Historical Resources**

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) map indicates that there is at least one historic building within the project area. Given that the project construction will be taking place within the road right-of-way, impacts to the historic building are not anticipated.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify SHPO of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the Office in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate. Work will not resume until a survey of the find and a determination of its value and effect has been made, and Ohio EPA authorizes work to continue.

#### Aquatic Habitat, Surface Water Resources

Walton Creek passes through a culvert within the project area. MSD will have an erosion control plan in place during construction and will use best management practices to avoid impacts. The sewer will be bored underneath the creek and culvert. This project will not result in increased withdrawals from any surface water resource.

#### Endangered Species, Fish, and Wildlife

The project will take place within the road right-of-way, an area that does not contain environmentally sensitive habitat that might support endangered species. This project is within the range of several endangered bat species. MSD is performing a survey for the presence of bats prior to tree removal.

This project is also within the range of the endangered clam rayed bean. Impacts to Walton Creek are not anticipated during this project due to boring and erosion control practices being in place.

#### Floodplains

A small portion of this project is within the floodplain of the Little Miami River, the 0.2% annual chance flood hazard area. As all construction will be taking place underground, impacts to the floodplain and/or flood flows and volumes are not anticipated.

#### Noise, Traffic, Aesthetics, and Safety

Construction noise will be locally audible and similar to that of small machinery used in the local area. Construction will involve excavation in road rights-of-way and residential yard areas adjacent to streets. Temporary disruption to local traffic will be controlled by use of standard measures (barricades, detours, signs, barrels, flaggers) to ensure safety. Trenches will be covered or filled at the end of each workday to help protect public safety. After construction is complete and road surfaces replaced and lawns restored, aesthetics will be little changed from pre-construction conditions. For these reasons, this project will result in no significant adverse long-term impacts to noise, traffic, safety, or aesthetics.

#### Unaffected Features

Based on the project's scope, location, and prior disturbances, the Board's proposed project is not expected to affect coastal zones, farmland, energy consumption, ground water resources, recreational land use, safe drinking water, sole source aquifers, terrestrial habitat, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers. These environmental attributes are not in the project area.

## **Conclusion**

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, 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 the elimination of a noncompliant package plant and the extension of sewer service to five new properties.

## **Contact information**

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