



**June 20, 2024**

**Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio – Hamilton County  
Stonebridge Relief Sewer  
Loan number: CS391525-0168**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sanitary sewer construction 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,

*Steve Malone, for*

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Project: Stonebridge Relief Sewer

Applicant: Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio  
138 East Court Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Loan Number: CS391525-0168



**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 Stonebridge Relief Sewer project. Work for this project will include construction of 16 new manholes and approximately 1,900 linear feet of new sanitary sewer along Stonebridge Lake.

### **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 wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) within the City of Cincinnati, including Muddy Creek, which receives flows from the existing sewer and manholes around Stonebridge Lake, located in western Cincinnati.

Stonebridge Lake is adjacent to several suburban neighborhoods and the Stonebridge Lake Condominium Association (SLCA). MSD has been receiving complaints since 2010 from the SLCA that two manholes adjacent to the lake overflow during heavy rainfall events. Field tests confirmed that the current sewer and manholes in the area are too small for heavy flow. A total of six alternatives were discussed to eliminate the problem, including doing nothing, securing the manhole lids to prevent overflows, upsizing the existing sewer, installing a new relief sewer to handle the heavy flows, adding a new wet weather pump station and force main, and reducing infiltration and inflow from upstream sewers.

Installing a new relief sewer was found to be the most feasible, cost-effective option. After then exploring several possible routes for the new sewer, MSD chose to place the new sewer on the east side of Stonebridge Lake, as this would involve the least amount of traffic disruptions and require fewer easements to be obtained than other routes.

### **Project Description**

The project consists of the construction of approximately 1,900 linear feet of 36-inch sanitary sewer and 16 new manholes. The alignment will run along the east side of Stonebridge Lake, underneath Werk Road, and along a ravine. See Figure 2 below for a map of the project area.



**Figure 2. Map of the project area**

**Implementation**

The Board proposes to borrow approximately \$3.8 million from the Ohio WPCLF at the standard interest rate of 2.73%. WPCLF interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award. Assuming a 20-year loan, borrowing this amount could save the Board approximately \$600,000 over the life of the loan compared to the current market rate of 3.98%.

Sewer rates will not be raised in order to pay for this project. The average annual sewer bill for residents served by the Board is \$618. This is 1.37% of the median household income (MHI:

\$45,235) and is higher than the Ohio average annual sewer bill, \$490. Construction began in January 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in approximately 18 months.

### **Public Participation**

Public participation opportunities for this project have been ongoing since 2018. The project has been discussed at Hamilton County Commissioners meetings from 2018 through 2023. MSD met with members of the affected Stonebridge Lakes HOA in September 2019 and January 2024. MSD sent out mailed notices to affected residents regarding the project in October 2019, November 2020, January 2023, and December 2023. And finally, MSD issued a notice of construction in January 2024 and a traffic alert press release in March 2024 regarding project detours.

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 collection system, which involves the functional improvements to existing manholes and sanitary sewer. 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 within previously disturbed road rights-of-way in residential areas within suburban Cincinnati. There are no high-value environmental resources in these developed areas.

**Is cost effective and is not a controversial action** because installing new relief sewer was found to be the best option for eliminating two overflowing manholes. Ohio EPA is unaware of opposition to or controversy about the 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 merely provides additional conveyance capacity for sanitary sewer and has no other effect on the city sewer system or 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 the elimination of two overflowing manholes adjacent to Stonebridge Lake.

**Contact Information**

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