



**March 6, 2025**

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

**Lancaster - Fairfield County  
Solids Handling Facility Upgrade  
Loan number: CS390504-0037**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a solids handling facility replacement project in Lancaster which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The LER describes the project, costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER fulfills the 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. In accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3745-150-05, this project meets the criteria for an LER rather than the more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Final 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

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Project: Solids Handling Facility Upgrade

Applicant: City of Lancaster  
104 East Main Street  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Loan Number: CS390504-0037



**Figure 1: Fairfield County**

### **Project Summary**

The City of Lancaster in Fairfield County has requested approximately \$11.3 million from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the replacement of the dewatering facility to handle sewage sludge from the Lawrence Street Water Pollution Control Facility. As construction will occur within the previously disturbed confines of the existing facility, environmental impacts are not expected.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

The Lawrence Street Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) is a wastewater treatment plant owned and operated by the City of Lancaster and serves a population of over 15,000. Wastewater is treated and discharged into the nearby Hocking River. The Lawrence Street WPCF stabilizes the biodegradable portion of the primary sludge in the WPCF digestion process. Thickened and digested sludge is housed in the three sludge storage tanks before it is pumped to the neighboring dewatering facility via the sludge pump station. The WPCF sends both primary and waste activated sludge to the dewatering facility to be dewatered and stabilized for land-application purposes. Since its installation, the sludge treatment process at the WPCF has been upgraded numerous times, with the most recent upgrade involving replacements of the sludge gravity thickener, digester, and sludge storage tanks.

The dewatering facility originated as solely a belt filter press when the wastewater plant was first built, and the lime stabilization process was added in 1995. Over the years of operation, the treatment configuration evolved to store and remove stabilized sludge outside the building on a drying pad reached via a belt conveyor. The existing building houses unused equipment from the original installation including the conveyance system, lime blending units, and a hopper. The equipment that is still operational such as the belt press, conveyors, and polymer mixers are very worn. An entire facility replacement is warranted to guarantee future longevity.

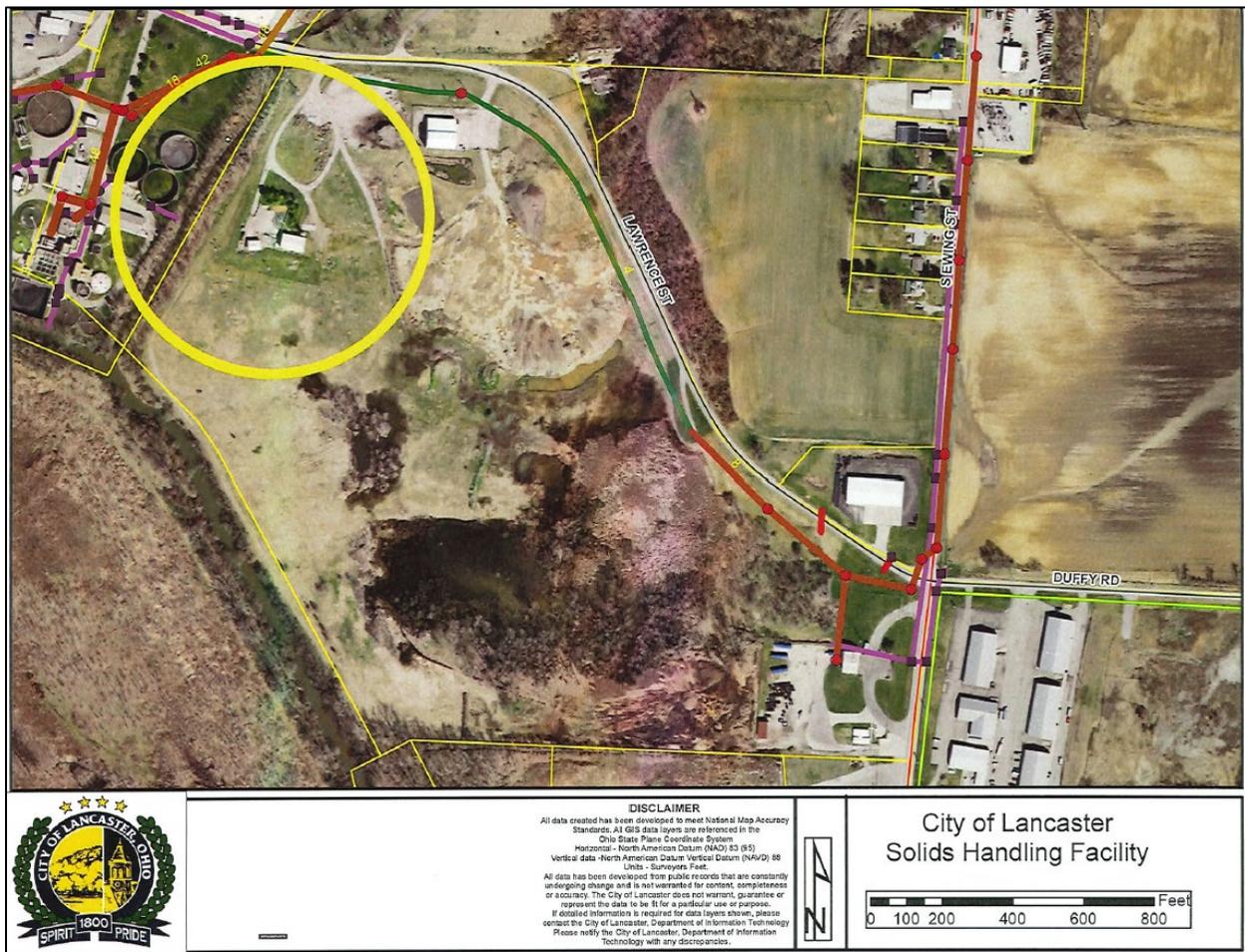
### **Project Description**

The proposed improvements in this project will include installation of a new sludge belt filter press, lime storage silo, polymer system, sludge conveyor, biosolids conveyor, and all associated appurtenances.

A new dewatering building will be placed north of the existing facility with a similar size and footprint. The new dewatering building is designed with the intention of providing an equal or better product, while not degrading the final biosolid product for users who prefer to land apply the biosolids. The existing dewatering facilities will be decommissioned and demolished.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the previously disturbed confines of the existing dewatering facility property, 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.

See Figure 2 below for a map of the project area.



**Figure 2. Solids Handling Facility**

## **Implementation**

Lancaster plans to borrow approximately \$11.3 million from the WPCLF over a 20-year loan period at the standard rate of 3.01%. When compared to the market rate of 4.26%, Lancaster will save \$1.8 million. WPCLF interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

The current annual Lancaster residential sewer bill is approximately \$499. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated sewer projects are expected to increase to approximately \$579, or 1.1% of median household income (MHI) of Lancaster, which is \$52,716. By using WPCLF financing for this project, Lancaster has minimized the economic impact on customers.

The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2025. Construction is expected to be completed by June 2026.

### **Public Participation**

Information regarding the Lawrence Street Water Pollution Control Facility and its wastewater treatment process is available on the City of Lancaster's website. Public participation was limited for this project as it involves construction on city property with access restricted from the public.

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

### **Conclusion**

The proposed project meets the criteria for a Limited Environmental Review; namely, it is an action for infrastructure improvements at an existing wastewater treatment plant. 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.**

This project is for the construction of a new facility within the footprint of the existing facility property, which lacks important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices 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 replacement is the only feasible alternative to provide an updated, safe, and efficient structure to provide a beneficial reuse for dewatered sludge. There is no known opposition to the proposed project and the city has minimized financial impact to customers by obtaining a low interest loan through the WPCLF.

#### **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 construction of a new dewatering facility and 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 construct new equipment and housing to replace the existing processed sludge dewatering and stabilization systems associated with Lancaster's Lawrence Street WPCF. This will allow for the continued beneficial reuse of biosolid waste as a product of the WPCF.

### **Contact Information**

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