



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

June 30, 2021

Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact

**City of Huron – Erie County
Huron WTP Tube Settler Improvements
Loan number: FS390465-0003**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a water treatment plant improvement project in Huron which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) 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 WSRLA 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,

Jonathan Bernstein

Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Project Identification

Project: WTP Tube Settler Improvements

Applicant: City of Huron
417 Main Street
Huron, OH 44839

Loan Number: FS390465-0003

Project Summary

The City of Huron in Erie County has requested \$3,144,637 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for construction of Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) improvements to the sedimentation basin in the city's water treatment plant. Specifically, this project will install tube settlers in the existing settling basins to optimize treatment and construct a building over the tube settlers to allow for better basin operation.

History and Existing Conditions

The Huron Water Treatment Plant (WTP) utilizes water from Lake Erie to produce drinking water for 3,600 service connections in the city as well as water sold to the Erie County Water and Sewer District. The Huron WTP is a traditional surface water treatment plant, utilizing coagulation, sedimentation, flocculation, and filtration. The plant has a rated capacity of 3.4 million gallons per day (MGD) and the ability to increase capacity to 5.0 MGD with the addition of sedimentation basins or tube settlers. The primary raw water intake is located approximately 2,200 feet from the shore of Lake Erie. A 36-inch diameter line brings water from the intake crib through a screen to a raw water wet well located on shore. Although the city has recently seen a decline in population, this decline is offset by the large volume of tourists that come to the region. The facility is expected to increase its water use incrementally over the next several years due to the potential to reach out to new customers in the area.

Because Lake Erie is the sole source of water for the Huron water treatment plant, the ability to treat for water quality is a necessity. Because Lake Erie is so vast, it is vulnerable to pollution from the many public access points and direct and indirect discharges that end up in the lake. The conditions make the city's water supply and subsequent treatment systems susceptible to changing raw water quality including turbidity spikes, water chemistry changes, significant contaminants, and cyanotoxins from HABs. HABs have been an increasing concern to water treatment plants along the shores of Lake Erie for several years.

The existing sedimentation basins in Huron's WTP need to be addressed. The sludge collection mechanism currently does not work as intended and requires the city to manually clean the basins once or twice a year. If a HAB event occurred, microcystis or other cyanobacteria could potentially build up in the basins through the sedimentation processes. As the cells begin to break down, intracellular toxins could be released into the raw water. The ability to remove sludge is a critical component of treatment during a HAB event. Microcystic cells must be removed with the sludge

before they are damaged and release toxins. If new cells containing toxins are continuously added to the sludge and the sludge is not periodically removed, a large cyanotoxin concentration could develop when the cells begin to break down and rupture. Cleaning out the sludge by hand during a HAB event would not produce a quick enough response time.

Project Description

With the existing concern that manual cleaning of Huron's WTP sedimentation basins could foster cyanotoxin growth, the installation of chain and flight scrapers will be implemented to bring the function of the sedimentation basins up to the original design standards. At the same time, enhanced settling equipment will be installed in the basins so the overall plant treatment capacity will be increased. This consists of tube settlers, or a series of plastic channels that decrease the distance particles have to travel which increases settling efficiency. Tube settlers will allow the flow through the basins to be increased to 1.468 MGD per basin and raise the capacity rating of the pretreatment process to 5.872 MGD.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing water treatment plant, 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.

Maps of the project location are provided in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Huron plans to borrow \$3,144,637 from the WSRLA. During the 30-year loan period Huron will save approximately \$667,438 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 0.54%, compared to the market rate of 1.79%.

Local Economy

The current Huron residential water bill is approximately \$380/year. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this project are expected to remain approximately \$380/year, or 0.7% of median household income (MHI) of Huron, which is \$56,513.

By using WSRLA financing for this project, Huron has minimized the economic impact on customers.

Project Schedule

Assuming loan award in July 2021, construction is expected to be completed by July 2022.

Public Participation

Huron discussed the nature of this project at several public council meetings, with these council meetings available on the city's website for public access and reference.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx> (Under the "What's New" tab, scroll to: "Documents Available for Review and Comment – WSRLA Documents for Review and Comment") 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 is a water treatment plant upgrade that qualifies for an LER and meets the following criteria:

- *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 water treatment plant, which lacks important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, and maintain safety.
- *Is cost-effective and not controversial.*
The proposed project is cost-effective as it involves upgrades to the existing sedimentation basins so that Huron is saved both the time and cost of manually cleaning the basins. DEFA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that would provide treatment optimization per the city's HAB General Plan.
- *Does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters; and does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, or substantially increase the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters.*
This project involves upgrades to structures within the footprint of the existing water treatment plant and does not otherwise alter Huron's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or usage of potable water).

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 help improve the operation of the Huron Water Treatment Plant and protect drinking water resources during HAB events.

Contact

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Exhibit 1: Project location map



Exhibit 2: Project location map

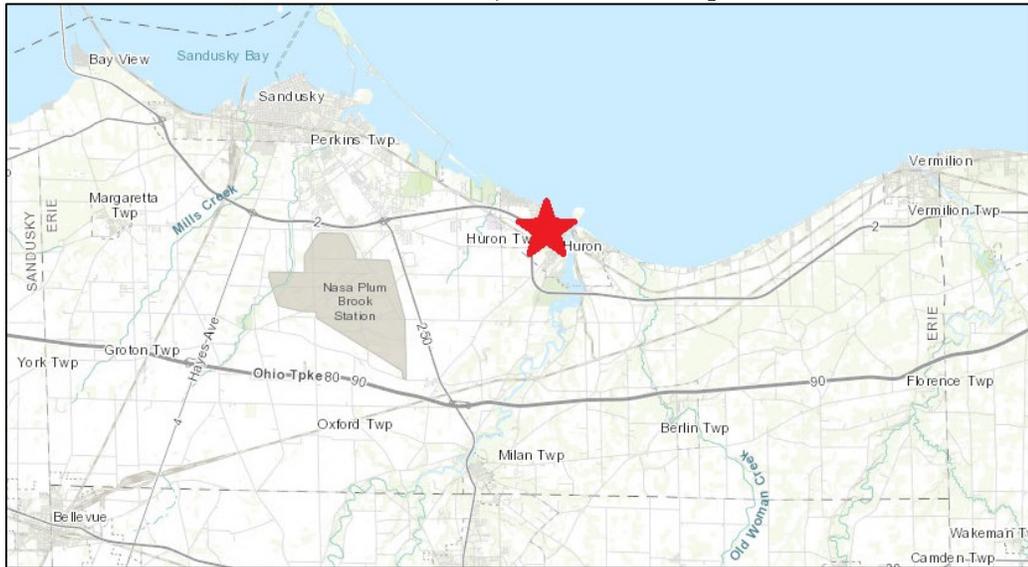


Exhibit 3: Project location

