



# State Revolving Fund Loan Programs

## Drinking Water, Clean Water, Nonpoint Source

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### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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#### TOWN OF WOLCOTTVILLE Stormwater System Improvements SRF PROJECT WW 22 09 44 01

**DATE: July 11, 2024**

**TARGET PROJECT APPROVAL DATE: August 12, 2024**

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The above entity has applied to the Wastewater State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program for a loan to finance all or part of the Drinking Water project described in the accompanying Environmental Assessment (EA). As part of facilities planning requirements, an environmental review has been completed which addresses the project's impacts on the natural and human environment. This review is summarized in the attached EA, which can also be viewed in color at <http://www.in.gov/ifa/srf/>.

#### II. PRELIMINARY FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

The SRF Wastewater Program has evaluated all pertinent environmental information regarding the proposed project and determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. Subject to responses received during the 30-day public comment period, and pursuant to Indiana Code 5-1.2-3, it is our preliminary finding that the construction and operation of the proposed facilities will result in no significant adverse environmental impact. In the absence of significant comments, the attached EA shall serve as the final environmental document.

#### III. COMMENTS

All interested parties may comment upon the EA/FNSI. Comments must be received at the address below by the target approval date above. Significant comments may prompt a reevaluation of the preliminary FNSI; if appropriate, a new FNSI will be issued for another 30-day public comment period. A final decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposed project shall be effected by finalizing, or not finalizing, the FNSI as appropriate. Comments regarding this document should be sent within 30 days to:

**April Douglas**  
Environmental Review Coordinator  
State Revolving Fund  
100 N. Senate Ave. IGCN 1275  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-234-7294  
[adouglas@ifa.in.gov](mailto:adouglas@ifa.in.gov)

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# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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## I. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name and Address: **Stormwater System Improvements**  
Town of Wolcottville  
103 W Myers Street  
Wolcottville, IN 46795

SRF Project Number: **WW 22 09 44 01**

Authorized Representative: Dean Domer, Town Council President

## II. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed stormwater projects are located in Noble County, Wolcottville 24K USGS Quadrangle, Orange Township, Township 35N, Range 10 E, and Sections 3, 4, and LaGrange County, Johnson Township, Township 36N, Range 10E, Sections 33 and 34. See **Figure 1**.

## III. PROJECT NEED AND PURPOSE

The Town of Wolcottville does not have an overall storm system. The existing system is not extensive, and, in some cases, structures are not sized or located to adequately drain some areas. This project will install storm sewers and conveyances to eliminate existing areas that are prone to flooding and surface water ponding.

## IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Stormwater System Improvements include: 1,650 linear feet (LF) of 36” Storm Sewer, 800 LF of 24” Storm Sewer, 3,000 LF of 18” Storm Sewer, 2,000 LF of 15” Storm Sewer, 5,900 LF of 12” Storm Sewer, Highway/Street Bore of 100 LF, and approximately 1800 LF of ditching. New inlets, storm manholes, 36” headwalls, 18” headwalls, and 12” culverts will be installed.

## V. ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS, AFFORDABILITY AND FUNDING

### A. Selected Plan Estimated Cost Summary

#### **Construction Costs**

Storm Water System Improvements	\$1,901,950
Contingency	<u>190,195</u>
<b>Construction Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$2,092,145</b>

<b>Non-Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$658,919</b>
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<b>Total Estimated Project Cost</b>	<b>\$2,751,064</b>
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- B. The total cost of these projects is estimated to be approximately \$2,751,064. Town of Wolcottville will finance the project with a loan from the State Revolving Fund Loan Program for a term and annual fixed interest rate to be determined at loan closing. The actual loan amount will depend on the bids received. Monthly user rates and charges may need to be analyzed to determine if adjustments are required for loan repayment.

## VI. DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives were evaluated based on reliability, practicality, technical feasibility, ease of implementation, environmental soundness and cost effectiveness. The following were evaluated:

1. **No Action:** The no action alternative was considered and eliminated as it would do nothing to alleviate any of the drainage issues or flooding in certain areas of Town.
2. **Extend the Storm System to Correct Existing Problem Areas:** This alternative consists of installing storm sewers and conveyances to eliminate existing problem areas that are prone to flooding and surface water ponding. These areas were identified from complaints and by field investigating after a rain event. The proposed plan is to install new storm sewers and other conveyances to replace the existing undersized subsystems. This is the selected alternative.
3. **Extend the Storm System to all Areas of Town:** This alternative would install structures and extend storm conveyances to all parts of Town in order to achieve an overall comprehensive system. This alternative is cost prohibitive and was rejected.

## VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES

### A. Direct Impacts of Construction and Operation

**Disturbed/Undisturbed Land:** All construction activities will be confined to areas previously disturbed by the installation of the existing alleys, trenches, adjacent to roadways and rights of way.

**Structural Resources (Figure 2):** Construction and operation of the project will not alter, demolish or remove historic properties. If any visual or audible impacts to historic properties occur, they will be temporary and will not alter the characteristics that qualify such properties for inclusion in or eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The SRF's finding pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is: "*no historic properties affected.*"

**Surface Waters:** The project will not adversely affect any outstanding state resource waters listed in 327 IAC 2-1.3-3(d), exceptional use streams listed in 327 IAC 2-1-11(b), Natural, Scenic and Recreational Rivers and Streams listed in 312 IAC 7-(2), or Salmonid Streams listed in (327 IAC 2-1.5-5(a)(3) or streams on the Outstanding River List for Indiana.

**Wetlands (Figure 3):** Wetlands will be impacted by the construction to install new outfalls, replace existing outfalls, and install ditches.

**Floodplain (Figure 4):** Construction will occur in a floodway. The proposed improvements will be installed at grade or underground to replace existing infrastructure. The project will not impact the existing floodplain levels.

**Groundwater:** The project will not impact a drinking water supply or sole source aquifer.

**Plants and Animals:** The Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) states:

*The project will be implemented to minimize impact to non-endangered species and their habitat. Mitigation measures cited in comment letters from the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented.*

**Prime Farmland:** The project will not convert prime farmland.

**Air Quality:** Construction activities may generate some noise, fumes and dust, but should not significantly affect air quality.

**Open Space and Recreational Opportunities:** The project will neither create nor destroy open space or recreational opportunities.

**Lake Michigan Coastal Program:** The project will not affect the Lake Michigan Coastal Zone.

**National Natural Landmarks:** Construction and operation of the proposed project will not affect National Natural Landmarks.

## **B. Indirect Impacts**

The town's PER states: *The Town, through the authority of its Council, planning commission, or other means will ensure that future development, as well as future projects connecting to SRF funded facilities, will not adversely impact archaeological/historical/structural resources, wetlands, wooded areas, or other sensitive environmental resources. The Town will require new development and treatment works projects to be constructed within the guidelines of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IDNR, IDEM, and other environmental review authorities.*

## **C. Comments from Environmental Review Authorities**

In correspondence dated March 16, 2022, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology stated:

*Pursuant to Indiana Code 5-1.2-10, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. § 306108), and 36 C.F.R. Part 800, the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer ("Indiana SHPO") is conducting an analysis of the materials dated and received by the Indiana SHPO on February 22, 2022, for the above indicated project in Wolcottville, Orange Township, Noble County, Indiana.*

*Based on our analysis, it has been determined that no historic properties will be altered, demolished, or removed by the proposed project.*

*No archaeological investigations appear necessary provided that all project activities remain within areas disturbed by previous construction.*

*If any prehistoric or historic archaeological artifacts or human remains are uncovered during construction, demolition, or earthmoving activities, state law (Indiana Code 14-21-1-27 and 29) requires that the discovery must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources within two (2) business days. In that event, please call (317) 232-1646. Be advised that adherence to Indiana Code 14-21-1-27 and 29 does not obviate the need to adhere to applicable federal statutes and regulations, including but not limited to 36 C.F.R. 800.*

In correspondence dated April 5, 2022, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service stated:

*This responds to your letter dated February 22, 2022, requesting our comments on the aforementioned project. At our request, additional information was provided on March 17th and April 1st.*

*These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.*

*The proposed project consists of the construction of additional storm sewers and open conveyances to remove storm water from throughout the town of Wolcottville. This includes new underground pipes of various sizes, including 12, 15, 18, 24, and 36 inches in diameter, to be built along existing public rights-of-way, 7 new outlets into Little Elkhart Creek, and 1 modified outlet into a county ditch associated with Yeager Regulated Drain. The project also includes reconstructing the downstream portion of Noble County Drain, between an existing storm water outlet north of County Line Road and Little Elkhart Creek, and the county ditch between the west end of Myers Street and the Yeager Regulated Drain.*

*Most of the floodplain of Little Elkhart Creek within the proposed project area is forested wetlands, although the stream exists as a pond between North 1st Street and Main Street/SR 9. An approximate 1,000-foot section of the creek downstream from North 1st Street is not wetland, but no construction is proposed in this area. The 5 pipes and outfalls at and upstream from Main Street/SR 9 will be constructed across the floodplain to the bank of the creek; the 2 new outfalls along North 1st Street will discharge into newly improved roadside ditches, which will then discharge to Little Elkhart Creek.*

*The modified outfall at the west end of Myers Street will discharge into the newly reconstructed ditch extending northwest to the Yeager Regulated Drain. This ditch will be constructed through an area shown as Palustrine emergent wetland (PEM) on the National Wetlands Inventory map (Exhibit 11); however, the project materials do not indicate that this wetland has been delineated in the field. The project engineer has apparently designed the project as though the wetland is present. Similarly, the Noble County Drain that is proposed to be reconstructed north from near West County Line Road is shown on the NWI map to affect a Palustrine forested/scrub-shrub wetland (PFO/SS). This wetland is also apparently assumed to be present without a formal wetland delineation.*

*Based upon information received on April 1, 2022, the project sponsors have committed to reconstruct the old ditches essentially as vegetated swales and to excavate them using a one-step process, meaning that the excavated material will be removed as it is dug, with no sidecasting into wetlands. Nevertheless, the project sponsors will need to contact the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Detroit District, South Bend Regulatory Office) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to determine whether or not Clean Water Act permits are needed, either for the ditches or the outfalls, or both.*

*It will be necessary to locate equipment staging areas, and bore work areas if horizontal direction drilling is used, well away from wetlands. It will also be necessary to store fuel, lubricants, drilling muds, and any other potential contaminants within protective enclosures (e.g. sandbagged upland locations) 150 feet or more from the nearest wetland or Little Elkhart Creek, and, whenever possible, refueling of equipment must not be conducted close to any wetland or waterway. Spill prevention information and spill containment equipment need to be available at all times.*

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

*The proposed project is within the range of the Federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), the threatened/proposed endangered northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and the threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus*). There is habitat for all of these species within the general project area. The bats may be present within any of the woodlands adjacent to the routes of the reconstructed ditches and within the undeveloped wooded floodplain, although we do not have any records of their presence or absence because no studies to locate these species have been conducted in the area. Given the possible presence of these bat species, it will be necessary to conduct any project-related tree clearing outside of the developed portion of Wolcottville during the time of year the bats would not be present, which is between October 1 and March 31.*

*Eastern massasauga are known from numerous locations within the vicinity of Wolcottville, including wetlands both up- and downstream within the North Branch Elkhart River Watershed. However, they have not been reported in the actual Wolcottville community. Therefore, the proposed project is not likely to directly adversely affect this species. However, we request that snake/wildlife friendly erosion control blankets be used throughout the project area, especially along the reconstructed ditches (blankets that are biodegradable or that use loose-woven/leno-woven netting [not plastic mesh]) to minimize the entrapment and snaring of small-bodied wildlife such as snakes and turtles.*

*With these tree cutting time restrictions and erosion control blanket requirements in place, we agree that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect these endangered, threatened/proposed endangered, and threatened species.*

*The candidate Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is also likely to be present. As a candidate species, the Monarch butterfly is not afforded legal protection under the authorities of the Endangered Species Act, and we have no specific comments/recommendations concerning this species at this time.*

*This precludes the need for further consultation on this project as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. However, should new information arise pertaining to project plans or a revised species list be published, it will be necessary for the Federal agency to reinitiate consultation.*

In correspondence dated March 23, 2022, the Department of Natural Resources Environmental Unit stated:

*The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.*

*If our agency has regulatory jurisdiction over the project, the recommendations contained in this letter may become requirements of any permit issued. If we do not have permitting authority, all recommendations are voluntary.*

*Regulatory Assessment: This proposal will require the formal approval for construction in a floodway under the Flood Control Act, IC 14-28-1, unless it qualifies for a general license under Administrative Rule 312 IAC 10-5 that applies to outfall structures (see enclosure). Please include a copy of this letter with the permit application if the project does not meet the general license criteria.*

*Natural Heritage Database: The Natural Heritage Program's data have been checked.*

*To date, no plant or animal species listed as state or federally threatened, endangered, or rare have been reported to occur in the project vicinity.*

*Fish & Wildlife Comments: Avoid and minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources to the greatest extent possible, and compensate for impacts. The following are recommendations that address potential impacts identified in the proposed project area:*

*1) Bank Stabilization: Establishing vegetation along the banks is critical for stabilization and erosion control. In addition to vegetation, some other form of bank stabilization may be needed. While hard armoring alone (e.g. riprap or glacial stone) may be needed in certain instances, soft armoring and bioengineering techniques should be considered first. In many instances, one or more methods are necessary to increase the likelihood of vegetation establishment. Combining vegetation with most bank stabilization methods can provide additional bank protection and help reduce impacts upon fish and wildlife. Information about bioengineering techniques can be found at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/20120404-IR-312120154NRA.xml.pdf>. Also, the following is a USDA/NRCS document that outlines many different bioengineering techniques for streambank stabilization: <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/17553.wba>.*

*Riprap must not be placed in the active thalweg channel or placed in the streambed in a manner that precludes fish or aquatic organism passage (riprap must not be placed above the existing streambed elevation). Riprap may be used only at the toe of the sideslopes up to the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). The banks above the OHWM must be restored, stabilized, and revegetated using geotextiles and a mixture of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees native to Northern Indiana and specifically for stream bank/floodway stabilization purposes as soon as possible upon completion.*

*2) Riparian & Forest Habitat: We recommend a mitigation plan be developed (and submitted with the permit application, if required) for any unavoidable habitat impacts that will occur. The DNR's Habitat Mitigation Guidelines (and plant lists) can be found online at: <http://iac.iga.in.gov/iac/20200527-IR-312200284NRA.xml.pdf>. Impacts to non-wetland forest of one (1) acre or more should be mitigated at a minimum 2:1 ratio. If less than one acre of non-wetland forest is removed in a rural setting, replacement should be at a 1:1 ratio based on area. Impacts to non-wetland forest under one (1) acre in an urban setting should be mitigated by planting five trees, at least 2 inches in diameter-at-breast height (dbh), for each tree which is removed that is 10" dbh or greater (5:1 mitigation based on the number of large trees) or by using the 1:1 replacement ratio based on area depending on the type of habitat impacted (individual canopy tree removal in an urban streetscape or park-like environment versus removal of habitat supporting a tree canopy, woody understory, and herbaceous layer). Impacts under 0.10 acre in an urban area may still involve the replacement of large diameter trees but typically do not require any additional mitigation or additional plantings beyond seeding and stabilizing disturbed areas. There are exceptions for high quality habitat sites however.*

*3) Wetland Habitat: Due to the presence or potential presence of wetland habitat on site, we recommend contacting and coordinating with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) 401 program and also the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 404 program. Impacts to wetland habitat should be mitigated at the appropriate ratio (see guidelines above).*

*The additional measures listed below should be implemented to avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources:*

*1. Revegetate all bare and disturbed areas within the project area using a mixture of grasses (excluding all varieties of tall fescue), sedges, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees native to Northern Indiana and specifically for stream bank/floodway stabilization purposes as soon as possible upon completion. Turf-type grasses (including low-endophyte, friendly endophyte, and endophyte free tall fescue but excluding all*

- other varieties of tall fescue) may be used in currently mowed areas only.*
- 2. Do not excavate in the low flow area except for the placement of riprap.*
  - 3. Minimize and contain within the project limits inchannel disturbance and the clearing of trees and brush.*
  - 4. Do not work in the waterway from April 1 through June 30 without the prior written approval of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.*
  - 5. Do not cut any trees suitable for Indiana bat or Northern Long-eared bat roosting (greater than 5 inches dbh, living or dead, with loose hanging bark, or with cracks, crevices, or cavities) from April 1 through September 30.*
  - 6. Do not construct any temporary runarounds, access bridges, causeways, cofferdams, diversions, or pumparounds.*
  - 7. Use minimum average 6 inch graded riprap stone extended below the normal water level to provide habitat for aquatic organisms in the voids.*
  - 8. Do not use broken concrete as riprap.*
  - 9. Underlay the riprap with a bedding layer of well graded aggregate or a geotextile to prevent piping of soil underneath the riprap.*
  - 10. Minimize the movement of resuspended bottom sediment from the immediate project area.*
  - 11. Do not deposit or allow construction/demolition materials or debris to fall or otherwise enter the waterway.*
  - 12. Appropriately designed measures for controlling erosion and sediment must be implemented to prevent sediment from entering the waterbody or leaving the construction site; maintain these measures until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.*
  - 13. Seed and protect all disturbed streambanks and slopes not protected by other methods that are 3:1 or steeper with erosion control blankets that are heavy-duty, biodegradable, and net free or that use loose-woven / Leno-woven netting to minimize the entrapment and snaring of small-bodied wildlife such as snakes and turtles (follow manufacturer's recommendations for selection and installation); seed and apply mulch on all other disturbed areas.*
  - 14. Protect the area around and below any concentrated discharge points, down to the waterway's normal flow level, with an appropriate structural armament such as riprap.*
  - 15. Do not excavate or place fill in any riparian wetland.*

In correspondence dated December 10, 2021, the Natural Resources Conservation Service stated:

*The proposed project to proceed with stormwater system improvements in the Town of Wolcottville, LaGrange and Noble Counties, Indiana, as referred to in your letter received November 1, 2021, will not cause a conversion of prime farmland.*

## **VIII. MITIGATION MEASURES**

Town of Wolcottville states:

### *1. Siltation and Erosion*

*Siltation and erosion will be kept to a minimum. Any mitigation measures mandated by authorized reviewing agencies to reduce or eliminate waterway contamination will be implemented.*

*Mitigative measures to limit erosion and siltation will include the following:*

- a) Erosion and sediment control measures required by the project specifications will require that the contractor provide a schedule for clearing, grading, excavating and restoring disturbed areas, along with a description of measures to be used during construction to ensure erosion/sediment control. The program shall meet all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.*
- b) Natural vegetation will be retained wherever feasible.*
- c) Excavations will be limited to right of ways where possible.*



- d) Appropriate agronomic practices (sediment basins, seeding, mulching) will be provided to control runoff, including shoreline and stream crossings, if applicable.*
- e) Drainage systems, including surface and subsurface drainage, will be returned to their natural state as soon as possible, if disturbed.*
- f) Roadways and parking lots will remain stabilized during construction to the extent possible.*
- g) Construction activities will be scheduled to avoid excessively wet conditions when possible*
- h) No more than 100 feet of open trench will be allowed. Excavated material will be kept to the upland side of the trench. Excess material will be used elsewhere on the project.*
- i) The existing topsoil will be reused during the restoration process.*
- j) If necessary, discharge from dewatering will be directed to sedimentation basins prior to discharging into surrounding surface waters.*

## *2. Air Quality Impacts*

*The adverse impacts caused by dust may be alleviated by periodically wetting the exposed soil and unpaved roadways to reduce the suspension of particles. To reduce noise impacts, work activities can be limited to normal daytime hours. Proper precautions will be taken to assure that construction activities do not impact ozone, airborne pollutants or other current or future air quality concerns.*

## **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A properly noticed public hearing was held on February 1, 2022, at 6:00 pm at the Wolcottville Town Hall to discuss the PER. No written comments were received during the 5-day comment period following the hearing.

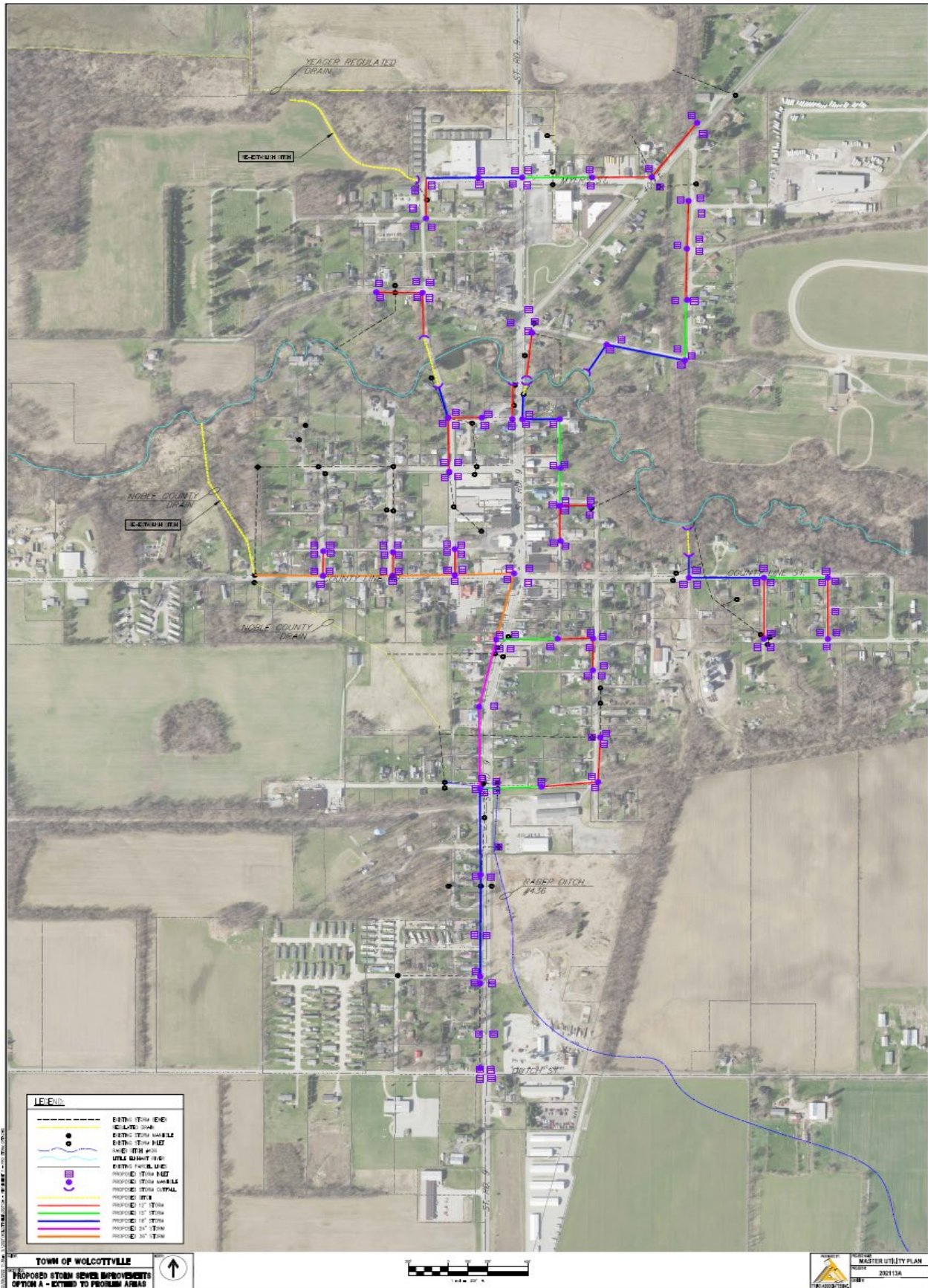
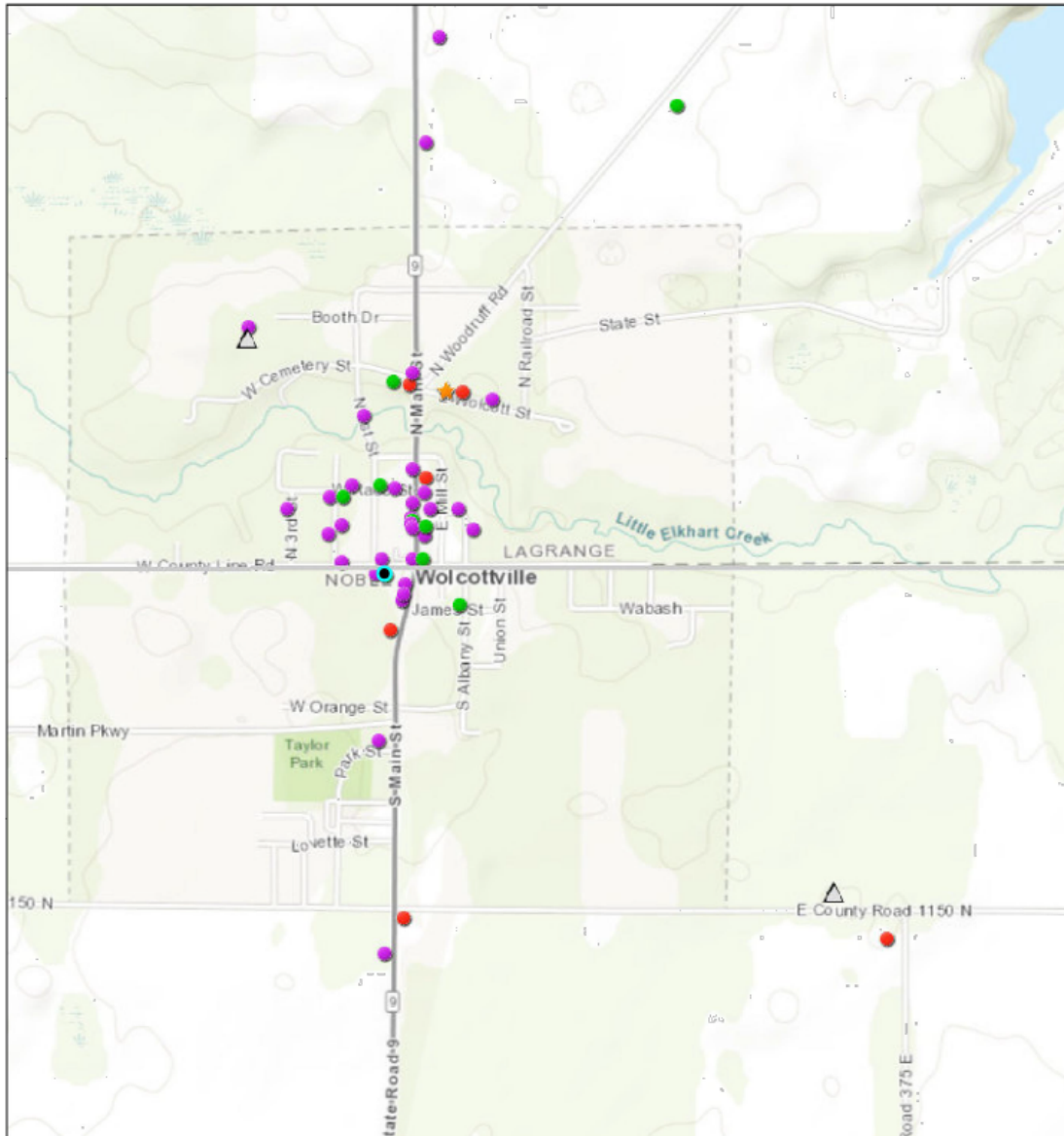


Figure 1

# Historic Buildings, Bridges, and Cemeteries Map



9/30/2021, 10:57:54 AM

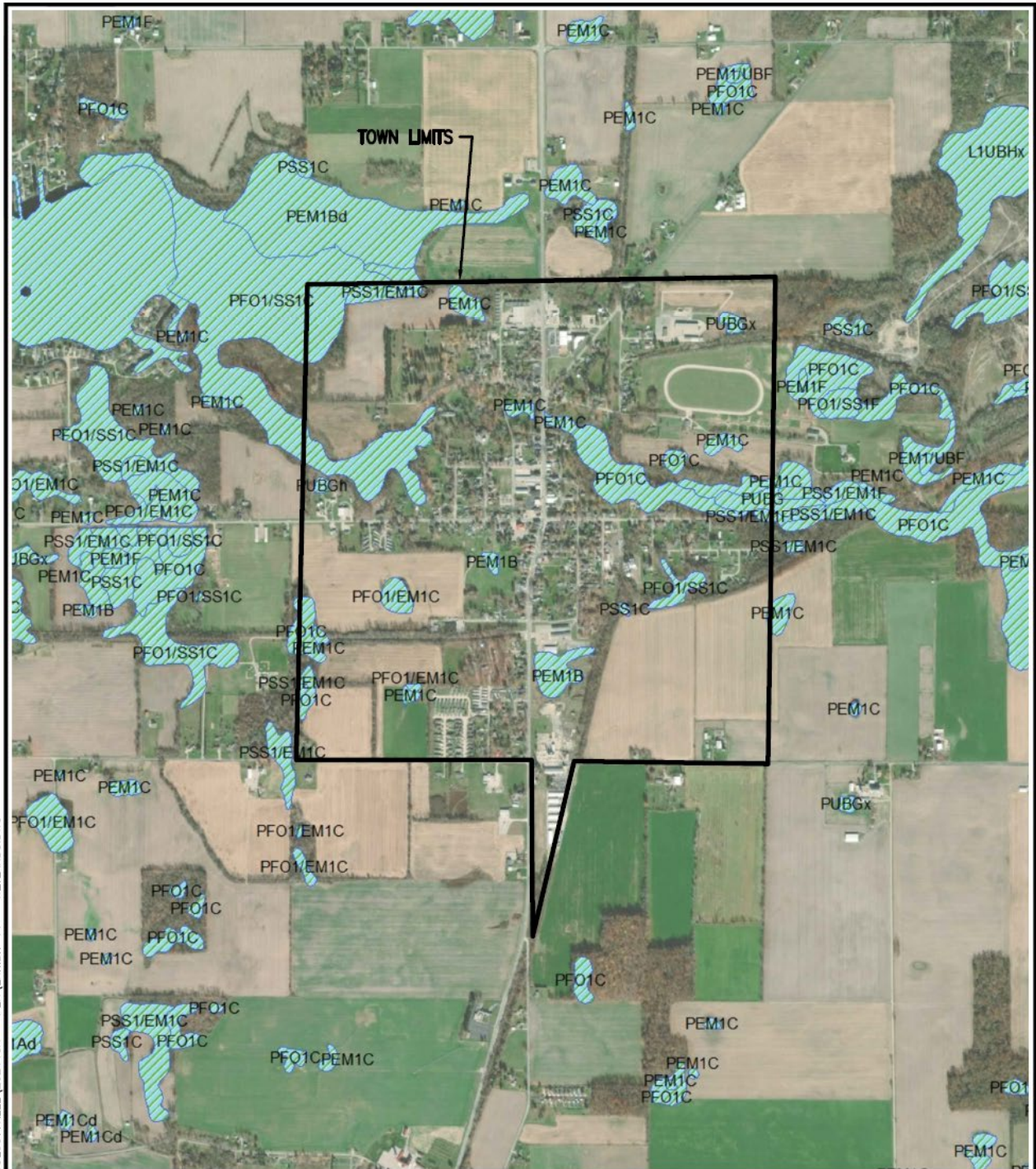
- Cemeteries
- National Register Sites
- County Survey Sites**
  - Outstanding
  - Notable
  - Contributing



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Indiana DNR DHPA  
2019 Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources, DHPA

CLIENT:	<b>TOWN OF WOLCOTTVILLE</b>		NORTH:		PREPARED BY:	PROJECT NAME:
SHEET TITLE:	<b>SHAARD MAP</b>		SCALE:	<b>1"=1250'</b>		<b>STORMWATER SYSTEM PER</b>
						PROJECT #:
						<b>202113A</b>
						EXHIBIT #:

Figure 2



CLIENT:	<b>TOWN OF WOLCOTTVILLE</b>	NORTH:		PREPARED BY:		PROJECT NAME:	<b>STORMWATER SYSTEM PER</b>
SHEET TITLE:	<b>WETLANDS MAP</b>	SCALE:	<b>1" = 2000'-0"</b>	TRIAID ASSOCIATES INC.		PROJECT #:	<b>202113A</b>
						EXHIBIT #:	

**Figure 3**

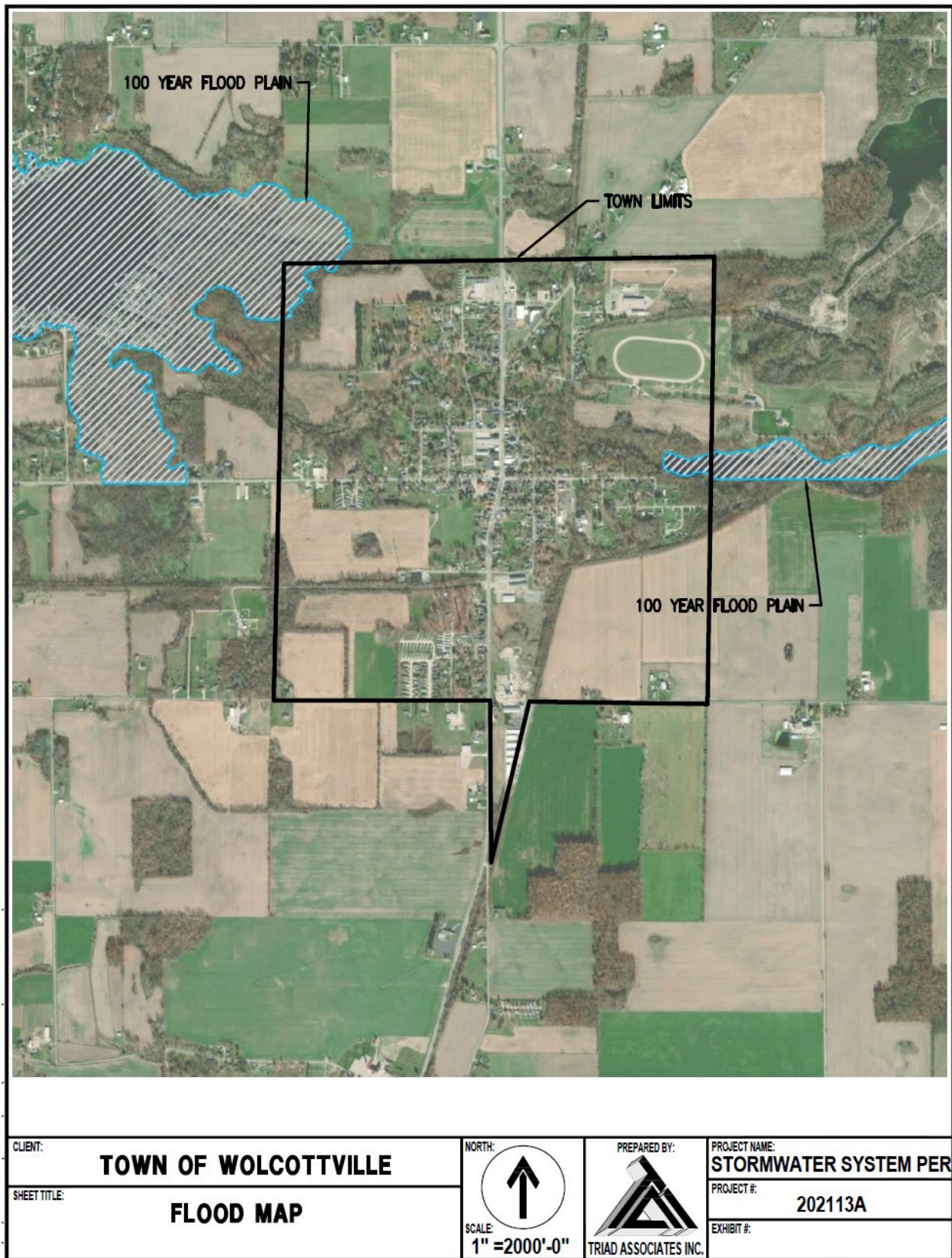


Figure 4