State Revolving Fund Loan Programs

Drinking Water, Clean Water, Nonpoint Source

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

CITY OF HUNTINGTON
South Water Treatment Plant Replacement Phase 1 and 2
SRF PROJECT DW 24 40 35 00

DATE: April 10, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENTS DUE BY: May 9, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

The above entity has applied to the Drinking Water 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 (FONSI)

The SRF Drinking Water 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/FONSI. Comments must be received at the address below by the target approval date above. Significant comments may prompt a reevaluation of the preliminary FONSI; if appropriate, a new FONSI 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 FONSI as appropriate. Comments regarding this document should be sent within 30 days to:

Jenni Curry
Environmental Section Manager
State Revolving Fund
100 N. Senate Ave. IGCN 1275
Indianapolis, IN 46204
463-261-6943
jecurry@ifa.in.gov

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

I. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name and Address:	South Water Treatment Plant Replacement Phase 1 and 2 City of Huntington 300 Cherry Street Huntington, IN 46750
SRF Project Number:	**DW 24 40 35 00**
Authorized Representative:	Honorable Richard Strick, Mayor

II. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located in Huntington County, Huntington township, Township 28 North, Range 9 East and Section 27. See **Figures 1 and 2**.

III. PROJECT NEED AND PURPOSE

Huntington's South Water Plant was constructed in 1959 and currently operates as a groundwater treatment plant. Equipment and structures have either passed or are nearing the end of their useful life. Well #5A was designated as a groundwater under direct influence (GWUDI) well, and has been shut off along with nearby Well #7 to protect public health. To meet 20-year water demand projections, an increase in well capacity and a new South Water Treatment Plant are needed. The project has been divided into two phases.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase 1 includes two new drinking water wells, including pumps, well house, backup power generator, and site piping; raw water pump station; relocated water main piping; sanitary sewer lift station, force main, and connections to replace an existing failing septic system; plant backup power generator; demolishing existing wells and well houses; site improvements to prepare for Phase 2; and engineering planning and design costs for both phases.

Phase 2 includes water treatment plant building; package treatment units (aeration, detention, and filtration); chemical feed and injection system; clear well; high service pumps; backwash water holding tank and recycle pumps; dewatering building and pumps; new maintenance building; conversion of existing backwash lagoon to backwash dewatering detention pond; abandon two remaining backwash lagoons; and demolish existing treatment plant building.

V. ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS, AFFORDABILITY, AND FUNDING

The total cost of this project is estimated to be approximately $36,601,000. The City of Huntington intends to finance the project with a loan from the Drinking Water SRF Loan Program for a term and annual fixed interest rate to be determined at loan closing. Monthly user rates and charges may need to be analyzed to determine if adjustments are required for loan repayment.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1 - **"No Action":** Alternative 1 proposes to maintain the existing South Water Plant without upgrades. This approach would require Well #5 to go back in service to meet demand, which in turn would fail to address IDEM's requirement to comply with GWUDI standards for Well #5A. Additionally, relying solely on current infrastructure poses challenges in meeting water demand, with identified potential areas for additional groundwater wells facing production capacity concerns. Given these factors, the "No Action" alternative is untenable, and this alternative will not be evaluated further.

Alternative 2: GWUDI Plant: Alternative 2 proposes demolishing the existing facility, constructing a new GWUDI plant, utilizing the existing well 5A, drilling a new well 7, and the regionalization of the town of Andrews. This alternative proposed the use of Package Treatment Units (PTUs) as the primary technology for treatment, which handle coagulation, sedimentation, and filtration processes. This alternative prosed the most difficulties in that it will require the addition of coagulation. This results in an additional process to monitor and more waste. This alternative would also require an operator present 16 hours a day. Due to these reasons, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

Alternative 3 – Groundwater Plant (New South Wellfield): Alternative 3 proposes the demolition of the existing plant, constructing a new groundwater plant, adding additional wells in the south, and the regionalization of the town of Andrews. This alternative also proposes the use of PTUs as the primary technology for treatment and relies on the initial water quality meeting treatment standards. This alternative would also involve adding 5 new wells resulting in additional land requirements. Although the staffing needs would be less than Alternative 2, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration due to cost and land requirements.

Alternative 4 – Groundwater Plant (Wells 6 and 7): Alternative 4 proposes the demolition of the existing plant, constructing a new groundwater plant, drilling two new wells (6 and 7). This alternative also proposes the use of PTUs as the primary technology for treatment and relies on the initial water quality meeting treatment standards. It involves drilling new wells, which would be located near the existing water treatment plant. No new land would be required with this alternative. This alternative would require less staffing needs than Alternative 2. **This is the selected alternative.**

Alternative 5 – Regionalization: Alternative 5 proposes regionalization with the City of Fort Wayne. Preliminary conversations with Fort Wayne were had and it was determined it would be too costly to extend a water main to their distribution system. This alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

Disinfection will be required in both the groundwater and GWUDI plants. Both alternatives will utilize sodium hypochlorite for disinfection. This method of disinfection includes two alternatives: 1) On-site generation of 0.8% sodium hypochlorite, and 2) Bulk storage and feed of 12.5% sodium hypochlorite.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES

A. Direct Impacts of Construction and Operation

Disturbed/Undisturbed Land: All areas have been previously disturbed by previous construction activity.

Structural Resources (Figure 3): 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 (Figure 4): The project will not adversely affect 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 5): Wetlands will be impacted by the tree removal required to drill the new wells and install the associated piping.

Floodplain (Figure 6): Construction will occur in a floodway. The project is located within either the 100-year floodway or the 100-year floodplain of Little River according to the published FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map.

Groundwater: Groundwater may be impacted by the construction or operation of the proposed project.

Plants and Animals: The wells have a 100-foot radius buffer to be cleared. This is anticipated to require approximately 1/3 of an acre of tree removal at well #6 and 2/3 of an acre of tree removal at well #7. The proposed project items 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 city's PER states: *The City, through local zoning laws, the authority of its council or planning commission, or other means, will ensure that future development and utility projects connecting to SRF-funded facilities will not adversely affect wetlands, wooded areas, steep slopes, archaeological/historical/structural resources, or other sensitive environmental resources. The city will require new development and utility projects to be constructed within the guidelines of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and other environmental review authorities.*

C. Comments from Environmental Review Authorities

In correspondence dated January 29, 2025, 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 January 10, 2025, for the above indicated project in Huntington, Huntington County, Indiana.*
>
> *Based on our analysis, it has been determined that no historic properties will be altered, demolished, or removed by the proposed project.*
>
> *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 March 26, 2025, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service stated:

> *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.*
>
> *There may be suitable summer habitat for the Federally endangered Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat present throughout the project site. The project would require the removal of approximately 2 acre of potentially suitable forested habitat. Based on a review of the information you provided and the project proponents commitment to remove trees from October 1- March 31, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would concur that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any Federally listed Indiana bat and northern long eared bat. 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 27, 2025, the Department of Natural Resources Environmental Unit stated:

> *Natural Heritage Database: The Natural Heritage Program's data have been checked. The following have been documented within .5 mile of the project area:*
>
> - *Clubshell (Pleurobema clava), State endangered*
> - *Snuffbox (Epioblasma triquetra), State endangered*
> - *Black Sandshell (Lampsilis fasciola), State special concern*
> - *Kidneyshell (Ptychobranchus fasciolaris), State special concern*
> - *Purple Lilliput (Toxolasma lividum), State special concern*
> - *Rayed Bean (Villosa fabalis), State special concern*
> - *Wavyrayed Lampmussel (Lampsilis fasciola), State special concern*

Fish and 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:

A) Heritage Species: The Division of Fish and Wildlife does not anticipate any significant impacts to the above-listed species due to this project.

B) Wetlands: 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 the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 404 program.

C) Riparian Habitat: Minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources by utilizing previously disturbed land such as rights-of-way. 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: https://www.in.gov/nrc/files/IB-17.pdf.

Impacts to non-wetland forest of one (1) acre or more in a rural or urban area should be mitigated at a minimum 2:1 ratio based on area of impact. Impacts to non-wetland forest under one (1) acre but at least 0.10 acre in a rural or urban area should be mitigated at a minimum 1:1 ratio based on area of impact. Impacts under 0.10 acre in a rural area typically do not require mitigation or additional plantings beyond seeding and stabilizing disturbed areas, though there are exceptions for high quality habitat sites. Impacts under 0.10 acre in an urban area should be mitigated by replacing each mature tree removed (trees that are 10" diameter-at-breast height (dbh)) with two native trees of 3-gallon stock or larger. Seeding and stabilizing disturbed areas is required regardless of the impact amount and location.

The mitigation site should be located in the floodway, downstream of the one (1) square mile drainage area of that stream (or another stream within the 8-digit HUC, preferably as close to the impact site as possible) and adjacent to existing forested riparian habitat.
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 that are not currently mowed and maintained with a mixture of grasses, sedges, and wildflowers 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. A native herbaceous seed mixture must include at least 5 species of grasses and sedges and 5 species of wildflowers.
2. Minimize and contain within the project limits in channel disturbance and the clearing of trees and brush.
3. Do not work in the waterway from April 1 through June 30 without the prior written approval of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.
4. Do not cut any trees suitable for Indiana Bat or Northern Long-eared Bat roosting (3 inches or greater diameter-at-breast height, living or dead, with loose hanging bark, or with cracks, crevices, or cavities) from April 1 through September 30.
5. Do not construct any temporary runarounds, access bridges, causeways, cofferdams, diversions, or pump arounds.
6. Do not deposit or allow construction/demolition materials or debris to fall or otherwise enter the waterway. Any incidental fallen material or debris in the waterway must be removed within 24 hours using best management practices, particularly lifting material out of the waterway and not dragging it across the streambed whenever possible.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

In correspondence dated February 11, 2025, the Natural Resources Conservation Service stated:

The proposed Huntington South Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project, in Huntington County, Indiana, as referred to in your letter received on January 24, 2025, will not cause a conversion of prime farmland.

VIII. MITIGATION MEASURES

City of Huntington's PER states:
The following measures are recommended to mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts:

1. Implement appropriate temporary erosion control measures (straw bale barriers, silt fencing, etc.) to prevent soil runoff leaving the construction site.
2. Protect disturbed slopes with sod or erosion control blankets upon raw water main and well installation.
3. Minimize fugitive dust from construction activities by wetting the construction area periodically and constructing wind barriers or treating with chemical stabilizers if necessary.
4. Any soil tracking from construction equipment will be removed from the streets on a daily basis.
5. Implement all applicable water pollution control measures specified in the Indiana Department of Transportation Standard Specifications (latest version). Appropriate measures will be taken to prevent siltation of nearby surface and underground water resources with dewatering flows or construction related runoff.
6. Maintain all equipment to manufacturer's specifications to minimize construction noise, and where appropriate utilize temporary noise barriers to reduce noise levels.
7. The open burning of debris (i.e., trees and shrubs) shall not be allowed unless a permit is obtained from the Indiana State Air Pollution Control Division for such activities.
8. Cutback asphalt or asphalt emulsion containing more than seven percent oil distillable shall not be used during the months April through October pursuant to 326 IAC 805 Asphalt Paving Rule.
9. The contactor shall abide by the rules governing asbestos notification, handling, disposal, and contractor licensing should such material be encountered.
10. Construction waste shall be disposed of by the contractor at an acceptable waste disposal landfill. If contaminated soils (including PCB's) are discovered during the project, they may be subject to disposal as either special or hazardous waste as determined by the Office of Solid and Hazardous Waste Management.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A properly noticed public hearing was held on February 18, 2025, at 3:30 pm at the City of Huntington Common Council Chambers on the 3rd floor of the City Building, 300 Cherry Street, Huntington, IN 46750 to discuss the PER. There were a few questions asked and answered during the hearing. No written comments were received during the 5-day comment period following the hearing.

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Figure 1 - **Phase 1**
South Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

Updated Force Main Route

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Figure 2 - **Phase 2**
South Water Treatment Plant Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

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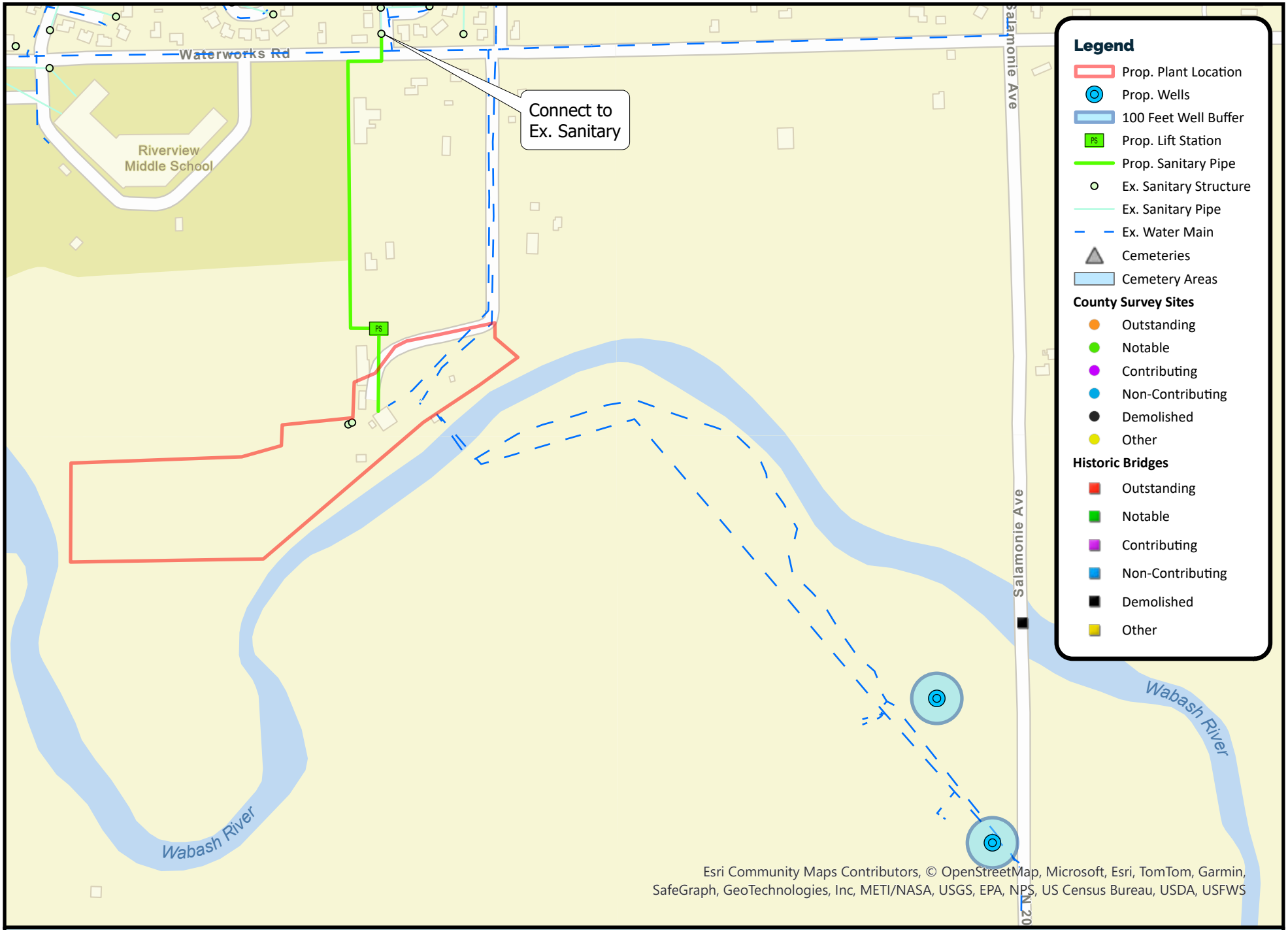

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Figure 3
Historic Buildings, Bridges, & Cemeteries
South WTP Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

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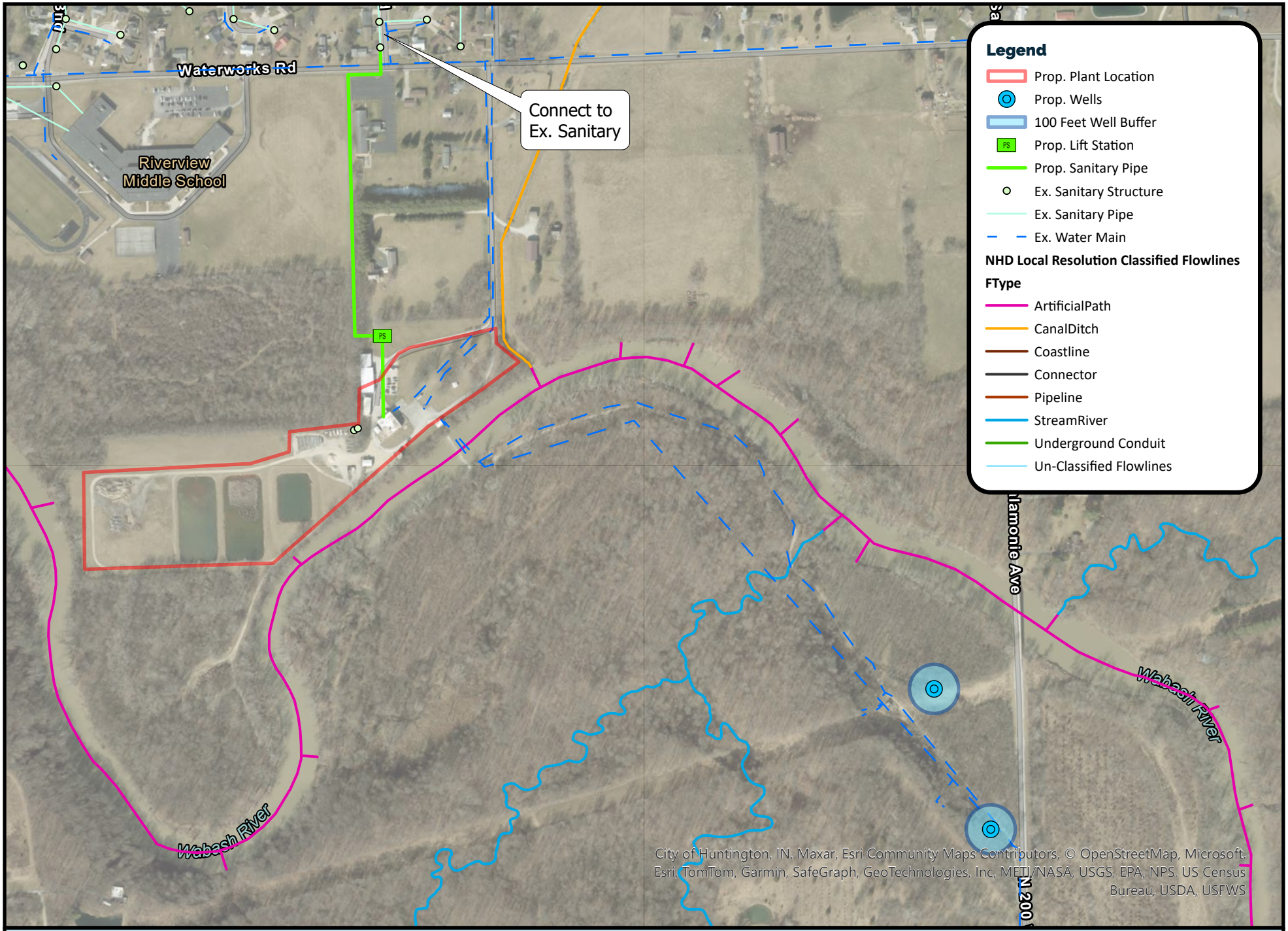

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Figure 4

Surface Waters Map
South WTP Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

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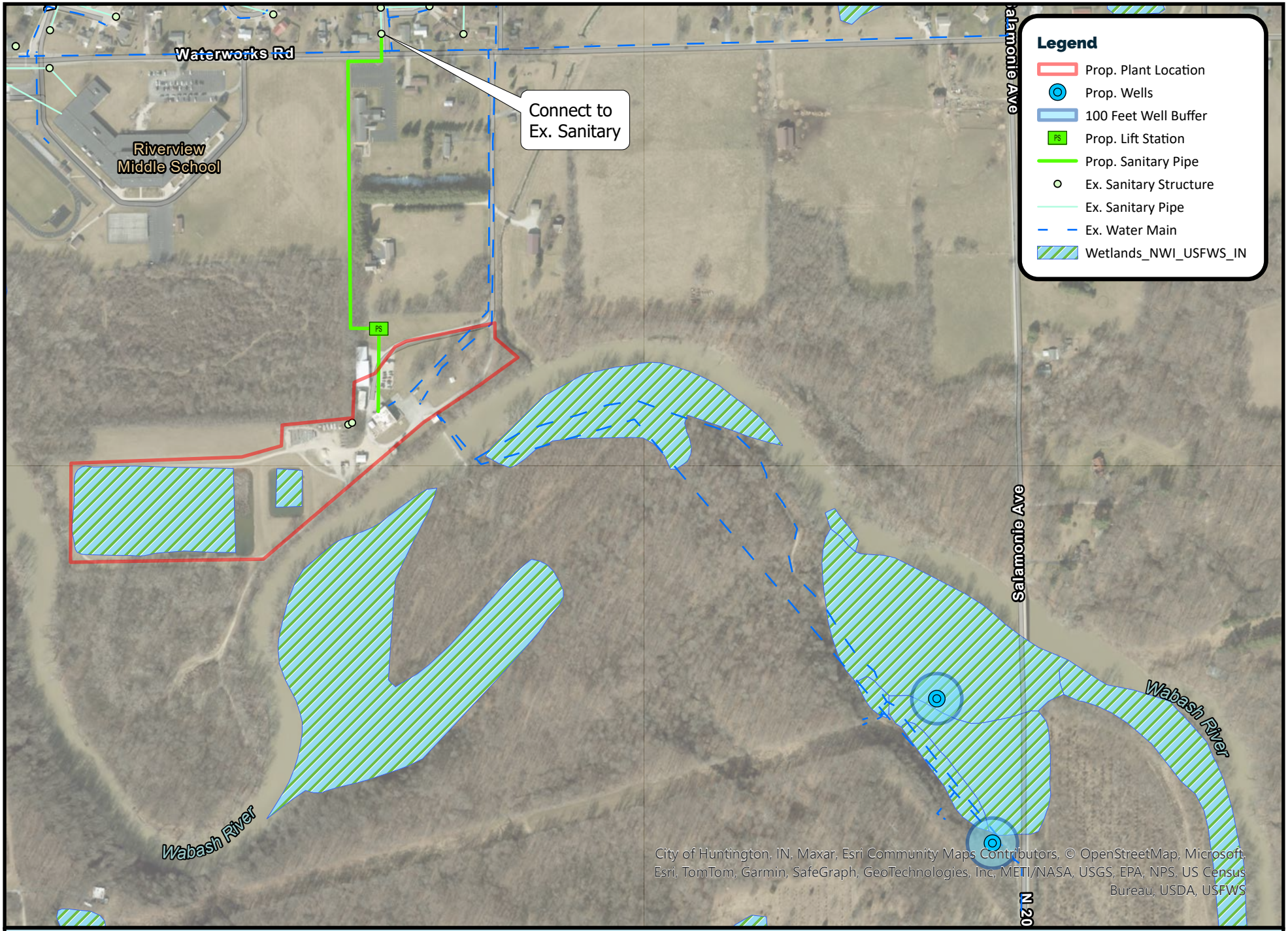

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Figure 5
Wetlands Map
South WTP Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

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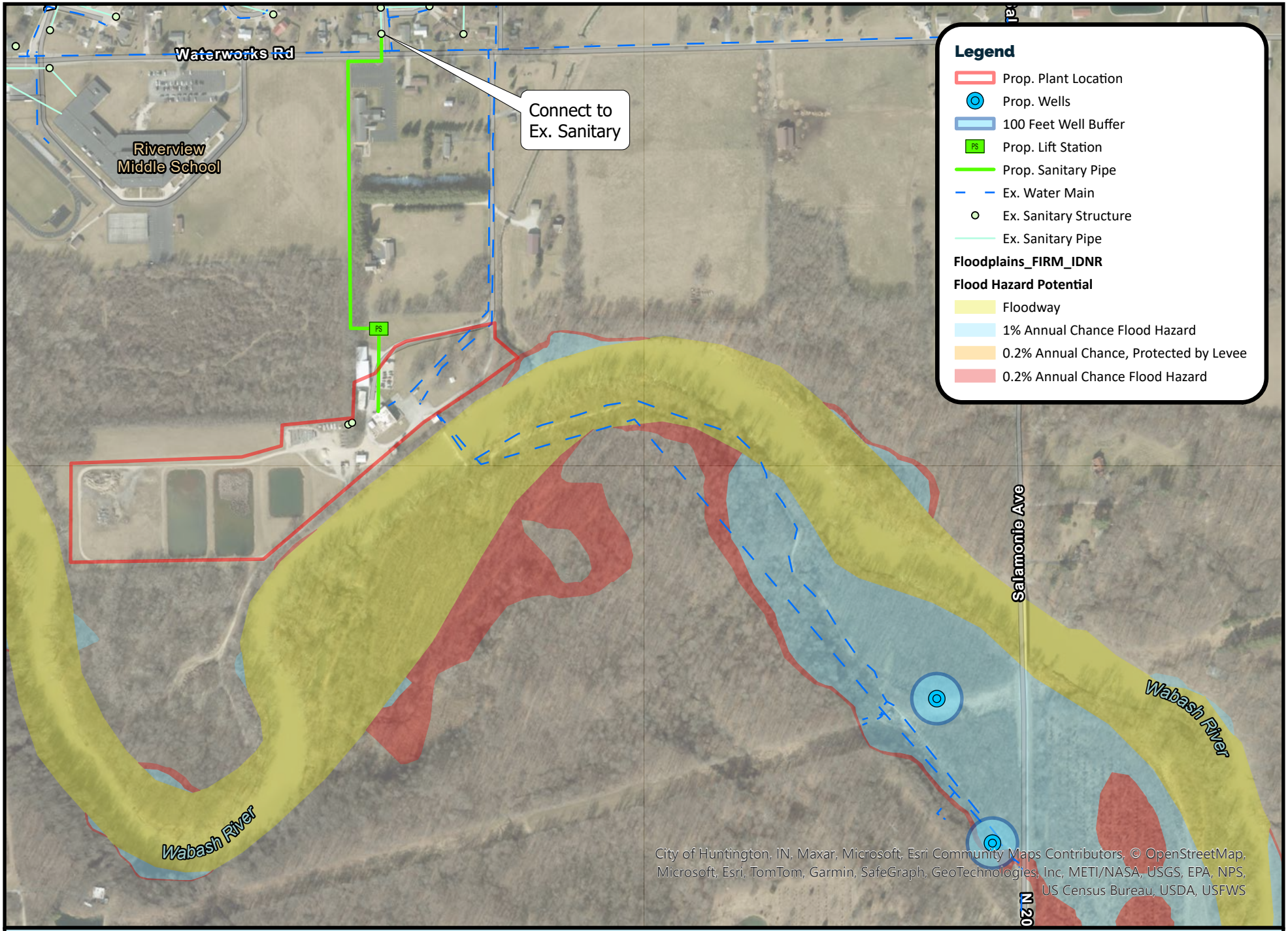

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Figure 6

Floodplain Map
South WTP Replacement Project
Huntington, Indiana

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