



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
ACTING DIRECTOR

January 11, 2023

TO: All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

SUBJECT: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
**Forsyth Township, Marquette County
Sanitary Sewer System Improvements Project
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Project Number 5833-01**

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comment on a preliminary decision by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to implement recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a wastewater project plan submitted by the applicant mentioned above.

HOW WERE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES CONSIDERED?

Part 53, Clean Water Assistance, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, being Sections 324.5301 to 324.5316 of the Michigan Compiled Laws Annotated, requires EGLE to evaluate all environmental implications of a proposed wastewater project. EGLE has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. A project plan containing information on environmental impacts was prepared by the municipality and reviewed by the State. EGLE has prepared the attached Environmental Assessment and found that the proposed project does not require the preparation of an EIS.

WHY IS AN EIS NOT REQUIRED?

Our environmental review concluded that no significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the project plan or will be reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A map depicting the location of the proposed project is attached. This information is also available on our website at Michigan.gov/CWSRF under "Additional Links." The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the proposed action, and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing one of the contact people listed below.

HOW DO I SUBMIT COMMENTS?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at EGLE, Constitution Hall, P.O. Box 30457, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7957. We will not take any action on this project plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The applicant will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this Agency to construct the proposed project.

Any information you feel should be considered by EGLE should be brought to our attention. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Angela Yu, the project manager, by phone at 517-599-5487, by email at YuA@michigan.gov, or you may contact me. Your interest in this process and the environment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dan Beauchamp

Dan Beauchamp, Section Manager
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section
Finance Division
517-284-5433

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
Clean Water State Revolving Fund
Forsyth Township, Marquette County
Environmental Assessment
January 2023

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant: Forsyth Township

Address: 186 West Flint Street
Gwinn, Michigan 49662

Authorized Representative: Mr. Joseph Boogren, Township Supervisor

Project Number: 5833-01

PROJECT SUMMARY

Forsyth Township (Forsyth) is in southeast Marquette County. The Gwinn community, a census-designated place (CDP), is the largest population center in Forsyth. The CDP consists of the unincorporated communities of Gwinn, Austin, Princeton, Swanzey, and New Swanzey. According to the U.S. Census, Forsyth had a total population of 6,194 in 2020. Population is expected to remain the same for the next twenty years.

The proposed project consists of sanitary sewer main replacement on the M-35 corridor in Forsyth. The project will be completed in conjunction with a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) highway road resurfacing and storm sewer and drainage repair project and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD) water main replacement project. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2023 and conclude in fall 2023.

Forsyth anticipates financing the proposed sewer replacement project with a low interest Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan totaling \$1,000,000. The CWSRF is administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Forsyth has qualified for an American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant for up to 50 percent of the total CWSRF-eligible project cost, not to exceed \$500,000. As a result, the remaining \$500,000 would be financed by a CWSRF loan. A typical residential customer is expected to see up to a \$5.50 monthly rate increase due to the sewer replacement project. However, the user cost impact may be reduced due to the ARP grant and will be adjusted according to the final CWSRF loan amount received by Forsyth.

EXISTING SYSTEM AND PROJECT NEED

Forsyth owns, operates, and maintains its wastewater collection system, lift stations, and treatment lagoons. The sewer system currently has 736 connections, which consist of 557 active single family residential and 179 non-residential customers. This includes various government, commercial, and industrial customers. Most customers are in the Gwinn community.

The system has four sanitary treatment lagoons. One is located south of the Austin community and the remaining three are located south of the Gwinn community. The lagoons were inspected in 2013 and were operating efficiently. Some of the sluice gates were recently

updated and future upgrades are scheduled. No other lagoon upgrades or improvements are needed at this time. The township operates one main lift station located on the southern boundary of the Gwinn community that pumps wastewater from the Gwinn and Swanzy communities to nearby lagoons. The lift station was recently inspected, and the check and gate valve are in the process of being replaced.

The original combined storm and sanitary sewer system was installed in 1907 and was composed of vitrified clay pipe (VCP). The system has undergone a series of sewer separation projects in various parts of the populated communities. The first sewer separation project in 1968 installed new sanitary and storm main in Gwinn, which removed part of the combined sewer from service. Large sewer upgrades occurred in 1977 in the New Swanzy and Austin communities, where truss piping was installed. In 1990, Forsyth replaced approximately 90 percent of brick manholes with concrete manholes. A recent inspection in 2018 indicated that the manholes are still in good condition, but the remaining 10 percent need replacement.

The most recent sanitary infrastructure upgrade was completed in 2007, where sewer was removed and replaced with Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) sewer main on Pine Street (M-35) in Gwinn. The PVC main was recently inspected and found to be in good condition. The sanitary sewer main along the M-35 corridor between the East Branch of the Escanaba River in Gwinn and North Smith Street in New Swanzy is the last remaining section that has not been updated since 1968. This sanitary sewer main serves a large portion of the service area, approximately 350 customers in New Swanzy. This section of sanitary sewer main was unable to be properly inspected in 2018 due to the high amounts of flow and submerged piping. Based on when it was installed and the suspected material of VCP, the piping is expected to be in poor condition and has a relatively high probability of failure. Any infrastructure work completed nearby could significantly damage the sanitary sewer main.

PROPOSED PROJECT

A. Alternatives Considered

No-action Alternative

If the sanitary sewer line is not replaced, this may result in sanitary sewer failure. Therefore, this alternative was not considered.

Regional Alternative

Regionalization is not a feasible option for Forsyth as any neighboring facility is a considerable distance away. As a result, regionalization was not considered further.

Removal and Replacement of Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure

This alternative includes the removal and replacement of sanitary sewer mains, laterals, and six manholes within the M-35 corridor. Approximately 1,600-feet of sanitary sewer main along Highway M-35 between the Gwinn and New Swanzy communities will be replaced with PVC piping. This proposed alternative would occur in conjunction with an MDOT M-35 road construction and USDA-RD water main replacement project. With all associated construction work occurring underground, there is a cost benefit for Forsyth to complete all infrastructure work simultaneously.

B. Proposed Project and Estimated Cost

Based on the expected poor condition of the sanitary sewer main and other sanitary structures along M-35, the only feasible alternative is to replace the sanitary sewer mains, laterals, and manholes. The proposed project is anticipated to occur along the M-35 corridor from North

Smith Street to the East Branch of the Escanaba River (Figure 1). The estimated cost for Project Number 5833-01 is estimated at \$1,000,000 for the sanitary sewer main replacement. Forsyth anticipates receiving up to \$500,000 in the form of an ARP grant for the project.

POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPACTS

A. Water Quality Impacts

The proposed sanitary sewer replacement project does not have any anticipated impacts to state-regulated water resources or surface waters, such as inland lakes, streams, or wetlands. Steps will be taken to avoid or minimize impacts to nearby wetlands. The East Branch of the Escanaba River is 36-feet west of the proposed project limit, and mitigation steps will be taken to reduce any potential impacts the project may have. Green space, vegetated ditches, and 4-foot sumps will be used to remove sediment. Construction impacts to water quality (e.g., from soil disturbance) will be controlled through best management practices.

B. Construction Impacts

The sanitary sewer replacement work will occur on previously disturbed rights-of-way along an MDOT highway. These areas will be impacted by the construction activity and mitigation measures will be taken, as described below. However, impacts of construction activity associated with the project are considered short-term disruptions that, for the most part, will not extend beyond the construction period. Short-term adverse impacts associated with construction include noise, dust, exhaust fumes, removal of groundcover, and increased erosion potential. Construction contract provisions will outline requirements to comply with the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act. Mitigation measures will be taken to prevent damage to surrounding areas from soil erosion, dust, and sedimentation. At a minimum, silt fencing will be installed along the perimeter of the work site. It is not anticipated that any areas of contamination will be encountered. If a contaminated area is encountered, Forsyth will contact MDOT and EGLE to take appropriate mitigation and safety measures.

The Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was the only state or federally protected wildlife species historically documented within 1-mile of the study corridor. The Northern long-eared bat roosts in trees April 1 to September 30 each year. A limited number of trees are expected to be removed due to the project and will be completed outside of the roosting time to avoid impact to the bats. A special provision for Winter Tree Removal will be included in construction documents.

The proposed project is not expected to have any historical, cultural, or archaeological impacts. The sanitary sewer replacement work will occur next to recreational areas maintained by the local school district. MDOT has requested that access to the parking lot next to the recreational area be maintained during project construction.

C. Secondary Impacts

No significant secondary impacts are anticipated because of the project. Improvements to the sanitary sewer system are associated with the need to address deficiencies and increase the reliability of the system.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An in-person public hearing on the proposed project plan was held on May 23, 2022, at the Gwinn Community Center. The public hearing was advertised in the *Daily Mining Journal*

newspaper on April 22, 2022. A presentation was given on the proposed project plan, including alternatives considered, potential project impacts, and estimated cost. No comments were submitted prior to the public hearing and all questions from the public and Forsyth Township Board members were answered during the public hearing. The Forsyth Township Board passed a resolution in support of the project plan following the hearing.

REASONS FOR CONCLUDING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The proposed project will address aging wastewater infrastructure and will have no significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on socioeconomic, cultural, or environmental factors. The water quality benefits anticipated from the project are expected to outweigh the short-term adverse impacts. Therefore, a finding of no significant has been made.

Questions regarding this Environmental Assessment should be directed to:

Ms. Angela Yu, Project Manager
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section
Finance Division
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
P.O. Box 30457
Lansing, Michigan 48909-4957
Telephone: 517-599-5487
E-Mail: YuA@michigan.gov

Figure 1: Forsyth Township Sanitary Sewer Main Replacement Project Area

