

# **DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Septic to Sewer Expansion** **Tuscarora Township, MI**

**Project:** The unincorporated Village of Indian River (Tuscarora Township) in Cheboygan County is proposing to expand its wastewater collection system to the west of the existing service area (District 1) to the Burt Lake Shoreline. The project also will expand the Township's existing wastewater treatment facility.

Tuscarora Township developed a municipal sewer system in 2014 that serves primarily commercial properties along the S. Straights Highway in the community of Indian River. The Indian River area and shores of Burt Lake also contain a substantial number of residential properties and older summer residences. Many of the historic summer homes have been transitioning to year-round residences over recent years. This transition places additional stress on the onsite septic systems serving these properties, which no longer get a significant resting period between use. When combined with the fact that many of the homes have very small lots with on-site wells and high groundwater conditions, it leads to many failing or non-conforming septic systems that cannot find onsite solutions. The most prudent solution is connection to the municipal sewer system that was installed through the commercial area.

The project involves the construction of approximately 18,500 feet of new gravity sewer main, 50 new manholes, 23 new duplex pump stations, 10 new lift stations, and upgrades to existing pump stations to improve flow within the service area.

**Federal Grant:** The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is proposing to issue a grant to assist in the implementation of the proposed *Septic to Sewer Expansion Project Phase II in Tuscarora Township, MI*. Because Federal grant funds will be utilized to assist in meeting the project's anticipated costs, the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which require an analysis of the project's potential to result in significant environmental impacts, are applicable to this project. The provisions of Section 106 of the

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) are also applicable to this project, which require an analysis of the project's potential to have an adverse effect upon cultural resources and/or historic properties.

**Analysis of Environmental Impact:** The Phase II expansion will not have significant direct impacts on environmental resources. All direct and cumulative impacts will take place on previously disturbed lands including easements, road rights-of-ways, mowed ditches, and municipally owned lands including an existing wastewater treatment facility.

The Phase II service area includes the property from Mack Avenue at the north end down to the Sturgeon River at the south end and the shore of Burt Lake at the west and the existing commercial district at the east. The proposed project will provide a hybrid of gravity services and low-pressure sewer (LPS) with individual grinder pumps. The service area encompasses approximately 81.8 acres and 179 EDUs on 190 assessment parcels. The Phase II expansion will include approximately 8,900 feet of new 8-inch gravity sewer, 29 manholes, approximately 8,800 feet of new force main sewer, 5 lift stations, 30 individual pumping stations, and an expansion of 48,000 gpd capacity at the existing WWTF.

The following social or environmental features will not be affected by this project for the following reasons:

- There are no existing or proposed state nature preserves, state parks, unique ecological sites, unique geological features or state forests within one-half mile of the project area;
- Wild, scenic or recreational rivers are not located in the project area;
- Wilderness areas or coastal zones are not located in the project area;
- Special aesthetic features, recreational facilities or undisturbed terrestrial habitat are not located within the project area;
- The project will not impact prime or unique farmland. {The project site does not rate high enough on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form (AD-1006, Appendix C) to warrant additional consideration for protection under the Farmland Protection Policy Act};

- Executive Director of the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments has indicated that the proposed improvement is consistent with the Area Comprehensive Development Plan for future growth; and
- The proposed project does not present environmental justice issues or potential impacts on community structures, institutions, or the overall quality of life.

To ascertain the effects, if any, of the proposed federal action on federally listed or state-listed species, U.S. EPA reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) websites identifying species of concern within Cheboygan County. Within Cheboygan County there are known endangered and threatened species including: Northern Long-eared Bat, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetle, Dwarf Lake Iris, Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, Houghton's Goldenrod, Michigan Monkey Flower, and Pitcher's Thistle. Per the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (iPAC) website, there is no known candidate, threatened or endangered species and no known critical habitat or hibernacula within the project area. U.S. EPA has determined that federally listed species will not be impacted by the proposed project.

A review was conducted to identify whether historic properties, as defined under NHPA, could potentially be affected by the undertaking within the project's area of potential effect (APE). Search and review results indicate a finding of no historic properties affected. The Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) have/has concurred with the finding of no historic properties affected in their letter/s dated February 8, 2021. In the unlikely event historic properties are discovered during project construction, work will immediately stop, and the Michigan SHPO will be notified within 24 hours of the discovery. If continuation of the project may result in an impact to historic properties, the grantee shall contact the U.S. EPA Region 5 Project Officer, Steffanie Crossland, at 312-353-4779, or by email at [crossland.steffanie@epa.gov](mailto:crossland.steffanie@epa.gov).

Features that could be affected by the construction of these improvements are described below. All adverse impacts are expected to be minor and will be monitored by the mitigative measures described below:

- The forcemain along Prospect Road lies within freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. However, the forcemain will be built entirely within the existing road rights-of-way. There are three points where forcemains will cross under the Indian River and the Sturgeon River. Each of these locations will be directionally bored under the rivers. Overall, this project will have no effect to any wetlands. Furthermore, excavations will be below ground, and the ground returned to its original condition including restored topsoil, grass, and paving, etc.
- The construction may have a temporary impact on the aesthetics of the area; however, any excavations will be below ground, and the ground returned to its original condition including restored topsoil, grass, paving, etc.
- During construction, there will be short term air quality impacts from fugitive dust as is common with any construction project; however, these impacts will be mitigated using best management practices during construction, such as dampening of the soil to limit dust and use of diesel-powered equipment that will be fueled with low sulfur diesel fuel. Additionally, contractors will be encouraged to limit idling time during operation of heavy equipment to reduce air quality impacts from exhaust.
- Any increase in noise associated with the construction will be unavoidable and will cease when construction is complete.
- Some traffic detours will be necessary to construct the project. The detours will be temporary and limited to local streets. Residents will be able to access properties and businesses throughout the construction period.
- The project area has been mapped for the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program. According to the FIRM maps, components of the project including collection lines and duplex pump stations will be constructed on the 100- or 500-year floodplain. The FEMA FIRM maps can be seen in Section 7.5. The duplex pump stations will not affect the floodplain as they are buried structures and are not buildings or insurable structures. The electrical components will be above the floodplain. The duplex pump stations do not encourage development in the floodplain because they serve only one or two existing houses

and cannot serve others. This project will have no effect on floodplains, furthermore, excavations will be below ground, and the ground returned to its original condition including restored topsoil, grass, and paving, etc.

**Grant Conditions / Required Mitigation:** All applicable State and local construction codes and best management practices designed to minimize harm related to construction activities will be applied to this project and maintained until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.

**Review/Comment Period:** U.S. EPA is soliciting comments on the *Septic to Sewer Expansion and Modernization Project for Tuscarora Township, Michigan* for a period of **thirty days (30)**, beginning January 25, 2023 on this draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The comment period ends on February 25, 2023 and comments received after this date will not be accepted. Following completion of the 30-day draft FONSI review/comment period, U.S. EPA will evaluate any and all comments received on the project. If no comments are received that are sufficient to cause this Agency to change its position on the project and its anticipated environmental consequences, U.S. EPA will issue the FONSI and proceed with the remaining administrative actions on the grant application.

**Submission of Comments:** Comments on this project and its draft FONSI should be submitted in writing to Steffanie Crossland at the following email: **[crossland.steffanie@epa.gov](mailto:crossland.steffanie@epa.gov)**.

**Point of Contact/Questions:** Any questions on the project and this draft FONSI should be referred to Steffanie Crossland at (312) 353-4779.