



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
FINANCE DIVISION



PHILLIP D. ROOS
DIRECTOR

March 10, 2026

TO: All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

SUBJECT: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Village of Cassopolis, Cass County
Wastewater System Improvements Project
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Project Number 5781-01

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 planning document 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 planning document 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 planning document 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/SRF under "Environmental Project Reviews." 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 via email to EGLE-WIFFS@Michigan.gov, or to me at EGLE, Finance Division, Stabenow Building, P.O. Box 30457, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7957. We will not take any action on this project planning document for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider all 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 Karen Venner, the project manager, at 517-599-5524; VennerK@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
517-388-3380

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
Village of Cassopolis, Cass County
Environmental Assessment
March 2026

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant: Village of Cassopolis

Address: 121 N. Disbrow St.
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Authorized Representative: Emilie LaGrow, Village Manager

Project Number: 5781-01

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The village of Cassopolis (Cassopolis) is centrally located in Cass County in southwest Michigan. Cassopolis along with LaGrange Township, Penn Township, Jefferson Township, and Calvin Township make up the Cassopolis Area Utility Authority (CAUA). Cassopolis entered into an agreement in 1987 with the CAUA townships to accept and convey sanitary sewage to the city of Dowagiac (Dowagiac) Wastewater Treatment Facility for treatment. Additionally, Cassopolis is the owner and operator of the wastewater collection system. According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Cassopolis is 1,734. The projected population growth for 2040 is two percent or 1,804.

Cassopolis is seeking \$8,100,000 in financing from the CWSRF for a project that includes force main replacement, replacement and rehabilitation of manholes, and upgrades to Lift Station (LS) No.2 (Figure 1 and Figure 2). As a qualified financially overburdened system determined by EGLE criteria, Cassopolis is eligible to receive a half percent interest rate reduction from the standard rate of 2.50 percent. The proposed project is eligible to receive 13 percent principal forgiveness (PF) not to exceed \$1,053,000. It is expected for a project of this cost that the typical residential customer would see an estimated rate increase of 41 percent, from \$52.89 per month to \$74.78 per month.

PROPOSED PROJECT

A. Project Need/Justification

Wastewater from the Cassopolis collection system is transported through an interceptor system that consists of three duplex submersible LSs with a limiting capacity of 1,206 gallons per minute (gpm). The LSs operate in a series with interconnecting 15-inch diameter gravity sewer and pressurized sewers built in 1986. The interceptor system has an average capacity of 565,000 gallons per day.

LS No.1 is located south of W. State Street between Lakeview Court and Stone Lake Street. Refurbishment updates from 2016 include a new valve vault, standby generator, pumps, and controls. LS No.1 pumps wastewater through 17,950 linear feet (lft) of 12-inch diameter high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) force main, discharging to LS No.2 via a 15-inch diameter gravity sewer just north of Shurte Street with an approximate capacity of 2,574 gpm.

LS No.2 is located at the intersection of Oak Grove Road (Oak Grove) and Peavine Street (Peavine) and was refurbished in 2014, including a new valve vault, standby generator, pumps, and controls. However, a fitting that leaks at LS No.2 was recently discovered, which sprays significantly. The positioning of the pumps within the wet well and the discharge piping need to be reworked. When the pumps turn on, they shift positions as if they are not properly affixed within the structure. Staff believe this may have led to the leaking fitting and could continue to cause further problems if a permanent solution is not developed.

Wastewater flow from LS No.1 and customers discharging directly to the 15-inch diameter gravity sewer interconnecting LS No.1 and LS No.2, pumps northwest through 6,465 ft of 12-inch diameter PVC force main to another gravity sewer on Peavine. The capacity of LS No.2 is approximately 1,206 gpm.

LS No.3 is located on M-62 just northwest of Dutch Settlement Street and was refurbished in 2016, including a new valve vault, standby generator, pumps, and controls. Wastewater from LS No.2 and customers discharging directly to the 15-inch diameter gravity sewer interconnecting LS No.2 & 3, are pumped through 4,790 ft of 10-inch diameter PVC force main. The force main runs west along M-62 before turning north on N. Mill Street (N. Mill), extending to E. Railroad Street (E. Railroad), running northeast and eventually discharging to a gravity sewer in the Dowagiac sanitary sewer collection system.

Much of the 15-inch diameter gravity sanitary sewer interconnecting LSs No.1, 2, and 3 were installed at a minimum slope with a capacity of 1,206 gpm, limited by the capacity at Peavine (LS No.2). This project would improve the capacity of the interconnecting LS system, as well as correct deteriorating force mains and manholes and address leaking associated with each of the three LSs.

Recently, Cassopolis has experienced multiple force main breaks resulting in various sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) events, but compliance with EGLE requirements has been maintained. Samples of the broken force main associated with LS No.1 were sent to PSI Laboratory for evaluation. The failed pipe sample displayed environmental stress cracking attributed to the chemical plasticizer group called phthalates, as identified by gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy. Detection of phthalates in sanitary sewer force main is not to be expected, and most likely resulted from discharge of chemicals into the sanitary sewer system which would not be allowed. The force main was replaced in 2017 and in the last year, has experienced eight additional breaks of non-replaced sections downstream of the replaced section. Sections replaced in 2017 were replaced with HDPE, which is resistant to plasticizers. There have been no additional breaks in the 2017 HDPE replacement, and no sections of the 2017 replacement are included in the proposed force main replacements for this project. Additionally, gravity sewer is not included in this project as gravity sewer pipe is not pressurized, which is required for the type of failure caused by the plasticizers in the force main.

Force main connected to LSs No.2 and 3 have not yet shown signs of breaking, but, like the force main connected to LS No.1, these force mains are constructed of PVC schedule 40 and are pressurized and downstream of LS No.1, subjecting the force mains to the same chemicals and conditions that caused the LS No.1 force main to fail.

Force main work includes associated manhole repairs, with air release and vacuum valves. Additionally, as identified in the Cassopolis 2017 Asset Management Plan (AMP) and the National Association of Sewer Service Companies Manhole Assessment Certification Program Inspection Reports, multiple gravity sewer manholes along the

existing interceptor system have consequential failure ratings of moderate to catastrophic disruption and exhibit significant deterioration due to attack by hydrogen sulfide (H₂S). Degradation will only continue to worsen with time, eventually placing the gravity sewer manholes in danger of structural failure.

B. Alternatives Considered

No-action Alternative

The no-action alternative does not meet the project needs as it would mean none of the proposed wastewater collection system improvements would be constructed. System inefficiencies would continue to worsen, and the force main would continue to age with continued failures, resulting in costly emergency repairs and likely SSOs. This alternative will not be considered further.

Regional Alternative

The CAUA and further regionalization would not correct the force main segment or identify the contamination source to address the system needs. Regionalization is not further considered.

Optimization of Existing System

Optimization alternatives involve improving efficiency through operational changes, additional new equipment, or additional personnel and training. Reworking the leaking LS No.2 would optimize performance at the LS. Optimization would not address deteriorating infrastructure and is therefore not further considered for the rest of the project components.

Village of Cassopolis Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Alternative

The Cassopolis WWTP alternative considers transporting wastewater from LS No.1 and discharging it to a newly constructed WWTP. A Cassopolis WWTP would require new treatment equipment, including a headworks equipment package, microstrainers, biological nutrient removal, disk filters, and ultraviolet disinfection. Following treatment at a mechanical plant, wastewater would be transported to rapid infiltration beds. Soil borings and percolation testing at the proposed rapid infiltration bed site location confirmed that the site was suitable for rapid infiltration, but this would increase project costs. The WWTP alternative would also likely have a greater impact on air quality, major surface waters, groundwater, and noise levels as well as construction impacts such as traffic disruptions and tree removal impacts. The Cassopolis WWTP alternative is not further considered.

Remediation Alternative

Spot repair has previously been utilized but was not effective, as it was reactionary to unpredictable failures and impacts. The reactive approach was costly, and typically emergency events had to be corrected without time for competitive bidding and planning. Spot repairs also resulted in losses in service as the system had to be shut down until the break could be isolated and bypass pumping setup. Additionally, lining the pipes is not an option as it would decrease the capacity below the required design flows.

The failing interceptor system would be proactively remedied, without costly emergency repairs or loss of capacity, by replacing the three force mains within the collection system and rehabilitating the manholes degraded by H₂S.

C. Selected Alternative

The selected remediation alternative for this project would involve replacement of three force mains and associated manholes, and rehabilitation of gravity sewer manholes deteriorating due to H₂S exposure. The optimization alternative would rework LS No.2.

The first force main replacement would be the 12-inch diameter force main connected to LS No.1. Approximately 15,200ft of Force Main No.1 would be replaced with new 12-inch diameter HDPE force main. HDPE pipe material is resistant to plasticizers and would therefore prevent further damage to the pipes. There are also seven existing manholes with air release and vacuum valves on the existing Force Main No. 1 that would need to be included in the replacement force main.

From the intersection of Oak Grove and Peavine, approximately 6,500ft of the 12-inch diameter PVC Force Main No.2 would be replaced with plasticizer-resistant HDPE. There are three existing manholes with air release and vacuum valves on the existing Force Main No.2 that would need to be included

Approximately 5,000 ft of the 15-inch diameter force main associated with LS No.3 would be replaced with 10-inch diameter plasticizer-resistance HDPE force main along M-62, N. Mill and E. Railroad. There are three existing manholes with air release and vacuum valves on the existing force main that would need to be included on the replacement.

Additionally, nine gravity sewer manholes are in need of lining, and 12 in need of replacement. Rehabilitation would include lining 9 gravity sewer manholes with Polyurea or epoxy to render the manholes impervious to H₂S and full replacement of 12 gravity sewer manholes.

Optimization improvements for LS No.2 include replacing pump rails, upper guiderail brackets, chains, pump bases, isolation and check valves, wet well piping, and grouting to correct leaking.

D. Project Cost and Implementation

The total estimated project cost is \$8,100,000. Cassopolis anticipates financing the project with a 20-year CWSRF loan at a reduced interest rate of 2.0 percent due to qualifying as a financially overburdened system, and up to 13 percent PF not to exceed \$1,053,000. The average residential user in Cassopolis is expected to see an estimated user rate increase of \$21.68 per month as a result of the project. Cassopolis owns, operates, and maintains the interceptor system that discharges to the Dowagiac WWTP.

PROJECT IMPACTS

A. Water Quality Impacts

The proposed project is not anticipated to have any adverse impact on water quality. Precautions would be taken including soil erosion and sedimentation control (SESC), best practices and permitting, and horizontal directional drilling to protect major surface waters and any potential floodplain areas. Disposal of soil in wetlands and floodplains would be prohibited. Project work located within wetlands (LS No. 2 improvements) would only occur inside the existing LS wet well and would not affect the wetlands.

Dewatering for replacement and installation of new force main would be temporary and appropriately permitted.

B. Construction Impacts

The areas which would be impacted by the construction of the proposed projects would include existing LS sites, river crossings, sanitary sewer pipes and manholes located within existing rights-of-way or utility easements. These areas have been previously disturbed through the construction of the existing assets. Temporary adverse impacts on the environment during construction include noise, dust, and traffic disruption.

Proper permitting and compliance with rules and regulations would ensure environmental protection, and provide mitigation for noise, dust, and traffic disruption. Operating construction vehicles would be limited to approved working times such as 7:30 am to 5:30 pm when working within Cassopolis limits. This would help minimize traffic disruptions, noise, and dust. Additionally, adequate signage for detour routes would reduce traffic disruptions and wetting disturbed ground would keep dust at a minimum.

Proper disposal of old equipment, asphalt, and any other site material removal would be required.

C. Operational Impacts

There would be coordination when switching from the existing force main to the newly constructed force main. The principal beneficial effects of the project would include eliminating the possibility of catastrophic infrastructure failures and ensuring correct components are in place to optimize utilization of the wastewater collection system.

After project work is completed, mitigation must be considered to prevent repeated chemical exposure and damage to the replacement force main. The replacements would utilize HDPE pipe material that is resistant to the plasticizers that caused the pipe damage. Additionally, efforts are ongoing to identify and eliminate the source of the plasticizers. Recent monitoring efforts identified a plasticizer indicator intermittently at LS No.1 but no presence of the indicator upstream of LS No. 1. The source has been determined to not be a result of a chemical leaching plasticizer from the pipe itself and is believed to be the result of an intermittent discharge.

D. Secondary Impacts

Anticipated secondary impacts on the environment include storm water runoff, erosion, air pollution and loss of vegetation. Directional drilling would be required to pass a minimum of 10 feet below the bottom of the river to reduce the impacts. Measures would be taken to prevent drilling fluid from leaking into the creek during directional drilling.

Where open-cut method is required, dewatering depths would be limited to the depth required for installation of proposed sewer pipes. SESC best practices include but are not limited to discharging dewatering water overland or to the storm sewer and using silt fences when disturbing ground within 500 feet of waters of the state.

Compliance with rules and regulations would ensure environmental protection for air pollution, including limiting work hours to Village required times. Temporary impacts to air quality are not anticipated to persist post-construction.

There are also no anticipated impacts for cultural and historical resources, or for wildlife. Tree removals, if required, would be completed between October 1 through March 31 to avoid impacts on threatened and endangered bats during the roosting season. Environmental impacts are not anticipated for wetlands, floodplains or other sensitive

areas, but SESC best practices will be utilized as appropriate. SESC measures, as well as the use of horizontal directional drilling in sensitive areas, temporary and permanent seed, fertilizer and mulch to all disturbed areas, will mitigate impacts on vegetation.

The estimated rate increase required to repay the capital cost for this project has been calculated to include two percent interest and 13 percent PF. As a result of the project, including PF, a user rate increase of approximately \$21.68 per month, is anticipated for the average residential bill.

No interceptors or capacity expansions are planned as part of this project. No new residential or commercial development is anticipated due to this project. Changes in development, land use, air quality, water quality, or secondary growth are not anticipated.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A formal public meeting was held April 24, 2025, at Village Hall. The advertisement for the public meeting was published on the Village website on March 21, 2025. This advertisement also notified residents that a copy of the draft project planning document was available at Village Hall. There were no questions or comments submitted prior to the public hearing. Project finances were reviewed as part of the presentation and were again reiterated during the questions portion of the meeting. Cassopolis held a special meeting on April 24, 2025, to formally adopt the project plan and approve the recommended alternative.

REASONS FOR CONCLUDING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The proposed project would address the deteriorating force mains and manholes and correct leaking LS No. 2 and there would be no significant adverse construction, operational, secondary, or cumulative impacts on socioeconomic, cultural, or environmental resources. Construction impacts would be mitigated by compliance with rules and regulations, permitting, and best practices. The water quality and efficiency benefits anticipated from the project are expected to outweigh the short-term adverse impacts.

Questions regarding this Environmental Assessment should be directed to:

Karen Venner, Project Manager
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section
Finance Division
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
P.O. Box 30457
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7957
Telephone: 517-517-5524
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Figure 1: Force main replacement, replacement and rehabilitation of manholes, and upgrades to LS No.2

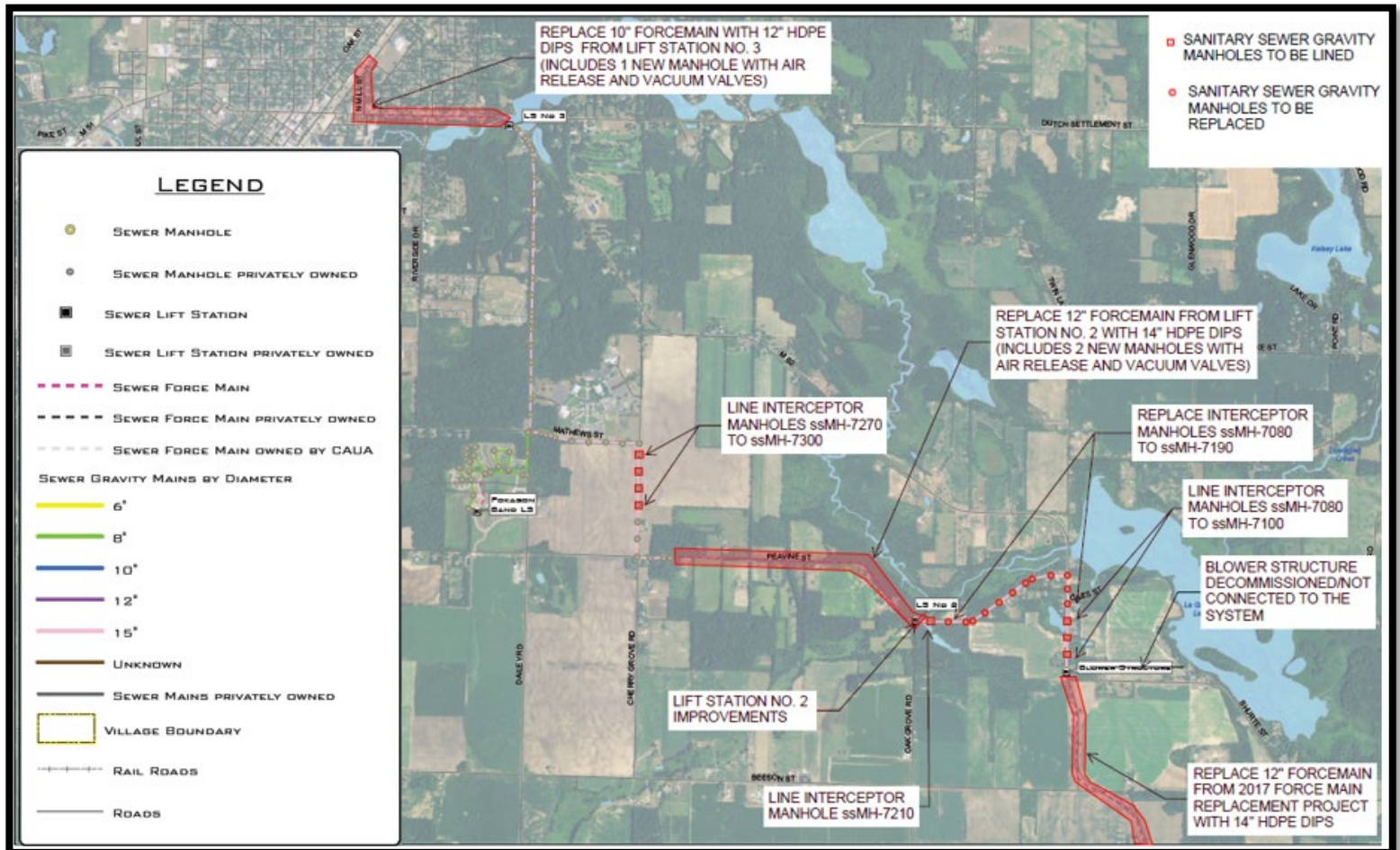


Figure 2: Force main replacement

