



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

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



PHILLIP D. ROOS
DIRECTOR

April 16, 2025

TO: All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

SUBJECT: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Village of Baraga, Baraga County
Collection System and Lagoon Improvements
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Project Number 5905-01

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, FD, Constitution Hall, 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 Jessica Ferris, the project manager, at 517-331-3744; FerrisJ6@Michigan.gov; or you may contact me. Your interest in this process and the environment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

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
Village of Baraga, Baraga County
Environmental Assessment
April 2025

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant: Village of Baraga

Address: 100 Hemlock Street
Baraga, Michigan 49908

Authorized Representative: LeAnn LeClaire, Village Manager

Project Number: 5905-01

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Village of Baraga (Baraga) is located in the northwestern portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, along the L'Anse Bay. Figures 1 and 2 indicate the location of Baraga along with the village boundaries. According to the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the 2020 population of Baraga was estimated at 8,746 and is expected to decrease to 6,762 by 2040.

Baraga is applying for a low interest Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. The proposed project consists of improvements to the sanitary sewers, lift stations, and treatment lagoon. The project is expected to cost \$4,500,000. As a significantly overburdened community as determined by EGLE, Baraga qualifies for up to \$900,000 (not to exceed 20 percent of total eligible project costs) in loan principal forgiveness. Construction is expected to begin in September 2025 and be completed in November 2026.

Baraga sewer rates are currently \$40.00 per month per single family residential user for up to 4,000 gallons per month. Usage over this amount is subject to a per 1,000-gallon charge of \$8.81. As a result of the proposed project, sewer rates would be increased to an estimated \$47.39 per month for up to 4,000 gallons.

EXISTING SYSTEM AND PROJECT NEED

Baraga owns and operates its sanitary sewer collection system which includes 56,000 feet of gravity sewer main, approximately half of which was constructed over 70 years ago and is primarily vitrified clay pipe. The sewer infrastructure was televised and the condition of the sewer mains scored using the National Association of Sewer Service Companies (NASSCO) Pipeline Assessment Certification Program (PACP) rating system. Sanitary sewers with a NASSCO PACP structural rating of a 4 (significant) or 5 (most significant) need to be replaced or rehabilitated.

The collection system also includes the Main Lift Station and three minor lift stations with related force main. The Main Lift Station was installed in 1991 and was updated in 2004 with new pumps and generator. The pumps, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, and generator are at the end of their expected useful life and are in need of replacement. The

Post Office Lift Station was updated in 2014 with new pumps and wet well with no upgrades needed at this time, but the associated force main was installed in 1973 and needs replacement due to age and criticality of failure. There are also several valves along the force main that are inoperable and need to be replaced. The Cardinal Lift Station was constructed in 2000 and is in fair condition but needs a backup generator to maintain reliability. The Marina Lift Station was constructed in 2010 and is also in fair condition except for the wet well that has leaks and needs sealing to stop infiltration.

Wastewater is pumped to the Baraga Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), jointly owned by Baraga and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, which services Baraga and the surrounding communities. The treatment processes include a primary aerated treatment pond, an aerated storage pond, and four stabilization/storage ponds. The original lagoon wastewater treatment system was constructed in 1970, with a major upgrade with additional lagoons and aeration system in 1990, and again in 2000 and 2010. Treated effluent is discharged to Hazel Creek under the provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The existing primary aerated treatment lagoon accepts and retains most of the settleable solids and organic biosolids and provides primary treatment with coarse bubble aeration and includes three floating baffle curtains. One of these curtains is damaged with a tear, allowing short circuiting of the intended travel path for the wastewater flow, decreasing wastewater treatment efficiency and allowing dead zones. Baffle curtains are needed to improve water quality at the WWTF by increasing the effective treatment area and time.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Alternatives Considered

Alternative 1 – No Action

This alternative would not provide required improvements to the wastewater collection and treatment systems. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further.

Alternative 2 – Optimize Performance of Existing Facilities

The existing system is designed and constructed for maximum efficiency. There are no identified operational changes, new equipment, or additional training or personnel that would provide for enhanced function or efficiency of the wastewater collection and treatment systems. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further.

Alternative 3 – Regionalization

Baraga is already a regionalized system by having joint ownership of the WWTF with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further.

Alternative 4 – Replacement of Structurally Deficient Sewer Main, Sewer Lining, Lift Station Improvements, and Lagoon Baffle Replacement

This alternative includes the removal and replacement of approximately 3,870 feet of sanitary sewer main, repair of 1,538 feet of sanitary sewer main with cured in place pipe lining (CIPP), replacement of the 2,100-foot-long force main at the Post Office Lift station, improvements to lift stations, backup lift station generator, and replacement of a damaged lagoon baffle curtain.

The open cut pipe installation method with polyvinyl chloride sewer main and precast concrete manholes would be utilized to replace sewer mains with multiple structural issues. CIPP lining would be used to repair sewer main with fewer structural deficiencies wherever possible in order to reduce construction costs and impacts.

Lift station improvements, SCADA system replacement, backup generators, and lagoon baffle curtain would also be included as part of this alternative to maintain effective and reliable operation.

Alternative 5 – Replacement of Structurally Deficient Sewer Main, No Sewer Lining, Lift Station Improvements, and Lagoon Baffle Replacement

This alternative includes the same details that were identified for Alternative 4, but the sanitary sewer main would all be replaced via the open cut method instead of repairing sewer mains using the CIPP lining method.

Selected Alternative

Alternative 4 is the selected alternative. The project would include the removal and replacement of approximately 3,870 feet of sanitary sewer main via the open cut installation method, repair of 1,538 feet of sanitary sewer main with cured in place pipe lining (CIPP), and replacement of the 2,100-foot-long force main at the Post Office Lift Station via the open cut installation method.

Sewer segments to be included in the project are identified in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1: Sanitary Sewer Improvements Proposed via CIPP Lining

Pipe Segment	Street Name	Pipe Length (feet)
57A	US-41	172
57	US-41	275
56	US-41	295
72	N. Superior Avenue	355
474	Wadaga Road	310
94	Wadaga Road	385
211	S. Superior Avenue	387
213	US-41	288
263	Elm Street	286
265	Spruce Street	137
286	M-38	394
328	Oak Street	257
336	US-41	329

Table 2: Sanitary Sewer Improvements Proposed via Replacement

Pipe Segment	Street Name	Pipe Length (feet)
106	S. Superior Avenue	150
103	Pennock Street	457
236	Girard Avenue	361
235	Girard Avenue	283
234	Girard Avenue	287

The proposed project also includes replacing pumps and the back-up generator at the Main Lift Station, coating the dry well with a sealing epoxy coating to limit deterioration and preserve the structural integrity of the steel enclosure, and installing mechanical screening equipment for removal of plastics and debris which hinder the operation of the lift station and treatment lagoons. Electrical and controls and the SCADA system would also be upgraded. A backup generator would be installed at the Cardinal Lift Station. The Marina Lift Station wet well would be patched and lined to eliminate excess water intrusion.

The project would also include the replacement of a damaged baffle curtain in the primary aerated lagoon at the wastewater treatment lagoon facility.

See Figure 3 for the locations of the proposed improvements.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND PROJECT IMPACTS

Water Quality Impacts

The proposed project does not have any anticipated impacts to water resources or surface waters such as inland lakes, streams, or wetlands. Continued water quality improvement to the Hazel Creek through reliable wastewater treatment is the primary cumulative impact anticipated. The surface water discharge will remain in accordance with NPDES permit regulations and is not anticipated to have a negative impact on the surface water quality of the receiving river or groundwater. The proposed water system improvements will improve water quality and increase system reliability.

Construction Impacts

While the sewer mains are being replaced, roads will be shut down to traffic, with access available for residents located in the construction area. Appropriate measures to combat dust will be implemented as needed, detours will be put in place for through traffic, and certain areas will require soil erosion and sedimentation control measures be put in place to contain soils within the construction area.

There are two endangered species located in Baraga County, the Gray wolf and the Kirtland's warbler. Given that the proposed project will take place in rights-of-ways, which have been previously disturbed, no potential impacts to plants or animals are anticipated.

No anticipated cultural or historic resource impacts are anticipated since the project is replacing or repairing existing infrastructure in the same location. If it appears that cultural or historic resources could be impacted, work would be immediately halted and the appropriate parties contacted.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A public hearing to discuss the proposed project was advertised in the *L'Anse Sentinel* on March 29, 2023. The public meeting was held at the Baraga Village Office on April 13, 2023. The main topics of discussion at the meeting were related to the need for the project, selected alternatives, construction impacts, and impacts to user costs. At the conclusion of the meeting, Baraga passed a resolution to adopt the project planning document and seek CWSRF financing to implement the selected alternative.

REASONS FOR CONCLUDING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The project will present no long-term significant impacts associated with its construction or operation. The proposed project will reduce the possibility of contamination due to wastewater leaking out of the structurally deficient system and will provide a reliable sewer service by improving the structurally deficient collection system. The water quality benefits anticipated from the project are expected to outweigh the short-term adverse impacts.

Questions regarding this Environmental Assessment should be directed to:

Ms. Jessica Ferris, 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: 517-331-3744
E-Mail: FerrisJ6@Michigan.gov

Figure 1: Location of Baraga

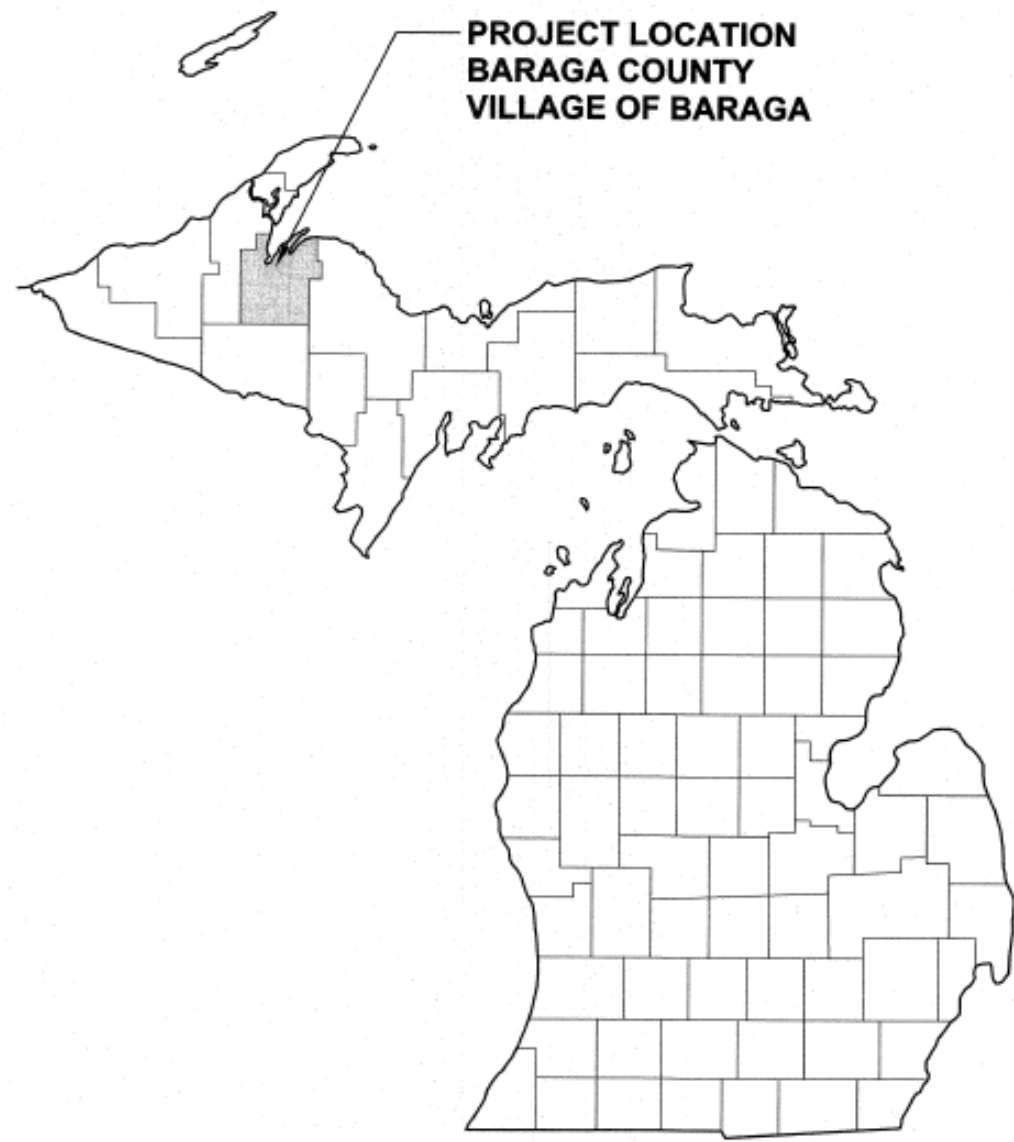


Figure 2: Baraga Service Area

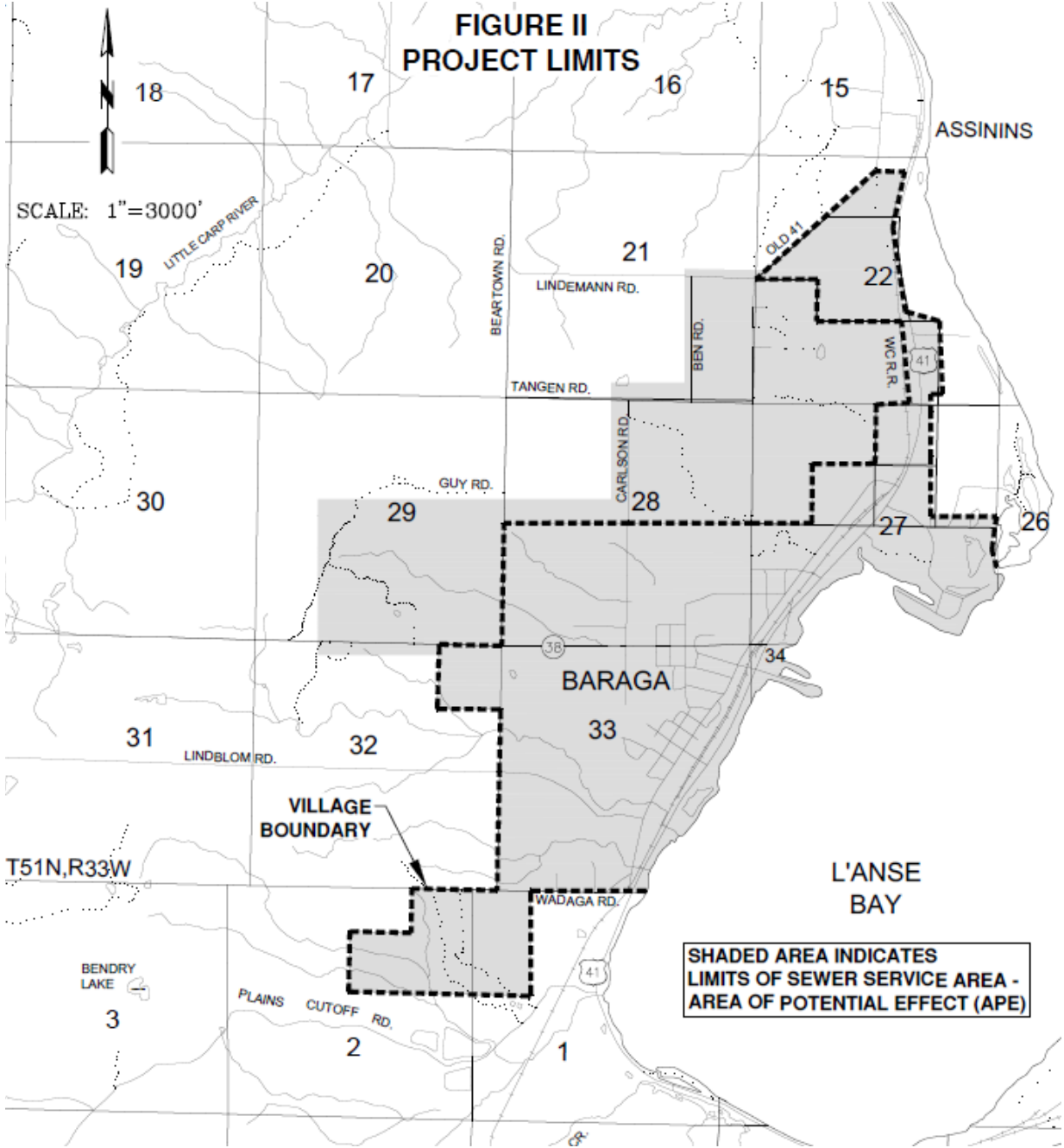


Figure 3: Baraga Collection System

