

Barberry Relief Sewer Project –FAQs

What is the Barberry Relief Sewer Project?

The Barberry Relief Sewer Project is a major infrastructure improvement project that will upgrade the City’s sewer system along Barberry Street between Eureka Road and Brest Road.

A *relief sewer* is a large sewer line that is built to help carry extra stormwater flow when the existing system becomes overloaded during heavy rain. It essentially “relieves” the current system so it can drain more efficiently and reduce backups and flooding.

This project includes construction of a new large-diameter relief sewer, connections to existing sewer and utility infrastructure, roadway improvements, and full restoration work once construction is complete.

Why is this project needed?

This project is being completed in response to long-standing drainage and flooding challenges in the area, including the catastrophic flooding event in 2014 and other basement flooding and sewer backup events that have occurred both before and since that time.

Following the 2014 floods, when Governor Snyder visited the City to assess the damage, Mayor Kuspa directed City engineers to identify a long-term solution to the recurring flooding problems. After further study, it was determined that constructing a relief sewer—similar to the system installed on Plum and Poplar Streets—could provide a permanent solution by significantly increasing the system’s capacity and reducing backups during heavy rain events.

Once this solution was identified, the City began proactively setting aside funds and pursuing grant opportunities, including FEMA assistance, to help fund construction of the project.

The project is intended to:

- Eliminate street drainage entering the sanitary sewer system
- Reduce the risk of basement flooding and sewer backups
- Improve the overall reliability and performance of the sewer system

The ultimate goal is to provide long-term protection for residents and reduce the likelihood of future flooding events.

How is the project funded?

- Total project cost: approximately \$25 million (including engineering costs)
 - 90% funded through a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant
 - 10% funded by the City
-

When will construction take place?

Construction is scheduled in phases from April 2026 through June 2027:

- Tree removals: Beginning April 20, 2026
 - Traffic setup (Eureka and Fort): Starting April 27, 2026
 - Eureka tunnel connection: May–June 2026
 - Tunneling under Eureka and Northline: June–July 2026
 - Main sewer construction (Barberry): May 2026–January 2027
 - Water main and storm sewer reconnections: May 2026–January 2027
 - Road paving: July 2026–May 2027
 - Grass restoration and signage: May–June 2027
 - Final completion: expected by end of June 2027
-

What work will be completed as part of the project?

Major components include:

- Construction of approximately 7,770 feet of new sewer (66"–78" diameter)
 - Installation of an 22-foot diameter drop shaft connecting to the existing Eureka tunnel
 - Tunneling beneath Eureka Road and Northline Road
 - Connection to the new Sycamore Relief Sewer system
 - Sewer lateral connections at 27 locations
 - Water main removal and replacement at 26 locations
 - Installation of new street drainage systems
 - Pavement reconstruction and grass restoration
-

Will there be traffic impacts?

Yes, traffic impacts are expected throughout construction.

Barberry Street:

- North-south traffic on Barberry will be closed during construction
- East-west streets crossing Barberry may be closed for 20–30 days each
- No more than three consecutive streets will be closed at one time
- East-west access will be maintained as much as possible

Eureka Road:

- Traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction during tunnel work
- Lane shifts will occur near the Barberry/Eureka intersection
- Access to all businesses on Eureka will remain open.

How will construction traffic be managed?

- Construction vehicles will enter into the construction area from Fort Street using the intersecting east/west streets (location varies, only three consecutive streets will be used at a time)
- Trucks will exit via Barberry to Northline, Eureka, Superior, or Brest, depending on work location

When will the project be completed?

The project is expected to be fully completed by the end of June 2027.

Will this project cause a rat problem?

No, this project is not expected to create a rat problem.

The Barberry Relief Sewer Project involves installing new sewer infrastructure in areas where large sewer pipes do not currently exist. Because of this, the work does not require opening or disturbing large, long-established sewer systems where rodents may already be present.

This is different from the Fort Street Reconstruction, where existing large sewer systems *were opened*, which can sometimes displace rodents from established nesting areas.

During the Barberry project, only smaller storm sewers may be temporarily opened at intersections. These pipes are significantly smaller and are not expected to contain substantial rodent populations.

In addition, the contractor and project engineers will actively monitor conditions during construction and take appropriate measures if any rodent activity is observed.

Overall, the risk of increased rodent activity as a result of this project is considered low.

What should I do on trash collection day during construction?

Residents along Barberry Street will still be able to have their trash collected during construction, with a few temporary adjustments:

- Residents should place trash and recycling on their east-west side street for pickup
- If sidewalks or driveway approaches are under construction, the contractor will assist by moving trash cans as needed

To help accommodate these changes:

- Code Enforcement and the Police Department will not issue tickets for on-street parking related to trash day in the construction area for residents who live on Barberry.
- Parking in front of fire hydrants remains prohibited at all times

These measures are intended to ensure uninterrupted waste collection while maintaining safety and accessibility during construction.

Could this project damage my pipes or foundation walls?

Damage to nearby structures is not expected as a result of this project.

Construction equipment used on the project is carefully calibrated to control vibration and minimize impacts to surrounding properties. In addition, monitoring devices will be installed in key areas to measure vibration levels during excavation and compaction activities.

These instruments allow the project team to ensure that vibration remains well below levels that could cause damage to concrete, underground pipes, or foundation walls.

Overall, multiple safeguards are in place to protect nearby homes and infrastructure throughout construction.

Is there a risk of flooding during construction?

The existing storm water and sanitary sewers will be functioning throughout the project.

How will I get project updates?

Residents will receive regular updates throughout the project through multiple channels:

- Project notices will be hand-delivered to residents along Barberry Street and any streets directly affected by temporary closures or construction-related traffic changes
- The City will maintain and update a dedicated Barberry Relief Sewer page on the City's website with the latest project information
- Updates and important notices will also be shared through the City's official Facebook page

These communication methods are intended to keep residents informed about construction progress, traffic changes, and any upcoming impacts.

What should I do if my property is damaged during construction?

The contractor is responsible for restoring or replacing, in kind, any items that must be removed or disturbed as part of construction. This includes items such as trees, sidewalks, and driveway approaches.

If you believe your property has been damaged as a result of construction activities, you should report it as soon as possible to the project engineers. The issue will be reviewed and addressed appropriately.

Prompt reporting helps ensure concerns are documented and resolved efficiently during the course of the project.

Will this cause my taxes to go up?

No. This project will not result in an increase to your taxes.

The majority of the project is funded through a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant. The remaining costs are covered using existing City fund reserves that have been allocated for this purpose.

The City is not issuing any new bonds, taking on additional debt, or levying any new millage to fund this project.

Will the trees be replaced?

Yes. Trees that are removed as part of construction will be replaced once the project is complete.

After construction is finished, the City's certified arborist will work with project staff to select and replant appropriate trees along Barberry Street. Replanting will be coordinated to ensure long-term health, safety, and compatibility with the restored streetscape and utilities.

What is being removed as part of the project?

As part of construction, some existing features within the project area will need to be temporarily or permanently removed to allow for installation of the new sewer and utility infrastructure.

This includes:

- Trees along Barberry Street (to allow for construction equipment, sewer installation and access)
- Portions of sidewalks and driveway approaches where underground work is required
- Select water mains and utility infrastructure at various locations that will be replaced and reconnected as part of the project

All impacted areas will be restored after construction is complete, including replacement of sidewalks, driveway approaches, utilities, and landscaping.

Will this cause flooding in other areas?

No. This project will not increase flooding in other neighborhoods or communities.

The Barberry Relief Sewer Project is designed specifically to improve stormwater management within the area generally bounded by Eureka and Brest, and Dix/Trenton and Fort Street. Existing flooding issues in this area occur because current infrastructure cannot move stormwater efficiently to the Eureka Tunnel during heavy rain events.

This project does not add additional stormwater to the system. Instead, it improves how existing stormwater is collected and conveyed, allowing it to drain more efficiently.

As a result, the project is intended to reduce localized flooding risks in the project area without creating impacts to surrounding neighborhoods or communities.

Who is the contractor?

The primary contractor for the Barberry Relief Sewer Project is Dan's Excavating, Inc. of Shelby Township, Michigan