

B U F F A L O
SEWER AUTHORITY

ATTACHMENT B-1

Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) Part 3 - Determination of Significance

Lead Agency: Buffalo Sewer Authority

Project: Genesee St - CSO053_8 SPP341A Modification

Proposed Activity:

This project is a Sewer Patrol Point (SPP) modification to incorporate an additional 18-inch diameter underflow pipe and raising the overflow weir to 55.60 ft to achieve a new total flow of 26.4 million gallons per day (MGD) reducing overflows at CSO-053. The project area is located on Genesee Street east of Kerns Street. The existing drop shaft connection to the Scajaquada Tunnel Interceptor at SPP 341A was reviewed and determined to be undersized for the proposed flow, with an original design flow of only 4.43 MGD. A vortex style drop structure is proposed to achieve the desired increased capacity. The small footprint of the vortex plunge design combined with its ability to reuse the existing tunnel connection from the existing drop shaft make this style drop shaft the preferred alternative. The drop shaft replacement would be constructed next to the existing drop shaft and completed offline.

Background:

The BSA entered into an Administrative Order (AO) with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of their approved Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) that was approved on March 18, 2014. The purpose of the LTCP is to reduce CSO activations within the existing collection system and to alleviate flow spikes for influent flow to the wastewater treatment facility.

Compliance with the LTCP is defined by the number of activations allowed in the typical precipitation year for the Sewer Patrol Point's (SPP's) receiving waterbody as determined by BSA's collection system hydraulic model. Following the approval of the LTCP in 2014 by the regulatory agencies, the collection system hydraulic model used in the LTCP was updated and recalibrated to reflect current system conditions. The updated and re-calibrated LTCP (now re-named the Queen City Clean Waters Program) model suggested that some projects originally envisioned in the 2014 LTCP are no longer feasible and that other planned projects can be further optimized to meet targets. The BSA undertook an optimization process that defined many projects within a Selected Alternative. Pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and 6 NYCRR 617.6(b)(3)(i), BSA has prepared this Significance Statement for the Genesee St - CSO053_8 SPP341A Modification

Agency Coordination:

Ten potentially involved agencies were identified. SEQR project materials were prepared and sent: City of Buffalo Common Council (Masten District), City of Buffalo Department of Public Works (Parks & Streets – Parks, Parks & Streets - City Engineer), New York State Department of State - Coastal Management Program, New York State Department of Transportation – Region 5, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation - Region 9, City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo Water Authority, Erie County Department of

Health, Buffalo Environmental Management Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. No agencies objected to the BSA serving as Lead Agency or expressed concern with the project.

Agency Coordination:

Additionally, project information was submitted for review to New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). OPRHP issued an Effect Finding of No Impact Letter. Based upon the review, no properties, including archaeological and/or historic resources, listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places will be impacted by this project.

A consultation was also made with the US Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system. The project site is located within the vicinity of four (4) listed endangered/proposed endangered species: the Northern Long Eared Bat, the Tricolored Bat, the Salamander Mussel, and the Monarch Butterfly. The site is also located within the vicinity of two (2) protected eagle species and twenty-three (23) bird species that are listed on the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Birds of Conservation Concern list. There are no critical habitats in the vicinity or the project site. USFW issued a letter stating the project is not reasonably certain to cause incidental take of any endangered species.

The site did not require consultation with the NY State Natural Heritage Program (NHP) as the site does not contain a designated significant natural community or contain any species that NYS lists as species of special concern. The SEQR project materials and correspondence from responding agencies is included as an attachment to this document.

Analysis of Impacts:

Using the information provided in the FEAF Part 1, project impacts were evaluated for each of the 18-areas identified in the FEAF Part 2. Impacts were evaluated based on magnitude, duration, and likelihood of occurring. Potential impacts were identified in two areas: Impacts to Land and Open Space. The magnitude of the impacts is discussed below:

Impact on Land

The proposed action involves the construction of the land surface on the proposed site. The total land area to be disturbed is approximately 2,200 square feet (0.05 acres). It will also involve an excavation to approximately 50-feet below grade, and a total of 1,500 cubic yards of material to be excavated. Given the relatively small area of disturbance and the targeted nature of the excavation, the impact on existing land use is expected to be minor. Temporary disruption may occur during construction, but the long-term land use will be consistent with the project's goals of improving sewer capacity and reducing overflows.

The excavation process will expose soil to the elements, increasing the potential for erosion and sediment runoff. Mitigation measures, such as erosion control practices and proper site management, will be essential to minimize these impacts. Implementing effective control measures will be crucial to prevent adverse effects on surrounding areas.

During construction, the primary impacts will be related to noise, dust, and temporary disruption of local traffic. These impacts are anticipated to be localized and temporary. Once construction is complete, the land will be restored and maintained in accordance with project plans, with minimal long-term land use changes anticipated.

Overall, while the project involves a moderate excavation and land disturbance, the impacts on land are expected to be minor in magnitude and a short-term impact. The benefits of improving sewer capacity and reducing overflows outweigh the temporary construction impacts. Proper management and mitigation strategies will ensure that the land impacts are minimized and that the project contributes positively to the overall infrastructure improvements.

Impacts to Open Space:

The installation of a new vortex-style drop shaft within Schiller Park will have a minimal impact on the open space. The footprint of the proposed drop shaft structure is small, and its location next to the existing drop shaft will limit the extent of disturbance to the surrounding park area. Additionally, only two manholes will be added to facilitate access and maintenance, further reducing the project's spatial impact on the park. The construction will be completed offline, meaning that the existing infrastructure will remain operational during installation, minimizing the need for prolonged work within the open space.

Although the project will introduce some temporary disruptions during construction, such as restricted access and minor vegetation disturbance, these impacts will be short-term and localized. The small scale of the footprint and the reuse of the existing tunnel connection will help preserve the overall character and functionality of the park. Once the modifications are complete, the park area will remain largely unaffected, with minimal visual or physical changes. The project will result in long-term environmental benefits by increasing the sewer system's capacity, reducing combined sewer overflows (CSO) at CSO-053, and improving water quality in nearby water bodies, which aligns with community goals for enhanced environmental management.

Determination of Significance

In determining the significance of this project, it is important to emphasize the long-term benefits it will have on the overall public health of Buffalo and its citizens. By reducing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) activations as part of the BSA's compliance with the LTCP, the project directly contributes to improved water quality in Buffalo's receiving waterbodies, reducing pollutants and contaminants entering the local waterways. The decrease in overflow events also alleviates the stress on the wastewater treatment facility, ensuring more reliable and effective wastewater management for the community.

While short-term impacts from land disturbance and excavation during construction are anticipated, these are temporary and manageable with proper mitigation measures. The long-term benefits, including enhanced environmental quality, safer water bodies, and compliance with state and federal environmental mandates, far outweigh these temporary inconveniences. Ultimately, the project promotes a healthier and more sustainable urban environment for the residents of Buffalo, contributing to cleaner water resources, improved infrastructure, and the overall resilience of the city's wastewater management system. These public health and environmental improvements underscore the importance of advancing the project despite any short-term impacts.

With consideration of the aforementioned environmental factors, along with findings from Part 1 and Part 2 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form, the magnitude, importance, duration, and scale of adverse environmental impacts related to this project are very low.

Therefore, the lead agency checks "A" on the last page of the Full Environmental Assessment Form, issuing a negative declaration (Neg. Dec) for the action.