



**Candice S. Miller**

Public Works Commissioner  
Macomb County

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## 15 Mile Road lane to close for critical sewer maintenance

One lane of a nearly one-half-mile stretch of 15 Mile Road in Sterling Heights will be closed starting Wednesday, Sept. 8, to allow for sewer maintenance to prevent sinkholes like the one that occurred five years ago to the east in Fraser.

The eastbound curb lane of 15 Mile between Morningdale Drive and Fontana Drive will be closed through early fall 2022, so that contractors have access to the manhole. Also, the east side (northbound lane) of the Fontana Drive entrance/exit, as well as the curb lane of eastbound 15 Mile Road from Fontana to Hayes Road, will be closed through late spring 2022. Two-way traffic will be maintained at all times on 15 Mile with only the minor inconvenience of one lane closure. No significant impact to traffic flow is expected. Traffic in both directions on Fontana Drive at 15 Mile will be maintained by using the west side of the subdivision entrance. A pedestrian detour also is provided.

“We simply cannot have another infrastructure disaster like the 2016 sinkhole,” Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Candice S. Miller said. “Our office is committed to investing and maintaining our underground infrastructure, so we appreciate the public’s patience and understanding during these lane closures.”

The lane closures and the work inside the sewer are the next phase of the ongoing \$28 million construction project known as “Segment 5” of the Macomb Interceptor Drain Drainage District.

Following the Christmas Eve 2016 sinkhole that occurred on 15 Mile at Eberlein Drive in Fraser just a week before she took office, Miller ordered an upstream and downstream inspection of the interceptor. It revealed infiltration of groundwater with sand and dirt from outside the large pipe through tiny cracks, and degradation of the concrete pipe caused by the corrosion created by hydrogen sulfide gas from the raw sewage that flows in the pipe.

Excavation of a massive shaft along 15 Mile Road, west of Schoenherr Road in Sterling Heights, began last fall and recently reached a depth of approximately 65 feet, enabling a construction crew to cut away a section of the 11-foot-diameter Macomb Interceptor sewer pipe. Workers entered the pipe and have cleared debris and sediment – some of which has accumulated during the past 10 to 15 years to a depth of more than 2 feet in some areas. That process has cleared the

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way for upcoming installation of impervious polymer pipe to the inside of a 7,000-foot stretch of unreinforced concrete, from the ITC Corridor to Fontana Drive, just west of Hayes Road. Heading further east from there toward Hayes Road, 1,300 lineal feet of 8-foot pipe will be spray-lined with a geo-polymer coating.

“The work going on in the massive interceptor far below the surface obviously can’t be seen by passersby, but it is vitally important to maintaining our infrastructure and protecting our environment and quality of life,” Miller said.

“A sinkhole under transmission towers of the ITC Corridor or beneath the Red Run Drain, would be a disaster. This next phase of our project will prevent the chances of something like what happened on 15 Mile in Fraser, from happening for decades,” she said.

The Segment 5 project is expected to be completed in 2022. It is funded by:

\*The \$12.5 million sinkhole lawsuit settlement paid to the MIDDD in November 2020 by the insurance company for three contractors whose mistakes while working in the Oakland-Macomb Interceptor to the west caused conditions that eventually led to the Fraser sinkhole

\*\$6 million from MIDDD reserves

\*Bond financing with payments spread over a period of 20 years

The MIDDD is composed of 11 municipalities in Macomb County, and carries the waste shed by approximately 600,000 people. In addition to Sterling Heights, those communities include Fraser, Utica, New Haven and Chesterfield, Clinton, Harrison, Lenox, Macomb, Shelby and Washington townships.

PHOTO:

Map of the lane closures starting Wednesday, Sept. 8.



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