



**Candice S. Miller**

Public Works Commissioner  
Macomb County

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

5-17-21

Contact: Norb Franz 586-201-5732 [norb.franz@macombgov.org](mailto:norb.franz@macombgov.org)

## To prevent catastrophe, grouting underway in massive sewer beneath Clinton River

Imagine if a sewer collapsed beneath a river. It would be an environmental catastrophe.

That's what Macomb County Public Works officials are trying to prevent with new maintenance inside a massive sewer that runs along Interstate 94 and crosses under the Clinton River.

Inspectors working in the sewers have been checking the underground infrastructure that's under the jurisdiction of the Public Works department, and we've found many areas that need work to ensure the integrity of the pipe. Sealing severe leaks and stopping infiltration of sediment into the pipe is essential. Left unchecked, it could eventually lead to sewer collapses. On land, it would cause sinkholes.

"This is maintenance which had been ignored for too long," Public Works Commissioner Candice S. Miller said. "Not anymore."

To help avert the possibility of a sewer collapse, chemical grouting of cracks where leaks have been found is now underway in one of the most important areas: beneath the Clinton River near I-94 and North River Road in Harrison Township, inside the Lakeshore Interceptor sewer. The interceptor is six miles long, and grouting in the 11-foot-diameter concrete pipe is aimed at stopping infiltration in advance of future rehabilitation and maintenance projects.

"After comprehensive inspections of the sewers, it's no surprise that we found our sewers need a lot of work," Miller said. "Can you even imagine if we had a sewer collapse under the Clinton River – a sewer that handles the sanitary waste from about a half a million people? It would be an environmental catastrophe!"

"When we talk about investing in our underground infrastructure, it's not to just make sure the sewers work well, we have to make sure we never have any issues with our environment as well," Miller said.

Slight leaks through concrete pipes are known as "weepers," and ones that spray are called "gushers."

Following the sinkhole on 15 Mile Road in Fraser in December 2016, Miller took office a week later and ordered inspections of the Macomb Interceptor sewer that carries the waste shed by approximately 600,000 people from 11 of Macomb County's communities. Under Miller's

**ADDRESS:** 21777 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, Michigan 48036 • Phone: 586-469-5325 • Fax: 586-469-5933

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direction, grouting ensued beneath 15 Mile Road including under the ITC Corridor and the Red Run Drain in Sterling Heights. A sewer collapse under either of those two locations would be disastrous.

In August 2020, grouting was performed inside a portion of the Macomb Interceptor Drain beneath Garfield Road near Clinton River Road in Clinton Township. Last winter, weeks of grouting was performed under Garfield Road near M-59. Operations then shifted south near the intersection of Garfield and Canal roads and were completed in April.

Thus far, more than \$4 million has been spent on chemical grouting.

To reduce the long-term risk of infrastructure disasters, a contract was awarded last December to a Macomb County environmental services company to periodically inspect 26 miles of sanitary sewers – ranging in diameter from 12 inches to 11 feet – more than 360 manholes and a dozen drop shafts, all under the Public Works Office’s jurisdiction. Reinforced concrete pipes will now be inspected every six years, and non-reinforced concrete pipes will be checked every three years. It’s the largest and most complete infrastructure inspection program ever in Macomb County.

#### PHOTOS:

A worker injects chemical grout to seal a leak inside a Macomb County sewer.

Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Candice S. Miller along the Clinton River at North River Road and Interstate 94 in Harrison Township.

#### VIDEO:

Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Candice S. Miller discusses important preventive maintenance inside a major sewer beneath the Clinton River. <https://youtu.be/tMkZEwVHDrE>



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