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## Mayor: Tunnel to Bring 'Significant' Benefits to Fort Wayne

Posted: Jun 15, 2017 9:49 PM

Updated: Jun 15, 2017 9:49 PM

By Alex Brown, Multimedia Journalist

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(photo courtesy of our partners at WPTA)

FORT WAYNE - Work has begun on the largest construction and public investment project in the history of Fort Wayne. City officials broke ground Thursday on the \$188 million Three Rivers Protection and Overflow Reduction Tunnel, which is part of the city's effort to reduce sewage overflow into rivers.

Mayor Tom Henry says the deep rock tunnel, which is slated for completion in 2021, will have significant environmental and economic benefits for generations to come. The tunnel is designed to have a life expectancy of 100 years, according to the city.

"To be a point of destination City, it's critical that we invest in projects that will have a lasting and meaningful impact," said Henry. "A successful future for our community and region depends on safe, effective and efficient wastewater treatment facilities and best practices."

Tunnel contractors S.A. Healy Co. and Salini Impregilo will construct the tunnel, which will be the fourth Combined Sewer Overflow they have built in the U.S. Matthew Wirtz, deputy director of City Utilities in Fort Wayne, says the city will see a 90 percent reduction in combined sewer overflow going into the local rivers, which is an average reduction more than 850 billion gallons each year.

"That will benefit the entire community and our waterways as well as those downstream all the way to Lake Erie," said Wirtz. "We also know that in the next four to six years we will see a reduction in neighborhood street flooding and basement back-ups. The tunnel will directly help 30 neighborhoods, 15,000 properties and around 45,000 residents."

The project will also include the construction of associated consolidation sewers, drop shafts and a pump station at the sewage treatment plant. The city of Fort Wayne provided some quick facts about the tunnel:

- 5 miles - length of tunnel, stretching from Glasgow Avenue to Foster Park
- 200 - 250 feet - tunnel depth below earth surface
- 16 feet - tunnel finished interior diameter
- 800 million gallons - amount of flow that can travel through the tunnel per day
- 90% - percentage this project will reduce the number of combined sewer overflows on our rivers
- 2017 - working shaft (the hole dug to send the Tunnel Boring Machine down to bedrock) construction will begin and will be completed by spring of 2018
- 2018 (late summer) - Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) will begin the journey through Fort Wayne's bedrock
- 2021 - tunnel is expected to be completed by late summer/early fall of that year
- 2023 - Tunnel pump station complete and tunnel put into operation