

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why is it necessary for the ditch to be rehabilitated?

The ditch is the "storm sewer" for the road and properties that it runs along. The ditch serves two purposes. First, it controls and carries rain water from your property and street to the streams, channels, and rivers. Second, it stores water until it can be carried through culverts to the streams, channels, and rivers; and allows time for pollutants and fine particles to settle out. Over time the ditches fill with particles, turf build-up, and root swells from trees and bushes. This "filling of the ditch" increases the chances of flooding and damage to the street and your home. Therefore, the time will come when the ditch has to be excavated and the flow pattern re-established. Since the original construction of the ditch, standards have changed which may require the ditch and culverts to be up-dated to handle higher flows. Remember, the ditch is not a yard – it is a "green storm sewer pipe" that is to transport and hold water. The more pipes (sumps and downspouts) and concentrated water put in the ditch – the longer it will remain wet for you and/or your neighbors.

### Why not just put in curb/gutter and storm sewers?

The Storm Water Management Plan was designed for the Village as it was originally developed with the utilization of ditches. Curb/gutter and storm sewers convey water more quickly and additional property would need to be acquired for the construction of detention basins to store the water and to remove pollutants and fine particles. Those areas of the Village with curb/gutters and storm sewers had the cost paid by the businesses and homeowners as they purchased property and built on it. The cost to build curb/gutters, storm sewers and storage basins on existing ditched roads could cost a property owner a minimum of \$13,200 in assessed costs. Therefore, the Finance/Public Works Committee and Village Board adopted the policy not to extend curb/gutters and storm sewers, unless public (vehicular) safety or storm water design requires a curb/gutter or an extension would not require additional storage and treatment facilities.

### Who can I call with questions about this policy?

The Department of Public Works should be contacted for inquiries and interpretations on the Policy. The Department may be contacted by telephone 357-0120, fax 354-8373, e-mail [mmaederer@browndeerwi.org](mailto:mmaederer@browndeerwi.org)

### Will my ditch be wider or deeper? or both?

In most cases - both. The typical ditch is 2 feet in depth and starts from the gravel shoulder of the road to your property line along the road rights-of-way (about 16.5 feet wide). The center of the ditch (deepest part and flow line) is 9 feet from your property line towards the road. Many ditches in the Village were originally constructed at the 2-foot depth, which over the years have filled in. Some ditch centers were not at the correct locations when the street was finally paved. In some cases the center of the ditch is far too close to the road shoulder and therefore it will be moved back to the 9-foot center from the property line. The Ditch Rehabilitation Policy has standards for the options available for finishing a ditch when it gets to a certain depth or side slope from the road pavement. Options range from sloping back onto the resident's property, the purchase of a Ditch Drainage Pipe, to walls and landscaping. **(NOTE: DITCH SECTIONS FOR THE 2011 PROJECTS DO NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS TO INSTALL A DITCH DRAINAGE PIPE)**

The Village **does not** install the old 6 inch pipe in ditches since the pipe - takes up storage space and plugs up over time – both reducing the ditch transport and storage capacity. If you have a wet ditch, it will remain a wet ditch. Again, sump pumps and downspouts should not be piped to the ditch since these concentrate water and would keep the ditch wet for a longer period of time for you and/or your neighbors. After the project you may place additional decorative plantings in wet areas and it is best for you to direct your sump pump and downspouts to spread out over your yard. The Department and most storm water websites can provide information on rain gardens and rain barrels so you can make better use of your collected storm water.



Drive ready for paving and ditch rough cut



Drive paved and ditch ready for hydro-seeding



Ditch 2.5 weeks after hydro-seeding and good watering.



Village typical mail/newspaper box unit.

### **Will I have to sod or plant grass seed in the ditch?**

NO. The policy states that the Village will hydro-seed the ditch area. The Village will provide daytime watering for the first two weeks (the rye and fescue grasses should be growing by the end of the first week). **The resident is responsible for evening and weekend watering; and all care after the first two weeks – follow Department instructions carefully.** The Department will review complaints about the lack of turf development. If it is found that the resident has followed instructions for watering and maintenance of the new grass, the Village will over-seed or re-seed the area as required. The resident has options to finish the ditch with other plantings at their own cost in accordance with the Ditch Rehabilitation Policy (i.e. naturalization).

### **Will I still be able to mow the ditch?**

YES. A property owner is responsible to maintain the area up to the road or curb. The centering of the ditch allows for a 2.5 to 3-foot horizontal to 1-foot vertical slope to the road and to your property. However, some properties were developed high above the road surface and the Village will match the ditch to the property at the property line. The Ditch Rehabilitation Policy allows a resident with a high property line options for landscaping or for the Village to adjust the slope back onto the private property. The department will contact you if the slope to your property will be steep with the options and costs (you will need to approve one) or the cutting back onto your property.

### **What will happen to my driveway approach and culvert?**

If required, your driveway approach and culvert may need to be replaced. The Ditch Rehabilitation Policy describes how the Department rates existing driveway approaches and culverts to determine what cost the resident will bear if replacement is required. This pro-rated cost is assessed to the resident because YOU OWN the driveway and culvert. If you were to repave your driveway at some other time, it would be at your own cost and you would have to pay the Village to put in a new culvert at that time. The Policy also describes how the Village will pave the driveway approach and warranty; and the resident's options to pave and/or install headwalls. The permit fee of \$75.00 is waived by the Village for this project. Do not try to compare the estimated cost of your drive to your neighbor's estimate. The drives may differ in width, culvert size, and the life credit given. Therefore, it is not an apple to apple comparison.

### **How much will I have to pay for the ditch rehabilitation?**

The re-shaping of the ditch is covered by the Village through its Capital Improvement Program/Storm Water Utility. Any improvements beyond a normal open ditch will create costs for the resident. Options in the Policy for the resident to implement at their own cost are not part of the assessment procedure. As noted above, the resident will pay the prorated cost of the culvert and driveway.

### **What will happen to the trees/plants or other items that I have near to or in the existing ditch?**

The Policy sets a guideline for the Department to follow in the preservation of existing trees and plantings. Basically, the closer to the center of the ditch the planting is located, the less likely that it can be saved. The Department will notify a property owner if a tree or planting area will need to be removed or relocated. The Village will not be responsible for other private improvements left in the rights-of-way such as fencing, irrigation systems, artwork, etc. These items are illegal in the rights-of-way and will be removed and disposed of by the department. If work requires, the Village will reset mailboxes and newspaper boxes in accordance with postal standards and the Village's snow plowing policy. Replacements of mail/newspaper boxes will be with the Department's standard pipe post and black mailbox system. A resident's mail/newspaper box is in poor shape, they can have the standard Department setup installed for the regular fee of \$75.00. Mark out your irrigation system and any drain pipes that come out to the ditch, any electric dog fences or other buried items you put in the ditch area.

### **What do the painted lines mean?**

The line closest to your house is the property line or what is called the rights-of-way line to the street. At this line we will match your existing yard grade. The next line out is the center of the ditch or the lowest point of the ditch. A third line may be painted up by the road as a guide for the edge of the shoulder. The lines may be in pink or white paint. All other paint colors and lines are for the location of utilities – yellow for gas, blue for water, green for sewer, red for electric, orange for telephone/cable.

### **How long will the ditch rehabilitation project take?**

The project will begin in June (weather permitting) or July and should be completed in late September. Topsoil and seeding will begin in the last half of August and continue into September to minimize watering. Typically, crews will come through and replace driveway culverts first and then ditch out between the culverts. The ditches when first excavated appear to be far wider and deeper because – you are not use to the stark hard dirt and the cut allows for new topsoil (4-6 inches) to be added for finishing and seeding. If the project runs into October for finishing, the Department will return the next spring to over-seed areas that did not establish a good turf in the fall. NOTE that the ditch will be soft under foot for the first year until the turf gets a good root structure, so care should be taken when mowing.

### **Important Storm Water Facts for the Home Owner.**

Extend downspouts and sump pump pipes 3 feet out from the house and to your larger yard areas. DO NOT discharge within 6 feet of your neighbor's property or directed toward your neighbor's property.

Install rain gardens at sump pump discharges and downspout extensions to spread water. Use rain barrels to collect the softer rain water and use for watering gardens and plants (including indoor). Save on your water bill.

Put low growing garden areas out by your property line to use the water running off your yard and reduce watering of planting areas.

Use pavers and other porous walk/patio and drive materials to reduce rain water runoff.

Use your property to its advantage to keep rain water and filter it. Look at developing small pond/rain garden areas with minimal drain tile to the street ditch.

Use No-Phosphorous fertilizers and reduce fertilizer use and use natural herbicide and pesticide products.

Wash your car on the grass or take to a carwash that recycles the water.

Mow grass at a 2.5 to 3 inch height to increase depth of roots to absorb more water and be more drought tolerant. Again, save on your water bill.

### **Has anything new been developed to replace the ditch?**

A new infiltrating storm system has been developed that would reduce the ditch to a 1 foot depth and replace culverts. The system provides underground storage and infiltration of storm water the same as a full ditch, allows for pipe connections and allows for a dry ditch above. The cost for this system is \$32.00 per lineal foot or \$3200 for 100 feet of ditch. All residents must agree to this system and pay their respective assessment for their frontage for the system. This assessment would be in addition to the driveway assessment. The Village now uses this system where a drainage pipe system is mandated by the policy. This system is still in a testing process for ditch use.