

# All About **Ditches!**

## What is a Ditch?

A ditch is an excavated channel in the ground beside roadways that moves water during storm events and spring melts. Ditches and storm pipes are part of a larger network of surface water infrastructure. Additionally, ditches have many environmental benefits including:

- Slowing the flow of runoff water
- Promote filtering of pollutants from surface water through ground absorption, and
- Reduce the risk of flooding

## Ditch Alteration

Ditch alteration refers to any modification to the ditch design, function, change of slope, appearance, or location. Property owners are not permitted to alter their ditch without approval from the City of Ottawa.

The City of Ottawa provides two options for ditch alterations to property owners; submit a Local Improvement request or obtain a Planning Agreement.

### Local Improvement

A Local Improvement is a process by which residents can request City infrastructure that currently doesn't exist in their neighborhood, such as stormwater pipes. Residents follow a provincially prescribed process that considers the infrastructure as a system, with consideration of a minimum of 3 properties. The City is responsible for the costs of the engineering study. Construction related costs are shared between benefiting property owners.

### Planning Agreement

Ditch alteration requests can also be initiated through the development review process and a development agreement. Residents would first consult with the City then supply the required engineering studies and information. All costs borne by the project would be the responsibility of the property owner(s).

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## Ditch Maintenance

Property's that have ditches adjacent to them share with the City in the responsibility of their maintenance. When ditches do not function properly, the affects can be seen in other areas of the neighborhood. It is important to maintain a functioning ditch.

### Urban / Suburban / Rural (Subdivision) Areas

#### **Property owners are responsible for:**

- Removal of debris
- Removal of root infiltration caused by a private tree
- Maintain boulevard, including cutting grass, weeds, and alike
- Replacement of deteriorated or damaged culverts (unless damaged by City operations)

#### **The City is responsible for:**

- Re-establish the grade and slope to the original design to maintain positive drainage, as part of a larger maintenance program
- Flush culverts to remove silt and sand, as part of a larger maintenance program
- Replace culverts damaged by City operations (ditch maintenance, winter plowing, etc.)

### Rural (Non-Subdivision) Areas

#### **Property owners are responsible for:**

- Replacement of deteriorated or damaged culverts (unless damaged by City operations)

#### **The City is responsible for:**

- Re-establish the grade and slope to its original design to maintain positive drainage, as part of a larger maintenance program
- Flush culverts to remove silt and sand, as part of a larger maintenance program
- Replace culverts damaged by City operations (ditch maintenance, winter plowing, etc.)
- Cut grass and weeds twice a year (spring and late summer)
- Removal of debris

## For More Information

For more information regarding ditch maintenance or alteration, please submit a Service Request online at [ottawa.ca/en/3-1-1](http://ottawa.ca/en/3-1-1) or call the Contact Centre at 3-1-1.