



ROADSIDE DITCH RE-ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAM

**Service Delivery Committee Briefing
JUNE 24, 2026**

WHAT IS A ROADSIDE DITCH?



A roadside ditch is an open channel carved into the ground parallel to roadways that diverts stormwater from the road's surface.

- Cost-effective
- Environmentally friendly
- Naturally directs into reservoirs, creeks and bayous

HOW MANY MILES OF ROADSIDE DITCHES ARE IN HOUSTON?

~2,500

HOW ARE DITCHES MAINTAINED?

BASIC MAINTENANCE

Routine maintenance helps keep roadside ditches clear and functioning properly.

Abutting property owner responsibilities include:

- Regular mowing
- Removing trash, litter and light debris
- Avoiding unpermitted structures or landscaping that block drainage
 - Examples: walls, bridges or inadequate landscape features



HOW ARE DITCHES MAINTAINED?



DITCH RE-ESTABLISHMENT

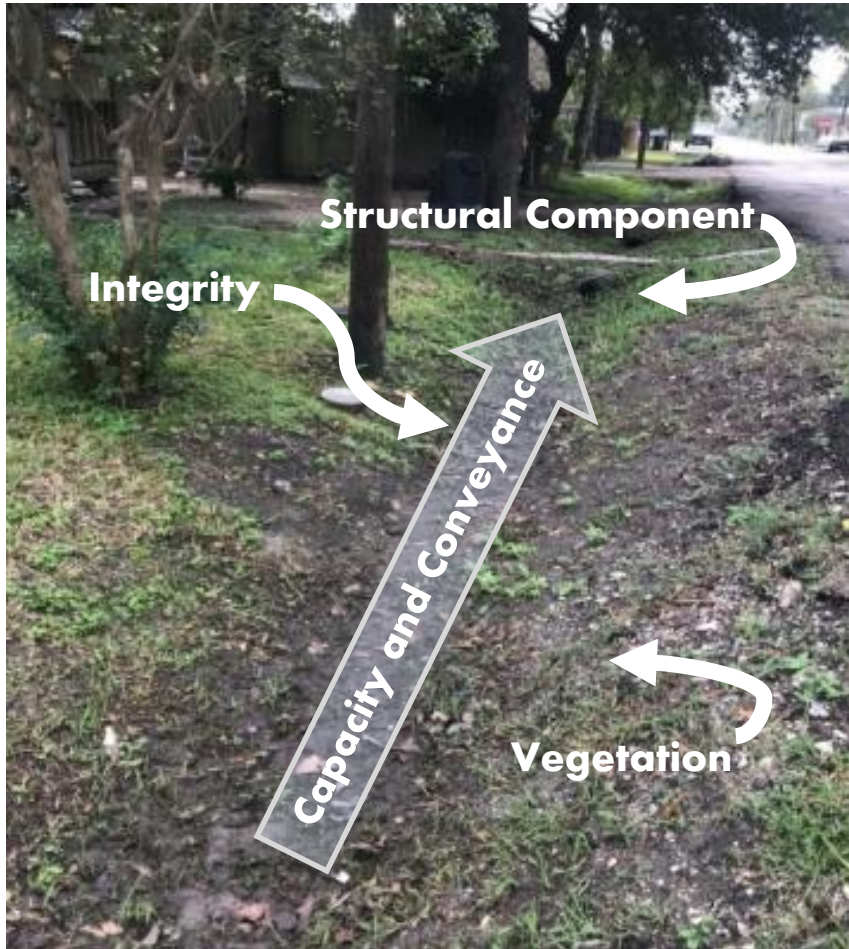
This work helps improve neighborhood drainage by restoring ditches so stormwater can flow more freely.

Scope includes:

- Regrading ditches
- Clearing vegetation and debris
- Reestablishing flow lines
- Flushing and repairing culverts
- Removing heavy debris and obstructions

ROADSIDE DITCH CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Example



DITCH CONDITION	Good	Moderate	Poor
SCORE	10-16	17-23	24-30
MAINTENANCE PRIORITY	None - Low	Routine	High

Category/ Rating	Item #	Good (1)	Moderate (2)	Poor (3)	Score
Capacity and Conveyance	1	Ditch flows freely, no debris build-up evident, no signs of offset culverts	Ditch flows freely, some minor build-up, minor offset culverts are evident	Ditch functions to less than 25% of capacity, major offset culverts are evident	3
	2	No evidence of localized flooding	Not applicable	Evidence of localized flooding	1
	3	No damaged components present	Damaged components (culvert, outfall, other), but not causing flow blockages	Damaged components (culvert, outfall, other) causing flow blockages	1
Structural Components	4	No debris buildup at inlet or outlet	Debris buildup at inlet or outlet blocking 25% of inlet/outlet capacity	Debris buildup at inlet or outlet blocking 50% or more of inlet/outlet capacity	2
	5	Covering 90% of ditch bottom	Covering 75-90% of the ditch bottom	Covering less than 75% of ditch bottom and/or causing line-of-sight issues	3
Vegetation	6	Recently mowed (<1 year ago)	Mowed last year (2 years ago)	Not recently mowed (3 or more years ago)	1
	7	No noxious weeds present	Noxious weeds present, but are actively being managed	Noxious weeds present and not being managed	1
	8	No erosion	Minor erosion conditions	Major erosion conditions	2
Integrity	9	No bare spots	10-20% bare spots	>40% bare spots	3
	10	No evidence of nuisance animals	Evidence of illegal dumping	Evidence of nuisance animals or illicit connections	1

Total Ditch Condition Score

18

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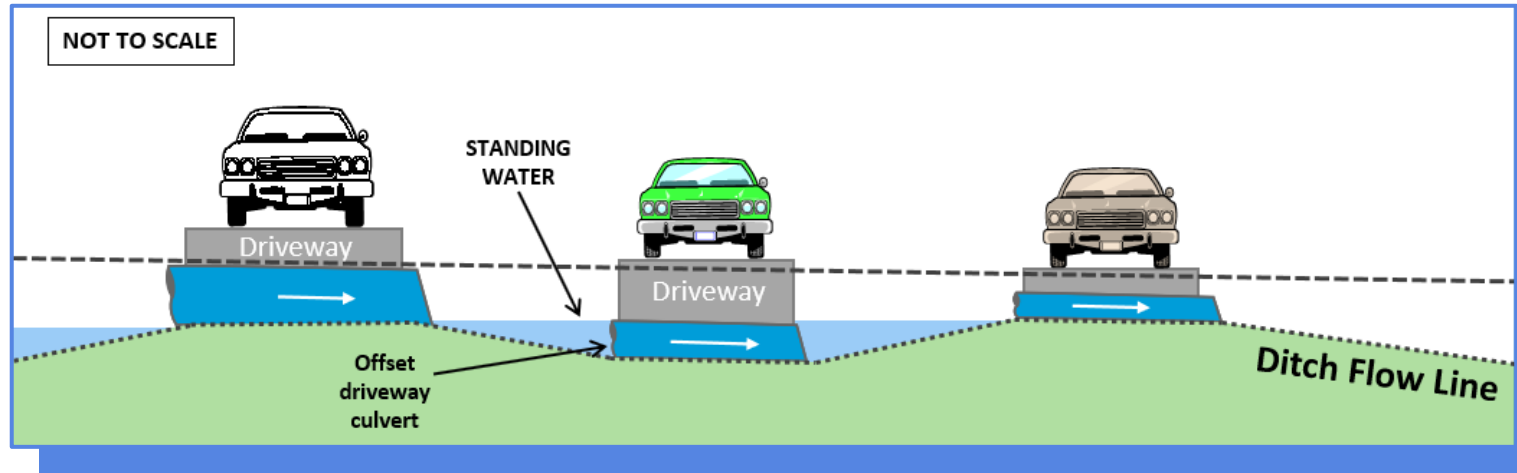
Proactive Planned- 5-Year Inspection and Re-establishment Cycle
(500 miles/year)

Miles Inspected									
FY2024		FY2025		FY2026		FY2027		FY2028	
GOAL	1500	GOAL	1000	GOAL	500	GOAL	500	GOAL	500
ACTUAL	1643	ACTUAL	1196	ACTUAL	644*				

Miles Re-established									
FY2024		FY2025		FY2026		FY2027		FY2028	
GOAL		GOAL	500	GOAL	500	GOAL	500	GOAL	500
ACTUAL		ACTUAL	528	ACTUAL	564*				

*through June 17, 2026

DITCHES ARE DESIGNED TO MOVE STORMWATER



Roadside ditches act as conveyance channels. When culverts are different sizes, set at different elevations, or the ditch flow line is uneven, water may slow down or stand.



- Standing water does not always require ditch re-establishment.
- Some locations may need basic maintenance.
- Larger issues may require full rehabilitation through a contracted drainage project.

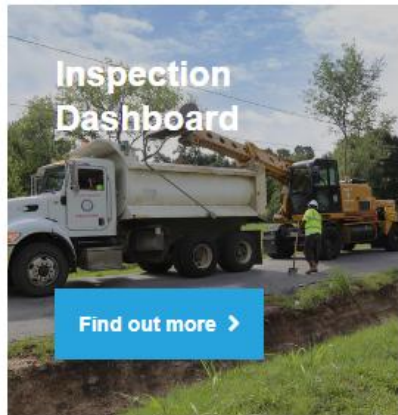
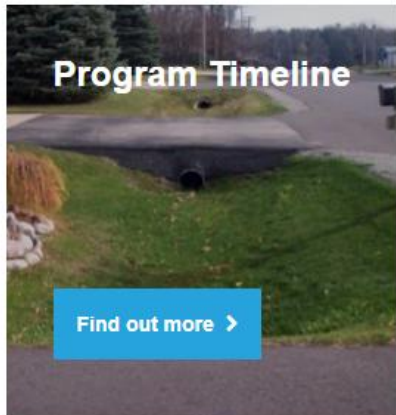
PROGRAM WEBPAGE*

Roadside Ditch Re-Establishment Program

What is the Roadside Ditch Re-establishment Program?

A roadside ditch is an open channel carved into the ground parallel to roadways. Roadside ditches are a cost-effective and environmentally friendly way of diverting stormwater from the road's surface and naturally directing it to reservoirs, creeks and bayous. The City of Houston has over 2,500 miles of roadside ditches.

The Roadside Ditch Re-establishment Program is a path to a proactive planned 5-year annual inspection and re-establishment cycle of approximately 500 miles. Initial priority will be given to the Houston Northeast Area and Complete Communities during the transition period. Extensive in-house and contracting resources are critical to this effort, ensuring Houston's ditches are proactively assessed and maintained.



More Information

Stay informed About Improvement Projects: [Houston Public Works](#)

[Roadside Ditch Re-establishment Program](#)

[Stormwater Maintenance](#)

[Engineering and Plan Review](#)

[Drainage Rehabilitation](#)

[Stormwater Planning](#)

[GIS and Asset Management](#)

[Help Protecting the City's Drainage Infrastructure](#)


Council Presentation


[Roadside Ditch Re-establishment Program](#)

[Roadside Ditch Re-Establishment Program Update](#)



For information or inquiries email:

 [Roadside Ditch Re-Establishment Program](#)

 Ditch.Reestablishment@houstontx.gov

**improvements in progress*

KEEPING DITCHES CLEAR

Illegal dumping, debris, encroachments, and unpermitted enclosures can block or restrict stormwater flow. Residents can help by keeping roadside ditches clear and reporting obstructions to 311.



Illegal Dumping

Encroachments and Unpermitted Enclosures

Thank You



HoustonPublicWorks.org

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