

DRAINAGE PLAN OF ACTION

JUNE, 2016

ISSUE:

While examining the “Extreme Event Drainage Study” conducted by SCL Engineering in 2002, it would appear that the basic issues and subsequent challenges related to drainage have changed very little over the 14 years. The one issue that hasn’t and can’t be changed is the fact that the topography within the City of La Marque is, at best flat, and often times, concave.

The continuing design and construction of new development allows to provide for a “3-year” rain event. This has not changed, and, while this is the normal standard in the industry, suggestions are presented below to address this concern.

Funding to implement the improvements suggested in the Study (close to \$4 million), has not been allocated to date. Existing practice has been to fund drainage projects and maintenance as a part of the overall Public Works budget where it becomes part of the “Street/Parks/Drainage” operations. This means that the available funds and workforce are shared with other street, parks maintenance, and “emergency” projects.

In the year 2015, the City contracted to have approximately 14,000 linear feet of ditch cleaning. The focus was to have the major collection ditches opened to where the outfall into larger collectors (those maintained by Galveston County Drainage District #2), was unimpeded. By contracting this out, the intention was to allow city forces to work on the interior, residential ditches. While the work completed was significant and impactful, there remains additional areas that need attention. Additionally, while the intentions were good, for the reasons already stated, city forces have only been able to respond to the interior ditches on an “as-needed” basis, responding to call-outs as, and when resources are available.

One of the greatest challenges continues to be the acceptance of responsibility for ditch maintenance between the property-owner and the City. One aspect of this was addressed in the “Recommendation” section of the 2002 study. Under these recommendations, a “citizen awareness” program was suggested to encourage citizens to notify the City of blockages in the drainage system. With the number of call-outs ever increasing, it doesn’t appear the citizens need to be encouraged, however the last sentence of that paragraph is the critical one - “Drainage and flood abatement must be made a *JOINT* effort of the City’s staff and City’s citizens.” (emphasis added)

PROPOSAL:

1. Accepting the limited resources (financial and qualified staff), major ditch clearing should continue to be contracted out as funds are available. The focus should be on major outfalls. Galveston County Drainage District #2 (DD2), and TX DOT will continue to be pressured to maintain open channels in their respective easements and right of ways.
2. City staff will continue to address calls on an as-needed basis with the following exception- barring any unforeseen emergencies, Public Works employees will dedicate each Wednesday to drainage ditch clearing and maintenance. Initially, the attention will be given to the areas previously cleaned and cleared through last year's contract (see attached map). Next, they will adhere to a schedule that mirrors the City Council Districts, beginning in District "A".
3. The assurance of the above-mentioned proposal relies on a fully staffed and equipped Public Works Department. An effort must be made to achieve that as soon as possible through effective hiring and purchase/maintenance of machinery and equipment. This will assist the Department to operate on a day-to-day basis while continuing to address the ever present "emergencies".
4. With City Council direction, and involvement of Code Compliance as well as Public Works, develop a working definition and assignment of responsibility as to what a "drainage ditch" is.
5. Develop requirements that new building developments address the impacts of a greater-than 3-year storm event. As the City considers updating the IBC Building Codes, this could prove timely.