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September 24, 2022

**Subject: Concerns about the Valli Vue LRSA ditch rehabilitation project**

Dear Mr. Robinson, Mr. Walters, and Mr. Telford,

On behalf of the residents of the Valli Vue neighborhood, which is centered along Main Tree Drive north of O'Malley Road, the Board of Directors is deeply concerned about the project to rehabilitate our ditches that began in June and was suspended in August due to unmanageable rainfall. Our understanding is that this work is being directed by the Valli Vue LRSA board in coordination with the Municipality with the expectation that the experienced subcontractor (Northern Gravel) would perform the work appropriately.

As communicated by Mike Markie of the LRSA, the functional goal of the project is to **preserve our relatively new asphalt paving by improving drainage to reduce water saturation in the roadbed.** To accomplish this, it is our understanding that the LRSA agreed with Northern Gravel that the ditches would be excavated to the depths of the driveway culverts and accumulated gravel between the ditch and the pavement edge would be removed, with the extent of removal to be judged by feel by an experienced excavator operator.

As implemented, the result has been appalling. Instead of preserving our pavement, the work has left the edges of the pavement unbuttressed by any shoulder, replacing the earlier shoulder with a steep declivity. The excavator operator cut a straight slope from the bottom of the ditch to the lower edge of the pavement and in places left a vertical drop at the road's edge of 0.5 feet or more. In most areas, the slope is too steep for easy walking. A 40-year resident of the neighborhood has stated that the ditch slope never came to the edge of the pavement before; there was always some shoulder.

The present ditch configuration has three consequences of great concern to the neighborhood:

1. **The ditches have become a driving hazard.** Already, at least two cars have been ensnared (see Photo 1), and in winter when the ditches are plowed flush with the road, they will be camouflaged pit traps. In some places, the deepened ditches may present a rollover hazard to cars and school buses.
2. **The absence of a shoulder has decreased pedestrian safety.** Previously, people could easily step off the pavement or even walk on the shoulder to put a little space between themselves and traffic. Sadly, one of our older residents was out walking on Main Tree Drive in the afternoon on September 21<sup>st</sup> when he was hit by a car (see Photo 2); the severity of his injuries has not been made public.
3. **Our pavement is at risk.** Without a shoulder adjacent to the pavement edge, vehicles are beginning to break down the edge (see Photo 3). In contrast, the extent of pavement degradation due to roadbed saturation appears to be negligible based on the absence of frost heaving or areas with excessive cracking.

The present ditch configuration is also at odds with the Municipality's guidance for rural streets such as ours (Figure 1). The guidance depicts a 2-foot shoulder approximately flush with the road surface followed by a ditch as shallow as 1 foot lined with topsoil and grass. In practice, a 1-foot shoulder seems typical (as seen on East 99<sup>th</sup> Ave, Homestead Trail, and Meridian Way/Zenith St), and our shoulders were about that wide before excavation. The depth of our ditches was also close to the 1-foot minimum, which could have been achieved with minimal digging. An effective case has not been made to justify the magnitude of the present project in contrast to a much smaller effort that would have conformed with the guidance. Given the safety problems with the current effort, restoration of perceived original contours of nearly 50 years ago is nonsensical. The ditch project should have been based on the current guidance.

In a phone conversation with a board member (David Ward), Maury Robinson named Prominence Pointe as another neighborhood whose ditches had been constructed by Northern Gravel. A visit to that neighborhood revealed what could have been done with our ditches. In order to preserve shoulder space, the roadside ditch banks are as steep as the hillside banks, and rock basins were installed around culverts that lay somewhat below the ditch bottom. Where ditch banks were too steep to be self-supporting, they were armored with carefully placed rock. Perhaps some of these measures can be employed as this project is brought to its conclusion.

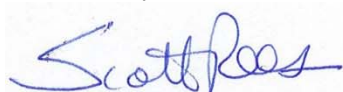
We close by asking you, as representatives of the Municipality, how we together can bring this project to a successful conclusion. Mike Markie of the LRSA has informed us that an attempt will be made in October to address drop-offs and perhaps restore some of the shoulders, and the remaining work will be completed next summer. The elements we want to see addressed include the following:

1. Restoration of 1-foot shoulders (or greater) as soon as possible, preferably before winter.

2. Reduction of ditch depth to no more than 1.5 feet before topsoil placement, where practical (e.g., away from culverts).
3. Final contouring and cleanup to remove loose rocks and roots and smooth transitions to adjacent landscaping.
4. Addition of a suitable thickness of topsoil and seeding with grass.

Please let us know of any additional steps we should take, and please keep us informed about instructions to Northern Gravel to accomplish these goals. Communication via email would be great, and we would be happy to meet in person if that would be beneficial.

Thank you,



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cc: Valli Vue LRSA, Valli Vue residents



Photo 1. Cars in ditches in August and September 2022



Photo 2. Pedestrian hit-and-run 2022-09-21 on Main Tree Drive



Photo 3. Pavement edge damage by traffic (mail truck)

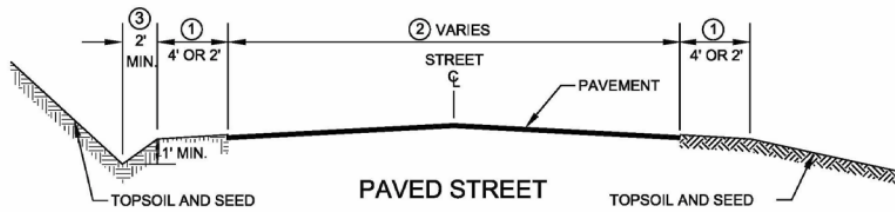


FIGURE 1-14 RURAL SECONDARY STREETS

NOTES:

- ① MINIMUM SHOULDER WIDTHS ARE 2 - 4 FEET FOR RESIDENTIAL STREETS AND 4 FEET FOR INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL STREETS.
- ② STREET WIDTHS VARY WITH TRAFFIC VOLUMES AS LISTED IN TABLES 1-4 AND 1-6.
- ③ MINIMUM DITCH DEPTH SHOULD ALLOW FOR 18-INCH DRIVEWAY CULVERT WITH 1-FOOT OF COVER.
- ④ SEE SECTION 1.3F FOR INFORMATION ON AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS.
- ⑤ PATHWAY REQUIREMENTS ARE DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER 4.

Figure 1. Municipality guidance for streets like those in Valli Vue