

Project Historical Timeline and Framework

Legal County ditch was established in the early 1900's. Landscape was rural, drainage was adequate.

Over the following 100 years or so, the City developed primarily within the lower part of the drainage area. Significant impervious surface, utilities, and encroachments created the inadequate drainage system existing today. No fiscal or structural arrangements were made to address the functionality of the ditch as the area developed.

Under ditch law, landowners petitioned for a ditch improvement in 2009. According to the Engineer, it was not possible to improve the ditch all the way through the City due to an unfavorable cost benefit ratio.

To address this impasse, the RLWD established the Thief River Falls Flood Damage Reduction Project to increase the scope of the project to include flood damage reduction elements such as a diversion and storm sewer, as well as provide for the drainage improvements petitioned for by landowners.

The proposed project framework also enabled the Project to be funded, in part, by the State of Mn, the RLWD construction fund, and landowners within a proposed Water Management District. Because of how the project is organized, landowners within the WMD will be assessed for *flood damage reduction* (diversion and storm sewer), and landowners within the entire drainage area will be assessed for the ditch improvement, ie. *drainage*. Thus, landowners within the WMD will be double-assessed. Landowners outside the WMD will be assessed for the ditch improvement only. Landowners along the diversion, outside of the CD 1 drainage area, will not be assessed.

Many will ask, "Why must I pay?".

The most basic answer is:

1. Under MN drainage laws, anyone who drains into a legal drainage system must pay benefits to the legal system in which their waters drain.
2. To help pay for the flood damage reduction component of the project that is not covered under MN Drainage laws.
3. To help pay for improved drainage on a legal drainage system.