

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet

VAN FLEET DITCH WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

1. What is the purpose of the view and first hearing?

The view is the opportunity for the Lucas County Commissioners to view the existing condition for the proposed improvement and to allow the public to bring to the attention of the Commissioners information regarding the existing conditions of the proposed improvement. After the view, the Lucas County Engineer's Office will prepare a preliminary report which includes a preliminary design and cost estimate, comments on the feasibility of the project, and an opinion as to whether the benefits of the improvement is likely to exceed the preliminary costs.

At the first hearing, the Lucas Commissioners hears the preliminary report of the Lucas County Engineer as well as any evidence offered by benefitting landowners. At the First Hearing, the Board may approve the petition if they find that the improvement is necessary, conducive to the public welfare, and is reasonably certain that the costs are less than the benefits.

2. I do not live directly on a ditch in the proposed maintenance area, why am I considered a benefitting landowner?

The Ohio Petition Law accounts for any land owners in the watershed of the ditch improvement as benefitting. Watershed is the term used to describe the ground surface area that "sheds" water off, either directly or indirectly, into a drainage system. If you are receiving this letter, the property identified is within the watershed and benefits from the ditch. Please visit the Lucas County Engineer's Office website - Ditch Petition Information Section at www.co.lucas.oh.us/263/Lucas-County-Engineers-Office for more information including a diagram detailing the Van Fleet Ditch watershed and benefitting properties.

3. What is proposed to be improved as a result of this petition?

At this time, installation of a "two-stage" ditch is proposed to be located along Van Fleet Ditch between Weckerly Road to the Wabash Cannonball Trail. Lucas County has received a grant for the design and construction of these ditch improvements. In addition, the remainder of the ditches within the watershed are proposed to be placed under permanent maintenance. This means that Lucas County will review the condition of the ditches on a periodic basis and may perform maintenance work on the ditch from time to time to keep the ditch in good working order.

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4. Is there a cost to benefitting property owners?

At this time, no assessments are proposed to be paid by property owners. However, any and all property within the watershed, including all state, county, township property, is assessed for the costs of the proposed improvement. However, in this case, any assessment for the cost for design and construction of the "two stage ditch" on Van Fleet Ditch will be paid from grants from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative as well as the Lucas County Stormwater Utility. Current policy provides for costs for ditch maintenance within areas of Monclova Township to be paid from the Lucas County Stormwater Utility. Maintenance work typically consists of the removal of sediment and spraying and minor brushing as needed.

5. Why petition the project?

Drainage infrastructure within Ohio is the responsibility of private landowners. The petition ditch process allows Lucas County to expend public funds for the construction and maintenance of private ditches which provide a public benefit. In addition, the petition process provides Lucas County a permanent easement on the ditches to allow for continued maintenance which allows the County to maintain public investment.

6. Is there any possibility of being assessed for maintenance of ditches within the Van Fleet Ditch watershed:

The result of this process will be to place the ditches within the Van Fleet watershed on a permanent maintenance program. Each year, Lucas County will inspect associated ditches. If maintenance work is required, Lucas County Engineers will request an assessment and perform the work the following year. Property owners will be assessed to maintain the ditches in good working condition. Current policy provides for the Lucas County Stormwater Utility to pay assessments for permanent maintenance after completion of the project for those properties within Monclova Township.

7. What comes after the First Hearing?

After completion of any required design work, the Lucas County Engineer will present his detailed plans and detailed cost estimate. At this point, the Commissioners will hold a Final Hearing to reconsider their decision made at the First Hearing based on the detailed information presented by the Lucas County Engineer and on any testimony provided by benefitting land owners.