

## **Mowing: Maintenance of Public Right-of-Way including residential ditches**

The public right-of-way is that part of a property owner's lot to which the City has specific rights of access, primarily for utility placement and pedestrian travel. Residents and businesses are required to maintain the right-of-way on their properties except for very rare exceptions. Maintenance includes the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks in winter, and weed and grass removal during the rest of the year. Certain bicycle/pedestrian paths are cleared of snow by the City, but mowing remains the responsibility of the adjacent property owners.

**Mowing:** Moorhead City Code 3-3-3 states grass may not exceed 8 inches in length and noxious weeds must be mowed or eradicated. Most property owners fulfill this responsibility without any intervention from the City, although more than 500 requests for enforcement are processed each growing season.

**Ditch Maintenance:** A specific area of concern and confusion is the maintenance of ditches. There are several drainage ditches and ponds in the community, some serving stormwater drainage needs of individual neighborhoods, and others providing drainage for large areas of the City. Some neighborhood drainage systems were constructed prior to the neighborhood's annexation into the City, and others were requested by developers of new residential subdivisions in order to reduce the costs of special assessments associated with more sophisticated and expensive drainage systems.

Except for regional ditches/ponds and those adjacent to parks and recreation facilities, property owners are responsible for maintaining the ditches adjacent to their properties. A map showing ditches and other public right-of-way areas maintained by the City of Moorhead is included at [www.cityofmoorhead.com/mowingguide](http://www.cityofmoorhead.com/mowingguide). All other ditches are privately maintained.

Ditches should be maintained in compliance with the City's mowing policy to the greatest extent possible to assure proper drainage, prevent weed growth and insect breeding, and allow ditches to dry out more quickly after precipitation; however it is recognized that ditches present a challenge for the City and homeowners to maintain. There are times when it is too wet to mow them, and they most often require mowing by push mowers or string trimmers because of the hazards of using riding mowers on ditch slopes. Residents should take advantage of periods of dry weather conditions to mow ditches.

If you have questions about your mowing responsibilities, please call Neighborhood Services at 218-299-5434.