

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Why are you doing this project in my neighborhood?

The Department of Public Works and Engineering has determined that the infrastructure in your neighborhood requires upgrading and improvements to meet current standards.

Where do I call to report problems?

Prior to construction on your street the contractor is required to give you written notification of the work that is to be performed. In the notification is the contractor's 24 hour emergency contact telephone number.

- *Emergency needs that require immediate response (i.e. water off, toilets not flushing): Contact Contractor's Superintendent or Project Manager*
- *Routine and Non-Emergency needs: Dial 311 - Mention to the operator the following 4 things along with your issue:*
 - *WBS Number of the project (this is on the project sign & door hanger you will receive)*
 - *That this is City of Houston CIP project*
 - *Refer the complaint to the "Engineering & Construction Division".*
 - *General concerns.*

What should residents with sprinkler systems be prepared for?

We recommend that you take pictures of the sprinkler heads in the "on" position and be sure the pictures clearly show the number and the location of the sprinklers/heads that you have in the right-of-way area near the street/curb. The construction company will make the effort to cap off your sprinklers in the right-of-way that will be torn up with the intent to keep your sprinklers working in the rest of the yard. The pictures should help resolve any questions when the construction company restores the sprinkler system. It is entirely possible your system (or at least certain zones) may stop working once work has commenced in the right-of-way as wires and lines do occasionally get cut inadvertently. Be sure to have a garden hose and traditional sprinklers ready to use during this period. If you believe that your sprinklers systems were damaged during construction please contact the project manager.

Why have various markers and protective barriers been placed in some yards around trees, etc.?

For most of the residential streets in the City of Houston, the right-of-way extends about 16 feet into yards from the back of the curb. As a result, the City of Houston and the contractors are granted full access into this right-of-way for this and any related projects. Once complete, the City is required to restore the disturbed areas to City of Houston standards. Both the City of Houston and the contractor are taking precaution to protect existing trees as best as they can. Additional right-of-way markers are in some yards, and removal of these causes added delays and expense. Please do not remove these markers or any projective precautions that have been provided in your yard.

Are they going to dig up my yard, or just my street?

If a waterline installation is required for your project, the contractor is going to use the boring process whenever possible to install the waterlines. This process requires minimal digging within the right-of-way. Once the new lines have been installed, the existing ("old") water lines will be abandoned, thereby avoiding the need to dig them up for removal. Once the new waterlines have been installed, tested, and approved by the City, the contractor will disconnect your water meter from the "old" line and reconnect to the "new". This may require additional boring for the installation of these services.

If the streets are going to be completely reconstructed, construction is usually accomplished by completing reconstruction of one side of the street, then returning to reconstruct the other side of the street. During this process, access to driveways will be maintained as best possible for personal access. On some days, you may be asked to park nearby, but this usually occurs on days that work is in front of, or blocking a given driveway at a given time. Naturally, weather will have some impacts on these occurrences. We suggest that you share your driveways with your neighbors, where possible.

At some point, will I lose my water?

If waterline replacement is a part of the project, you may lose water service periodically during the course of construction. It is the City of Houston's responsibility to notify residents 24-48 hours in advance of a scheduled shut-down for the main line connections. Typically, water is out up to 4 hours. When transferring water service to the new water lines, the process usually takes 2-3 hours.

There may be periods where service is accidentally interrupted due to inaccurate location of existing waterlines. When this occurs, it is the contractor's top priority to restore service quickly as possible and notifications will not be provided.

At some point, will I have issues parking in my driveway or garage?

Yes. As mentioned, for Paving and Storm Sewer Projects, streets will be completely reconstructed. This is typically accomplished by completely reconstructing one side of a street first, then returning to reconstruct the other side of the street. During this process, access to driveways will be maintained as best possible for personal access. On some days, you will be asked not to park in your driveway. However, you will be given ample notification of this condition through door hangers which will be distributed by the contractor. This will only occur on days that construction is being performed in front of your driveway. Naturally, rain and weather will have some impacts on the duration of these occurrences. We suggest that you share your driveways with your neighbors on the opposite side of your street, where possible. Typically, you will be restricted from your driveway for 7-10 days.

What about the new sidewalks?

All reconstructed streets typically receive new sidewalks on both sides of the street. Any street or block that currently does not have sidewalks will typically receive new sidewalks. Sidewalks will be 5-foot wide where possible. The location of the sidewalks may vary due to obstructions.

What about our trees?

The right-of-way extends about 16 feet into yards from the back of the curb into your yard. The City and the contractor will make all attempts to protect existing trees in accordance with the tree protection plan provided. These plans are developed by a certified arborist. The City Arborist will make recommendations where new trees will be planted to compensate for any removed trees. Affected residents will be informed in advance.

What about landscaping near streets, sidewalks and curbs?

While these areas are maintained by the abutting property owners, the right-of-way, extending approximately 16 feet from the back of curbs, grants the City of Houston full access and utilization as deemed necessary for the construction of the project. If you have specific landscaping within the public right-of-way that you would like to save, we suggest you relocate these special items to a projected location. Grass will be restored in yards upon completion of all construction.

What about my driveway?

For paving and drainage projects, new driveway aprons are a necessary part of this project as they are required to meet and connect existing driveways to the new streets. In addition, where sidewalks extend through these aprons, the sidewalks must meet all local and federal regulations for sidewalks. This requires the sidewalks to meet ADA (American with Disabilities) standards. As such, you can expect to have your driveway apron reconstructed with a different entry slope. It may be necessary to obtain a right-of-entry from the property owner to enter your property if this new slope exceeds the maximum allowable design standards. This right-of-entry will allow the City to connect to the existing driveway further away from the street which will lower the slope of the new driveway.

What if I have an improved or special/decorative driveway and/or walkway?

For portions of driveways (and front walkways) located in the right-of-way, the City is only required to return your driveway to City of Houston codes and standards.

What about any school buses that typically drives on the affected streets?

The City of Houston and contractor will work with the local school principals and school transportation coordinator to address the individual needs of the schools.

Will my street be at a different elevation than it is today?

Over the past 40-50 years, the topography of the area has obviously shifted. When reconstructing a street the intent of any project by the City of Houston is to minimize any street elevation change as much as possible. Some change may be required to establish the proper flow of storm-water to ensure proper drainage for years to come.

How can residents feel comforted that all restoration will occur properly?

Restoration of yards, sprinkler system, etc. will occur once all construction is complete. Additionally, the City will not approve of final payment to the contractor until the City completes their own assessment to ensure restoration is sufficient. If you have concerns, please call 311 and document those concerns so that they can be addressed at the end of the project. Do not make the repairs yourself! The contractor will make them at the appropriate time during the course of construction.

On streets under construction, what is the procedure for trash and recycling pick up?

Please put your receptacles on the non-affected side of the street.

What if I perceive that there has been damage to my property?

The Contractor is required to take pre-construction photos of all property prior to commencing work. If you perceive that damage has been done to your property, you may report the damage to the City using the 311 System or by e-mailing PWECIP@houstontx.gov. A City representative will meet with you and will compare your property to the pre-construction photos to determine if any damage has been done. If so, the City will direct the contractor to repair the damage.