

The Villages®
Community Development Districts

The District has received several inquiries over the last several days regarding depressions, sinkholes, and stormwater pipes. Unfortunately, there is a huge amount of misunderstanding regarding the causative factors, further intensified by the misinformation on social media. As this misinformation continues to spread and cause much angst among residents, we would like to take a moment to review the facts. To those residents that have reached out with your questions and concerns...thank you!!

FALSE:

There seems to be a misperception that inferior construction materials were used or substandard workmanship took place during road, infrastructure, and facility projects, which are then turned over to the District and become “the residents' problem” to fix.

TRUE:

The Villages is built to a high construction standard. Everything is designed, reviewed, and approved by licensed architects, professional engineers, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, and other professionals. All of the work is built to industry standards, local building codes and is permitted, inspected, and accepted by independent County inspectors who must certify that construction meets industry standards and federal, state and local building codes.

FALSE:

There are massive failures of infrastructure, either caused by or causing depressions and sinkholes.

TRUE:

Given the sheer massive size, density, and complicated infrastructure within The Villages, along with the topography of Central Florida, it is not uncommon to have naturally forming depressions, and on rare occasions, pipe or other infrastructure failures. The majority of our infrastructure is in excellent condition.

Stormwater pipe failures can lead to a depression, and while these do occasionally occur, the majority of depressions are naturally occurring. One of the primary indicators of a stormwater pipe failure is evidence of a depression in the ground immediately above a stormwater pipe. There are several reasons for stormwater pipe failures including age, corrosion, blocked/clogged pipes, separated joints, or connections.

FALSE:

Sinkholes are occurring all over The Villages.

TRUE:

We have had only one sinkhole over the past 16 months, which was the one near the Moyer Recreation Center. Depressions can and do appear anywhere, and we have been challenged with numerous depressions which have occurred in basins, parking lots, golf courses, and other areas. In every case of a sinkhole, depression, or pipe failure, we utilize Professional Engineers

and Geotechnical Engineers to perform analysis including ground-penetrating radar, standard penetration testing, cone penetration tests, core samples, soil density tests, visual inspections, and diver services which formulate our repair efforts. Most depressions include the use of chemical grout which is injected into numerous injection points to fill and stabilize voids, loose soil, large cavities, etc. We also use clayey soil to backfill and compact into smaller depressions. Depressions within basins are significantly more challenging and thus more expensive to repair and often include repair and/or replacement of the basin liner.

FALSE:

Infrastructure is turned over to the District with no warranty.

TRUE:

All infrastructure turned over to the District from the Developer comes with a one-year (1) warranty. This meets industry standards and is common practice in other cities/counties.

FALSE:

Stormwater pipes and other infrastructure was poorly constructed and now residents just have to pay when it fails.

TRUE:

Infrastructure throughout the community is designed, reviewed, and approved by licensed architects, professional engineers, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, and other professionals. It is built to industry standards, local building codes and is permitted, inspected, and accepted by independent County inspectors who must certify that construction meets industry standards and federal, state and local building codes. District Property Management has a robust program to perform pipe inspections. Pipes are generally inspected every five years for Steel Pipes, and every 10 years for Concrete or PVC pipes. It should be noted that in our older areas of The Villages, our infrastructure is greater than 35 years old and by the sheer age is more prone to failure. Divers are routinely used for wet pipes and pipes with stormwater connective boxes. Stormwater pipe inspections are a proven Best Management Practice (BMP) that can be used proactively to identify potential pipe failures (corrosion, collapse, separation, etc.). By following the adopted BMPs, repairs can be made or other necessary actions can take place to prevent the failure of control measures. Stormwater pipe inspections have led to repair actions, which have prevented the total failure of sections of the stormwater system and avoided hundreds of thousands of potential damages and repair costs.

In The Villages, less than 0.10% (or 1/10th of a percent) of stormwater pipes have actually had a failure.

FALSE:

Nothing is happening after hearing repairs need to be made to certain pipes.

TRUE:

Recently, contractor availability has significantly impacted the District's ability to perform and complete Pipe Inspections (and repairs) throughout The Villages. As a result, the Pipe Inspection program has been challenging to keep on schedule and perform required repairs. Likewise, the cost for these services has greatly increased over the past two years which limits the number of inspections that can be reasonably completed within current budgetary constraints. Just this month, Village Center Community Development District authorized the funding to procure a Deep Trekker Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) system for DPM to conduct stormwater pipe inspections. With the Deep Trekker, DPM can quickly perform pipe inspections as needed and on the spot without expending District funds on contracted services and save an estimated \$175,000 annually. While DPM will continue to utilize contractors for large-scale pipe inspection projects, the Deep Trekker will prove most critical when we have suspected pipe or stormwater-related failures.

FALSE:

We are just placing a Band-Aid on areas that need repair or replacement.

TRUE:

In most cases, stormwater pipes can be repaired through Cured In Place Pipe, which is a trenchless rehabilitation method used to repair existing pipelines. It is a jointless, seamless lining that can be inserted from the inlet to the outlet, thus there is little to no damage to landscaping and other areas. CIPP is considered to be a 50-year repair and it has proven to be a highly effective solution. In some cases, we must replace a pipe that has failed due to age, corrosion, or other factors. Pipe replacement projects are the last resort. Lastly, we work closely with our City and County partners to cost-share repairs which cross County roads or Right of Ways.

When you read something or hear a rumor while enjoying this wonderful lifestyle, please take a moment to "fact check" before you become concerned or pass along misinformation. In a community this large, misinformation can be one of our biggest challenges. For additional information or clarification, please visit www.DistrictGov.org or contact District Property Management at 352-753-4022.