

POLICY AND/OR PROCEDURE STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA

POLICY SUBJECT: Participation by Athens-Clarke County
on Storm Drainage Facilities
FUNCTIONAL AREA: Public Works/Streets & Engineering
POLICY/PROCEDURE NUMBER: PW-002

POLICY STATEMENT: The development and use of land in and around the Athens-Clarke County area frequently involves drainage problems, both on private property and in the public right-of-way. Due to the repetitive nature of requests that are received on three specific issues, it is most important that a firm policy be adopted on each of these situations.

These three general situations are as follows:

1. A policy for a Standard Drainage Contract for those situations when a landowner desires to seek the Government's help in improving a drainage system that crosses or adjoins his property.
2. A policy for maintenance work that a citizen requests along a creek, stream or drainageway that crosses his property.
3. A policy with respect to the Government's participation toward the placement of a driveway drainage pipe that is needed for access to newly developed land.

STANDARD DRAINAGE CONTRACT:

This type of request usually occurs after private property is occupied and upstream properties are either partially or fully developed. When further development occurs, the amount of storm water runoff increases and causes the drainageways to erode and be enlarged. Although this circumstance may occur on residential, commercial, and industrial properties, the vast majority of requests are received in single family residential situations. The Standard Drainage Contract policy applies only to single family residential properties. It also is limited to those situations where a portion of the storm runoff is being discharged from publicly-owned lands, such as road right-of-way.

Athens-Clarke County views the improvement of storm sewer systems on private property as an enhancement to the land value. This policy authorizes the Government work force to install the drainage improvements if the property owner agrees to pay for the cost of materials. The owner must also dedicate any required drainage easements and temporary construction easements as a condition of satisfying a Standard Drainage Contract. The total labor and equipment costs usually equal or exceed the cost of the materials. This policy is deemed to be an acceptable and consistent policy that is workable in practice and is consistent with the type of policy practiced in many other cities and counties.

The portions of a storm system that cross the public road right-of-way are considered to be the full funding responsibility of the local government, including the cost of materials. If the owner desires to enclose a storm drainage system in front of his property that lies within the public road right-of-way and this improvement, in the opinion of the Public Works Director, is not primarily needed for vehicular safety reasons, it is the responsibility of the owner to pay for the cost of materials. If the owner desires to install a curb and gutter system in a public road adjacent to his property and the improvement has been authorized by the Public Works Director, the owner shall be responsible for the material costs of the road widening and the curb and gutter construction.

When a Storm Drainage Contract is approved, it is necessary to schedule the construction of these improvements in conjunction with the Public Works Department's overall work program only after the owner or owners involved have dedicated the necessary drainage easements to establish permanent maintenance rights. The funding of the Government's portion of the cost of materials in the right-of-way must either already be budgeted, or be delayed for consideration at a future budget session.

MAINTENANCE OF DRAINAGEWAYS:

It is desirable for Athens-Clarke County to have a policy on the maintenance of drainage systems crossing private property. In most cases, these drainageways are constructed along side lot lines or rear lot lines where natural waterways were ultimately subdivided and incorporated in the layout.

Drainage easements are usually dedicated to the public for future maintenance purposes. The natural rights from the original waterway, sometimes in combination with the dedicated drainage easements, have usually given the Public Works Department the rights to cross these properties to perform essential maintenance. In reality, however, the Public Works Department does not have a sufficient work force or, in staff's opinion, the responsibility to undertake the maintenance of these drainage systems. It is essential, therefore, that a policy be adopted that defines the priorities for maintenance of drainageways.

In order to respond to those situations that are deemed to be potentially dangerous to the safety and welfare of the general public, the policy for maintaining drainageways shall include the cleaning out of any debris that threatens to block the drainage system at any road crossing. In certain other cases where the stream erosion factor is considered extreme and a potential immediate threat to publicly owned properties and/or facilities, the Public Works Department shall assume the initiative for installing energy dissipaters, such as a riprap embankment. Otherwise, the property owners are expected to maintain their embankments along each drainageway, including such improvements as a utility service crossing that might be serving their dwelling, or to request assistance through the Standard Drainage Contract process. This policy is applicable to the maintenance of drainageways in residential, commercial and industrial areas.

DRIVEWAY PIPES:

The Athens-Clarke County policy on installing driveway pipes in developing areas shall be done on a limited basis. Participation shall be limited to single family residential development that is not a part of a subdivision and is not applicable to multi-family residential, commercial or industrial development.

When driveway pipe requests are received, the Engineering Section shall review the conditions to determine the size of the pipe that must be installed. This is done for all types of land uses where the driveway pipe is permitted. For single family residential areas where a curb and gutter system is not being installed, the owner is required to purchase the driveway pipe materials up to an 18" diameter pipe size. For pipe sizes exceeding that diameter, the owner shall pay for the material cost of an 18" pipe and the Government shall pay for the additional material cost. The Public Works Department shall install the driveway pipe from materials that are kept in stock after the owner has made payment to the Finance Department for his material costs. This practice shall be the policy for all driveway pipes that are needed for single family development. For multi-family residential, commercial and industrial developments, the applicant shall go through the same procedure for the sizing of the pipe. Approval of formal plans may be required for installing driveways for these uses. In these situations, however, the owner must pay for the full material cost of the driveway improvements, and must also pay for the installation of these improvements.

Recommended:

Ronald M. Loomis

Director of Public Works

Date:

12/10/91

Approved:

James G. Giddens
Manager/Assistant Manager

Date:

1/15/92

Approved by the Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

on 01-07-92

Shirley Jean Spottler
Clerk of Commission

Date: 01-16-92