

Drainage Easements

What are drainage easements and why are they important?

A drainage easement is a legal right to use a parcel of land for a specific purpose. In this case, orderly flow of water. They are essential for controlling stormwater runoff and often contain engineered best management practices. Drainage Easements help to clean stormwater before it can discharge into our local lakes, rivers, and streams. This system helps protect our waterways from harmful pollutants. Drainage easements can also help slow down stormwater run-off, which can reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Who maintains a drainage easement?

In general, the easement holder (property owner) has the duty to maintain the easement. This includes public drainage utility easements located on private property. Property owners are responsible for maintaining drainage easements located on their property in a neat and clean manner. Property owners must preserve the slope of the land to ensure proper drainage.

What happens if I do not maintain the easement?

The City or a contractor hired by the City has the right to enter the easement to fix and correct any issues at the property owner's expense.

Can I install a fence or some other structure in an easement?

No. A property owner with a drainage easement is restricted from erecting both temporary (such as a shed) and permanent structures (such as a driveway) within the easement area. Such structures can reduce the efficiency of drainage and increase the possibility of flooding.

How do I know if there is an easement on my property?

You can go to the county register of deeds office and request to look at a map of the easement locations. A survey of the property will also show the location of utility easements.