



110 N. Poplar Street • PO Box 218 • West Branch, Iowa 52358
(319) 643-5888 • Fax (319) 643-2305 • www.westbranchiowa.org • matt@westbranchiowa.org

City Administrator's Weekly Update

Matt Muckler, City Administrator

December 11, 2016

- **Winter Weather Reminders: SNOW EMERGENCIES:** Snow emergencies are issued by the Public Works Director in consultation with the Police Chief and City Administrator. During a Snow Emergency, on-street parking is not allowed. Drivers are encouraged to find alternate parking spots before the first snow fall so that you have a place to park. Violators can be ticketed or towed. Snow Emergencies will be announced via the West Branch City website at www.westbranchiowa.org and the West Branch Cable Access Channel 5. The City will also notify the West Branch Times for publication on their website, the Iowa City Press-Citizen website, the Cedar Rapids Gazette website, KCRG TV, KGAN TV and KWVL TV.

SIDEWALKS: Sidewalks must be cleared of all snow and ice accumulations within 24 hours after the end of a snow or ice event. If sidewalks are not cleared, the City will clear the sidewalks and bill the owner at a rate of \$50/sidewalk plus a \$40 administration fee. Corner lots are considered two sidewalks, and would be billed accordingly. We encourage residents to have a sturdy snow shovel and a supply of ice melt on hand. We also encourage residents to practice smart shoveling techniques while clearing their walks and drives. Also, please remember that snow from sidewalks or driveways may not be pushed into or across streets.

If anyone is interested in hiring out for snow removal, you may leave your name and contact information at the City Office at (319)643-5888. City staff will keep a list if anyone calls looking for individuals to clear their sidewalks.

MAILBOXES AND FIRE HYDRANTS: As a courtesy we encourage residents to clear snow away from your mailboxes. This allows carriers to deliver your mail in a safe fashion. We also ask that residents please help keep snow from piling around fire hydrants. This is an important safety measure in case a fire occurs and the Fire Department needs to make a connection to a hydrant.

- **Holiday Trash Pick-Up:** There will be no changes to the trash pick-up schedule as a result of either the Christmas or New Year's Holidays. Trash and recycling will be picked up on the regular days – Friday December 23rd and Friday December 30th. City Offices, the Park & Recreation Department and the West Branch Public Library (WBPL) will be closed on Friday December 23rd, Monday December 26th and Monday January 2nd.

Mayor: Roger Laughlin • **Council Members:** Jordan Ellyson, Colton Miller, Brian Pierce, Tim Shields, Mary Beth Stevenson

City Administrator/Clerk: Matt Muckler • **Fire Chief:** Kevin Stoolman • **Library Director:** Nick Shimmin
Parks & Rec Director: Melissa Russell • **Police Chief:** Mike Horihan • **Public Works Director:** Matt Goodale

- **Friends of the Library Book Sale:** The Friends of the West Branch Public Library hosted a book sale this weekend on Saturday and Sunday December 10th and 11th. The sale did not have any set prices for the books, movies, and CDs, but allowed for a pay-what-you-want method. They introduced new, canvas bags (see below). Please stop by the Library if you are interested in purchasing one.



- **Cedar County Clerk's Meeting:** City Administrator/Clerk Matt Muckler, Deputy City Clerk Leslie Brick and Finance Officer/Treasurer/Deputy City Clerk Gordon Edgar all attended the Cedar County Clerk's Meeting in Lowden on November 29th. Clerks from other municipalities and representatives from the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) and the Cedar County Economic Development Commission (CCEDCO) also attended. Brownfields grants, other grant opportunities and financial report deadlines were all discussed. CCEDCO also talked about efforts they have undertaken to promote shopping in Cedar County during this holiday season.



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- **Pet Registration Now Open for 2017:** All cats and dogs over four months of age residing within the city limits must be registered annually with the City of West Branch. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for the Annual Pet Registration form. Registrations and tags for 2017 are also available at City Offices located at 110 North Poplar Street. When registering your pets, please provide current rabies vaccination papers at the time of registration. The fee for registering pets is \$5 per animal. A \$5 late penalty fee will be applied if an animal is registered after Jan. 31st.

- **Drainage in your Neighborhood:** The Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership has introduced a new brochure that provides information on neighborhood easements, rainfall and soil dynamics and reducing stormwater runoff. The brochure is attached to this week's *Update*.

- **Public Works Busy Clearing Snow:** The Public Works Staff has been busy this weekend clearing snow. They brined, sanded, and bladed the snow that fell yesterday. Public Works returned this morning to clean sidewalks. More brine is being put down this afternoon. If the brine doesn't melt off the snow that continues to fall, then crews will plow later this evening. Otherwise, Public Works will be back in tomorrow morning at 4:00 a.m. to again clear the sidewalks and make sure there are no slick spots for the morning commute.

- **Upcoming City Meetings & Events:** Please see the Calendar of Events on the City Website <http://westbranchiowa.org/home> for a complete list of upcoming events. There are several meetings and other community events currently scheduled in the next few weeks:
 - Thursday December 15th at 6:30 p.m. Park & Recreation Commission Meeting
 - Monday December 19th at 7:00 p.m. Regular City Council Meeting
 - Monday December 19th (after Council) City Council Work Session
 - Friday December 23rd Regular Trash and Recycling Schedule
 - Friday December 23rd City Offices, Library, Park & Rec – Closed
 - Monday December 26th City Offices, Library, Park & Rec – Closed
 - Friday December 30th Regular Trash and Recycling Schedule
 - Monday January 2nd City Offices, Library, Park & Rec – Closed
 - Tuesday January 3rd at 7:00 p.m. Regular City Council Meeting
 - Tuesday January 3rd (after Council) City Council Work Session
 - Monday January 16th – MLK Day City Offices, Library, Park & Rec – Closed
 - Tuesday January 17th at 7:00 p.m. Regular City Council Meeting
 - Tuesday January 17th (after Council) City Council Work Session

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this could be a violation of the open meeting law.

Neighborhood Easements

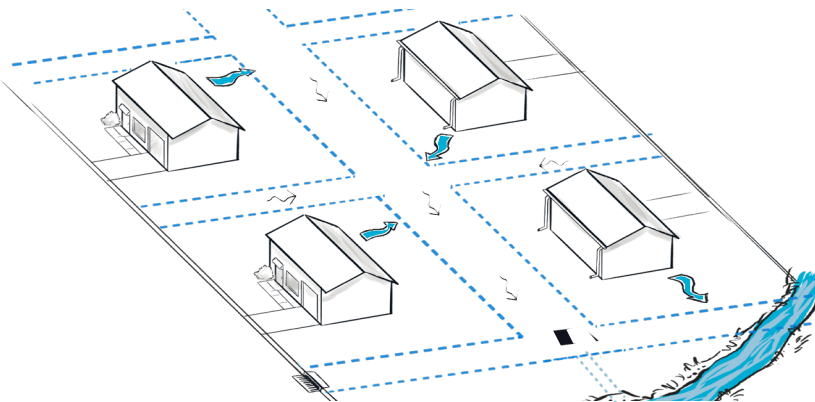
While technically your property, an easement is a portion of land set aside for a specific purpose and recorded, by deed, on your abstract (your property's history of ownership).

There are many types and sizes of easements. The most common easements are associated with utilities and include electric, gas, cable, drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater or overland flowage.

Overland flowage easements, or surface water flowage easements, provides a safe path for stormwater runoff to get from your backyard to the closest storm drain, which carries water away underground.

It would be cost prohibitive for a community to rely on underground pipes alone, not to mention possible downstream flooding, streambank erosion or the difficulties created if storm drain pipe buried in backyards needed repair or replacement.

Easements, a vital component in stormwater management, allows the municipality access to your property for repairs and maintenance after construction is complete.



While not always the case, boundaries for overland flowage easements typically mirror drainage swale boundaries, which is the area of your property contoured or graded to expedite the removal of stormwater runoff.

Important to note: It is difficult to identify easements once a property has been developed, however; easements must be kept free of obstructions to maintain efficient drainage of stormwater runoff and prevent neighborhood disputes.

Placement of anything including wood piles, playground equipment and sheds within the easement or constructing fences or bridges within / across the easement is regulated by city code and strictly prohibited. Filling the easement in, redirecting or prohibiting the flow of stormwater through your property is also prohibited.

Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership



- Altoona
- Ames
- Ankeny
- Asbury
- Bettendorf
- Bondurant
- Carter Lake
- Cedar Falls
- Cedar Rapids
- Clinton
- Clive
- Coralville
- Council Bluffs
- Davenport
- Des Moines
- Eldridge
- Grimes
- Hiawatha
- Iowa City
- Johnston
- Marion
- Muscatine
- North Liberty
- Pleasant Hill
- Sergeant Bluff
- Sioux City
- Solon
- Storm Lake
- University of Iowa
- Urbandale
- Waterloo
- Waukee
- West Branch
- Windsor Heights

A cost-share program may exist in your community.

While cost-share programs vary across the state they share one thing in common: providing financial assistance to property owners to install approved landscaping practices designed to capture and infiltrate stormwater runoff and reduce localized flooding.

Rebuilding soil health may be one of many landscaping practices eligible for cost-share.

Stormwater utility fees typically fund cost-share programs. For most communities the cost-share is a reimbursement of costs associated with the installation of practices.

Property owners receive approval from the city, expend the funds and apply for reimbursement from the city when the project is complete. Reimbursements are usually a certain percent, up to a certain dollar amount (i.e. 50% up to \$2,500.)

Property owners can either design and install the practice themselves or hire a landscaper. With "Do It Yourself" practices, reimbursement is materials only. When contracting the services out, reimbursement is labor and materials.

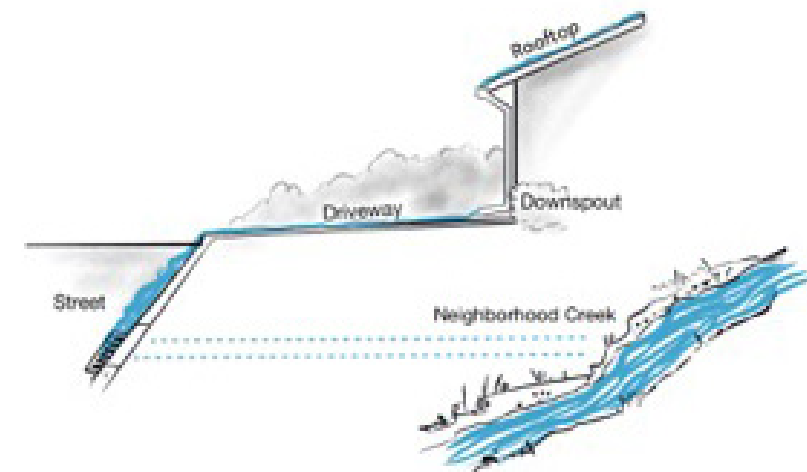
Contact local city staff to discuss programs and resources available for managing stormwater in your neighborhood.

IowaStormwater.Org

Drainage In Your Neighborhood



Rain *SOAKING INTO* the ground.



Rain *RUNNING OFF* hard surfaces.

Easements At Work

When it rains a little...



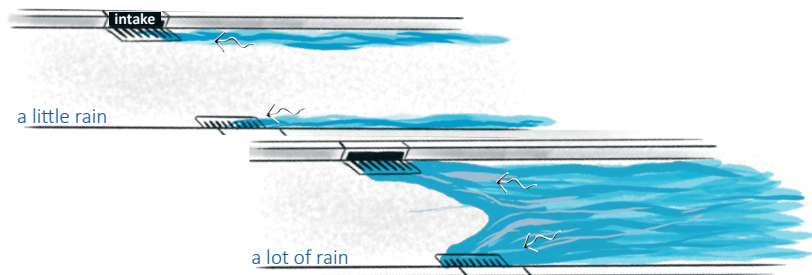
You may see a small stream forming. Depending on how your house was built, the small stream could flow in the front yard, the side of your house, the backyard or even all three.

When it rains a lot...



The once small stream becomes larger and the water moves much faster, which could cause you concern. Be patient, as drainage swale easements are engineered and are functioning properly when runoff drains away within 48 hours.

Same goes for streets...



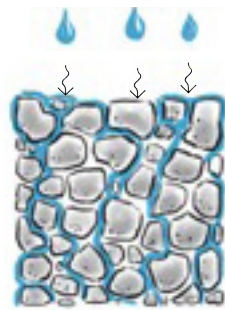
Most street intakes are sized to drain stormwater runoff generated from almost four inches of rain. Runoff generated from larger storm events may collect in and flood the street. This too will drain when given time, unless intakes are blocked by debris (i.e. litter, leaves or yard waste.) **Contact City staff if you notice neighborhood inlets are blocked.**

Rainfall and Soil Dynamics

A little rain is one inch falling over 24 hours. **A lot of rain** is one inch falling in five minutes. The amount of rain as well as how fast it falls determines if it is soaked up by the landscape or not. A lot of rain may overwhelm your soil's ability to *infiltrate* or *soak it up*.

Rain not soaked up by the landscape or falling on an impervious surface, such as a rooftop or driveway, becomes stormwater runoff. Healthy soil plays a vital role in managing stormwater.

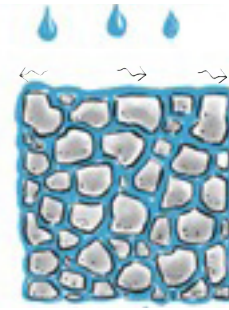
Did you know? One inch of rain falling in five minutes is equivalent to 7.5 inches of rain falling over 24 hours. Both of these rainfalls have a 1 out of a 100 chance (1%) of occurring each year.



Healthy soil with open pore space is able to infiltrate rain.

Healthy soil should have 50% pore space reserved for air and water storage.

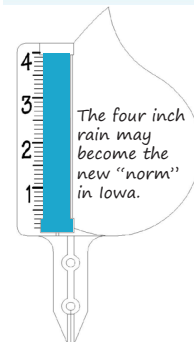
When it rains, water fills pore space until it is saturated. Once saturated, rain becomes runoff.



When soil is saturated or mostly compacted rain becomes stormwater runoff.

Water stored in the soil is beneficial as it either percolates deeper into the ground to recharge groundwater, is used by plants or evaporates to begin the water cycle again.

Change in Iowa rainfall



The four inch rain may become the new "norm" in Iowa.

While we still receive 34-36" of rain per year according to the **National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration**, the four-inch rain is becoming more frequent and could be the new "norm" in Iowa.

Be aware heavier rainfall events, happening more often, may overwhelm the neighborhood drainage system.

Reducing Stormwater Runoff



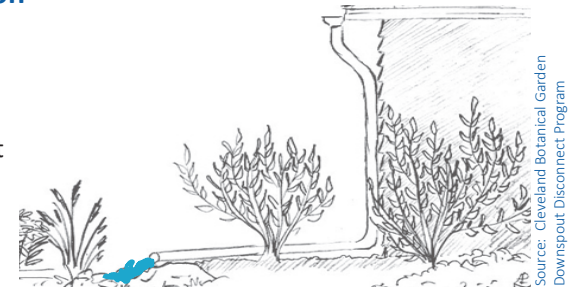
The storm drain system, including overland flowage in your easement, can easily be overwhelmed when there is more stormwater runoff than it is sized to handle. This can result in neighborhood flooding.

Neighborhoods and neighbors working together can reduce stormwater runoff. Two simple steps go a long way to keep rain where it falls: redirect downspouts to vegetated areas in your yard and rebuild soil health.

Downspout direction

Downspouts pointed to impervious areas, such as driveways or walkways generate a lot of stormwater runoff.

This results in a deluge of runoff reaching the storm sewer system quickly and may cause localized flooding in the street.



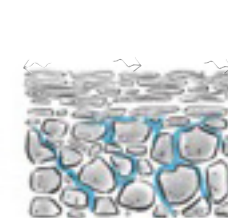
Source: Cleveland Botanical Garden Downspout Disconnect Program

Direct downspouts so rooftop runoff is infiltrated into the ground rather than quickly draining into the street and into the nearest storm drain.

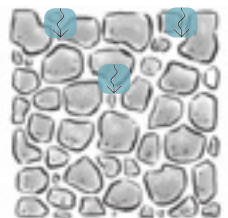
Soil health

There is nowhere for water to go when soil is compacted.

This results in more runoff and a soggy backyard, which takes a long time to dry out. It may also result in a constant battle to grow vegetation.



Rain running off as it hits this compacted surface.



Soil compaction can be reduced through aeration.

Reduce compaction so more rainfall is soaked up where it falls rather than flowing through and possibly overwhelming backyard easements.