

Neighborhood Easements

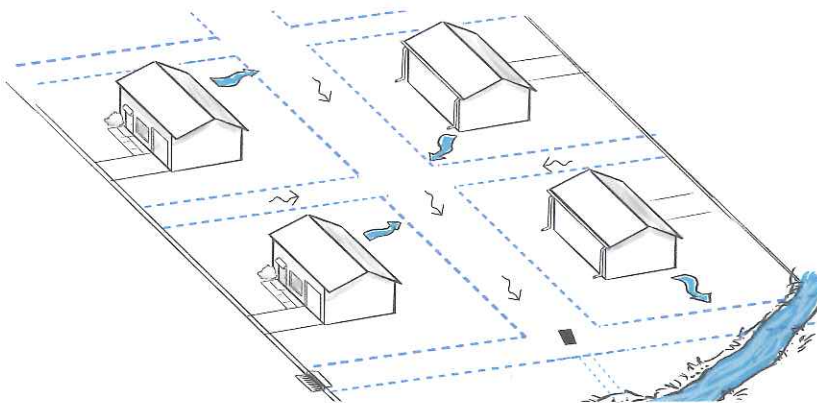
While technically your property, an easement is a portion of land set aside for a specific purpose and recorded, by deed, on your abstract (your property's history of ownership).

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. Total reliance on underground pipes can increase downstream flooding, streambank erosion or cause difficulties 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



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.)

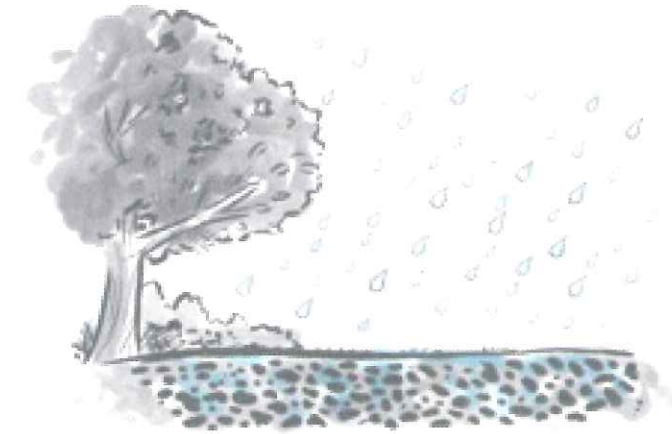
Property owners can either design and install the practice themselves or hire a landscaper. With "Do It Yourself" practices, reimbursement is materials only. When contracting the services out, reimbursement is labor and materials.

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

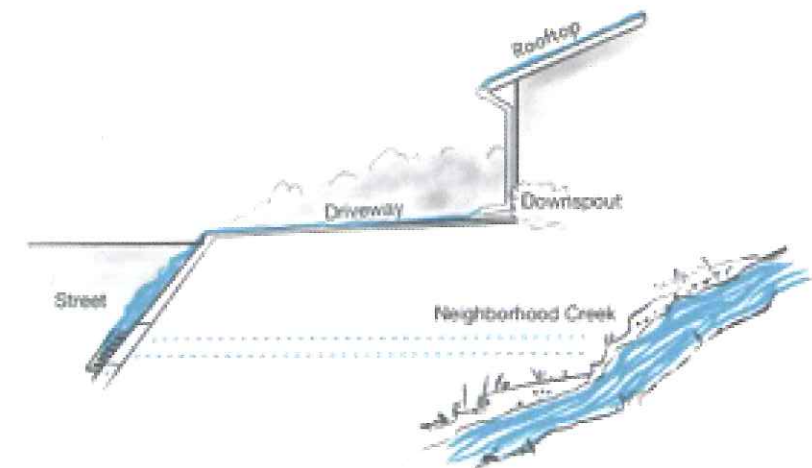
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Davenport
Des Moines
Eldridge
Grimes
Hiawatha
Iowa City
Johnston
Marion
Muscatine
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Sioux City
Solon
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University of Iowa
Urbandale
Waterloo
Waukee
West Branch
Windsor Heights

IowaStormwater.Org

Drainage In Your Neighborhood



Rain *SOAKING INTO* the ground.



Rain *RUNNING OFF* hard surfaces.

Easements At Work

When it rains a little...



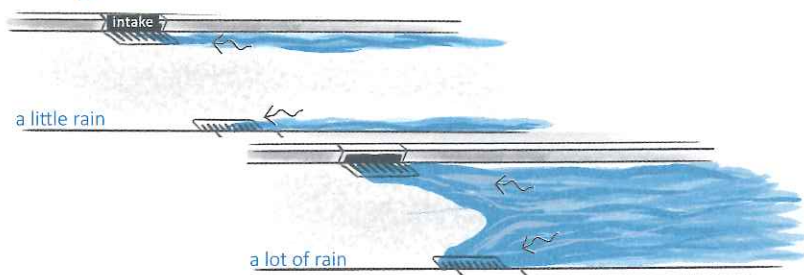
You may see a small stream forming. Depending on how your house was built, the small stream could flow in the front yard, the side of your house, the backyard or even all three.

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...



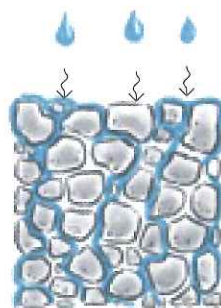
Most street intakes are sized to drain stormwater runoff generated from almost four inches of rain. Runoff generated from larger storm events may collect in and flood the street. This too will drain when given time, unless intakes are blocked by debris (i.e. litter, leaves or yard waste.) **Contact City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

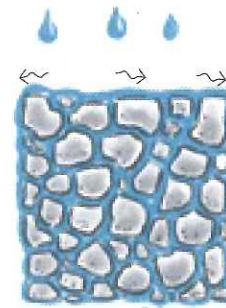
Did you know? One inch of rain falling in five minutes is equivalent to 7.5 inches of rain falling over 24 hours. Both of these rainfalls have a 1 out of a 100 chance (1%) of occurring each year.



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



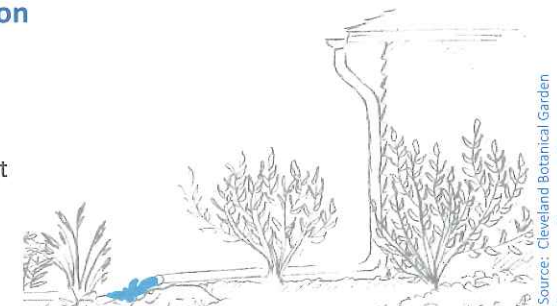
The storm drain system, including overland flowage in your easement, can easily be overwhelmed when there is more stormwater runoff than it is sized to handle. This can result in neighborhood flooding.

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.



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.