

# **The Engineering Services Department**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **Will I be getting a sidewalk on my side of the street?**

Simply call or visit the Engineering Services Department with your street name and lot number and we will be able to advise on whether or not sidewalks are planned for your side of the street. There may also be other helpful information available when you contact us.

### **When will my lot be sodded?**

In accordance with the subdivision agreement, the developer shall ensure that the builder completes the sodding of each lot shown on the plan no later than one year after the date of occupancy of the dwelling unit on that lot. The developer/builder determines the best timing for these things, based on a sufficient amount of work to justify bringing in the crews. Therefore, purchasers should contact their builder for timing questions. If delays are excessive you should contact the Engineering Services Department for assistance.

### **Who should I speak to if there are going to be utility boxes on my lot?**

The Engineering Services Department can let you know the proposed locations for utility boxes and hydro vaults. (Due to the nature of utility distribution systems, utility companies reserve the right to install additional access boxes where necessary).

### **Will the builder pave my driveway and if not, when should I pave it?**

You will need to check your Purchase and Sale agreement to see if paving is included with your purchase. If not, the responsibility is the homeowner's. Since there are underground services that may settle with time, we suggest you hold off paving your driveway for at least a year or two. Where sidewalks exist, the Municipality ensures the portion between the sidewalk and the curb is paved by the builder/developer.

### **Can I widen my driveway?**

Due to narrower lots there is less grassed boulevard room for things like trees, utilities and street parking. As a result the Municipality does not generally permit widening of driveways beyond the approved widths. There may be exceptions made where a lot has a large frontage and sufficient boulevard remains for street utilities and on-street parking. These are approved at the sole discretion of the Municipality. If approved, the homeowner must first pay for the additional gravel and asphalt required.

### **Who can I speak to about street trees and other streetscape matters?**

Street trees in all new subdivisions are installed by the subdivision developer based on a landscape plan that is approved by the Municipality. Plans are submitted and approved long before the subdivision is built. The landscape plan establishes the tree types and the locations. While we endeavor to have one tree planted for each house this is often not possible because of required setbacks from light poles, utility boxes, intersections, stop signs, and driveways. Street trees are usually not installed by the developer until all of the streets and boulevards within a subdivision are completed. Trees that die before the Municipality assumes the subdivision will be replaced by the developer.

If you live in a new subdivision that has yet to be assumed by the Municipality and have a question about the street trees please call the Park Development Branch of the Engineering Services Department, 905-623-3379 ext. 2307 or e-mail [pwindolf@clarington.net](mailto:pwindolf@clarington.net).

### **Is my subdivision assumed?**

While the timeframe varies for each subdivision, assumption generally occurs one year after it is totally built out. This can sometimes be 3 or 4 years after the start of construction. If you are not sure if your subdivision has been assumed by the Municipality please call the Construction Branch of the Engineering Services Department, 905-623-3379 ext. 2308.

### **Who can I speak to about street trees in an older/ assumed subdivision?**

Once a subdivision is assumed the street trees become the responsibility of the Municipality's Operations Department. Please call (905) 263-2291.

### **Where can I get information on new parks in my neighbourhood?**

The Park Development Branch of Engineering Services manages the design and construction of all new parks and trails. For information please call 905-623-3379 ext. 2307 or e-mail [pwindolf@clarington.net](mailto:pwindolf@clarington.net).

### **Do I require a permit to build a fence on my property?**

No, but you should check with the Planning Department to confirm by-law restrictions and also review your Offer to Purchase to see if the builder has restrictions on when you can install your fence. Please note that if a swimming pool is being installed a pool enclosure permit is required.

### **When can I install a fence in my rear and side yards with my neighbours?**

Homeowners should not install fencing until their lot is deemed certified by the Engineering Services Department in case additional grading is required along the fence line. Once the lot has been inspected and the builder has completed all lot grading deficiencies, the lot will be certified and the homeowner can install the fence. Homeowners should check their agreements for any conditions with reference to fencing.

### **Can I install a gate in the fence at the rear of my yard if it backs onto Municipal land?**

The Municipality of Clarington requires developers of new communities to install chain link fences between residential properties and municipal property. Typically these fences are located 150mm (6 inches) onto the municipal property.

The Municipality has a Gate Access Policy regarding the permitted locations for gates into municipal land. Generally gates are only allowed to be installed into developed parks, but not into woodlots, open space areas or storm water pond blocks.

Homeowners must submit an application if they wish to install a gate into municipal property. If approved the entire cost of the gate will be the responsibility of the homeowner and the gate must be constructed to the standard established by the Municipality.

Gate Access applications can be obtained by calling the Engineering Services Department, 905 623-3379 ext. 2308.

### **I would like to build a deck; do I require a building permit?**

Decks not attached to the house and less than 10 square metres (108 square feet) in area do not require a permit. Decks larger than 10 square metres and all decks attached to a dwelling, and being 2 feet above grade, do require a building permit. Please note that zoning by-law requirements regulate the location of all buildings and decks. Check with the Building permit to see how this applies to your situation by calling (905) 623-3379, Ext. 2311.

### **What exactly is a building permit and why do I need one?**

Building permits are required to ensure that all buildings are constructed in a safe and healthy manner. They are also required to ensure that a new use in an existing building does not interfere with life and structural safety elements in an existing building. To obtain further information about building permits please call (905) 623-3379, Ext. 2311. We can help you navigate the process involved in obtaining a building permit and can direct you to the appropriate agencies when outside comments, approvals or assistance is necessary.

## **How much will a building permit cost?**

In most cases the cost of the building permit is based on the area of the building; however in some cases (i.e. sundecks, porches, etc.) the fee is fixed. The Building Division staff will advise you of the fee applicable to your application.

## **Who can I talk to about Lot Grading?**

*Purchasers are strongly encouraged to contact the Engineering Services Department to determine the approved grading design for the lot they are interested in before they buy.* The purchasers will be informed as to whether the approved grading proposal requires retaining walls, slopes, rear yard catchbasins and drainage from abutting lands. Contact the Engineering Services Department at (905) 623-3379, Ext. 2308.

## **I gave my builder a grading deposit but it has been some time now and I still haven't been given it back.**

The Municipality is not party to any grading or damage deposits in plans of subdivision. The amount and conditions for refund are between the builder and the purchaser through your Purchase and Sale agreement. Lot grading deposits are held by the builder and are generally returned to the purchaser after the lot grading has been approved by the Municipality.

Contact the Engineering Services Department to confirm that the lot grading has been approved and then contact your builder for return of the deposit.

## **I don't understand, the builder says that the return of my deposit has something to do with the Municipality. Who has my money and when do I get it back?**

The Municipality of Clarington does hold letters of credit from developers to ensure that all works (such as roads, storm sewer, fencing and landscape works), that have been approved under the subdivision agreement, are completed in accordance with Municipal standards and specifications. This agreement however, is a separate legally binding agreement between the Municipality and the developer only.

Sometimes, but not always builders will charge the purchaser for deposits on their home. When this is required you should *check the purchase agreement carefully before you sign* to determine what the deposit is for, who will be holding it and when it will be returned. Deposits paid by the purchaser to the builder are a private matter and come under a distinctly separate legal agreement between the purchaser and the builder. In the case of such private agreements *the Municipality of Clarington has no authority whatsoever to intervene on the purchaser's behalf in obtaining a refund for any deposits paid.*

### **Who do I contact about excessive mud and dust in a new subdivision?**

Mud and dust are inevitable with construction but there may be times when a call to the Municipality is needed to ensure reasonable efforts are being made to minimize the problem. The Municipality instructs all developers and builders in new or existing subdivisions that once any of the houses have been occupied the streets must be kept reasonably clean.

If you believe that the mud and dust is excessive in your subdivision please contact the Engineering Services Department's Construction Division at (905) 623-3379, Ext. 2308.

### **What is the purpose of the large pond in my subdivision?**

Stormwater management ponds protect natural creeks and watercourses by reducing silt and erosion damage from water runoff. This is done by diverting rainfall runoff from roads and properties into the ponds where the water is then gently released at a controlled rate. This minimizes erosion downstream and also captures the silt in the ponds where it does not harm the environment.

### **What is the purpose of the square drain located on the street known as a catchbasin?**

The purpose of a catchbasin is to collect rainwater during rainstorms. Disposing of any other substance into the catchbasin is illegal since this water ends up in our creeks and rivers and other substances may harm the fish.

### **Who is responsible for the cleaning of rear lot catchbasins in a residential subdivision?**

Once the subdivision has been assumed, the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining the rear lot catchbasin belongs to the Municipality and information may be obtained from the Operations Department by calling (905) 263-2291. Any maintenance prior to assumption is the responsibility of the developer.

### **Who do I contact for information on re-zoning?**

Contact the Planning Services Department at (905) 623-3379.

### **Who do I contact to find out about Site Plan submissions?**

Contact the Planning Services Department at (905) 623-3379.

### **I would like to know what is being built in a certain area.**

Contact the Planning Services Department at (905) 623-3379. They will look up this information from their maps to determine if there has been an application submitted.

**Where can I get more information on Development Design Guidelines?**

Contact the Planning Services Department at (905) 623-3379.

**Where can I get more information on Development Charges / Levies?**

Contact the Building Branch within the Engineering Services Department at (905) 623-3379, Ext. 2311.