DECATUR COUNTY ROADS, HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Craig

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STAFFORD

CHAIRMAN, DECATUR COUNTY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:

(CORPORATE SEAL)

DECATUR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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1.0 PURPOSE.

The purpose of these policies is to define the mission, responsibilities and limitations of the County Public Works Department and shall apply to all lands within the jurisdiction of the County and within the jurisdiction of those municipalities that agree, through intergovernmental service contracts, to have these provisions administered within their corporate limits. Unless otherwise defined herein, the County Administrator shall be responsible for the administration of these policies.

2.0 DEFINITIONS.

The following definitions apply to words and terms used in these policies. All other words shall have their usual and customary meaning unless otherwise indicated.

Access. The right to cross between public and private property, thereby permitting pedestrians and vehicles to enter and leave property.

Accessory Structure. Any structure that is a detached, subordinate structure, the use of which is clearly incidental to, customarily associated with and related to the principal structure or use of land and which is located on the same lot as the principal structure or use. Accessory structures shall include storage buildings, dollhouses, pool houses, tree houses, entrance gates to individual homes or subdivisions and other similar uses. Mailboxes mounted or constructed on non-breakaway posts are considered accessory structures.

County. Decatur County, Georgia, its Board of Commissioners or its administrative staff acting on its behalf.

County road system. All those public highways, streets and roads, paved and unpaved, that have been acquired and incorporated into the County road system through gift, devise, exchange, purchase, prescription, dedication, eminent domain, or any other manner provided by law.

County Public Works Department. A department of the County. May also be referred to as County forces.

Driveway. Any paved or unpaved private way which is intended for vehicular access from a highway, street or road to one or more residences or businesses or parcels or property.

Easement. a legal interest in real property that grants the right to use in some specified manner the property of another; often, specif., the right to enter upon or pass over another's land

Emergency. A situation that produces an eminent threat to life or property.

Functional classification. Refers to a road's role, or "function", in an area's roadway system.

GDOT. Acronym for Georgia Department of Transportation.

Highway, street or road. The terms "highway', "street", and "road", as used herein, shall be general terms denoting a public way for the purpose of vehicular travel. The terms shall refer to the entire area within the right-of-way to include roadways, pedestrian facilities, bridges, tunnels, viaducts, drainage structures and all other facilities commonly considered component parts of highways, streets or roads. These terms are used interchangeably herein.

Motif signs. A decorative non-County issued sign that is not a standard sign accepted by the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*

Private road. As it is used in this article, a private road refers to a road that is not maintained by any public entity such as the County, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) or a municipality. Depending upon the granting of easements and accepted use, private roads may be used by those other than the property owners.

Public road. A public road refers to a road that is maintained by a public entity. This would include all roads in the County road system. In this case, the public is clearly entitled to use the road.

Right-of-way. A strip or parcel of land occupied or intended for occupancy by a street, road, railroad or other special use. Fee simple title may or may not be granted to the agency or entity acquiring the right-of-way, but the property is dedicated exclusively for the intended use and is platted separately and distinct from the adjoining lots or parcels.

Security for performance or maintenance. A surety bond, bank letter of credit, escrow account or similar instrument that provides a guarantee of performance or maintenance of construction activities on a proposed or existing right-of-way.

Street. A way dedicated for vehicular traffic by the general public whether designated as street, highway, parkway, road, avenue, boulevard, lane, place, or other similar designations.

(1) Arterial Streets and Highways are those that are used primarily for fast or heavy traffic and include all Federal and State roads.

(2) Collector or Feeder Streets are those which carry traffic from minor or access streets to the major system or arterial streets and highways and promise a traffic potential greater than that of minor streets.

(3) Minor Streets are those which are used primarily for access to the abutting properties.

(4) Cul-de-Sacs are short minor streets with only one end open to vehicular traffic and being permanently terminated at the other end by a vehicle turn-around.

(5) Dead End Streets are those streets with only one end open to vehicular traffic and not provided with a vehicle turnaround at the other end.

(6) Frontage Roads are minor streets that are used primarily for access to the abutting properties.

(7) Alleys are minor ways that are used primarily for vehicular service access to the rear or side of properties otherwise abutting on a street.

(8) Private Street: A Street meeting all of the Decatur County specifications for paved residential streets for which Decatur County shall have no subsequent responsibility to maintain and repair. Private streets may be only established and maintained by an incorporated private homeowners association and shall be open for public school buses and emergency vehicles.

Private Street Requirements In order to be considered for approval, a private drive providing access to lots in a private subdivision shall meet the following minimum requirements:

(1) The private drive shall be owned by the corporation;

(2) The private street meeting all of the county's paving specifications shall begin at a public road or street and shall be planned in such a way so as to provide access to each lot in the private subdivision. The County Planning Commission shall determine if the layout planned is adequate for emergency vehicle travel.

3.0 WORK ON PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Generally, County resources and / or equipment are prohibited from performing any work on private property not specifically authorized under the provision of this section except in emergency situations involving public safety or health and authorized by the County Administrator.

4.0 DRAINAGE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY.

In selected and warranted circumstances the specified below maintenance, repair or construction by County resources may be warranted. The County Administrator may approve work on private property if he / she determines that a clear and substantial public interest is served in the correction, maintenance or improvement of a condition(s) on private property.

Conditions for Approval

 A state of emergency, disaster, or serious health hazard, as designated by County or state health officials

Criteria/Procedure for Approval

• <u>Emergent conditions:</u> The Director of Public Works may approve such work upon consulting with the Sheriff, the EMA Director, Director of Emergency affecting multiple residences.

- A malfunction of the drainage system with the right-of-way.
- Problems associated with projects constructed by the County.
- Problems with the structural integrity of the existing drainage infrastructure of the County.

Medical Services or their designees, if they determine that a serious or imminent threat to life and / or property affecting multiple residences.

- <u>Non-emergent conditions</u>: Before any work is performed by County resources under these conditions, temporary drainage easement will be obtained and granted to the County for any existing or proposed drainage facilities on all private property. Such easements provided shall hold harmless and release the County from all claims resulting from drainage facilities.
- Permanent easements for maintenance of drainage facilities will not be accepted unless recommended after appropriate engineering study and provided that the property owners hold harmless and release the County from all claims resulting for deficiencies of facilities.
- Multi-jurisdictional conditions shall be addressed with standing intergovernmental (mutual aid) agreements.

5.0 EMERGENCY WORK ON PRIVATE ROADS

Maintenance of private roads is the responsibility of the property owner.

In selected and warranted circumstance specified below maintenance, repair of private road may be warranted. The County Administrator may approve work if he / she determines that a clear and substantial public interest is served in the correction, maintenance or improvement of a condition on a private road.

Conditions for Approval

 Imminent threat or danger to life or property

Criteria/Procedure for Approval

- The Director of Public Works may approve such work upon consulting with the Sheriff, the EMA Director, Director of Emergency Medical Services or their designees, if they determine that access to such roadway is necessary for the performance of one or more emergency functions.
- Any work will be done on a one-time basis.

- The work of County resources is limited to the minimum improvements that will allow full and immediate access to affected residences.
- County maintained road will take priority. Maintenance will not be provided thereafter.
- Multi-jurisdictional conditions shall be addressed with standing intergovernmental (mutual aid) agreements.

6.0 MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE ROADS AND DRAINAGE WAYS

Authorizations: the County Administrator may approve work orders originating from service requests or recommendations from the Public Works Director for Advanced Levels of Service.

Service Recommendation/Request Service Request

Roadway Maintenance Improvement Program-Concrete Reclamation

Approval Criteria/Procedure

- Requests for County services on private property shall be submitted in writing to the County administrator. (Appendix A)
- The County administrator shall perform a project feasibility study (legal, regulatory compliance, cost estimate, time allocation, equipment allocation). (Appendix B)
- Commissioners shall be informed of projects determined feasible and beneficial to the County program. (Appendix B)
- Commissioners shall be informed of projects determined non-feasible to the County program. The requester shall be notified by written letter of the determination. (Appendix C)
- Upon request of one or more Commissioners for County services on private property, the request shall be placed on the next County commission meeting agenda. A majority vote of the commission shall be required to undertake the proposed project.
- Before any work is performed by County

Drainage on Private Property with a clear public interest

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resources for this request, a temporary easement, releases and/or other necessary instruments shall be obtained and granted to the County for the proposed project on private property. Such easements provided shall hold harmless and release the County from all claims resulting from the project.

- A signed work order shall be required before commencing project work on private property. (Appendix D)
- Requests for County services on private property shall be submitted in writing to the County Administrator. (Appendix A)
- The County Administrator shall perform a project feasibility study: (legal, regulatory compliance, cost estimate, time allocation, equipment allocation). (Appendix B)
- Commissioners shall be informed of projects determined feasible and beneficial to the public interest. (Appendix B)
- Commissioners shall be informed of projects determined non-feasible or not clearly in the public interest. The requester shall be notified by written letter of the determination. (Appendix C)
- Upon request of one or more Commissioners for County services on private property, the request shall be placed on the next County commission meeting agenda. A majority vote of the Commission shall be required to undertake the proposed project.
- Before any work is performed by County resources for this request, a temporary easement, releases or other necessary instruments to facilitate the request shall be obtained and granted to the County for the proposed project on private property. Such easements provided shall hold harmless and release the County from all claims resulting from the project.
- County Commissioners shall be advised of request in excess of the County's capitalization policy threshold.
- Any work will be done on a one-time basis.

Substances and Materials Requiring Emergency Containment

Tree Removal from County Rights of Way

- The work of County resources is limited to the minimum improvements that will allow full and immediate access to affected residences.
- Emergency petroleum, chemical and other related spills shall be managed on an occurrence basis with the public safety as the primary consideration.
- Where feasible the County will recover associated cost from the responsible party.
- Removal of spills shall be the responsibility of the appropriate environmental agency (ies).
- Fallen trees on public rights of way that originate from adjoining property and pose as a pending threat to the public's safety may be removed if the Public Works Director determines that immediate action is required to safeguard the public's interest.
- Dead or leaning trees that are on Private Property is the responsibility of the property owner. (Appendix E)

7.0 DRIVEWAY INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE.

1. General

It shall be unlawful for any person to develop a driveway on a County maintained road or county right of ways without first obtaining a driveway permit from the Planning Department and paying such fees as may be required for the purchase and installation of said driveway by the County, private contractors, or individuals. Such permit shall be accompanied by a processing and review fee subject to the Board of Commissioners' adopted schedule of fees and charges and other entities for pipe necessary to ensure the unobstructed flow and drainage of water within the public rights-of-way. Consultation with the Public Works Director is advised during planning. While the Public Works Director may waive the County installation of pipe he/she deems is not necessary to achieve the unobstructed flow and drainage of water within the public rights-of-way., the driveway permit is still necessary. Driveway permits shall be required in conjunction with the acquisition of a building or manufactured home permit. Driveways located on state highways and or state rights-of- ways must first obtain a driveway permit from the Georgia Department of Transportation. Minor maintenance of existing driveway facilities by property owners in the right-of-way does not require a permit. This would include re-coating an existing asphalt driveway with sealer or cleaning out a clogged culvert pipe. However, any excavation of the driveway apron or the adjacent area of the right-of-way does require a permit. The County will only maintain those items that it installs. In the event that a property owner wishes to pave their driveway apron, the County will assume no further maintenance of the apron. On dirt roads, paved aprons will not be allowed.

7.2 Residential Driveways

Permits for the installation of residential driveways are required along County maintained roads, and are administered by the Planning Director.

Installation Standards:

- 1. The following are the current procedures for obtaining and the installation of a private driveway on a county maintained road:
 - a. Property owner pays for and obtains a driveway permit from the county Planning Department
 - County Clerk contacts the property owner and informs them of the price of the driveway installation
 - c. Once the property owner pays the County Clerk for the requested driveway, the County Clerk notifies the Public Works Department to install the driveway.
 - d. Public Works Department notifies the property owner, schedules and installs the driveway.
 - e. Public Works Department inspects the location of where the driveway is to be emplaced, and make a determination of pipe diameter based on terrain and volume of water flow (15 inch in diameter is the smallest pipe installed). The determination of pipe length is based on the homeowner's request (minimal length is 24 feet and maximum length is 40 feet). Public Works Foreman indicates pipe diameter and length on work order request.
 - f. Work order request is given to the Public Works Office Manager, who call the County Clerk and gives the work order number, the pipe diameter and length
 - g. County Clerk determines the price of pipe based on the following formula:

Pipe cost x 1.845 = price added to pipe cost

New pipe cost x pipe length = total cost of pipe

NOTE: Driveway pipe cost includes the following: fill material (sand/clay base), top coating material (crushed asphalt or crushed rock), man hours, equipment hours and a lifetime warranty on the pipe and top cover material).

Driveway pipe standards: 16 gauge metal or Georgia Department of Transportation approved thick wall plastic pipe, both ends of the pipe must be cut to a 4:1 slope

- h. County Clerk contacts the property owner and informs them of the price of the driveway installations
- i. Once the property owner pays the County Clerk for the requested driveway, the County Clerk notifies the Public Works Department to install the driveway.
- j. Public Works Department notifies the property owner, schedules and installs the driveway.
- 2. All residential driveways on a state highway shall obtain a driveway permit from the

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and be installed in accordance with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) standard specifications.

7.3 Commercial and Group Development Driveways

Commercial and group development driveway permits are required on County maintained roads. Permits are administered by the Planning Director who will advise the petitioner regarding location, grading plan (from the outer edge of the shoulder of the road to the right-of-way line) and pipe to be placed under the driveway. These types of driveways will be installed by the applicant at their own expense and according to the following requirements.

Owners/developers of commercial developments accessing County roadways utilizing existing driveway cuts shall be required to submit development plans indicating onsite traffic movement and site ingress and egress to the Planning Director for review and approval.

Installation Standards:

- 1) All commercial driveways on a state highway shall be installed in accordance with GDOT standard specifications and must obtain a GDOT permit
- 2) All commercial driveways designed for two-way operation shall have a minimum throat width of twenty-four (24') feet and a maximum throat width of thirty (30') feet, measured at right angle to the center line of the driveway at the rights-ofway line.
- 3) All commercial driveways designed for one-way operation shall have a minimum throat width of sixteen (16') feet and a maximum throat width of twenty-four (24') feet, measured at right angle to the driveway center line at the rights-of-way line. Driveways operated for one-way traffic shall be so designated and have signage installed accordingly as directed by the Public Works Director at permiters expense.
- 4) All commercial driveways shall meet the traveled way with a curve having a minimum radius of twenty-five (25') feet. Larger radii may be required as directed by the Public Works Director.
- 5) Channelizing islands at the driveway intersection are required on arterials or major collector roads as directed by the Public Works Director.
- 6) Driveway storage should be of sufficient length to keep stopped vehicles from blocking the path of entering vehicles or vehicles traveling within the site. The Public Works Director may require a longer throat length or a median in the

driveway.

- 7) Commercial driveways located closer than one-hundred (100') feet apart will be required to be paved along the intervening roadside shoulder and provided with necessary appurtenances, if serving the same abutter.
- 8) Each parcel that is in ownership separate from the ownership of contiguous parcels shall be entitled to at least one curb cut per street front.
- A curb cut shall be no less than one-hundred (100') feet from an intersection with a street.
- 10) Where there is more than one driveway serving the same parcel, curb cuts shall be at least one-hundred twenty five (125') feet apart where practical.
- 11) When both property owners abutting a common property line agree, they may construct a joint commercial driveway which shall meet the same rules regarding width as all other commercial driveways and all the rules regarding location of commercial driveways, except that pertaining to location in regard to property lines.
- 12) Shared driveways are encouraged, and where practical a driveway that is not a shared driveway shall be at least fifty (50') feet from a side or rear property line.
- 13) The owner may be required to improve the driveway cut to accommodate the proposed development or eliminate the existing drive.
- 14) Where deemed necessary, the property owner shall provide deceleration and/or acceleration lanes, curb and gutter and underground drainage as an integral part of the commercial driveway.

7.4 Farm Use Driveways.

The permitting of farm use driveways will be determined on a case by case basis. Approval will depend on such factors as:

- The depth of the existing or proposed drainage ditch swale in front of the property; and,
- 2) The level of traffic on the road and diameter of the pipe required to accommodate the anticipated storm water flow

7.5 Forestry and Mining Driveways.

These driveways will be treated in the same manner as residential driveways, and must maintain a Construction entrance / exit. (Appendix F, Appendix G)

7.6 Other Engineering Criteria

The Public Works Director, at his discretion, may utilize criteria contained in the <u>GDOT Driveway and Encroachment Control Manual</u> as a guide in evaluating access management and approving permits, where appropriate.

8.0 STREET NAME SIGNS

8.1 Generally

The County shall maintain, repair and re-install standard street name signs on all public and private streets of the County under inventory for enhanced delivery of emergency 911 services.

8.2 Sign Standards for Publicly Maintained Signs

Standard street name signage for publically maintained signs will consist of aluminum on a metal post, or as otherwise determined by the County, and will consist of the following:

- 1) A white reflective lettering a minimum of four (4) inches high on a reflective background.
- 2) A green background will denote a public road.
- 3) A blue background will denote a private road.
- 8.3 Sign Standards for Motif Signs in Subdivisions and Group Developments

The developer (or, common interest element such as a property manager or homeowner's association) of any new subdivision or group development constructed within the County is responsible for the cost of installing and maintaining of motif street name signs in accordance with an approved signage plan. Such plan shall be submitted along with the final subdivision plat to the Planning Director for approval. All street signs shall comply with the County's design standard for retro-reflectivity. Overhead signs with a County motif may be installed at selected intersections at the discretion of the County.

9.0 TRAFFIC ENGINEERING.

9.1 County Responsibility

Generally the County shall adhere to design and engineering standards promulgated by the Georgia Department of Transportation, except where they may vary from or are less restrictive than the County land development regulations for residential subdivisions, by conditions of re-zoning, or where they may vary within the context of these policies at the discretion of the Public Works Director. Traffic control devices on County maintained highways, streets and roads shall be in accordance with the <u>Manual on Uniform Traffic</u> <u>Control Devices</u> as adopted by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

No accessory structure shall be constructed or installed in the public right-of-way.

9.2 Private Responsibility

The developer of any new subdivision or group development constructed on a County maintained highway, street or road is responsible for the initial installation of all necessary traffic control devices in accordance with an approved traffic control or signage plan. The County shall maintain the devices after acceptance of the streets.

10.0 SURPLUS DIRT.

The County may secure agreements with land owners of private property for the excavation, and off-site hauling and disposal of dirt needed for County projects. Surplus dirt excavated for County projects, which must be hauled away and disposed of off-site, may be placed on private property, with the property owner's consent, provided that:

- 1) Disposal there is more economical than hauling the dirt to the nearest County owned disposal site.
- 2) The property owner releases and holds the County harmless for any damages or liability resulting from placement of the dirt on his property.

11.0 MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMMING.

11.1 System Improvements

All public funds available to the County for transportation system improvements expended in accordance with a comprehensive transportation improvement plan may apply to:

- 1) Road construction and rehabilitation (paving, widening, and resurfacing)
- 2) Traffic safety projects (intersection improvements, re-alignment, turn lanes, signalization, guard rails, striping, etc.)
- 3) Bridge construction and rehabilitation.
- 4) Drainage improvements. The County Administrator or his/her designee will be responsible for implementing systematic programs for construction funds approved by the Board of Commissioners.
- 11.2 Road Construction and Rehabilitation

Road construction and paving projects administered by the County and funded from public funds shall have the following basic characteristics:

1) Only County maintained roads are eligible for construction funding provided that lawful acquisition has taken place.

 Construction will be accomplished in priority order at a rate permitted by availability of funding, except otherwise determined by the Board of Commissioners.

The Public Works Director will acquire and maintain the following data on all roads proposed for paving:

- 1) Name.
- 2) County road number.
- 3) Map location code.
- 4) Beginning and ending points.
- 5) Length in miles and hundredths of a mile.
- 6) Number of homes accessed from the road.
- 7) Number of businesses accessed from the road.
- 8) Number of public facilities accessed from the road.
- 9) Maintenance difficulty factor.

Road construction will be prioritized in accordance with the rating factors used by the Georgia Department of Transportation; a road's paving may be given higher priority under the following circumstances.

- The road is identified as a high priority system improvement by the current County transportation improvement plan as established by County road workshop review.
- 2) Special assessment district is being established.
- 3) Lawful acquisition prior to construction has been accomplished.

In general, the County will observe the GDOT standards and specifications for the design and construction of improved County maintained roads along arterials and collectors. However, the Public Works Director, within his best judgment, may establish appropriate alternate design and construction standards for low volume rural roads as a means of ensuring maximum cost effectiveness of road paving funds.

11.3 Bridge Construction and Rehabilitation

The Public Works Director will collect and maintain data on all bridges in coordination with the GDOT. The GDOT performs periodic bridge condition evaluations which will be used by the Public Works Director to prioritize, and recommend construction and rehabilitation projects for programming. Such projects shall adhere to standards observed by the GDOT Bridges and Structures Design Policy Manual.

11.4 Drainage Improvements

The Public Works Director will collect and maintain data on all drainage structures and roadside drainage ways in coordination with the GDOT. All drainage structures and roadside drainage improvements approved for major construction programming shall

adhere to standards observed by the GDOT <u>Manual on Drainage Design on Highways</u>, and the <u>GDOT Bridges and Structures Design Policy Manual</u>.

11.5 Intergovernmental Aid and Assistance

All system improvements for the primary benefit for other governmental agencies in Decatur County shall follow the program structure through the County's Intergovernmental Aid and Assistance policies.

12.0 STANDARDS FOR ACCEPTANCE, IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE OF NEW STREETS AND STORM DRAINAGE.

12.1 Minimum Acceptance Criteria

Only those streets, roads, and drainage systems designed and constructed using County standards will be accepted for maintenance. The County accepts no responsibility for either new or existing private streets or drainage systems without fully executed and recorded easements and right-of-way deeds. The County may accept easements and rights-of-way dedications if review and inspection standards are met for:

- 1) Widths of easements and right-of-ways.
- 2) Road construction.
- 3) Placement of existing and proposed utility lines.
- 4) Any other road-related infrastructure authorized by the County upon the inspection and recommendation for approval by the Public Works Director.

All new or existing private streets or drainage systems that the contractor wishes the County to accept, must seek an application from the Planning Department. Planning Board will consider acceptance of all new or existing private streets or drainage systems based on recommendations from the Planning and Public Works Director. The Planning Board will make their recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners may accept paved roads and drainage systems if all County standards are met and are based on the review and approval of the Public Works Director and County Attorney.

12.2 Maintenance Standards Upon Acceptance

The accepted road(s) will be subject to minimum level of service maintenance standards and will not be substantially or further improved by the County, except under a special assessment district, or unless otherwise approved as a priority project under major construction programming.