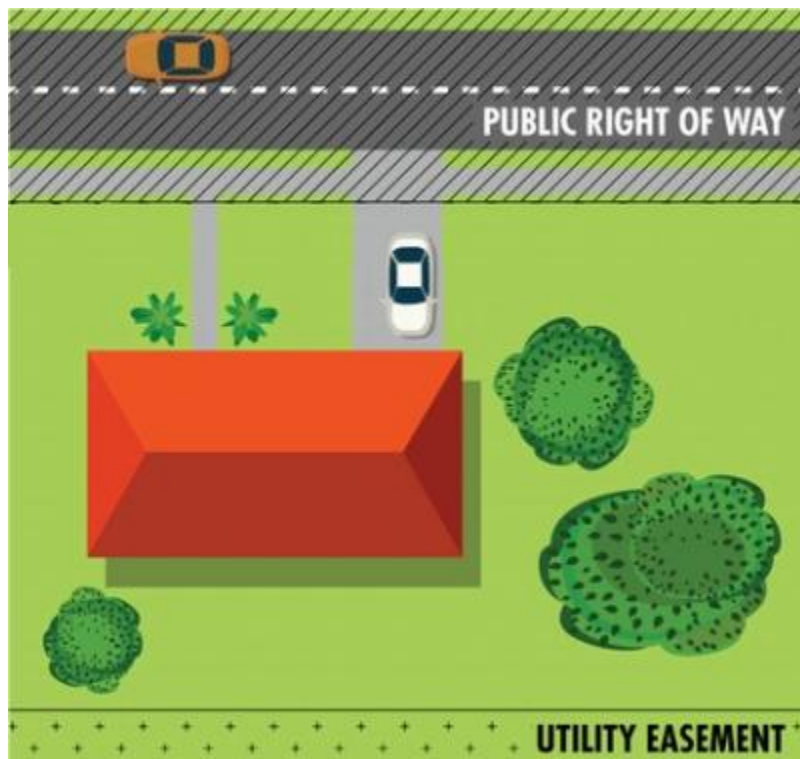


Easements & Rights-of-Way

What are street rights-of-way & easement areas?

A street rights-of-way is publicly dedicated land area that contains the paved street surface, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, and other infrastructure like storm water inlets and street lights. The street rights-of-way land area may also contain utility lines, like water lines, gas lines, sanitary sewer lines, phone and fiber lines, all needed to provide various utility services to properties.

Utility easements are dedicated areas of a property for utility companies to deliver services such as electricity, gas, water, sanitary sewer, telephone, internet and cable. The land belongs to the property owner, but utility companies generally have a right to access easement areas to perform routine maintenance, construct improvement projects and repair utility lines.



Related Questions

Can I prohibit utility contractors from working in my yard?

You can't prevent a utility from accessing the dedicated street rights-of-way area or easement area to perform work, nor can the city, according to federal and state law. We encourage utility providers to notify property owners and residents as a courtesy before starting work.

Do I need approval to work in the right of way or an easement?

Permanent and temporary structures and materials that restrict access to easements or utilities are generally prohibited. Contact city staff to request approval for encroachments like fences, irrigation systems and landscaping (including street trees).

Utility companies try to limit damage to encroaching items during construction, but they are not required to replace, pay damages for or reinstall an item that impedes construction.

Encroachment into an easement or street right-of-way, even if approved, may be at your sole risk.

Does the city regulate utility providers?

The city regulates utility companies through franchise agreements. We also monitor where and when work is taking place in the public right-of-way and public utility easements through a permitting process. The city can impose reasonable restrictions on how the work is done.

How can I find out where easements and public rights of way are on my property?

Easements are typically filed at a county's register of deeds office, or in Johnson County at the [Records & Tax Administration \(RTA\)](#) office. All filed easements should be listed on the property title report and/or shown on property survey information that may have provided at the time your property was purchased. Having a complete boundary-survey of your property done with the appropriate property title research will show where any easements are located on a property.

How wide and where are utility easement on my property?

Not all properties in Westwood have dedicated easements. Some lots established easement areas when the lots were first established or platted. Other properties may have utility easements dedicated by separate instrument along rear or side lot lines that are anywhere from 5 to 15 feet or more wide, and may or may not be divided between two adjoining lots. Most easements are located along rear property lines, and many easements are within side yards as well.

How wide is the public right of way in front of my house?

The public rights-of-way for streets in Westwood all vary, but the street rights-of-way area all extend beyond the curbing of a street. The location where the rights-of-way ends, and the private property line begins on some streets in Westwood is 5 to 15 feet beyond a street curb.

Who is responsible for maintaining the easement and right-of-way?

Property owners are expected to take care of the public right-of-way area (to the curb) and utility easement areas as you would the rest of your property. The City of Westwood will generally maintain the sidewalks in the right-of-way.

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