



COUNTY OF ARANSAS
Office of the County Engineer
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County Engineer

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Re: Unpaved County Roads

Dear Sir:

We often are asked about the process of paving or maintaining the approximate 200 miles of roads that are platted but currently not part of our county road system. Most of these roads were platted back in the late 1800's. They were created based on a perimeter survey of the acreage and it was left up to each individual to find a way to access his property. Early methods of access were achieved by canvassing their commissioner. This method was random and often lent itself to claims of favoritism. These properties have become popular lately due to the low cost but with the low cost comes the difficulty of access.

Many people feel that since they are paying taxes that they are owed a road by the county. The truth of the matter is that the road tax, which is identified as "Special" on the tax bill, is only \$0.045/\$100 valuation. This rate equates to \$45 for a \$100,000 piece of property. We estimated that with the amount of tax collected on these low valued properties it would take between 300 to 400 years to tax to pay for a new road built to county standards. It was pointed out by our appraisal district that once a road is placed in front of these properties, the value would be greatly enhanced. The increased appraisal not only would reduce the time needed to collect enough taxes to only 100 to 200 years, but would also provide a windfall to the property owner at county expense should they decide to sell after the road is installed. In view of this dilemma, the Commissioner's Court has approved a policy whereby if the adjoining land owners pay two-thirds of the cost, the county will pick up the other third provided the work is done by the Road and Bridge Department within their workload ability. A complete copy of the policy is available at the Aransas County Service Center.

Often people do not want to proceed with the policy because the cost of the road may be more than the cost of the property. We are often asked if they can clear the way to their property and put some material down to aid in access. The only thing that the county asks is that the request for clearing goes through your commissioner. Any vegetation that is cut down must be removed to prevent a fire hazard and any material that is used must be consistent with future road material. In other words, we do not want to see large chunks of concrete, shingles, tree mulch or anything that would have to be removed in order to build a road. We are often asked for used or excess material to aid in their access. In Aransas County there is no such thing as surplus material, everything is used somewhere.

Please bear in mind that these right-of-ways are public access and nothing can be put in place to restrict others from using this property. We have also received a lot of complaints from people that emergency services will not come to their door if they have limited access to their property. There are no laws mandating that the county provide access for emergency vehicles to all citizens. Just like the decision you have made to live in these areas are based on economics, so also the county must make decisions on how to best spread the meager road tax dollars that are received.

Roads that are opened by the general public in the manner mentioned above will not receive any county maintenance until they are brought up to county standards. Generally, we try to put up an "End County Maintenance" sign to indicate that the roads are not county maintained as a warning to people thinking of buying property in these areas.

This letter is not intended to dissuade individuals from purchasing property in Aransas County but instead to better educate them in the decision making process and also to warn them of the pitfalls and potentially dangerous situation that they may be putting their family into. Good luck in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

David Vyoral
County Engineer