

Landscape and Drainage Questions and Answers

Q? I've just purchased a new home in West St. Paul and I am planning the landscaping. I've heard a little about boulevards and I know there are easements on my property. What is their purpose?

- A. The boulevard is part of the street right of way. This area is designated as the area between the street edge or curb and your property line. It is used for installation and maintenance of sewer and water lines and storage of snow in the winter. Planting trees or bushes in the boulevard (street right of way) is not permitted. Lawn sprinkler systems are allowed in the boulevard; however the city will not repair sprinkler systems damaged by snowplows or other work. Boulevard widths vary from 6 feet to 18 feet in residential areas. Typical width is 13 feet. To verify the boulevard width on your lot, call the Building Department: (651)552-4116, Engineering Department: (651)552-4133, or the Planning Department: (651)552-4134.

Q? I understand the boulevard is part of the street right of way, but what are the easements for?

- A. Easements allow certain rights to other personnel on a property; the easements are on your property within the property lines. Drainage easements give the city rights to regulate drainage within the easement area. Utility easements give utility companies (electric, gas, phone, etc.) rights to install utilities in these easements. Typical city lots will have 5-foot easements on the side yards and 10-foot easements on the front and rear yard. It should be noted that the front yard easement is in addition to the boulevard. Individual lot surveys will show these easements.

Q? May I plant trees or bushes in the easements?

- A. Plantings such as trees and bushes may be placed in drainage and utility easements at the risk of the property owner, provided they do not change or interfere with the drainage. The city does not encourage extensive plantings or landscaping in the easement area because of potential drainage problems and the possibility of utility work in the easements. The city or utility companies will not replace plantings or landscaping removed or damaged during work within the easement area.

Q? Do I need city approval to work in the easement area?

- A. Any work that would change or interfere with the drainage on the easements or any part of the property should be approved by the City of West St Paul Engineering Department before starting the work.

Q? Is there anything else I should know?

- A. The City of West St Paul passed an ordinance to reduce erosion. It requires turf be established within 60 days (excluding the time between October 1st and May 1st) of the city issuing a Certificate of Occupancy. We would also like to remind you to maintain, until turf is established, any silt fence or hay bale erosion control systems that may be on your lot.

Q? Many cities have lawn sprinkling restrictions. Do we have any in West St Paul?

- A. The City of West St. Paul received its water from St. Paul Water and does not currently have watering bans or restrictions. The City will enforce future restrictions as necessitated by St. Paul Water.