



TOWNSHIP SERVICES POLICY

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Summit County Engineer Policy for Township Services

The Summit County Engineer endeavors to provide high quality engineering services to townships as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. It came to our attention that the way engineering services are provided to townships lacked uniformity across the townships and even across the various requests for services we receive. To that end, the Engineer's office has established a policy for providing services to our townships where none existed before. It is our hope this policy will clear up any confusion as to how to request services, what services are provided and establish consistency in how townships receive engineering services.

The second reason for establishing a policy is to ensure compliance with the rules, regulations and laws of Summit County and the State of Ohio. Like all public officials, we must perform our duties as prescribed by the Ohio Revised Code and Codified Ordinances of Summit County. The ORC defines the authorized uses of Motor Vehicle and Gas Tax dollars and the Summit County Council appropriates the funds subject to these limitations. This policy will ensure that we stay in compliance with the law.

In addition, we must also work within the constraints of our budget. Declining revenue has led to belt tightening all across governments. We are finding ways to fulfill our statutory responsibilities while bringing our expenditures in line with our revenue.

In order to face these budgetary constraints and legal issues while still providing quality engineering services to the townships, we have developed a new policy for services provided to townships. The new policy hopefully will clarify roles and responsibilities as well as address cost issues.

No Cost Services

The following services are provided at no cost to townships. The list is by no means all inclusive; there may be other services provided at no cost.

1. Preparation of township highway paving specifications
2. Inspection of township highway paving work
3. Plan creation for township culvert replacements
4. Inspection of township culvert replacement work
5. Right-of-way staking for maintenance work
6. Analysis of roadway safety issues
7. Performance of engineering for roadway maintenance services
8. Site plan reviews for new development and for modifications to existing sites
9. Contract sharing for road maintenance and resurfacing work
10. Engineer representative for every township
11. Assistance with road closures by providing equipment and signage

All engineering and surveying services related to the maintenance of township highways and highway drainage systems are provided at no direct cost to the townships, including

preparation of township highway paving specifications, inspection of contracted township sealing and paving work, plans for township culvert replacements and the inspection of the replacement work, staking of road right-of-ways for maintenance activities, analysis of township roadway safety issues and the performance of similar engineering maintenance services.

Each year we put our pavement maintenance and resurfacing projects out to bid. Townships wishing to “piggyback” contracted roadway maintenance and resurfacing improvements onto the County Engineer’s annual resurfacing and repair contracts may do so at no direct cost to the township above the actual cost of the contracted work. This can lead to cost savings and a more efficient use of time by having our office administer the bids.

In addition, each township has been provided a County Engineer employee liaison to attend township meetings and consult with township trustees on engineering related matters at no direct cost to the township. This service is provided to maintain an open channel of communication for projects in progress and to minimize the response time for important engineering related questions that may confront township trustees on a regular basis.

While funding for the operations of the County Engineer have been decreasing, it is our goal to continue to provide these services as they relate to the maintenance of the township highway systems at no direct cost to the townships.

Limited Services

Our ability to provide engineering services for roadway improvement projects such as the reconstruction of roadway pavements, curbing, gutters and storm drain systems, roadway widening, realignment and changes to traffic control devices is limited however due to work load, staffing level and financial restraints. The level of engineering effort and expertise is much higher for these types of improvements than for the maintenance of existing facilities. These types of projects usually result in engineering fees amounting to 10 to 15 percent of the cost of the improvement. They also often require professional analysis of soil conditions, environmental studies and possibly services for acquiring additional roadway right-of-way. The engineering services for an improvement project can often take over a year to complete, and depending upon the scope of the project and the type of funding involved, may require public hearings and may take multiple years to ready a project for construction.

In addition, many maintenance functions can be performed on township roads and be billed as a direct cost reimbursement to the township, much like engineering services.

Stormwater improvements can be performed in multiple ways. Any ditch projects outside the road right-of-way cannot be paid for with Motor Vehicle and Gas Tax monies according to the ORC. One way to fund them is to go through the Ditch Petition process under Chapter 6131 of the ORC. This process ultimately assesses the residents benefited

by the work performed. Off-roadway assessed drainage improvements will be made by the County. In newer subdivisions, residents must also pay assessments for the maintenance and improvements of drainage systems that are not within the road right-of-way.

Outside Consultants

Due to the complexity of most improvement projects and the need to ensure that adequate staff is available to complete the engineering and surveying work within the scheduled timeframe, it is the policy of the County Engineer to engage private engineering and surveying consulting firms to perform the design services for most of our highway improvement projects and often for complex maintenance projects such as major repair to a bridge. This policy is in place in part because the staff of the County Engineer is structured to be more proficient in the performance of services for maintenance of our highways and a consulting engineer's staff is more suited for the design of major improvements. Because most major improvements are dependent upon fluctuating and unpredictable outside funding sources it is not an efficient utilization of our resources to maintain employee staff for the design of such improvements. The utilization of consulting engineering services for major highway improvements is also instrumental to maintaining timelines that are often essential to the securing of outside funding (such as Ohio Public Works Commission funding) that is often a component of the budget for major improvement projects.

While we utilize consultant engineering services to perform the major elements of the design work for highway improvements, our staff prepares all major project scope of services, administers consultant contracts, and reviews and approves the consultant's work products.

Funding

Townships also have the ability to secure outside funding for highway improvement projects. It is understandable that townships desire to stretch their funding for highway improvements as far as possible and to that end request that the County Engineer perform the engineering, surveying and construction inspection services for their projects at no cost to the townships. Unfortunately, the funds available to the county for highway improvements are simply inadequate for the county to pay for the engineering services for major township highway improvement projects. Our limited budget is not able to support these activities at the expense of county highway maintenance.

Most county highway major improvement projects are funded from state and federal funding sources with a local match. The consulting engineering services for these projects are likewise funded in this manner. The local match for these projects must be set aside from our normal operations and maintenance revenue that we are provided through the state fuel tax and permissive vehicle registration fees. The County Engineer has no other sources of highway funding. It is therefore often a struggle to find adequate

dollars to pay the local match required to secure the outside funding for high priority county highway improvement projects.

Policy

To this end, we have formulated the following policy for implementation for township highway improvement projects:

1. Absent priority concerns regarding health and safety issues, requests for initial study, project scope preparation, consultant procurement, administration and plan review services will be provided by county engineer staff on a first come first served basis at no direct cost to the township.
2. Absent priority concerns regarding health and safety issues, requests for surveying, plan and specification development and inspection services for highway maintenance improvement projects such as seal coats, resurfacing and culvert replacements will be provided by county engineer staff on a first come first served basis at no direct cost to the township. The level of service and detail provided to the township by the County Engineer will be commensurate with the standard level of service and detail we provide for our County highway projects. Should a township desire a higher level of service or more detail, the township may be responsible for the additional cost of such service.
3. Consultant services for engineering services required for a township highway improvement project will be procured by the County Engineer in accordance with ORC 5573.01, ORC 164.15, and Ohio Public Works Commission Advisory VI. The county engineer will procure engineering services in accordance with the provisions of ORC 153.65 to 153.71 and Ohio Public Works Commission Advisory XVIII. The township will be responsible for the cost of actual consultant fees, however administrative cost of supervising and reviewing the activities of the consultant will be provided at no direct cost to the township, except where such costs are reimbursable from grant funding sources. If the project has received state, federal or other types of grant funding, the County Engineer shall be reimbursed in accordance with the percentage of grant funding made available for the improvement. The local share, if required, of said cost will be performed at no direct cost to the township.
4. Absent priority concerns regarding health and safety issues, requests for non-highway related engineering and surveying services (such as services related to township owned properties, parks, trails, etc.) will be considered on a first come first served basis. All costs related to the provision of non-highway related services will be the responsibility of the township.

All requests for engineering and surveying services shall be made in writing by submittal of a Request for Service form signed by two township trustees. Within 30 days of receipt

of a properly completed Request for Service form the County Engineer will advise the township of the Engineer's anticipated schedule for completion of the requested service and of the category of cost sharing, if any, that may be applicable. The County Engineer reserves the right to consider exigent circumstances as to any particular project in setting its own internal priorities.

A detailed project scope and cost estimate will be prepared by the County Engineer and submitted to the township for all projects for which the township may be responsible for a portion of the cost of said services. The consultant selection process will not begin until a cost sharing agreement has been executed between the township and the County.

Conclusion

We want all townships in Summit County to be aware of the services we can provide so that all townships have an equal opportunity to have work performed by our office. The goal of this policy is to achieve uniformity among the townships for work done by the County Engineer.

We wish to continue providing as many services at no cost to townships as possible. Our office currently provides many administrative engineering and maintenance services to townships and will continue to do so as long as our budget allows. Declining revenue has made it tougher to provide services; however we are confident that our current budgeting practices will allow us to continue the current policy for the foreseeable future.

It is our belief that a close cooperative working relationship between all townships and the County Engineer is essential for a strong Summit County. We will strive to assist in any way possible.

Attachments:

Request for Service Form

Ohio Public Works Commission Advisory VI

Ohio Public Works Commission Advisory XVIII

Summit County Consultant Selection Process