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| The El Paso County logo |
| **Department of Public Works** |

# ROAD CONVERSIONS

# ENGINEERING AND PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

KEY MESSAGE

El Paso County is committed to serving the community by providing a process for road conversion and assisting applicants through this process.

## **Introduction**

Converting a road from private to public or from gravel to paved is possible. However, difficulties and high costs should be expected with either process. Specific information regarding these conversions is outlined below.

## **Introduction to Converting a Private Road to a Publicly Maintained Road**

It is possible to convert a private road (not maintained by El Paso County) to a County owned and maintained road. However, there are hurdles to accomplishing this because of the engineering design, construction, and associated costs.Prior to El Paso County (EPC) accepting a road into the maintenance system, it is necessary for the current property owner(s) to hire a surveyor, engineer, and contractor to address right-of-way (ROW), drainage, stormwater, geotechnical conditions, road design, and any necessary upgrades needed to bring the road up to current County criteria. The conversion from private to public requires the support 100% of property owners living on parcels with access to the road in question.

## **Alternative to Converting a Private Road to a Publicly Maintained Road**

As an alternative to going through the road conversion and County acceptance process, many communities hire a contractor to perform routine maintenance on private roads. Some communities have an owners’ association that finances and manages maintenance of the private roads. Routine maintenance will have a much lower initial cost and allows maintenance work to be done at the discretion of the property owners, compared to meeting all improvement requirements necessary for a private road to meet El Paso County requirements.

## **Recommended Maintenance for Privately Owned Roads**

When choosing the maintenance approach instead of pursuing County road conversion, hiring an engineer to assist in the following items should be considered:

* Drainage improvements should be prioritized to prevent road and adjacent property damage. The first step is installing cross drainage culverts to carry the flow of water from one side of the road to the other.
* The center of a road should have a crown that slopes down to either side to remove water from the driving surface, 3-4 percent for gravel roads and 2 percent for paved roads.
* Cross drainage and a road crown/slope will significantly reduce road damage during large storms.
* After cross drainage is complete, drainage improvements parallel to the road should be considered. This could consist of ditches, driveway culverts, or curb and gutter for paved urban roads.
* Routine maintenance of the private road should be done by adding surface materials, regular gravel road grading, and cleaning of ditches and culverts.

## **Introduction to the Resident Participation Program**

Roads designed and built as gravel are generally expected and anticipated to remain gravel. The Resident Participation Program is a program intended to provide an opportunity for the owners of lots along a gravel road to work cooperatively with the Department of Public Works to voluntarily convert their gravel road to a paved road. This program is effective where an individual or individuals will organize their neighbors, and where the owners of the lots are unified in their desires to pave their gravel road.

Prior to allowing a road to be converted from gravel to paved, El Paso County considers the cost and efficiency of maintaining the road. For El Paso County to consider allowing conversion of a gravel road to a paved road, the road under consideration must connect to a paved road. If the road being considered does not connect directly to a road that is currently paved, additional roads must be paved to form a connection with a road that is currently paved.

All costs associated with the Resident Participation Program are the responsibility of the landowners and residents taking access from the road in question. This includes, but is not limited to, surveying, collecting geotechnical information, developing construction plans, providing an environmental transaction screening, establishing necessary drainage, addressing stormwater requirements, obtaining financial assurance, hiring a contractor, and hiring a quality control testing firm. While road conversion requires the support of the owners of 100% of the parcels taking access from the road, costs can be shared in any manner agreed upon by those owners.

## **Road Conversion Application Documents**

When choosing to pursue road conversion, the first step is to reach out to the Planner of the Day at dsd-pod@elpasoco.com or (719) 520-6944. The planner will initiate an application in the Electronic Development Application Review Program (EDARP). Within the application, there are several documents to submit. Information regarding the work needed to create these documents is listed below:

* Identify a Lead Coordinator (Resident Participation Program)
  + When choosing to pursue county road conversion from gravel to paved, the first step is for the neighbors to identify a Lead Coordinator. The Lead Coordinator will be the individual responsible for all coordination and communication with El Paso County. The Lead Coordinator shall then contact the Construction Services Group at the El Paso County Department of Public Works by phone at 719-520-6460 or by email at [dotweb@elpasoco.com](mailto:dotweb@elpasoco.com) to initiate the process. Within the application, there are several documents to submit. Information regarding the work needed to create these documents is listed below:
* Obtain Signatures at Initiation of Project and Just Prior to Construction (required for both)



* + The Lead Coordinator must collect supporting signatures of one hundred percent (100%) of the property owners living on parcels with access to the road in question. The attached sheet must be used for collecting signatures and all items at the top of the page must be completely filled out. Additional pages of the form can be used, but all items at the top of the page must be completely filled out for all pages. The Lead Coordinator must supply the Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works with the supporting signatures at initiation of the project and just prior to construction.
* Land survey (required for both)
  + The applicant must hire a surveyor licensed in the state of Colorado to survey the road. The purpose of the survey is to verify the road is within the right-of-way and to verify the width of dedicated right-of-way meets the requirement for the road’s functional classification. If the road is outside the right-of-way or not centered within the right-of-way, either the road must be moved, or additional right-of-way must be obtained.
* Right-of-Way dedication for Final Plat (required for both)
  + The dedicated right-of-way must have clear title and be accepted by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners. If there is insufficient right-of-way for the proposed functional classification, additional right-of-way must be obtained. In many cases, the private road is located within a tract or easement. The underlying property must be converted to a public ROW. The minimum width that must be dedicated to El Paso County is 60 feet for a local rural road and 50 feet for a local urban road. In addition to the minimum ROW width, a 5-foot Public Improvement Easement must be granted to El Paso County on each side of the ROW. All existing easements shall be vacated prior to County acceptance. Fences impinging on the ROW must be moved to ensure they are on the property line and not within the public ROW. Specific right-of-way requirements are based on functional classification of the road and are outlined in Tables 2-5 and 2-7 of the Engineering Criteria Manual.
* Engineering evaluation of existing soil conditions for Geotechnical Report (required for both)
  + The applicant must hire a licensed geotechnical engineer to collect soil samples. The geotechnical engineer must provide soils information and, if the road will be paved, a pavement thickness design based on the existing soil types. Pavement design criteria are outlined in Appendix D of the Engineering Criteria Manual.
* Engineering evaluation of drainage conditions for Drainage Report (required for both)
  + Assessing the drainage conditions and identifying necessary culverts or ditches is needed to minimize high water flow impacts on the surrounding properties and road. Stormwater requirements also need to be addressed.
* Engineering evaluation of traffic conditions for Traffic Impact Study (required for both)
  + One of the main considerations for traffic in this process is the number of daily trips on the road. The average number of trips generated by a detached residential home is approximately 10. If more than 200 daily trips are generated, a paved road is required by the current County criteria. Note: paving may also be required if there are no gravel roads in the area.
* Environmental Transaction Screen (required for both)
  + The applicant must hire a qualified environmental professional (Q.E.P.). The qualified environmental professional must provide a “Transaction Screen (TS)" for review and consideration. The TS shall be prepared by a qualified environmental professional in accordance with American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard E1528 "Standard Practice of Environmental Site Assessments: Transaction Screen Process." Based on the Department's review of the TS, the residents may be required to present to the Department a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (Phase 1 ESA) for review and consideration. If required, a Phase 1 ESA shall be prepared by a qualified environmental professional in accordance with ASTM Standard E1527, "Standard Practice of Environmental Site Assessments: Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Process."
* Engineering design of road for Construction Drawings (required for both)
  + The applicant must hire a professional engineer licensed in the state of Colorado to develop construction plans constructing a gravel road or converting the gravel road to a paved road. The plans must meet all criteria outlined in the Engineering Criteria Manual for the road’s functional classification. The plans must be stamped and signed by the project’s Engineer of Record and submitted to the Planning and Community Development Department for review. The plans must be approved and signed by the County Engineer or approved designee before construction can commence.
* Financial Assurance Estimate/ Financial Assurance (required for both)
  + The applicant must set up Financial Assurance in accordance with Section 1.17 of the Engineering Criteria Manual. The amount of financial assurance must be determined in accordance with Appendix H of the Engineering Criteria Manual.

Below are the submittal documents that are usually required for a road conversion application:

## **Private Road to Public Road Conversion Program**

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| * Signed Petition, 100% * Drainage/Stormwater Report (P.E) * Construction Drawings (P.E.) * Traffic Impact Study (P.E.) (depending on traffic volume) * Application | * Geotechnical Report (P.E.) * Transaction Screen (Q.E.P.) * Financial Assurance Estimate (F.A.E.) * Final Plat (P.L.S.) or Deed * Land Survey (P.L.S.) * Letter of Intent |

Submittal Documents

All County roads must conform to the EPC Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM) and Drainage Criteria Manual (DCM). Typical submittal documents include:

Footnote:

(P.E.) – Documents prepared by a professional engineer

(P.L.S.) – Documents prepared by a professional land surveyor

(Q.E.P.) – Documents prepared by a qualified environmental professional

## **Resident Participation Program**

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| * Signed Petition, 100% * Drainage/Stormwater Report (P.E) * Construction Drawings (P.E.) * Traffic Impact Study (P.E.) (depending on traffic volume) | * Geotechnical Report (P.E.) * Transaction Screen (Q.E.P.) * Financial Assurance Estimate (F.A.E.) * Final Plat (P.L.S.) or Deed * Land Survey (P.L.S.) |

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Footnote:

(P.E.) – Documents prepared by a professional engineer

(P.L.S.) – Documents prepared by a professional land surveyor

(Q.E.P.) – Documents prepared by a qualified environmental professional

## **Both Private Road to Public Road and Resident Participation Program**

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| * Signed Petition, 100% * Drainage/Stormwater Report (P.E) * Construction Drawings (P.E.) * Traffic Impact Study (P.E.) (depending on traffic volume) * Application | * Geotechnical Report (P.E.) * Transaction Screen (Q.E.P.) * Financial Assurance Estimate (F.A.E.) * Final Plat (P.L.S.) or Deed * Land Survey (P.L.S.) * Letter of Intent |

Submittal Documents

All County roads must conform to the EPC Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM) and Drainage Criteria Manual (DCM). Typical submittal documents include:

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(Q.E.P.) – Documents prepared by a qualified environmental professional

## **Plan Review and Inspection**

Once all the documents have been submitted to the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department, the following process will take place:

* El Paso County engineering and planning departments will provide comments on the submitted documents.
* The applicant must revise documents according to comments and resubmit within EDARP.
* The review and revision process will take a few months until the documents are approved.
* After the documents are approved, the applicant must contact the Engineer of the Day to determine if the Board of County Commissioner’s approval is necessary. Approval will be necessary if right-of-way is being dedicated, if there is any objection to the work, or if the Board has interest in the conversion. If a planner has been assigned to this project, the planner can help with this step of the process.
* After plans have been approved and signed by the County Engineer and Financial Assurance has been obtained, the applicant must obtain a Notice to Proceed from the County Inspections group.
* Once the Notice to Proceed has been issued, the applicant can hire a contractor. A construction testing firm must also be hired by the applicant to perform quality control testing for the conversion of the road from private to public or gravel to paved. Once a contractor and construction testing firm have been hired, the applicant must contact the Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works to schedule a pre-construction meeting. Specific requirements regarding quality control testing can be found in the Engineering Criteria Manual. All costs associated with quality control testing are the responsibility of the resident landowners.
* The applicant must obtain a schedule from the contractor and provide the schedule to the Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works. The schedule must identify when all phases of the construction are proposed. This includes, but is not limited to, proposed dates when earthwork, drainage work, and asphalt paving work will be performed.
* The contractor must obtain a Work in the Right-of-Way Permit. The Work in the Right-of-Way Permit can be obtained through the Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works website <https://publicworks.elpasoco.com/forms-applications/>. The Work in the Right-of-Way Permit must be applied for at least 5 business days prior to start of construction. Depending on the extent of work required, applicable permit fees may be waived. As part of the Work in the Right-of-Way Permit, the contractor will be required to provide traffic control in accordance with an approved traffic control plan.
* During construction, the contractor will need to coordinate with El Paso County for appropriate inspections and testing. Any work that does not pass inspections or meet El Paso County standards must be redone. The Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works may choose to provide an inspector to monitor the construction work on a part-time basis and provide quality assurance testing. All quality control test results by the construction testing firm shall be sent to the Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works.
* Once the work is completed and El Paso County inspections has verified that the work has been completed in accordance with the approved engineering plans and documents, Preliminary Acceptance is issued. Financial Assurance may be reduced up to 80% at Preliminary Acceptance, or if no Financial Assurance was posted at Notice to Proceed, 20% of the Financial Assurance Estimate will be required.
* At the end of the warranty period there will be a final inspection to determine Final Acceptance. Any deficiencies found with respect to materials or workmanship will need to be corrected.
* After receiving Final Acceptance, the road will be accepted as an El Paso County public owned and maintained road and the remainder of the Financial Assurance will be returned.

## **2025 Applications and Fees**

* Work in the Right of Way permit fee schedule: <https://publicworks.elpasoco.com/forms-applications/>.
* Acceptance of ROW
  + $1,540
* Review of Standalone Construction Drawings not associated with zoning or subdivision application
  + $3,962.00
* Link to full fee schedule: <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/#1515613078895-69552b09-44a4>

## **Construction Services Group Contact Information**

For questions regarding information that might apply to your specific situation or to initiate a submittal, please contact El Paso County Construction Services Group at the Department of Public Works at:

* Email: [dotweb@elpasoco.com](mailto:dotweb@elpasoco.com)
* Phone: (719) 520-6460

Or view the Engineering Criteria Manual here:

* <https://library.municode.com/co/el_paso_county/codes/engineering_criteria_manual_?nodeId=ENCRMACOELPACO>

## **Planning and Community Development Contact Information**

For questions regarding information that might apply to your specific situation or to initiate a submittal, please contact the Planner of the Day at:

* Email: dsd-pod@elpasoco.com
* Phone: (719) 520-6944

For questions regarding engineering requirements, please call (719) 520-6300 and ask to speak to the Engineer of the Day.

**PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF ROAD CONVERSION**

**INITIATION OF PROJECT**

**EL PASO COUNTY ROAD CONVERSION PROGRAM**

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, agree to the following:

* I understand this is the initiation of the project and additional information is necessary.
* I am an owner of a parcel taking access from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I am interested in having our road converted: From private to public: Yes Not applicable (Circle one)

From gravel to paved: Yes Not at this time (Circle one)

* I understand the rough estimate of cost for converting a gravel road to paved road is approximately $1,000,000 per mile depending on the road classification.
* I understand our road is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ miles in length.
* I understand the expected cost of conversion from gravel to paved for our road would be approximately $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I understand there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parcels taking access from our road.
* I understand we will request a more detailed estimate from a professional engineer hired to develop construction plans.
* I understand the landowners will jointly determine the method of sharing costs.
* I am willing to pay for my share of the necessary work to have our road converted.
* I agree that all the items above have been completely filled out.

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| **Name (must be legible)** | **Address and Parcel ID** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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**PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF ROAD CONVERSION**

**JUST PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION**

**EL PASO COUNTY ROAD CONVERSION PROGRAM**

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, agree to the following:

* I understand this project is ready for construction.
* I am an owner of a parcel taking access from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I am interested in having our road converted: From private to public: Yes Not applicable (Circle one)

From gravel to paved: Yes Not at this time (Circle one)

* I understand a detailed estimate has been prepared and the expected cost of conversion for our road is approximately $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I understand there are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parcels taking access from our road.
* The landowners have determined the method of sharing costs, and my estimated contribution is below.
* I am willing to pay for my share of the necessary work to have our road converted.
* I agree that all the items above have been completely filled out.

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| **Name (must be legible)** | **Address and Parcel ID** | **Signature** | **Date** | **Estimated Contribution ($)** |
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