

The steps to a new road are many...

You want your dirt road paved, but possibly a neighbor does not want to donate any right-of-way or their yard disturbed. Why can't Barrow County just put the asphalt down on the existing roadway and get it done immediately? Unfortunately, on most roads it just doesn't work that way. Hopefully the following information will give you some indication of the steps we have to take to get a road paved. These steps do not include the many times we have to go back to the beginning.

In the beginning...

1. Secure a paving petition from our Engineering Department, have all property owners adjacent to the road sign it, and return it to the Engineering Department.
2. Engineering reviews the petition, performs a needs analysis, and makes a recommendation as to whether paving is warranted.

If approved right-of-way acquisition begins...

3. The county surveyor lays out the road showing curve data, etc. to meet Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements.
4. DOT reviews the layout, making suggestions for any changes they deem necessary.
5. The surveyor revises his plan and stakes the road on the ground including special easements.
6. Deeds are drawn by the county attorney and each property owner whose land abuts the proposed road is asked to donate the required right-of-way.
7. If the property owners all donate the right-of-way, then all mortgage holders and all other lienholders have to be contacted and asked for a release on the lien. Frequently these liens have been sold to other companies and new lien releases have to be drawn by the county attorney.
8. If a property owner will not donate right-of-way, the county Board of Commissioners must decide whether to proceed further. If they proceed, an appraiser has to be chosen, an appraisal made, and an attempt made to buy the property. If the owner declines to sell the necessary right-of-way to the county, the project must be halted, the route changed, or commissioners must decide to proceed with condemnation in court. If a lienholder fails to sign a release, to proceed the county must condemn the property, basing the action on tax records.

Ready to pave, right?

Wrong. Then comes environmental clearance.

9. The county must delineate wetlands and show that no wet lands will be disturbed, or if they are, must obtain permission to "mitigate" their loss by reserving other wetland acreage.
10. The county must conduct a study to find and preserve any archaeological sites that might be affected by the project.
11. The project must be evaluated for its affect on endangered species and clearance obtained before it may proceed.
12. Historical sites that might be affected by the project must be identified and protected. (Current regulations even protect the view from a historical site if a public project might alter it.)

Bear in mind that all the steps noted here are required by law--or by common sense. A road building project can be complicated by any number of physical factors: presence of a rock vein that will need to be drilled and blasted, a major natural gas transmission pipeline, a railroad, underground "seeps" that will have to be drained to protect the road bed, streams and drainage ditches that will have to be bridged or directed through culverts. Planners will check for lowlands that need fill before paving, for nearby access to borrow pits for obtaining fill dirt, for safe sight-lines for motorists. They will have to assess intersections and the need for traffic control devices, suitability for school bus routes, signage and all the points of access to the finished road.

Now, deal with utilities...

Once all these considerations have been handled, it's time for the county to deal with roadside utilities.

13. All utilities, above ground and below, must be located and marked.
14. Utility companies identify conflicts with the county's road construction plans.
15. All utilities have to be relocated (sometimes at the county's expense) to a proper location. Examples: power poles, buried cables, pipelines, etc.
16. Contractors clear and grade the project.

Next, the county addresses the contract with DOT...

17. The Board of Commissioners (BOC) authorizes a request to DOT to issue a county contract, which is a commitment of state funds to pay part of the construction costs.
18. A request is prepared and forwarded to DOT for a county contract.
19. The maintenance agreement is approved by the BOC, signed and sent to DOT.
20. Right-of-way certification is prepared by the county attorney and sent to DOT.
21. An Obstruction Clearance is signed by the BOC and is sent to DOT.
22. If all is approved by DOT, a contract is sent for the county BOC to sign.
23. The BOC approves, signs and returns the contract to DOT.
24. DOT issues a notice to proceed.

Now things are finally moving...

25. County receives a list of quantities of materials needed from DOT.
26. County prepares a contract.
27. County advertises for bids from road building companies and suppliers.
28. Bids are opened as part of formal, legally mandated bid process.
29. Bid documents submitted by contractors are reviewed by the Engineering Department.
30. BOC awards the contract or contracts.
31. Contractors and BOC, engineer, etc. hold preconstruction conference.
32. Notice to proceed is issued to the paving contractor.

We hope the information we have provided you has been beneficial. The Board of Commissioners goal is to provide quality services and develop projects that result in positive and progressive growth for our community.

Barrow County
Board of Commissioners

