

# Real Estate Acquisition Summary

Engineering creates the right of way plan sheets that show the areas needed to build the highway project. Real Estate Services has the responsibility to acquire the needed property and assure the acquisitions are accomplished within the law. Eminent domain laws require the government to pay just compensation for the property needed for public uses. The steps in the acquisition process are as follows:

- ◆ Real estate appraisers will determine the market value of the property. The appraiser will:
  - Contact you for a joint inspection.
  - Research sales of similar property in the market area.
  - Value the property before and after the project.
  - Determine the damages or special benefits.
  - Some parcels with minor acquisitions will be valued administratively using the appraiser's sales research. You have the right to request an appraisal on this administrative value.
- ◆ A review appraiser checks the appraiser's work and issues a 'Determination of Value' which is the just compensation that will be offered to you.
- ◆ An acquisition Agent will contact you with the offer to purchase. You will be informed whether an appraisal or an administrative value is being used. The Acquisition Agent will:
  - Explain the project and its impacts to your property.
  - Explain your rights under the eminent domain law.
  - Listen to your concerns and, if necessary, convey them to engineering or appraisal for review.
  - Discuss the acquisition with your professional advisors (appraisers, real estate agents, lawyers, etc.).
  - Provide all the documents necessary to acquire the property for the project.
  - Submit the signed documents to headquarters for payment processing. Payments are processed within 45 days of signature.
  - If the acquisition Agent is unable to reach an agreement with you, we refer the acquisition to the Attorney General to begin condemnation proceedings. Condemnation is a legal action to acquire the property for the project after the state has been unsuccessful in reaching agreement with the property owner.
- ◆ If a residence or business is acquired by the state, you or your tenant may be entitled to relocation entitlements. A relocation agent will:
  - Explain the relocation entitlements available to you under eminent domain laws.
  - Assist you in locating replacement housing.
  - Assist you in the move of your personal property.
  - Assist your business in re-establishing at its new location.
  - Assist tenants in locating replacement housing.

Three brochures, ***Transportation Property Needs and You***, ***Residential Relocation Assistance Program***, and ***Business/Farm Relocation Assistance Program*** are published by the Department of Transportation. These booklets provide more detail into the acquisition and relocation processes. You may request a copy by contacting:

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(509) 577-1650



Washington State Department of Transportation