ACQUISITION

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How Is Property Acquired By the City of Cedar Rapids?
The acquisition of property required for a public improvement project occurs after an extensive and thorough engineering process that includes a series of planning and design phases which lead to a determination that the property is necessary in order to construct the public improvement. When it is necessary for the City to acquire private property, a map is prepared which shows in detail the extent of right of way and easements needed from each property. Title to the private property required is vested or transferred to the City when the conveyance documents are recorded in the Linn County Recorder’s Office. However, before any transfer of title takes place, you will receive a copy of the map, a thorough explanation of the acquisition and an offer of compensation in writing.

2. Who Will Contact Me?
A Right-of-Way (ROW) Agent from the City of Cedar Rapids will explain how your property is affected and provide you with information concerning the proposed acquisition. An appraiser may also visit the property to assemble valuation data. The appraiser will examine all features of the property which affect its value. Any information you can give with regard to your property is welcomed and you are encouraged to accompany the appraiser during the inspection.

3. How Does the City Determine What I Will Receive For My Property?
The law requires the City to pay each property owner the fair market value which, generally, is the same amount of money that the sale of the property would bring under current market conditions. In making its appraisal, the Appraiser examines the various features of your property, and the prices at which properties similar to yours are being sold. You will receive a summary statement showing the basis for the establishment of fair market value as developed by the appraisal and listing other benefits to which you will be entitled.

4. Who Will Appraise My Property?
This analysis is completed by Independent Certified General Real Estate Appraisers, who have received special training in this field and has years of experience in evaluating real estate. These appraisers, through their research and analysis of the real estate market, are thoroughly familiar with property values of the area. Their job is to objectively determine the value of the property to be acquired and damages, if any, caused by the acquisition. For simple and non-complex transactions the ROW Agent will provide a valuation by completing an appraisal waiver or commonly known as a Compensation Estimate.
5. How Soon Will I Be Paid?
The City endeavors to make payment as rapidly as possible after an agreement is signed. Typically, you can expect to receive your check two to four weeks after City Council approves the transaction. However, the process could be prolonged due to clear title. The ROW Agent representative will explain this to you in greater detail.

6. What About Liens, Mortgages, or Taxes on My Property?
If applicable, a title search is completed, at no expense to the property owner and is made by the City on most properties acquired. Any outstanding liens, mortgages or taxes will have to be satisfied out of your settlement.

8. Am I required to donate an easement?
The City routinely requests a donation of the needed property interests based upon public benefit. Property owners are under no obligation to donate and are informed they are due just compensation for all property rights required by the City. If a property owner chooses not to donate, the City may elect not to perform the work or proceed with monetary negotiations.

9. What if I don’t agree with the City’s appraisal valuation?
You may obtain your own appraisal. The City will then have both appraisals reviewed by a third party appraiser who will review both and submit an estimate of value. If the third party appraiser's review warrants an adjustment a revised offer will be presented.