



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Office of Planning, Environment and Realty

Office of **REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty supports and conducts research to improve transportation decision making and promote efficiency while protecting communities and the environment. The Office's research:

- Informs Decisions
- Reduces Environmental Impacts
- Enhances Quality of Life
- Accelerates Project Delivery
- Advances Planning

The following document highlights specific research activities in the Office of Real Estate Services. For more information, please visit: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/hep_research/

OFFICE OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES

FHWA's Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) develops and implements programs and activities to advance the fair and equitable acquisition and management of real property.

Research Focus

The Office's research activities focus on:

- Improving the effectiveness of local agencies in acquiring and managing highway real property interests
Developing improved methodology, technology, and systems for right-of-way (ROW) agencies.
- Advancing technological innovations to implement: integrated electronic ROW management systems and electronic delivery methods to streamline acquisitions and electronic mapping to control outdoor advertising and junkyard control.

The Office's research goals include:

- Streamlining current acquisition and property management processes.
- Identifying additional ways to improve the state of the practice in Realty and Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Control programs.
- Developing automation and tools that save time, cut administrative costs, and help ensure timely assistance to the public.

The enactment of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) prompted regulatory revisions to the Uniform Act (49 CFR 24) and the department-wide regulations on real property acquisitions and property management (23 CFR 710). HEPR determined those regulations required additional revisions to eliminate duplicative and outdated regulatory language and to streamline processes to better meet current Federal-aid highway program needs.

For more information, please contact Rosemary Jones, 202-366-2042 or rosemary.jones@dot.gov.

FEATURED RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Alternative Uses of Right-of-Way

This research provides transportation agencies with the information they need to evaluate the feasibility and potential impacts of implementing renewable energy and fuel options within the right-of-way. The report's findings focus on a series of interviews with stakeholders representing State highway ROW renewable energy and alternative fuel facility projects that are in varying stages of completion, and that utilize or are pursuing a range of technologies. **Staff Contact:** Rosemary Jones, 202-366-2042 or rosemary.jones@dot.gov.

Implementation of Notices and Offers by Electronic Methods: Process Streamlining

This research will provide FHWA with the technical information necessary to determine how Internet-based systems can be used to streamline the acquisition process, specifically in the delivery of notices and offers, which are integral to the ROW process. **Staff Contact:** Rosemary Jones, 202-366-2042 or rosemary.jones@dot.gov.

Option Contract Research

MAP-21 amended section 108 of U.S.C. 23 striking "real property," "right-of-way," and "rights-of-way," replacing those terms with "real property interests," making it possible for State departments of transportation (SDOTs) to use option contracts in Advance Acquisition projects. The research will examine what types of options are appropriate for SDOT usage, how option considerations should be determined, and whether and to what extent Federal funds should participate in the option consideration. **Staff Contact:** Mike Jones, 202-493-0350 or john.m.jones@dot.gov.

Electronic vs. Paper Systems

This research will provide FHWA and State and local DOTs with a toolkit using tangible and easy-to-understand documentation with quantitative metrics. The toolkit will assist ROW professionals as they endeavor to obtain leadership buy-in to support implementation of Integrated Electronic ROW Management Systems. **Staff Contact:** Rosemary Jones, 202-366-2042 or rosemary.jones@dot.gov.

Early Acquisition: Statewide Land Use, Environment and Transportation Planning Requirements – Examining Reimbursable State-Funded Early Acquisition under MAP-21 Section 1302

This report offers an analysis of how States have interpreted or implemented mandatory comprehensive and coordinated land use, environmental, and transportation planning processes required in section 1302 as codified in 23 U.S.C. 108. The report also documents the challenges they have met in doing so, and opportunities that exist to further clarify the new requirements. **Staff Contact:** Rosemary Jones, 202-366-2042 or rosemary.jones@dot.gov.

Urban Routes Study Identifying Federal Aid Primary Urban Routes

This research project will be used to map and conflate FAP urban routes with the previously mapped federal aid rural routes. It will be used to help FHWA Divisions and States provide more effective outdoor advertising control. **Staff Contact:** Clifford Pearson, 202-366-9488 or clifford.pearson@dot.gov.

Local Public Agencies (LPA) Toolkit and Video

This research will develop an "LPA Oversight and Stewardship Toolkit" of practices and effective techniques to assist SDOTs and LPAs in the administration of the ROW Federal-aid Program, and will include informative videos. **Staff Contact:** Carolyn James, 202-493-0353 or carolyn.james@dot.gov.