The Real Estate division falls under Capital Programs. When a construction project cannot be built within the existing limits of ODOT’s right of way, or when a new alignment for a highway is required, additional property is needed. The process of obtaining control of this property is managed by the Real Estate Department.

Real Estate works closely with District Project Managers during plan development. The right of way component of these plans identifies properties that need acquired for project use. These plans allow Real Estate to secure the additional property needed for construction and long-term operation of the highway.

The process to acquire right of way is lengthy, with very specific federal & state guidelines to be followed. The basic steps of right of way acquisition are as follows:

1. Generate a Title Report identifying the owners of property to be acquired.
2. Prepare an Appraisal to determine “fair & just compensation” for the land, improvements to be taken such as signs or fencing; and any damages to the property as a result of construction.
3. Meet with the owner on site, explain in detail the Acquisition process, the project, and its impact on their property. The negotiator will provide a written and verbal offer, along with right of way plans and the appraisal, among other items.
4. If a residence or business is being purchased as part of the project, then a Relocation offer is also presented to the owner. This offer may include Replacement Housing Payments, Move Expenses, Reestablishment Expenses, and other benefits to assist displaced persons and businesses find new housing and offices.
5. If negotiations fail and an agreement can’t be reached with an owner, ODOT will exercise its power of Eminent Domain by filing an Appropriation action with the local court. Once filed, ODOT has the right to enter onto the property to do the necessary construction. The Office of the Assistant Attorney General works with Real Estate to either settle or bring the case to a jury trial.
6. If negotiations are successful, the owner signs a Contract selling the property to ODOT and a Closing is held. Funds are disbursed to the owner and the right of way needed is legally transferred into ODOT’s name.
7. When Real Estate has gained control of all necessary right of way for a project, it will issue a “Certification of Right of Way Control Letter”. This letter is required to file a plan to Central Office and advertise the project for sale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Parcels</th>
<th>Structures</th>
<th>RW Cost</th>
<th>RW Clear</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUM I-76 Main Broadway</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$15,730,340</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>STA SR 619 widening</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,863,500</td>
<td>Nov. 18, 2016</td>
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<td>STA US 62 Harrisburg/Middlebranch</td>
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<td>May 1, 2020</td>
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<td>STA US 62 relocation</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>$4,856,000</td>
<td>May 1, 2020</td>
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Permits

Denise Click oversees the permit process for District 4. The District 4 Permits department falls under the Real Estate Section. This department issues permits to construct a driveway on state highway right of way for access to a business or residence, discharge surface water by natural flow from roof drains and field tiles into state owned drainage systems and enter the state right of way to tap existing utilities or install new main lines.

Railroad Coordination

Brian Honaker is the District 4 railroad coordinator. Railroad Coordination also falls under the Real Estate section. Railroad coordination needs to occur when an upcoming construction project is within the railroad’s right of way and/or track clearance.

Railroad coordination is needed when any construction work passes over a rail line, when a new bridge is constructed over a railroad (grade separations), for reconstruction or rehabilitation of existing grade separation bridges that pass over or under a railroad, drainage work, resurfacings, utility work, etc.

District 4 has 13 different railroads that run through at least a portion of our six-county jurisdiction, including, Norfolk Southern, CSX, Wheeling & Lake Erie, the Akron Barberton Cluster, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic, Ohio Central and others.

Railroad coordination will be busy for the upcoming SR 8 hi-level bridge replacement in the city of Akron. This project has the potential to have $2 to $3 million set aside for railroad flagging operations. CSX, Wheeling & Lake Erie, Akron Barberton Cluster, Metro RTA, and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic railroads are all located within the project limits.
Utility Coordination

The District 4 utility coordinators are Matt Steele and Steve Sasala. All work performed with utilities within District 4 is handled by the district’s utility coordination staff. This two person team provides technical support to the districts In-House Design section, Consultant Administration section, and the LPA section. They work very closely with the district’s right of way design and right of way acquisition staff to determine the necessary utility locations on all projects.

This group is in daily communication with all of District 4’s utility companies. They insure that each utility has plan information as soon as possible and review the relocation plans for constructability to the district’s construction plans. They review and approve eligible utility relocation reimbursements and process those requests for payment. Once coordination is complete, this group prepares utility notes that reflect the project utility location and is part of the plan package when the project is advertised for sale. This group stays involved throughout the life of the project to assist construction when needed.

Utilities works to remove trees around district

An additional activity the Real Estate Division provides is the clearing of trees from the right of way. Coordination with several departments is needed to clear trees for a variety of reasons. Trees can be cut down from October 15 through April 1. For projects with utility relocations, trees are cut to assist with the relocation work.

At the beginning of each year, Real Estate meets with the Environmental department to discuss trees that need removed for construction projects that will have a start of construction between April 1 and October 15. The purpose for this is that if there is a tree cutting restriction on potential Indiana bat trees, those trees need removed in the appropriate time frame. If a project goes to Construction that has a tree restriction, the project may be immediately stopped or delayed. Each year there are anywhere from 10-15 projects that need to have trees removed due to environmental restrictions. This work is coordinated with the district’s Survey department to assure that we are cutting the correct trees. Survey will mark the trees within the project limits or right of way that need removed.

Another reason to remove trees is the safety of the motoring public. Real Estate works with each county manager to remove trees that have the potential to cause an issue to the public or the roadway. There is a task order with a tree contractor to get trees removed.
The District 4 Survey department, performs the following types of survey work: topographical surveys for bridge, culvert, signal, slide area, rock fall and bin wall projects. They also layout and locate soil borings and inclinometers in slide areas, locate existing monument boxes for resurfacing projects, monitor bridges and slide areas, pin new permanent right of way and perform relative cross sections for signing plans.

Survey also establishes survey control for project and mainline centerline pavement for Programmatic and Design Build projects. Working with the construction department, they check project control points for awarded projects before they begin work, check cross sections and assist with survey needs during any given active construction project.

Survey also plays an important role in the right of way process. They help the Utility department stake new permanent and temporary right of way for utility relocation and tree removals. They assist county managers by staking existing right of way for tree removal and culvert replacement projects. The also help the Permits department stake existing right of way at possible encroachment locations, and the Right of Way department stake parcels in negotiations for acquisition. Lastly, Survey also lays out air speed zones for the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Meet the District 4 Real Estate Team!

First row (left to right): Kristin Bergdorf, Matt Steele, Cheryl Everett, Chris Huff, Steve Sasala

Second row (left to right): Brian Honaker, Brian Meade, Sam Janka, Thomas Brett, Pete Trivelli, Tim Ward, Mike Schiavone

(Not pictured: Denyse Click, Paul Milinkovich)

Mike Schiavone (right) helps to inform high school students about what surveyors do everyday on the job.