

Next stop: LA, transformed.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION Fact Sheet



Who is Metro?

Metro (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority) is the transportation planner, coordinator, designer, builder and regional transit operator for LA County. Metro works in partnership with the County of Los Angeles, local cities, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and others when planning new transportation projects.



Metro[®]

What is property acquisition?

New projects need to acquire property for their construction or operations. The property acquisition process is governed by state and federal law, and is basically the same regardless of whether acquisition efforts are led by Metro or another public agency. This fact sheet explains the Metro acquisition process in more detail.

Why do new transportation projects need to acquire real property?

New transportation projects often need to acquire property. This can be for a variety of purposes.

Permanent Property Needs

Highway, rail, bus and other projects often require the acquisition of property to expand capacity and increase service to the public. This could be for new or wider travel lanes, rail or bus right-of-ways, interchanges, ramps, bridges, stations or maintenance yards. The property acquired becomes a permanent part of the project and the region's transportation infrastructure.

Temporary Construction Staging

In order to build a project, property is sometimes necessary for a period of time for construction staging. Staging space includes areas for active construction, equipment and material storage, field offices, parking and other construction-related activities. Staging locations are ideally located off-street and immediately adjacent to where the project is to be constructed.

Below Ground Easements

Some projects need property below ground for tunnels, stations or other facilities. In the majority of these cases, there will be little or no impact to the property on the surface.

Staging for the Hollywood/Highland Station during construction of the Metro Red Line.



How is the need for property acquisition determined?

Whether or not property is needed for a project is determined through the environmental planning process. This occurs in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and often results in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Some projects also need federal review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which can result in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). During this process, various project alternatives are evaluated and property is identified that might possibly be needed for the project. The final list of properties is not determined until the very end of the process when the study being conducted is adopted. Public involvement is always an important part of these studies.

For additional information, please see our Environmental Review fact sheet.

Will Metro buy the property, lease it or something else?

This depends. The most straightforward method is for Metro to purchase a "fee interest" and become the owner of the property. Sometimes, other arrangements are developed, such as leases, right of entries, temporary construction easements or permanent easements.

If the project needs property below ground, Metro will purchase a subsurface easement from the property owner. This is accomplished through a one-time payment and an easement deed is recorded. This is identical to underground easements that a utility or cable company obtains for fiber optic cables, water lines, gas lines, etc.

Hollywood @ Vine: Metro Red Line station in Hollywood



How will I know if my property is needed for a project? When will I be contacted?

In some cases, property owners may be notified that their properties are under consideration for a project while the studies are ongoing. However, the exact list of properties is not deemed to be final until the studies are adopted. Once those are done and funding is available to begin construction, property owners will be contacted by a representative of the agency building the project (i.e., Metro, Caltrans, etc.).

How will I be compensated?

Metro is required to provide just compensation to property owners for the purchase or use of their property. The first step in this process is for Metro to obtain an appraisal of the property. The appraisal will consider a variety of factors, including location, size, the highest and best use of the property, and the recent sale of similar properties in the area.

Once the value is established and approved, an offer will be made to the property owner. Time will be allowed for the owner to obtain their own appraisal if desired, and to have a full discussion with Metro regarding their opinion of the value of the property. Metro will seek to reach a negotiated agreement with a property owner whenever possible. If a negotiated agreement cannot be accomplished, Metro may exercise its power of eminent domain to acquire the property. Initiating eminent domain procedures requires specific approval by the Metro Board of Directors.

Disposition of Property after Construction

Following the completion of project construction, Metro will return leased properties to the property owner, who may then develop the property in accordance with local zoning regulations. In cases where Metro has obtained fee title, any portions of the property owned by Metro that are no longer needed for public purposes after construction may be sold or made available for joint development subject to local land use regulations and approval processes. If a joint development project is feasible, Metro will typically issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking development proposals for the particular property.



Atlantic Station: Metro Gold Line station in East LA



For more information, visit metro.net/pa.

Will I receive relocation benefits if I am required to move from the property?

If you are an owner-occupant or tenant occupying a property that is acquired for a public project, you may be entitled to relocation benefits. Federal and state regulations provide for payments to assist in the relocation of your business or residence. Your relocation benefits will be explained in detail by Metro staff or a consultant hired by Metro. No one will be required to relocate from their property until they have been given at least a 90-day written notice to move.

How to Stay Involved and Give Input

Metro invites you to stay involved during the planning and construction of projects. You can keep up with developments on metro.net, where you can find information about ongoing studies, projects under construction, leave comments and provide your contact information so we can keep you informed of upcoming meetings and other milestones.