

PUBLIC HEARING VIDEO SCRIPT – RIGHT-OF-WAY

Introduction:

Hi, I'm Brittany, and I'm here to explain the South Carolina Department of Transportation's Right of Way process. While it may seem overwhelming at first, our dedicated Right of Way team is committed to assisting you every step of the way.

South Carolina is growing, and with that growth comes the need for new or improved highways to reduce traffic congestion and make roads safer. Our vision at SCDOT is to connect communities and drive the economy.

We work hard to provide the road improvements our communities need, while balancing the potential effects on the surrounding environment and communities.

Before construction of *any* road project, SCDOT follows an extensive, and oftentimes lengthy, process that includes expert planners and public outreach to find the best option that minimizes impacts.

Sometimes, it's necessary for SCDOT to purchase land, homes, and businesses in order to complete a road project. This is called a Right of Way acquisition.

During the design phase of a project, the amount of property that may be needed is better defined. Each project is unique, so the amount of land or property that may be required is dependent on the type of roadway that will be built or improved. This process can take some time – several months or even years. However, should your property be impacted, you will be notified. Here's what to expect...

Step-by-Step Process:

We follow the Uniform Act of 1970 which is a federally required process to ensure your rights as a property owner are protected.

First, a dedicated Right of Way agent is assigned to the project. The agent will verify ownership of any property impacted by the road plan.



Second, the Right of Way agent will reach out to you, the property owner, in-person or through certified mail to explain why the roadway project is needed and how it may affect you.

Next, SCDOT will use third-party licensed appraisers to estimate the fair market value of the property. Fair market value is the current-day value and is determined using recent sales of similar properties.

Prior to the appraisal, the appraiser will provide you with an opportunity to meet and discuss your property. This is a great opportunity to provide the appraiser with any information that may contribute to the property's value.

The appraiser knows that to look for, but without your help and cooperation, he may overlook something of value.

Based on the completed appraisal, the Right of Way agent makes a fair market value offer. You can either accept the offer or negotiate further to reach an agreement.

If we are unable to reach an agreement, Eminent Domain proceedings may be initiated. Eminent Domain is the government's right to acquire property for public benefit. Should this happen, your rights to full compensation are still protected. As part of this process, the government will pay you, the owner, what they determined to be a fair price for the property. However, most property is acquired successfully through negotiations.

If the road project impacts your home or business and you have to move as a direct result of a Right of Way acquisition, you may also be eligible for relocation assistance programs, services, and additional financial support. The Right of Way agent will talk with you, one-on-one, to explain which benefits may be available based on your unique situation *and* how to use them. This is a critical step. To avoid risking or jeopardizing your benefits, you should not move prior to confirming your eligibility and receiving approval from the agent. Your agent will work to ensure this process is as smooth as possible.

Conclusion:

We understand that your property is a testament to your time and hard work and we do not take this process lightly. While we are unable to compensate you for your sentimental value, our experienced Right of Way team is dedicated to helping you understand and navigate this process. We will work with you as a partner, giving your case personal attention every step of the way. Our goal is to ensure you are treated fairly, understand the process, and ultimately provided just compensation.





We look forward to providing you additional information on the Right of Way process in-person, on the phone or online.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the SCDOT Right of Way Process.

