

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE: Land Acquisition Specialist I

GRADE: 26

DATE: 5/28/2024

SERIES: General Administrative

CODE: 2142

EEO: Professional

FLSA: Exempt

Class Definition:

Under direction, performs land acquisition work involving the administration, negotiation and acquisition of parkland and other land acquired through Departmental Land Acquisition Programs. Supports the development of a land acquisition strategy through review of key documents outlining planning and funding (master and sector plans, appraisals, zoning requirements, community input and recommendations). Completes various acquisition projects approved by the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP); drafts legal documents necessary to secure acquisitions such as Land Purchase Contracts, Option Agreements, Easements and Leases. Reviews survey plats and descriptions for accuracy and forwards to settlement attorneys for use in preparing deeds. Resolves issues regarding collection of transfer taxes, payoff of front foot benefit charges, delinquent real estate taxes and special assessments as well as handles other details that may arise at settlement. Reviews preliminary plans, site plans, mandatory referrals, building permit and special exception applications and zoning petitions. Contacts are internal and external to the organization and include Planning Board, County Council, Department staff, legal and political entities, landowners, real estate brokers and agents, civic groups and the general public. Explains land acquisition procedures and processes; conducts appraisals; explains or justifies determination of value; and presents to outside groups and Commission leadership. Work requires complex negotiation techniques to achieve desired actions, and results in the acquisition of land which affects many parts of the organization and consists of varied activities within the land acquisition field. Information on which to act is obtained through investigation, research, tests, extensive calculations or use of standard mathematics, or other means to ensure high accuracy. Information must be developed, classified and analyzed to determine significance. As an individual contributor, work results in completed assignments that have a direct impact on land acquisition matters. Some work may be confidential or sensitive. Applies considerable knowledge of, and skill in, land acquisition programs; land acquisition techniques; land use principles such as zoning and permit processes; appraisal procedures; negotiation techniques; condemnation and related court procedures; land taxation rules and regulations; real estate; Federal, State, and county laws and regulations pertaining to land acquisition by a public agency; and business administration. Independently performs various types of research and analyses to solve difficult, complex and challenging problems. Interacts with people inside and outside the organization, including the public, to exchange information, coordinate, instruct, guide, advise, obtain agreement or compliance, present, defend, convince or persuade and achieve other desired actions. Performs other duties, as assigned.

Assignments are made in terms of functional responsibilities. Incumbent independently plans the work of the unit and ensures work is carried out in conformance with established policies and procedures and accepted practices; keeps the supervisor informed; resolves problems or deviations referred by subordinates or management by selecting and applying the appropriate guidelines; and brings challenging and highly sensitive problems to the supervisor for guidance or resolution. Work is expected to be effective – the incumbent is held responsible for results; work is evaluated in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, teamwork, customer service and other factors.

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Examples of Important Duties (Estimated Percentages):

1. Core Functions (±85%)

- Establishes land acquisition priority lists and ranking/rating systems. Conducts field inspections to evaluate land proposals and coordinates on-site meetings with staff and property owners to evaluate and discuss.
- Negotiates acquisitions of land for both park and non-park public uses and ensures established criteria and practices are met.
- Completes various acquisition projects approved by the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP); drafts legal documents necessary to secure acquisitions such as Land Purchase Contracts, Option Agreements, Easements and Leases.
- Analyzes acquisitions for Capital Improvement Plans and other proposed land purchases. Analyzes building permits, special exception applications and zoning petitions. Researches land records related to park properties with regards to ownership and restricted covenants.
- Negotiates the acquisition of real estate for future parklands; negotiates with landowners based on appraisals; and initiates contact with property owners to advise of pending acquisitions. Obtains independent appraisals on each property to be acquired; reviews appraisals for accuracy, determines amount to be offered and arrives at mutually acceptable purchase price with property owners.
- Drafts legal documents necessary to secure negotiated acquisitions or improvements to the recreation system such as Land Purchase Contracts, Option Agreements, Easements, Recreation Facility Agreements, and Leases using established forms and recommending modifications required by individual situations. Presents acquisition contracts to the Planning Board, Commission, County Council or County Executive's Office with recommendations for action. Obtains final approval of legal documents from either the Commission's Legal Office or the County Attorney's Office prior to documents being fully executed. Tracts the processing of all contracts for acquisition through the Commission's Administrative Offices or forwards contracts to the County Government for processing through the County Attorney's Office.
- Follows through on settlements for routine real estate purchases. Works with the County Attorney's Office and private attorneys in preparing for settlements. Orders and reviews title reports, approves settlement sheets, requests checks or fund wires for payments and secures title insurance policies when appropriate. Orders property surveys from private survey and engineering firms. Reviews survey plats and descriptions for accuracy and forwards to settlement attorneys for use in preparing deeds. Assists in resolving issues dealing with the collection of transfer taxes, payoff of front foot benefit charges, delinquent real estate taxes and special assessments, as well as handles other details that

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may arise at settlement. Secures deeds to acquired property, confirms property is added to Commission's inventory and forwards original documents for permanent filing in the Commission Records.

- Communicates, by telephone or in person, one-on-one or in groups, with citizens, developers, engineers, surveyors, architects, and attorneys to answer questions and provide information relating to the land acquisition program. Drafts correspondence to property owners, attorneys, and other public agencies.

2. Other (±15%)

- Assists in securing grant money from Maryland's Program Open Space (POS) for land acquisition projects. Prepares and files applications for all acquisition projects to be funded through POS. Resolves problems that may arise relative to project eligibility, conversion of use issues, and other administrative concerns.
- Attends all mandatory training and recertifications, as required. Attends seminars and conferences.
- Prepares detailed and complex reports and memoranda. Maintains electronic files and logs and reports.

Important Worker Characteristics:

- A. Considerable knowledge of, and skill in (1) Land Acquisition Programs; (2) land acquisition techniques; (3) land use principles such as zoning and permit processes; (4) appraisal procedures; (5) negotiation techniques; (6) condemnation and related court procedures; (7) land taxation rules and regulations; (8) real estate; (9) Federal, state, and county laws and governmental regulations pertaining to land acquisition by a public agency; (10) business administration; and (11) Commission organization, policies and procedures.*

**Typically acquired or fully developed primarily after employment in this job class.*

- B. Skill and ability to (1) negotiate routine land acquisition contracts; (2) work diplomatically with public and staff on sensitive land acquisition issues; (3) plan and organize work efficiently; (4) critically evaluate a variety of acquisition, land taxation, and real estate subject matters areas; (5) read complex maps; and (6) prepare and deliver clear and concise presentations for leadership, and elected and appointed officials.
- C. Skill in problem solving in order to select, organize and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical or abstract) to solve a problem. Examples include solving complex problems involving many variables related to real estate transactions which may be politically controversial; reading and interpreting complex land taxation and real estate rules and regulations to resolve issues pertaining to land acquisitions.

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- D. Skill in communication to understand verbal and written information (including facts, assertions and arguments), draw inferences, form hypotheses and develop logical arguments, and to express such information so that others will understand, and at times, agree, comply or take other desired action(s). This includes skill in actively listening to ascertain key information, including concerns, wants and needs of others, and in communicating effectively to obtain desired results including agreement or compliance. Examples include presenting information to outside groups and Commission leadership; persuading and negotiating in order to obtain desired results; reading and understanding deeds and other instruments of real estate conveyance, property descriptions, title abstracts; establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with landowners, real estate professionals, public officials, and other governmental agencies; and reading, writing and editing a variety of reports and correspondence and reports.
- E. Interpersonal skills to interact effectively with contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner; this includes establishing and maintaining effective working relationships and working as a member of a team.
- F. Skill in using a computer; modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise software, specialized software.

Minimum Qualifications (MQs):

- 1. Bachelor's Degree in Planning, Park Administration, Business Administration, Public Administration, Engineering, Real Estate or any related field.
- 2. Two (2) years of progressively responsible experience in real estate management, land appraisal and negotiation of land and property acquisitions.
- 3. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted, which together total six (6) years.
- 4. Valid driver's license in accordance with both State and Commission rules and regulations. Driver's license must be unencumbered by restrictions, revocations, suspensions, or points that could limit the employee's ability to drive Commission vehicles or perform driving duties required by the position of assignment.

Working Conditions:

Works in office and conducts on-site field inspections. May be exposed to inclement weather such as rain and winds, hot, cold or humid outdoor conditions and a variety of potential hazards from driving and working outdoors. May be subject to various job demands such as high volume of work and tight deadlines.