

Comment: Please explain the process and timing for property acquisition

Response: Property owners will be contacted in advance of the need for the specific properties and acquisition will be in accordance with IDOT policy

The State of Illinois expects to build the project in approximately seven usable construction sections, each section taking 2-3 years to construct. The entire project between Galena and Freeport could take 15-20 years to complete, or even longer, depending on availability of funds. In the interim, all affected owners should continue to maintain their property, as condition will be considered in the future appraisal of property and buildings to be acquired.

As part of the land acquisition process, IDOT's policy is to pay fair market value for properties acquired. In some cases, only a portion of a parcel will be acquired. In these situations, separated parcels would remain the property of the current owner. In order to determine the Department's "offer to purchase", an appraiser compares the market value of the original property versus the market value of the remaining parcel(s). The difference in these values is considered the fair acquisition price, since all factors that affect the value of the property to be acquired, as well as damage to the remaining property, are considered.

The Department will approach owners with an offer to purchase needed property. The amount of the offer will be what an appraiser determines to be the fair cash market value of the property. Any owner responses are listened to and considered. Land exchange is possible, but only in certain circumstances. Recording and surveying costs are typically paid for by the Department.

The acquisition process is typically initiated when a certain section is programmed for construction and detailed design is substantially underway. The only exceptions to this schedule are for two cases: hardship acquisition and protective buying. Hardship acquisition can occur when a property owner identifies a desire to sell their property and demonstrates that they have been unable to sell due to public knowledge of the roadway improvement project. In a protective buying, IDOT may step in to buy property on which a specific development plan has been announced and undertaken.

Generally, the Department remains flexible when dealing with landlocked parcels. Two possible compensation options exist. The Department either pays severance damages or purchases the remnant. When compensations take place, the Department is obligated to pay a just level of compensation, which will include any fair market value reduction of the remaining property. This would extend to purchase of buildings as well as land. On this project, the Department is committed to mitigating woodland impacts by planting an acre of trees for each acre of trees removed. This mitigation is primarily planned for parcels that would be landlocked by the freeway construction.