

## US 301 Waldorf Area Transportation Improvements

US 301 Waldorf Area Transportation Improvements will reduce congestion along the Waldorf portion of US 301. Every effort is being made to limit the impacts of these improvements on the existing social, natural and cultural environment. However, once the final alternative has been selected, property will need to be acquired. This *Focus On* gives a brief overview of property owners' rights and Maryland's right-of-way real estate acquisition process.

## Transportation Right-of-Way Property Acquisition

Maryland residents and our State's economy depend on a well-maintained and efficient transportation system. Under the U. S. and Maryland Constitutions and laws, the State has the right to acquire private property for public use. Property owner's rights are also guaranteed, and limitations are in place on what the State can do. "Eminent domain" laws ensure that all property owners receive just compensation for their property, based on fair market value.

## How the Process Works

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) makes every effort to obtain property through positive negotiations. First, SHA determines the amount of land needed for the highway improvement. Property surveys and other engineering tests are performed and title information is obtained. Affected property owners will receive a letter from SHA's Office of Real Estate, and an independent real estate professional or an appraiser will be sent to establish a fair market value of the property.

A negotiating agent will arrange an appointment with property owners to discuss the acquisition and offer, and to answer any questions. Once an agreement is reached, a contract is signed and a property settlement meeting is scheduled. When the deed is exchanged, a check for the agreed upon value of the property will be issued. If a home or business is acquired, funds for replacement housing, moving costs and business-related relocation expenses may be available.



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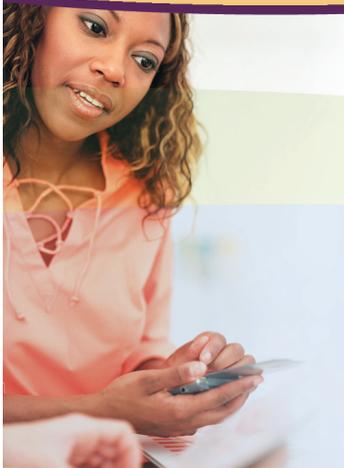
## **FOCUS ON...** **Property Acquisition – The Process & Your Rights**

### **When an Owner Rejects SHA's Offer**

Should negotiations reach a stalemate, the SHA may use one of three other methods of acquiring the property – regular condemnation proceedings, quick take condemnation, or immediate entry condemnation. SHA realizes that this legal process is unfamiliar to most people. More detailed information about these options and the process in general may be found in "Your Land and Your Highways" and "Relocation Assistance," brochures available from the Real Estate Office. For copies of those publications, or for more information, contact:

**Charles County:**  
**Sue Bauer, Office of Real Estate**  
410-841-1008 or  
toll-free 800-331-5603  
Email: sbauer@sha.state.md.us

**Prince George's County:**  
**Paul Lednak, Office of Real Estate**  
301-513-7466 or  
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### **For More Information**

Or to request a project team speaker to meet with your community or organization, please contact Steve Hawtof, Project Manager, at (800) 548-5026 or email shawtof@sha.state.md.us

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