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Reference - Property Transaction Process

Property Transaction Process Following City Council Approval for Condemnation

The following overview is intended to provide further explanation for the process of property transactions that are approved by City Council for condemnation.

Approximately six weeks of preparatory work is required before the condemnation lawsuit is filed. During this time, City staff continues to negotiate with the property owner in an effort to reach a mutual settlement.

- If a settlement is reached, the condemnation process is stopped, and the property transaction proceeds to a real estate closing.
- If a settlement cannot be reached, the condemnation lawsuit is filed. Even after filing, negotiations continue between the property owner and the City's legal representative. Filing of the condemnation documents allows:
  - The City to gain access and title to the subject property so the capital project can proceed on schedule.
  - The City to deposit the appraised value of the property in an escrow account with the Clerk of Court. These funds may be withdrawn by the property owner immediately upon filing, and at any time thereafter, with the understanding that additional funds transfer may be required at the time of final settlement or at the conclusion of litigation.
- If a condemnation lawsuit is filed, the final trial may not occur for 18 to 24 months; however, a vast majority of the cases settle prior to final trial. The City's condemnation attorney remains actively engaged with the property owner to continue negotiations throughout litigation.
  - North Carolina law requires that all condemnation cases go through formal non-binding mediation, at which an independent certified mediator attempts to facilitate a successful settlement. For the minority of cases that do not settle, the property owner has the right to a trial by judge or jury in order to determine the amount of compensation the property owner will receive.