

2017

**Dakota County Office of
Performance and Analysis**

REPORT

April 2017

**Dakota County Physical Development Division:
Real Estate Acquisition – Phase I**



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Acknowledgements:

We sincerely thank and salute the spirit of cooperation shown by all staff from the Physical Development Division who participated in the process mapping sessions.

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Bridging today and tomorrow with planning and analysis to improve residents' lives and their government.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Several departments within Dakota County's Physical Development Division (PDD) acquire real estate (i.e. property) in different ways and for varying purposes. Each of these acquisition processes are undertaken by staff in separate departments within PDD, with different staff conducting each of the processes. Each process is funded through different sources, each of which has its own required steps, timelines, funding requirements, and documentation practices.

Project sponsors in PDD leadership expressed concern that the different processes used for each type of acquisition caused difficulty in supervising them and created challenges in spotting any skipped steps. As a result, PDD leadership wanted to examine whether there was a possibility to move toward a more uniform approach to real estate acquisition by the County.

Staff from the Office of Performance and Analysis (OPA) met with staff engaged in each of the four distinct real estate acquisition processes, and together we created a step-by-step process map for each. These maps allowed for an analysis of each process.

Our conclusion was that there was not an opportunity to move these four processes toward one shared process; each of the four is efficient, complies with grant requirements and state laws, includes necessary steps, and no critical steps were missed.

As part of the process mapping, OPA created a list of all the documents generated for and required by each of the four processes. This information was provided to Dakota County's Information Technology (IT) staff, a member of whom attended every process mapping session. IT staff will use this information as they consider potential technology solutions for storing and tracking documents and files for all acquisition types in one electronic solution.

In 2014, Environmental Resources staff in PDD crafted a proposed due diligence policy for environmental assessments of property that the County is considering acquiring for any purpose. This draft policy would require the County to undertake due diligence on properties prior to acquiring them, thereby limiting the County's current and future liability. After the policy was drafted, it was not clear to PDD Administration whether the proposed policy was being followed within the four acquisition processes, and whether or not the draft policy should be formally adopted.

OPA staff examined the policy and related statutes, and met with staff from Environmental Resources and the County Attorney's Office. Formal adoption of the proposed environmental due diligence policy is recommended, as well as greater exchanges of information between PDD staff and legal counsel concerning environmental assessment information for the parks and conservation easements acquisitions.

Because of the costs and resources needed to acquire parcels in eminent domain, Right of Way acquisition for transportation (and trails) projects seemed an area where OPA could add value to this real estate acquisition project. After consulting with project sponsors, OPA staff designed and conducted a benchmarking research plan focused on R/W acquisition and eminent domain.

The work undertaken, as well as findings and results of further examination of the R/W acquisition process, can be found fully described in the related PDD Real Estate Acquisition - Phase II Report.

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Project Background

Several departments within Dakota County's Physical Development Division (PDD) acquire real estate (i.e. property) in different ways and for varying purposes. The processes vary depending on the type of acquisition, and there is not one uniform or single most effective approach to real estate acquisition by the County.

The four¹ major real estate acquisition types used by Dakota County are:

- Capital Planning: used for acquiring property to build new or expand existing county buildings;
- Parks, Trails, and Greenways: used to create, expand, or continue existing county parks, trails and greenways;
- Conservation Easements: used to preserve natural areas; and
- Right of Way Acquisition: used to acquire permanent or temporary ownership of property in order to create or expand county roads and bridges.



Each of these acquisition processes are undertaken by different departments within PDD, with different staff conducting each one. Each process is funded through different sources, each of which has its own mandated or otherwise required steps, timelines, funding requirements, and documentation practices.

At the outset of this project, project sponsors expressed concern that the different processes seemed complicated and wondered if some confusion could be eliminated if it was possible to design a uniform real estate acquisition process.

In 2014, Environmental Resources staff in PDD crafted a proposed due diligence policy for environmental assessments of property that the County is considering acquiring (Appendix B). This draft policy would require the County to undertake due diligence on properties prior to acquiring them, thereby limiting the County's current and future liability. After the policy was drafted, it was not clear to PDD Administration the extent to which this proposed policy was being followed across the four acquisition processes, and whether or not the draft policy should proceed to formal adoption.

¹ The Tax Forfeiture situation is not part of this project, primarily because in those instances, the County is not seeking to acquire tax forfeited parcels as we do with the other real estate acquisition processes, but rather we administer them on behalf of the State. Al Singer notes that there are also rare instances when the County agrees to acquire parcels that will ultimately be owned by other entities.

The County Attorney's Office staff expressed concerns related to their increasing workload around real estate acquisition by the County. Among the growing challenges is accessing and obtaining documents when addressing legal challenges or when responding to questions regarding County property acquisitions. As a result, County Attorney's Office staff have expended significant amounts of time spent searching through file storage boxes containing paper files from many different departments and staff, and from physical and electronic filing systems, in order to prepare for a court hearing or another legal proceeding, or to respond to a public data request under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act or the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Around the same time as the initiation of this project, Dakota County's Information Technology Department (IT) was asked to research possible solutions for collecting and storing all documents related to property acquisition in a common system, regardless of the acquisition type for that property. A centralized system could improve the current state of searching through boxes of files, emails, and other sources to find documents when addressing legal concerns, and also reduce duplicate work gathering documentation and information about a parcel from scratch when it may have been part of a past project.

Project Purpose

PDD Administration proposed this project during the 2014 Measure & Improve project solicitation process. The PDD Administration's principal aims for this project were to:

- determine if an opportunity exists to adopt a uniform and consistent acquisition process across real estate acquisition types used by Dakota County, or at least move toward greater uniformity among the four processes;
- ensure that no necessary and required steps are being overlooked or missed in each of the four acquisition processes;
- determine whether the processes were being completed in an efficient and effective manner;
- examine the extent to which the draft environmental due diligence policy is currently being followed within the four acquisition processes, and whether related actions are recommended; and
- provide IT with a list of documents needed for and generated by each of the acquisition types, for use in IT's parallel database development/procurement project.

Methodology

Milestones of success for this project include:

- producing process maps of the current state of each of the four acquisition types;
- providing IT with a list of documents needed for and generated by each of the acquisition processes; and
- producing a report outlining the processes used in the project, as well as findings, and recommendations.

Process Questions:

- Is it reasonable, practical, or possible to adopt a uniform and consistent standardized process across the four real estate acquisition types used by Dakota County, or to move toward greater uniformity among these processes?
- Is the draft environmental due diligence policy being followed? What are recommended next steps?

Compliance Questions:

- Is the County following state and federal mandates, administrative rules, and County policy in real estate acquisition?

Project Research Approaches

OPA used these approaches to answer the project questions:

- discussed the four major acquisition processes with Dakota County staff and created a detailed process map of the current state for each of the four processes;
- reviewed Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) guidelines and practices;
- reviewed statutes applicable to the acquisition process and environmental assessment;
- discussed the proposed environmental due diligence policy and current County practices with Dakota County Environmental Resources staff and a representative from the County Attorney's Office.

The project scope for this project was written for both phases of the project. It can be found at Appendix A.

PROCESS MAPPING AND FINDINGS

Project Mapping in this project

As noted in the [Project Background](#) section, several departments within the Physical Development Division (PDD) acquire real estate for varying purposes. A concern expressed by project sponsors at the outset was that the acquisition processes used for each purpose are different from each other, creating confusion for Division leadership and causing difficulty in managing them.

Process mapping was intended to document the steps performed in each real estate acquisition process, to help determine whether important elements were missing with each process, to learn why the processes were different, and to consider ways to improve them or make them more consistent with each other. The goal of greater consistency was desired because it could result in preventable costs and help avoid unnecessary litigation.

An important step in the process mapping phase of the project was identifying documents and other pieces of data that are generated in each acquisition process. Currently, there is no central repository that gathers in one place all documents related to real estate acquisition. Staff in several departments and divisions create or collect these documents, further complicating any effort to track them.²

Currently, there is no central repository that gathers in one place all documents related to real estate acquisition. Staff in several departments and divisions create or collect these documents, further complicating any effort to track them.

This is a dual track project: Information Technology staff are working on finding a software or another technological solution that will identify, organize, and store documents and data from the property acquisition processes.

The process mapping included special emphasis on identifying all official documents generated by or relied on during property acquisition. That list appears on each page of the process maps and was turned over to Information Technology immediately after the process mapping phase concluded, so that IT staff could move ahead with their part of the project. An IT business analyst also attended all process mapping sessions.

Process Mapping: What it is and how it was used in this project

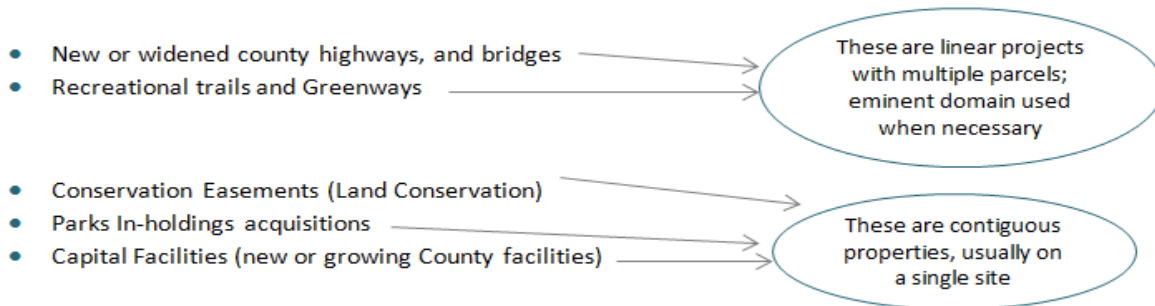
Process mapping is a process improvement technique often used to identify duplicated steps, unnecessary wait times (when no progress is made), and other inefficiencies in processes. Generally, process mapping has two phases: the initial documentation of the “current state” of the process, and a realigned and more simplified or more efficient “future state” process. The process maps for this project bear the label “current state,” but no future state versions were produced for this project. More information about that follows.

Often, when all staff involved in many parts of a process gather together to describe each distinct step, they see steps in the process other than their own that they were not aware of, and can identify inefficiencies just by learning about the rest of the process. In this project, we saw very little of that staff-level efficiency analysis.

² Documents include: Plans for Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs), long-range master plans, Board of Commissioners meeting materials and recommended resolutions, property information, GIS data (e.g. shapefiles), design plans, site maps, RFPs, appraisals, environmental review reports, title reports, purchase agreements, contracts, legal documents (e.g. eminent domain petitions), and many others.

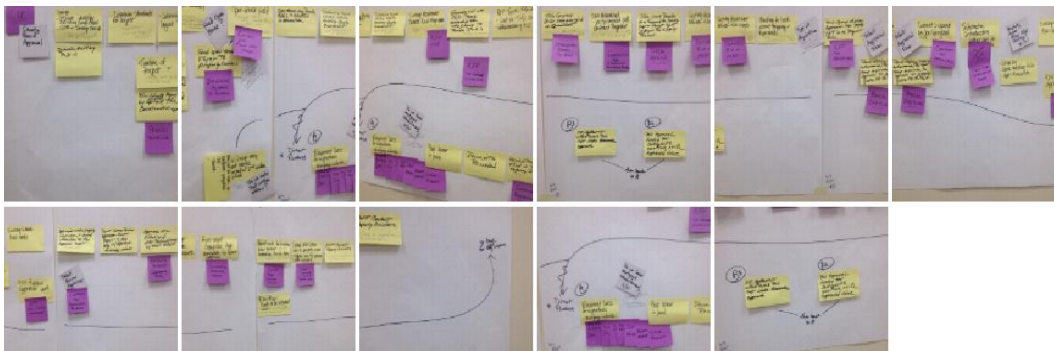
That is not necessarily bad. In this project, we are not recommending changes in the processes because the staff who perform them, either by habit or assignment, already understand all the steps involved. Staff seem quite good at routinely working collaboratively to continuously find efficiencies, even if they are assigned to separate work units.

OPA staff conducted mapping sessions of several hours each for all distinct processes shown below. Mapping the process of property acquisition required several hours of time from all staff involved in each of the mapped processes. In some cases, more than one session was needed.



At a granular level, process mapping is a sequential description of every step in the process. Staff explained each individual step, documented by “sticky notes” spread out along many pieces of joined poster paper on a wall, as shown below.

Notes taken by OPA staff provide additional context and detail for each process map. Later, OPA staff used process mapping software (Microsoft Visio) to create electronic representations of the poster paper/sticky notes. Last, process maps were revised after staff who participated in the process mapping reviewed and critiqued the maps to ensure their accuracy.



The process maps are available from the OPA project staff as either Visio or PDF files, and they are all attached to this report as Appendix C. The process maps for this project totaled 30 pages and 313 steps.

When viewing process maps, it is helpful to remember two ideas:

- We used a 90/10 rule, meaning the process map reflects what happens most of the time. If we mapped every possible contingency, no one would be able to read the process maps.
- The maps make the processes look sequential, but in reality, they often are not. We tried to illustrate this by vertically stacking several steps that staff do simultaneously (not consecutively), with no arrows between them. Arrows indicate tasks that are done sequentially.

Process Mapping findings and conclusions

When all the process maps were finished, we spread them out across several conference room tables and compared them. These are our findings and conclusions:

1. Differences we noted in the circumstances and characterization of acquisition processes:
 - Capital Planning, Parks in-holding parcels, and Conservation Easements seldom need to acquire many separate properties all at once, and typically purchase property (or an easement) from willing sellers³ though the right to acquire property using Eminent Domain has always been available.
 - By their nature, highway and greenway construction projects are long and relatively narrow, and require the acquisition of dozens of parcels within a defined time frame. Typically, a construction project does not start until the County has title and possession of all parcels. Right of Way might be required on either total parcels or for narrow strips of parcels. Staff use eminent domain (condemnation)⁴ when necessary to gain legal control over the needed parcels or pieces of property so a project stays on schedule. Greenways/Trails projects also occasionally use eminent domain.
 - Conservation Easements begin with a formal opt-in application and ranking/prioritization system that is not found in the other processes, though Capital Planning staff also rate and rank potential properties based on how well the properties match the desired conditions.
 - Unlike the other purposes for real estate acquisition, Capital Planning projects generally do not involve grant funds. For the others, acceptance of funding from other partners or from grants often drives the project schedule, as well as required steps in the process.
 - Capital Planning projects never involve formal relocation benefits. While the County chooses to buy properties from willing sellers who voluntarily relocate, the costs to find another residential or business location may be part of the purchase price.
 - Cities sometimes act as a partner to acquire and donate property, or represent the County in acquiring property, for projects in Capital Planning (such as libraries) and Greenways/Trail acquisitions. Cities are also project and cost-sharing partners in many road construction projects.
 - In the three least contentious processes (parks in-holdings, capital planning, and conservation easements), either county staff or an agent acting on behalf of the county is in direct contact with property owners early and often, establishing a relationship and building trust that appears to promote an amicable conclusion to the acquisition more often than the process used by R/W Transportation. More about this is in the Phase II of the project report -- Benchmarking section.

³ The long-standing County practice of acquiring parks in-holding properties only from willing sellers – not using eminent domain – has changed recently for acquisitions related to greenways and trails. Other acquisition strategies were used for the County's newest park, Whitetail Woods.

⁴ Eminent Domain, also known as condemnation, is the legal process by which public agencies gain title and possession of property needed for public purposes. Under the state and federal Constitutions, no "taking" can occur without "just compensation". A U.S. Supreme Court opinion in a 2005 case (*Kelo vs City of New London*, 545 U.S. 469, 125 S. Ct. 2655) resulted in many state legislatures (including Minnesota's) enacting greater protection for private property owners.

2. While the acquisition processes are all different, and similar documents might have different names, they all include the same primary elements:
 - They all start with a plan approved by the Board of Commissioners.
 - They all involve identifying “target” properties, and require independent appraisals, environmental assessments, and negotiations with property/parcel owners over property cost and conditions of sale that are concluded out of court (or not).
 - The Board of Commissioners approves the appraisal or the proposed acquisition cost, or both.
 - Each process involves title search and clearing any issues, such as mortgage subordinations, and may include consideration of relocation benefits.

3. We did not find steps in the processes that seem unnecessary, duplicative or inefficient. Many of the processes are complicated, with several steps being done simultaneously. We found that if the process does not move along for a period, it is generally due to time necessary for a step to be completed, such as appraisers visiting parcels and preparing reports, or giving property owners time to consider an offer for purchase (this is guided by statute in the R/W process).

We did not find steps in the processes that seem unnecessary, duplicative or inefficient.

None of the processes are exactly the same, but the differences are reasonable.

Over time, staff have increased efficiency by anticipating the next step before the previous one is concluded, and starting the subsequent process steps as early as possible. For example, Transportation R/W staff begin the RFP process with potential outside appraisers as soon as parcels are identified in a construction project, while title clearing work is underway, and before design plans are completely finished.

While some of the processes were already documented with flow charts or similar guides, we found that staff do not rely much on those process descriptions because they know their process well, and they often tweak the process when efficiencies can be found.

4. None of the processes are exactly the same, but the differences are reasonable because they usually relate to the purpose for which the property is acquired. In many cases, differences are caused by requirements of funding partners, grant requirements, state regulations or state and federal laws.

During process mapping, an important follow-up question OPA staff asked acquisition staff is “why” they do what they do and when they do it. Often, the answer was related to meeting requirements from county policy, state laws, or grant/funding requirements. The assistant county attorney who advises real estate acquisitions and conducts the eminent domain process was a participant in all the mapping sessions. He has reviewed and suggested some minor changes in the process maps. He has not suggested any new process steps or changes needed to protect the county from any sort of liability, or to comply with rules or policies.

Recommendations

On the whole, the acquisition processes appear complete, orderly, and efficient. Many of them are also complicated. Therefore, because the essential elements are accounted for, we see little to be gained by insisting on a single, uniform process. In fact, we doubt it is possible to design a process that is both uniform and a good fit for each of the purposes for which property is acquired. Doing so could lengthen the processes and would be unnecessarily disruptive to staff.

Now that they are up-to-date and complete, the process maps should be kept updated and offered as guides for staff who are new to the process of acquiring property.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

As described in the [project background](#) section, OPA’s scope for this project includes this statement (pg 2, parameters section):

A proposed due diligence policy for environmental assessments of property that the County is considering acquiring was written by Environmental Resources staff more than a year ago, and will be considered in this project as part of any recommended best practices process for real estate acquisition.

Environmental Due Diligence (EDD) Policy

In mid-August 2014, staff in the Environmental Resources Department (ERD) staff drafted a proposed County-wide policy, entitled “Environmental Due Diligence Process for Property Acquisitions”. The proposed policy formalizes best practices that would allow County staff to “identify potential contamination issues early in the property acquisition process, thus allowing the County to take appropriate and timely action.”⁵

At that time, the First Assistant County Attorney, who provides legal counsel to County leadership, suggested the County Administrator delay considering the merits of the policy, and instead suggested the policy should be considered as part of this OPA project when it was conducted in the future.

OPA staff recommend that the Environmental Resources Department (ERD) Director, in consultation with Assistant County Attorney Tom Donely, should revise and update the policy, if necessary, and then move forward with its approval.

The proposed policy’s central premise is that Dakota County should be committed to conducting environmental due diligence before any acquisition of real estate interests by the County, including easements, fee title, and leases. The proposed due diligence process collects current and historic environmental information, which is considered in assessing the potential costs and liabilities associated with a property acquisition.

The policy was drafted because state and federal laws indicate that a new property owner can be held responsible for any contamination on a property unless specific criteria are met. Completing the EDD process and following prescribed procedures before acquiring property can reduce the County’s liability. In addition, when the County is considering whether to acquire a contaminated property, and what price to offer, the potential impact of contamination on the property’s fair market value and the short and long-term environmental costs and liabilities should be taken into account.⁶

In the short term, cleaning up contaminated property might increase project complexity and costs, and could result in project delays. In the long term, ownership of contaminated property exposes the County to potential lawsuits, future regulatory requirements and future costs associated with property use, maintenance and restoration.

⁵ The draft of the proposed policy in place when this project started is found in Appendix B in this report; it has been subsequently revised and, as of Spring 2017, was moving through the approval process.

⁶ Except in the case of parcels needed for road/greenways or bridge construction projects, which by law must be appraised without regard to either positive or negative changes in property value due to the proposed project. In addition, for parcels acquired using Eminent Domain, a standing court case (precedent) forbids consideration of EDD results when appraising the property.

The proposed EDD policy follows environmental due diligence assessment procedures described in MN Statute 115B, the Minnesota Environmental Response and Liability law.⁷ The draft EDD policy generally describes the process as evaluating the property to:

- identify potential environmental contamination;
- assess potential liability coming from that contamination;
- conduct due diligence to determine who previously owned the site and how it was used;
- assess the current conditions at the property; and
- determine if those uses or conditions present an environmental concern.

The proposed policy would require property acquisition project managers to alert ERD staff before any property is acquired. The earlier they can be made aware, the better, so the proper degree of assessment can be conducted to determine the level of risk associated with the parcel(s) being considered for acquisition. The first level of assessment is done by ERD staff, using historic data in Dakota County's files to review known environmental and property information, and if necessary conduct a site visit. This initial screening is used to evaluate whether a more thorough assessment of the property by a third-party contractor should be conducted, including collecting subsurface samples and analysis of soil, soil gas, surface water and groundwater.

Current practice

Even without a formally approved policy, ERD staff have worked with PDD acquisition project managers who acquire property, and their supervisors or department heads, to include environmental assessments in all property acquisitions. Though they encounter skepticism about the need to add this step, EDD processes have been established for Transportation (including Trails/Greenways), Parks, and Land Conservation projects and are slowly being fully implemented.

For linear projects such as trails/greenways and roads/bridges, it is unlikely design engineers would attempt to circumvent a potentially contaminated parcel, but a practical form of mitigation could be "capping" the hazard by paving over it with the road or trail, after properly disposing of contaminated soil disturbed during construction. Environmental assessments may provide opportunities to choose a "cleaner" parcel, negotiate a reduced price due to clean-up costs for the property, or arrange for the current owner to pay for mitigation before the County acquires fee title acquisitions for new County facilities or alternative greenway corridor properties. In the case of adding private property within park boundaries, an environmental assessment provides an opportunity to negotiate a reduced acquisition cost due to clean-up costs for the property, or arrange for the current owner to pay for mitigation.

In all cases, environmental assessments early in the acquisition process provide information necessary for informed decision-making.

MnDOT describes standards for the environmental due diligence that are required for any project in which the agency is a funding or design partner.⁸ ERD staff conduct similar environmental assessment processes, which meet or exceed MnDOT standards, for all road/bridge/trail projects.

⁷ MERLA can be found online at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=115b>

⁸ <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/policy/operations/op009.html>

In some cases, grant funds are available for mitigating costs of contamination found on parcels considered for acquisition, if those costs are determined before the project concludes. For conservation easements, environmental assessment results might not affect the scoring of parcels, but could affect how they are ranked; a property that requires a great deal of cleanup might end up with a lower priority than one that does not require mitigation.

Currently, County staff who work on all acquisition projects indicated during the process mapping phase of this project that an environmental assessment is considered part of their process. More information about the process mapping part of this project can be found in the process mapping section of this report. All process maps can be found in Appendix C.

Environmental Assessment Policy Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Though many parts of the proposed environmental due diligence policy are already in practice, OPA staff recommend moving forward with the policy. We agree that it is better to know, as early as possible, whether parcels needed for acquisition present a liability risk or greater cost for the County. Adopting the policy provides greater assurance that the right information for mitigating the County's potential financial risk will be available to those who need it so appropriate courses of action can be considered.
2. Environmental assessment results are available to the Assistant County Attorney during quarterly progress meetings on property acquisitions for roads/trails/bridge projects. We recommend adding an opportunity for a similar exchange of information for the parks and conservation easements acquisitions.
3. The schedules for projects should be adjusted, where possible, to allow for onsite inspections (environmental assessment) of parcels potentially targeted for acquisition during non-winter months, when snow cover makes on-site observation more difficult.
4. Establishing a formal EDD policy will establish a consistent process throughout all of the County's property acquisition needs.

FURTHER EXPLORATION – PHASE II

After process mapping for each of the processes was completed, it was clear that Right of Way acquisition differed from the other three acquisition types because of its use of eminent domain, the number of parcels involved in each construction project, and the total acquisition costs often result in greater financial implications for the County than the other acquisition processes.

Because of the costs and resources needed to acquire parcels in eminent domain, this seemed an area where OPA's project could add value to this real estate acquisition project. After consulting with project sponsors, OPA staff designed and conducted a benchmarking research plan focused on R/W acquisition and eminent domain.

The work undertaken, as well as findings and results of further examination of the R/W acquisition process, can be found fully described in the related PDD Real Estate Acquisition - Phase II Report.

PARKING LOT

The Parking Lot is OPA’s place in project reports for documenting ideas that surface during the project but that are beyond the scope or parameters for inclusion of the current project.

We leave it up to the project sponsors to decide which of these to pursue, but we think they merit discussion. Many of these ideas were brought up during the process mapping sessions by staff who do property acquisition, have considerable expertise and history within their processes, and voluntarily expressed concern about these issues.

- We believe offering relocation benefits for people from whom we acquire property, even if they are willing sellers, is generally required. But there seems to be some confusion about this point. It might be a good idea to clarify when these benefits should be offered – perhaps by developing a checklist or decision tree and work them into acquisition procedures.
- There may be differences in the four acquisition processes concerning when (i.e. in which circumstances) review appraisals are required. This might be driven mostly by funders’ requirements. Again, it might be helpful to consider when review appraisals are, or are not, necessary or useful.
- It appears there are differences in the four acquisition processes concerning when the Board of Commissioners need to approve moving forward on a property, which appear to be related to higher-than-anticipated acquisition costs or for legal consultation. This is in addition to OPA’s recommendation regarding Board updates on properties in eminent domain. The Commissioners might have opinions about whether they should be involved sooner, later, or not nearly as often in property acquisitions.
- When the County acquires property (even properties it does not acquire by choice, such as tax forfeit properties from the state) it is required to actively manage those properties (e.g. cutting the grass, plowing snow, making sure they are secure and structurally sound)? Is there a common County fund to pay for those expenses? Is there a process in place for making decisions about when those properties are no longer needed?
- There was a lively discussion following a mapping session that occurred mostly because the “right” subject matter experts were all in the room at the same time. The subject was developing a system that pro-actively notifies the County when property it has an eye on becomes available for sale, such as when it’s listed for sale. This might involve MLS access in the PS&R Division, GIS property identification and/or mapping tools, and a periodic review of plans (CIP, East-West Corridor, park, trail, or greenway expansions, etc.) where a corridor could be established of properties that may eventually be “target” properties.

Such a flagging system could increase the number of “willing seller” relationships for acquisition and potentially reduce costs, but would mean acquiring properties in some cases before final design plans are finished, or perhaps even started. Proactively acquiring properties could be useful for many public purposes, including:

- a. Access management along county roads
- b. Public recreation (parks and greenways)
- c. Natural resource management (FNAP & Vermillion River JPO)
- d. Library expansion or new library facilities

- e. Roadway expansion and storm water management
- f. Contamination clean-up/resale
- g. Transit stations
- h. Pedestrian grade-separated crossings
- i. Converting intersections to roundabouts

This system could work in a similar fashion, but more comprehensively, to the current review of tax forfeiture properties that are evaluated and prioritized for potential county use.

- If the County has a policy that directs when it agrees to lease land it owns, it might be a good idea to review and update it with an eye to the proposed use for leased land or facilities, amount of county property that is available, leasing terms (cost and length), and other related issues.

APPENDIX A: PROJECT SCOPE

April 2016
Final

Real Estate Acquisition

Project Scope Statement

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Office of Performance and Analysis

Project Background

Several departments within Dakota County's Physical Development Division (PDD) acquire real estate in different ways for varying purposes. Real estate (i.e., property) is acquired for parks; Right of Way for new or expanded roads, trails and greenways; conservation and farmland easements; and new County facilities. Although there are processes in place to address aspects of most of these acquisitions, they vary substantially and there is not one consistent and most effective approach to real estate acquisition in the County.

These different acquisition types are funded through various sources, many of which appear to have their own required steps and documents. For example, acquiring property for highway and federal aid trails are highly prescriptive processes established through statute and MnDOT highway project development rules.

By adopting a more consistent approach to real estate acquisition throughout the County, staff may be able to eliminate unnecessary confusion, mitigate potential liability for environmental issues and help avoid unnecessary and expensive litigation. The County Attorney's Office has cited challenges in accessing and obtaining documents when addressing legal challenges or questions regarding County property acquisitions.

Project Purpose & Outcomes

This project will be a two-part process improvement, some of which will be done by staff in the Office of Performance and Analysis (OPA) and some by Information Technology (IT) staff. The project is intended to develop a more consistent and effective approach to real estate acquisition countywide, including managing, storing, and retaining documents.

The goal for OPA's part of the project is to examine and document the various processes used to acquire real estate within PDD, and to recommend best practices and potential improvements.

The goal for IT's part of the project is to use the information gathered by OPA to define the requirements for a new land acquisition/management system, purchase/develop a software package that meets our needs, and implement the new system with the required interfaces (GIS, OnBase and ONESolution). The new system will be a central repository where all stakeholders to create and manage their workflow for their respective land

acquisition/management information processes. It will also allow other staff/departments to access the stored data for official County business.

Parameters (inclusion/exclusion)

OPA has held and will continue to hold informational meetings, and will conduct a series of process mapping sessions to document steps in the various processes currently used to acquire property. While these meetings are likely to produce information useful to IT for its new database and for updating records retention policies, this is a secondary benefit and is not OPA's primary purpose for the meetings. For example, OPA staff expect to identify documents used throughout the acquisition process in each type of acquisition, and describe where these documents are currently stored. IT staff can act on that information to determine statutory and other requirements, and to design the new data storage system.

Management policies for county property or conservation easements, the divestiture process for County-owned property, and leasing County-owned land to outside parties are policy issues that are outside the scope of this project. Information on these topics will be set aside for potential future projects.

A proposed due diligence policy for environmental assessments of property that the County is considering acquiring was written by Environmental Resources staff more than a year ago, and will be considered in this project as part of any recommended best practices process for real estate acquisition.

Process & Methodology

Information gathering for this project will include a series of informational interviews and separate process mapping sessions with Transportation, Parks, Land Conservation, and Capital Planning. OPA will document the current processes used, and will develop recommendations for improvements.

Success measure

The OPA project will be successful if the real estate acquisition process becomes more efficient, if best practices identified during the process mapping and additional research are documented in the project report, and if the varying processes for acquiring real estate move toward a common, shared process.

The IT project will be successful if the new database system is implemented on time and on budget, if it delivers at high quality all the functionalities/features it is supposed to, and if the stakeholders can efficiently manage their land acquisition information and also share it when necessary.

Deliverables and format

OPA will produce:

- a final summary report including process maps of the current real estate acquisition processes;
- a new “future state” (proposed) process map showing a more efficient process and/or one that can be used by all staff who acquire real estate, to the extent possible;
- discussion of policy questions that arise, if necessary; and
- recommendations for improvements.

OPA will also share information with IT that may help shape its database/data retention project. IT will create and launch a database system for managing and retaining real estate acquisition documents, and will produce an updated records retention policy.

IT will produce:

- An IT project scope identifying the problems/opportunities, goals, success criteria, and assumptions/risks/obstacles.
- A project charter outlining the purpose of the project, project resources, project approach, risks, costs, and major deliverables/milestones.
- A detail project plan listing the projects/tasks, due dates, responsible parties, and statuses.

Expectations of project team members

OPA tasks and responsibilities

- Ensure that team members understand their roles and responsibilities;
- Schedule, plan, and facilitate process mapping sessions and other team meetings;
- Create key deliverables based on work with project team.

Project champion tasks and responsibilities

- Authorize staff to commit time to process mapping sessions and other team meetings;
- Review and provide feedback on drafts and final versions of deliverables as requested;
- Upon project completion, communicate with project sponsor to approve and implement changes.

Team member tasks and responsibilities:

- Be an engaged participant in process mapping sessions and other team meetings, providing information and feedback, sharing expertise, and asking questions;
- Assist in gathering information and/or providing existing documentation outside of team meetings as needed; and
- Review and provide feedback on deliverables developed by the team.

Project Team and Audience

Project Sponsor

Steve Mielke, Director, Physical Development Division

Project Champion

Erin Stwora, Assistant Director, Physical Development Division

Office of Performance and Analysis Staff

Josh Hill

Jane Vanderpoel

Team Members/Stakeholders

Transportation: Gary Peppard and staff, John Sass, Tom Anton

Land Conservation, Greenways, Parks: Al Singer and staff, Steve Sullivan, John Mertens

Environmental Resources: Georg Fisher, Cathy Udem

Capital Planning: Tom Burrows

County Attorney's Office: Tom Donely

IT: Khai Lee, Sally Anderson, Tim Auld

Expected Audience

Physical Development Division management team and department staff
 County Attorney’s Office staff
 County Board of Commissioners
 Property owners
 County funding partners

Timeline

Task	Staff	Hours	Timeline
OPA: Conduct and document initial interviews	Josh/Jane	20	January - March 2016
OPA: Prepare project scope	Josh/Jane	20	April
OPA: Conduct and document process mapping	Josh/Jane	70-90 hours	May - June
OPA: Hold additional follow-up meetings and conduct additional research	Josh/Jane	80	June - July
OPA: Prepare report	Josh/Jane	50-60	August – September 2016
Total OPA hours		240-270	

For IT’s Timeline, please see their Project Charter and Project Scope, which were under development at the time this scope was completed.

APPENDIX B: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL DUE DILIGENCE POLICY

As of late 2015

Policy XXXX Environmental Due Diligence Process for Property Acquisitions

Publication Date:	_____
Revision Date(s):	_____
Last Reviewed:	_____
Department:	Environmental Resources Department
Board/Administrative:	Administrative
Related Policies:	None

POLICY STATEMENT

Dakota County is committed to conducting Environmental Due Diligence prior to any acquisition of land by the organization, including easements, fee title acquisition and leases. This process identifies potential contamination issues early, thus allowing the County to take appropriate and timely action.

DEFINITIONS

"All Appropriate Inquiries (AAI)" is the assessment or evaluation of a property to identify potential environmental contamination and assess potential liability coming from that contamination. It includes conducting due diligence to determine who previously owned the site and how it was used, assessing the current conditions at the property, and determining if those uses or conditions present an environmental concern.

"Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser Liability Protection" provides liability protection for a new landowner from the risk presented by acquiring a previously contaminated property.

"Contiguous Property Owner Liability Protection" is obtained by demonstrating that contamination on a property was coming solely from neighboring property owned by someone else, that the owner did not cause, contribute or consent to the release, and after conducting AAI prior to the purchase, the owner did not know or have reason to know that the property was or could be contaminated by a neighboring property.

"Environmental Audit/Screen" is a quick review of the readily available historic environmental information related to a specific parcel of land. This process is used by the Dakota County Environmental Resources Department as a screening tool to identify potential environmental concerns.

"Environmental Due Diligence (EDD)" is the process used to investigate the environmental background and use of a property to determine the potential risk associated with environmental conditions on the property. The process collects current and historical information, which is considered in assessing the potential costs and liabilities associated with a potential County property acquisition.

"Innocent Landowner Defense" is obtained by demonstrating that a purchaser who acquired property did not know and had no reason to know of contamination on the property. The landowner must demonstrate that a hazardous substance release was by a third party with whom the landowner had no direct or indirect contractual relationship. This is demonstrated by performing AAI prior to the acquisition of the property.

“Phase I Environmental Site Investigation” is a historical review of the property’s use, previous ownership and current conditions.

“Phase II Environmental Site Investigation” is a subsurface site investigation that includes sample collection and analysis of soil, soil gas, and surface and groundwater, as appropriate.

“Property Acquisition” means obtaining property rights for the County through fee title and easement acquisition, leases, or tax forfeiture. It also includes the acquisition of properties as gifts or “zero cost” transactions, eminent domain and abandonment.

“Requesting Organization” is the County unit or department that is seeking to acquire a specific parcel of property.

SOURCE

EDD requirements and the requirements to conduct AAI prior to acquiring property interests are governed by Minn. Stat. § 115B “Environmental Response and Liability”, Minn. Statutes 115C “Petroleum Tank Release Cleanup” and Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 312 Innocent Landowners, Standards for Conducting All Appropriate Inquiries.”

GENERAL

State and federal laws indicate that a new property owner can be held responsible for any contamination on a property unless specific criteria are met. Completing the EDD process and following prescribed processes prior to an acquisition can reduce the County’s liability by establishing an Innocent Landowner Defense, Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser Liability Protection and/or Contiguous Property Owner Liability Protection.

When considering whether to acquire a contaminated property, and what price to offer, staff should take into account the potential impact of contamination on the property’s fair market value and the short and long-term environmental costs and liabilities. In the short-term, cleanup of contaminated property will increase project complexity and costs, and could result in project delays. In the long-term, ownership of contaminated property exposes the County to potential lawsuits, future regulatory requirements and future costs associated with property use, maintenance and restoration.

PROCEDURES

1. Staff working on property acquisition for the Requesting Organization shall notify Environmental Resources Department (ERD) staff within the Waste Regulation Unit early in the process and provide sufficient information to clearly define the project area. This may include, but is not limited to, property identification numbers, current property owner information, general property descriptions, and the type of acquisition project.
2. ERD staff shall perform an Environmental Audit/Screening to identify potential environmental liability concerns. ERD staff shall also, when deemed necessary, schedule a site visit with the property owner in consultation with the Requesting Organization. Based on the results of the Environmental Audit/Screen and site visit, ERD staff shall determine the extent of property evaluation required. The results shall drive one of the following outcomes:
 - a. No Significant Environmental Issues Identified during Environmental Audit/Screening Process: If ERD staff determines that a property does not present a high risk of environmental liability or that the level of risk can be effectively managed,
 - b. Potential Significant Environmental Issue Identified during Environmental Audit/Screening Process:
 - i. ERD staff shall provide the Project Manager and Requesting Organization’s Director or Manager with a memorandum detailing recommendations for

additional environmental assessment. This may include Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments.

- ii. ERD Staff shall assist the Requesting Organization in preparing a Request for Proposals, selecting and contracting with an environmental consultant, developing work plans for environmental assessments, establishing budgets, and completing the necessary assessments.
- iii. After all appropriate environmental assessment has been completed, the ERD Director or designee shall prepare a memorandum for the Physical Development Director, the Requesting Organization Director/Manager and Project Manager detailing identified concerns. There are three potential outcomes:
 1. Property does not have environmental contamination: No additional environmental investigation is required. Acquisition may proceed as planned.
 2. Property has minor environmental contamination: Either the landowner or the County can typically satisfactorily address minor environmental contamination. The Requesting Organization Director/Manager shall work with the Physical Development Director to prepare a recommendation for the County Board on whether or not the property should be acquired, and at what price.
 3. Property has significant environmental contamination: The Physical Development Director shall work with the Requesting Organization Director/Manager to prepare a recommendation to the County Board on whether or not the property should still be acquired. Recommendations to acquire property with significant environmental issues shall be made in consultation with the County Manager, Risk Management, ERD, the County Attorney's Office and the County Board, when appropriate. Acquisition shall be on hold until a final determination is made.

Staff contact: Dave Magnuson (or Enviro. Resources?) Ext: 7551 Email:
david.magnuson@co.dakota.mn.us

Board Resolution

APPENDIX C: PROCESS MAPS

Legend for Real Estate Acquisition Process Mapping

Action taken by
Elected officials
or other
Authorized
Decision-maker

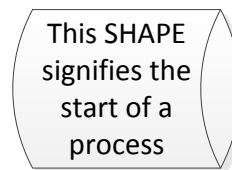
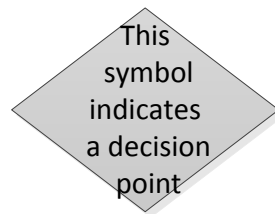
Action taken by
Physical
Development
Division staff

Action taken by
consultants

Action taken by
property owners

Action taken by
other Dakota
County staff or
depts

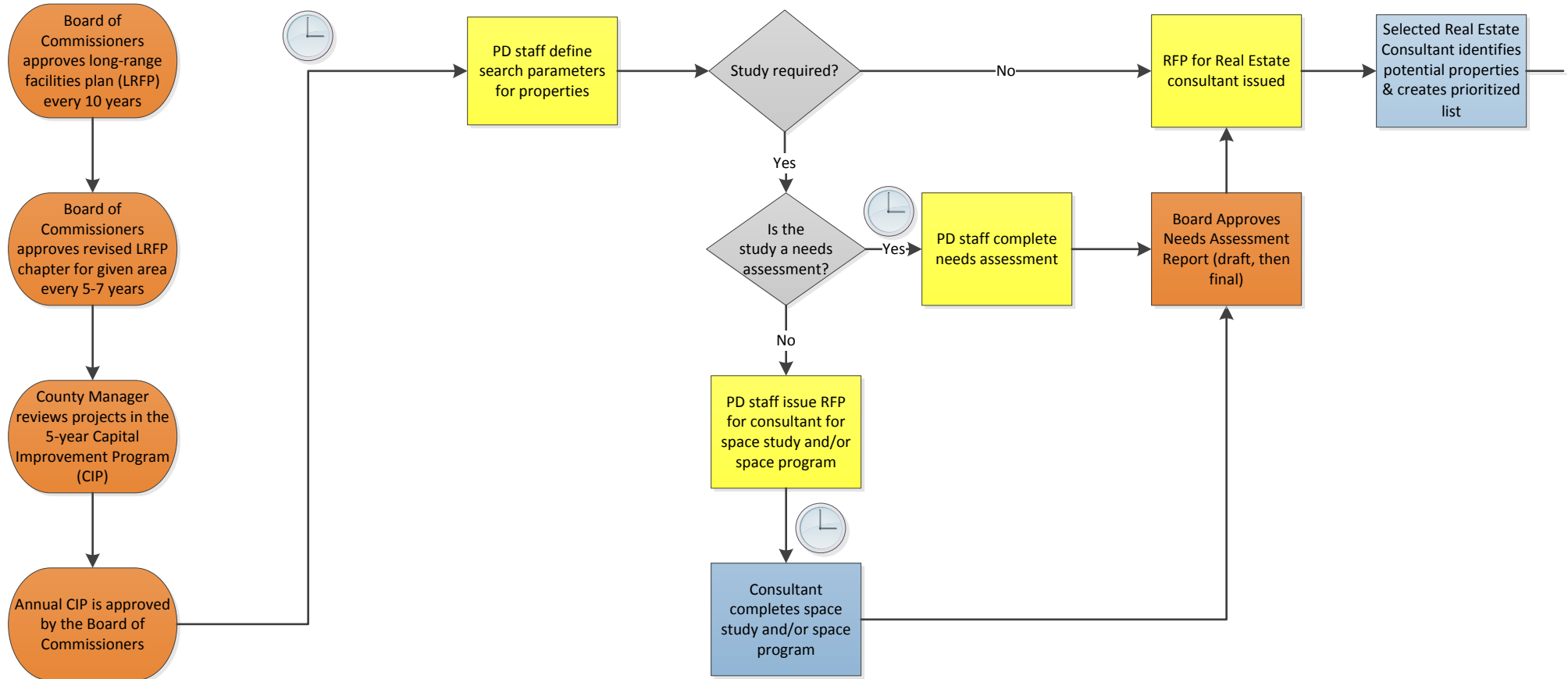
Note: on our process maps, we often show many tasks in a vertical lineup. That means those tasks are undertaken at about the same time, not consecutively. An arrow between tasks indicates they are done sequentially.



This symbol shows the passage of time – could be weeks or months.

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Capital Planning (Current State)

Initial Planning and Site Selection Phase



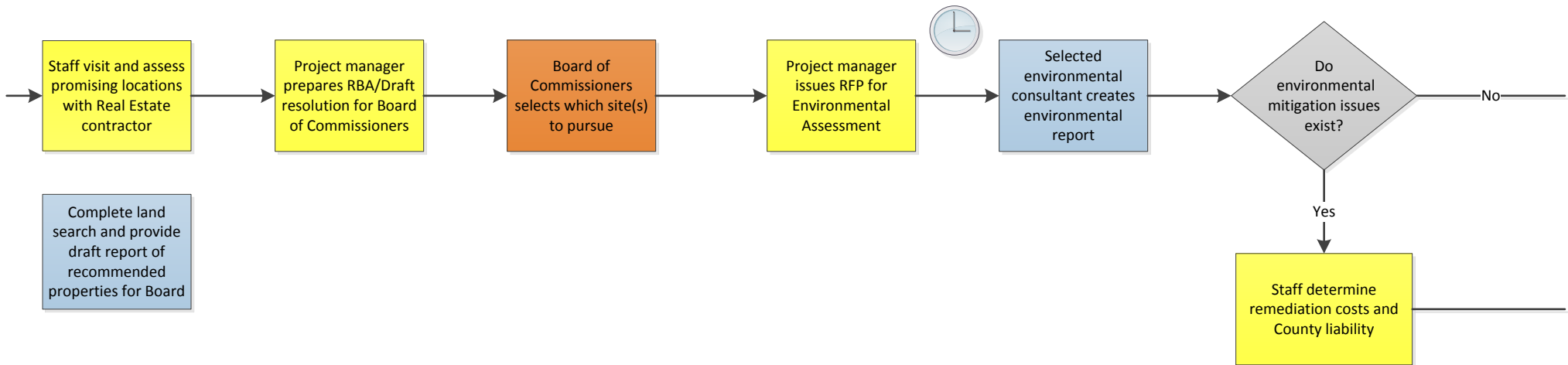
Document List	Long-range facilities plan	Property Report
	Long-range facilities plan chapter updates	Draft report of recommended properties
	Annual CIP	
	Needs Assessment Report	
	RFP – for space study and or space program	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Capital Planning (Current State)

Map Page 2

Initial Planning and Site Selection Phase

Negotiations & Environmental Assessment Phase



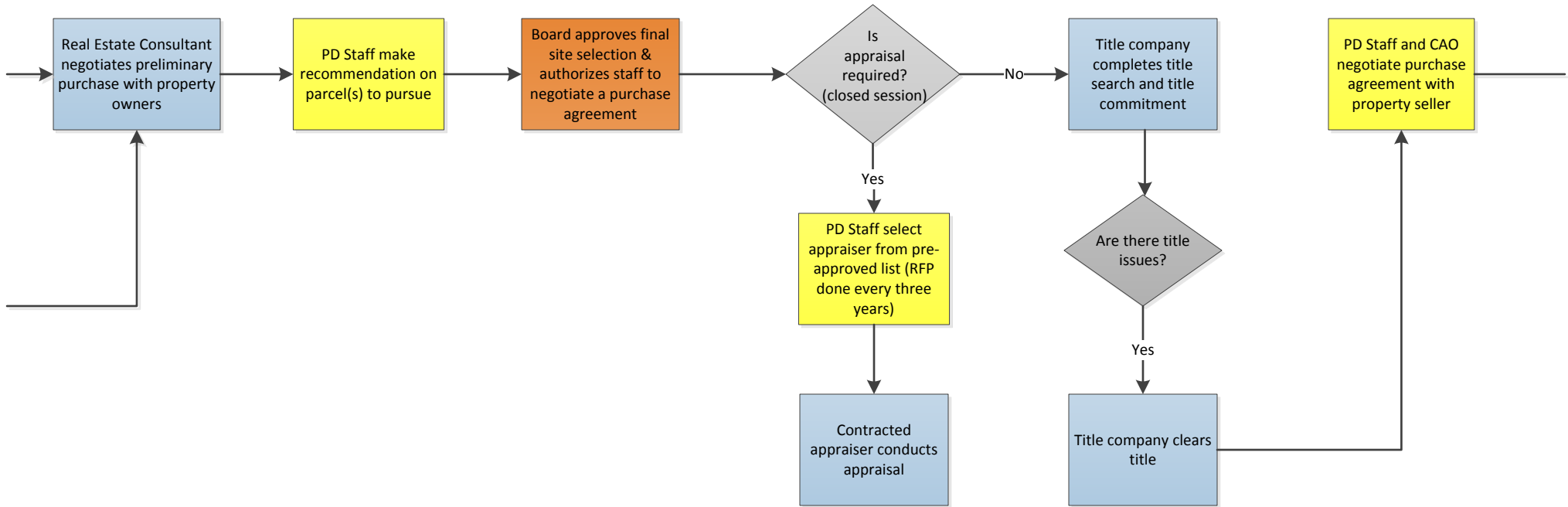
Document List	RFP for environmental assessment Contract for environmental assessment Environmental report RBA/Board reviews potential sites; site selection
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Capital Planning (Current State)

Map Page 3

Negotiations & Environmental Assessment Phase

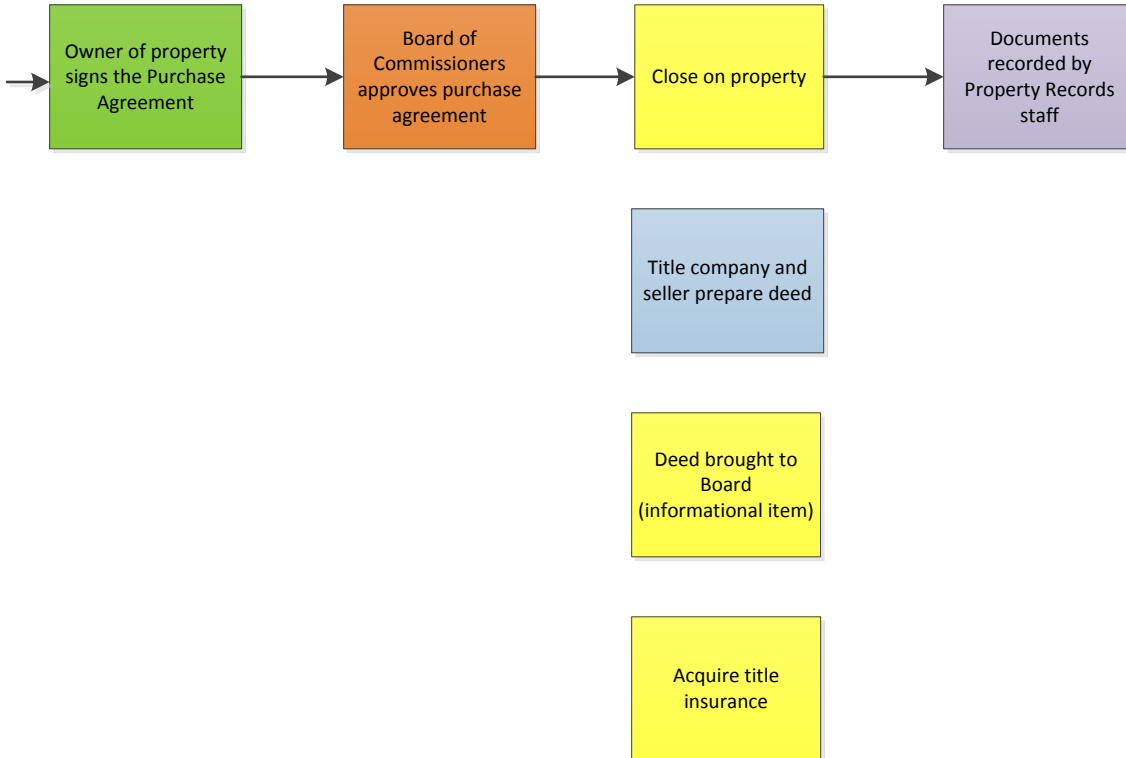
Closing & Property Acquisition Phase



Document List	Title Report	Property documents (deeds, etc.)
	Appraisal	Title Insurance Policy
	RBA/Resolution to purchase specific property (parcel or parcels)	
	Purchase Agreement	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Capital Planning (Current State)

Closing & Property Acquisition Phase



Legend for Real Estate Acquisition Process Mapping

Action taken by Elected officials or other Authorized Decision-maker

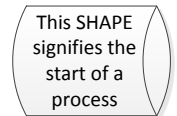
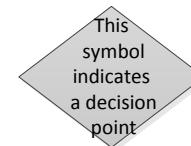
Action taken by Physical Development Division staff

Action taken by consultants

Action taken by property owners

Action taken by other Dakota County staff or depts

Note: on our process maps, we often show many tasks in a vertical lineup. That means those tasks are undertaken at about the same time, not consecutively. An arrow between tasks indicates they are done sequentially.

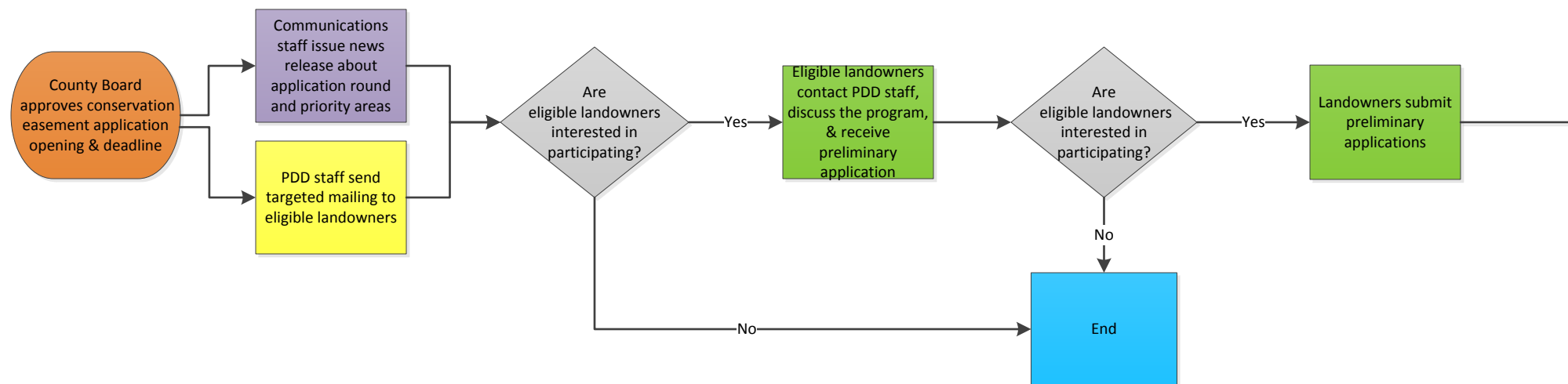


This symbol shows the passage of time – could be weeks or months.

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Initial Engagement Phase

Preliminary Application
Due Date: October

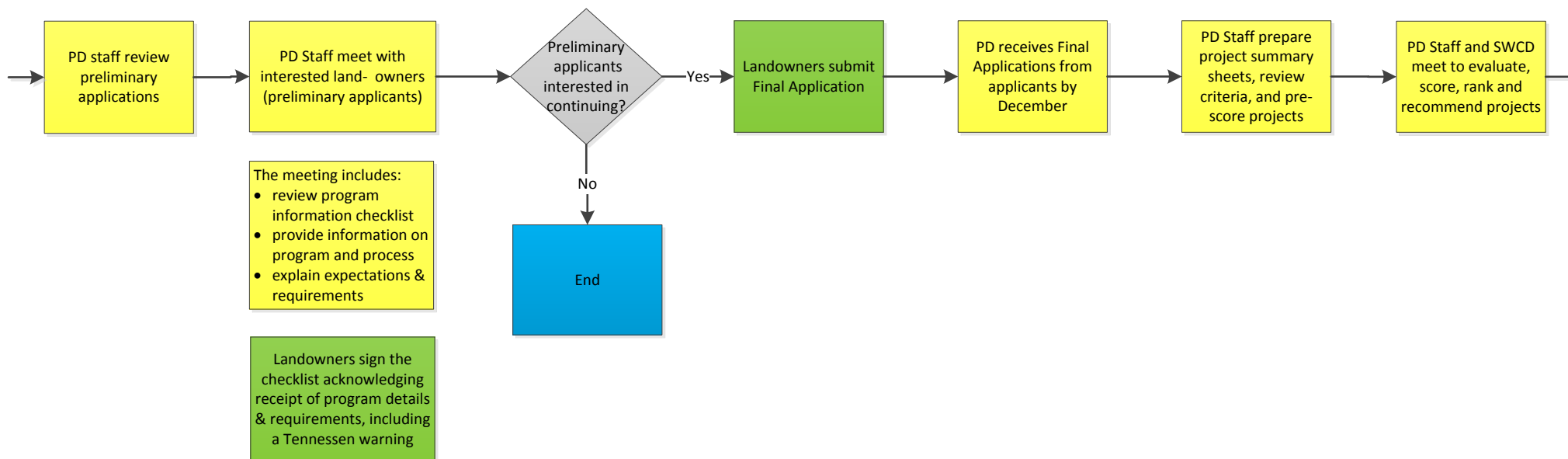


Document List	<p>News Release</p> <p>Mailing to targeted land owners: Informational Packet</p> <p>Preliminary Application</p>
----------------------	---

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Map Page 2

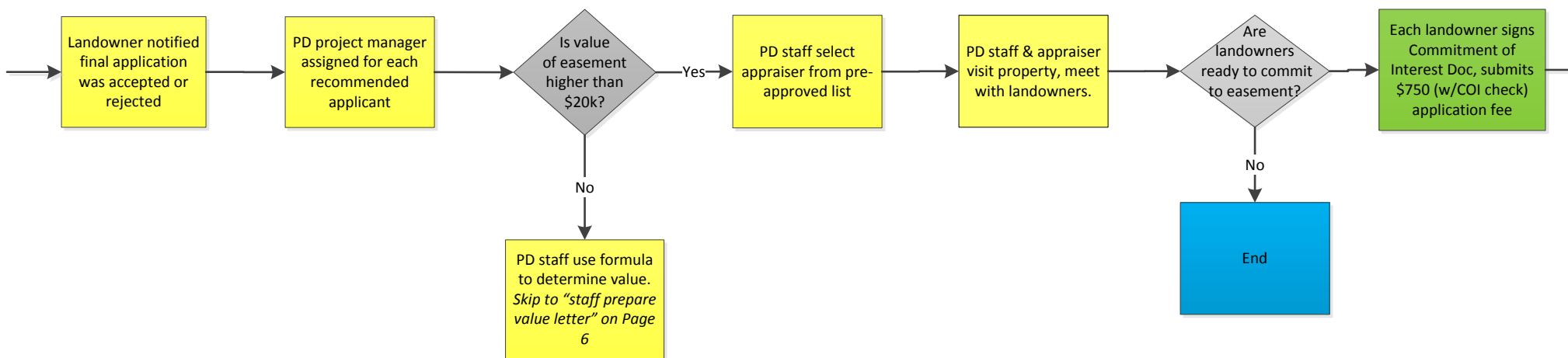
Application Submission Phase



Document List	Program Information Checklist Tennessee Warning Final Application Project summary sheets
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

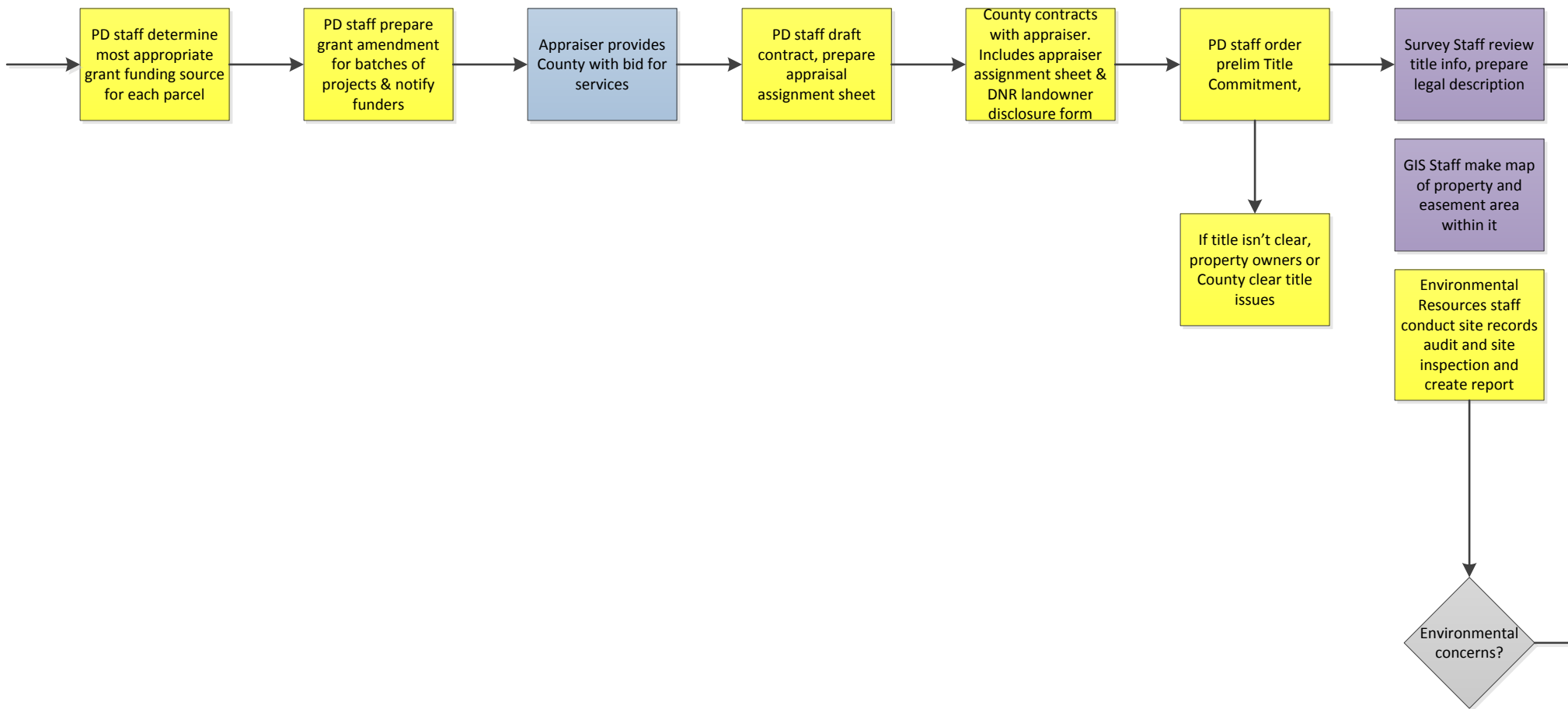
Application Processing & Project Pickup Phase



Document List	<p>PD Formula for easement values under \$20k Pre-approved list of appraisers County RFQ for appraisers (every 2-3 years) Notification Letter to property owners</p>
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

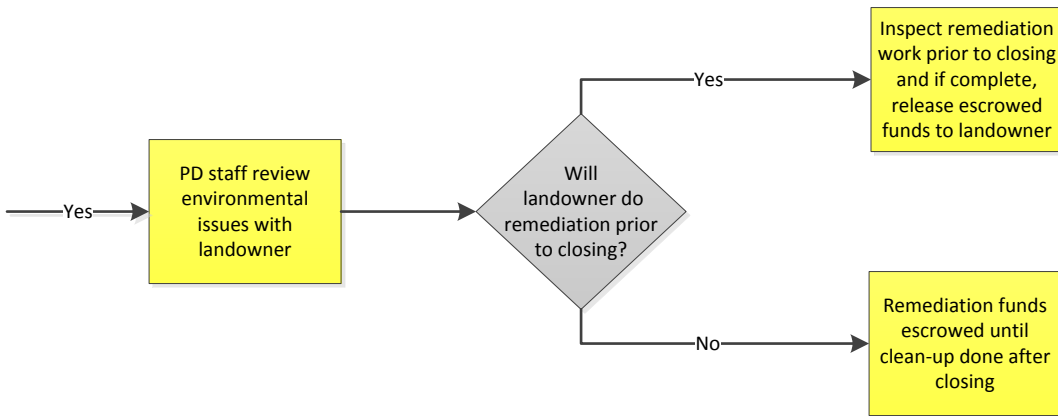
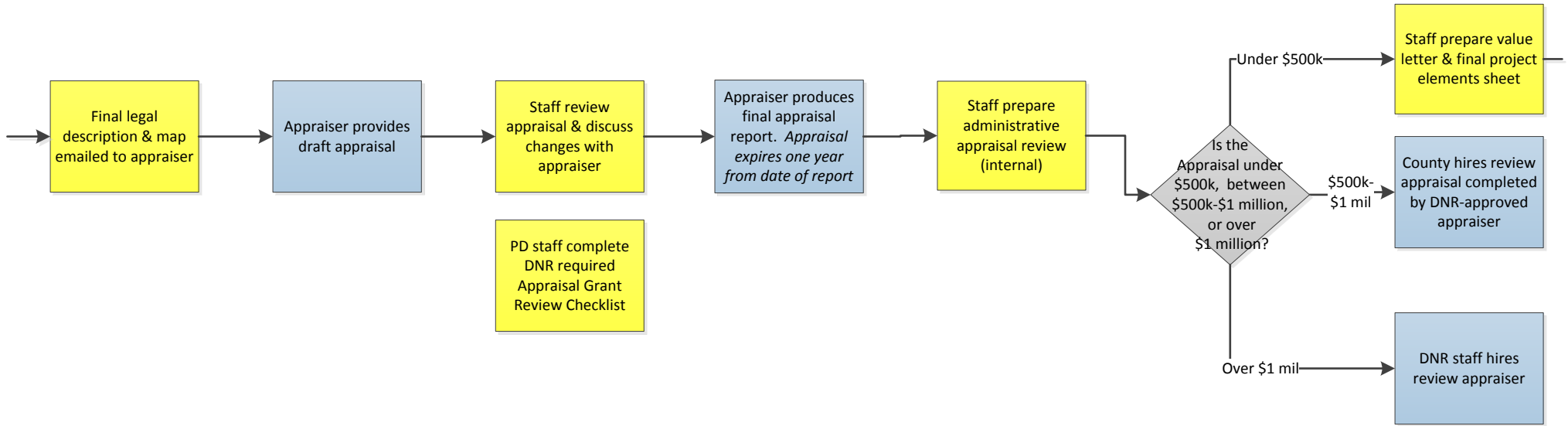
Property Research Phase



Document List	Commitment of Interest Document	DNR Landowner Disclosure Form
	Grant Amendments	
	Appraiser's bid for services	
	Appraisal assignment sheet	
	Contract with Appraiser	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Title Commitment and Project Documentation Phase

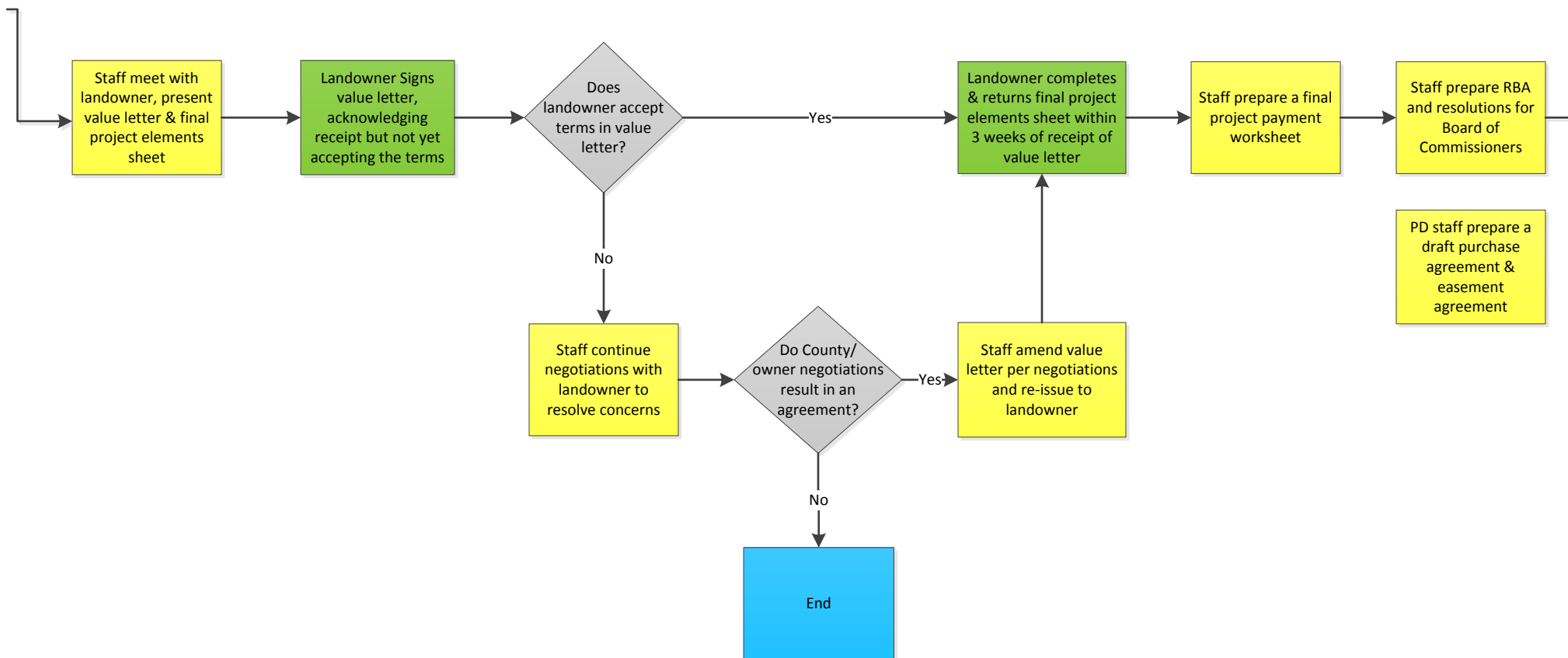


Document List	Title Commitment	Draft Appraisal Report
	Final Legal Description	DNR required Appraisal Grant Review Checklist
	GIS property map	Administrative appraisal review form
	Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)	Final Appraisal Report
	Environmental report	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Map Page 6

Appraisal Review & Receipt of Terms Phase

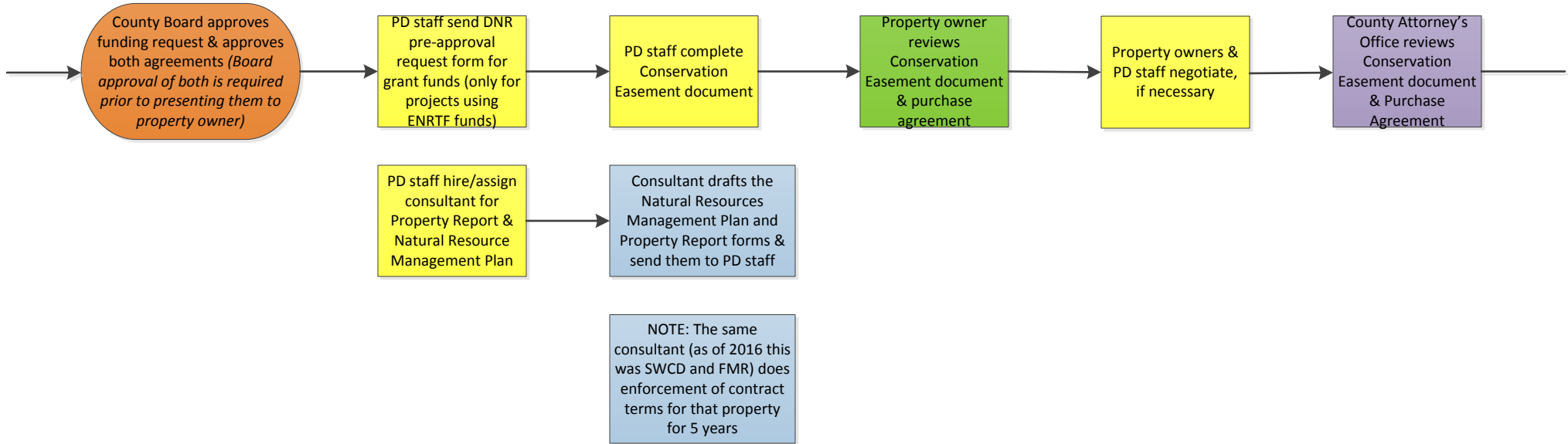


Document List	DNR's Land Acquisition Reporting Procedures (determines which type of draft appraisal review is required) Appraisal review report Value Letter Final Project Elements Sheet
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Board Approval Phase

Final Agreement & Closing Phase

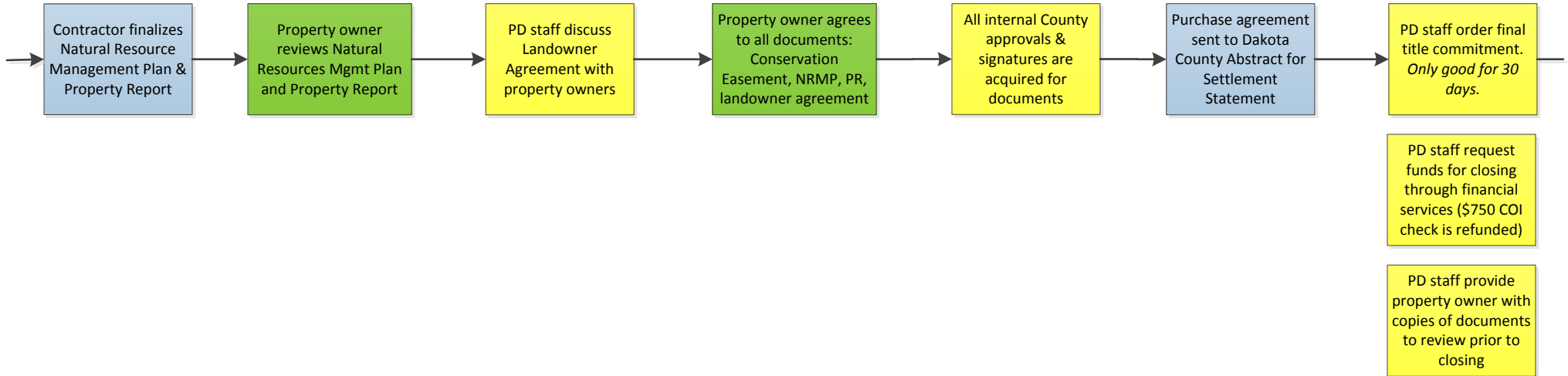


Document List	RBA Project payment worksheet Preapproval DNR Commissioner Form Natural Resources Management Plan Property Report
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Map Page 8

Final Agreement & Closing Phase



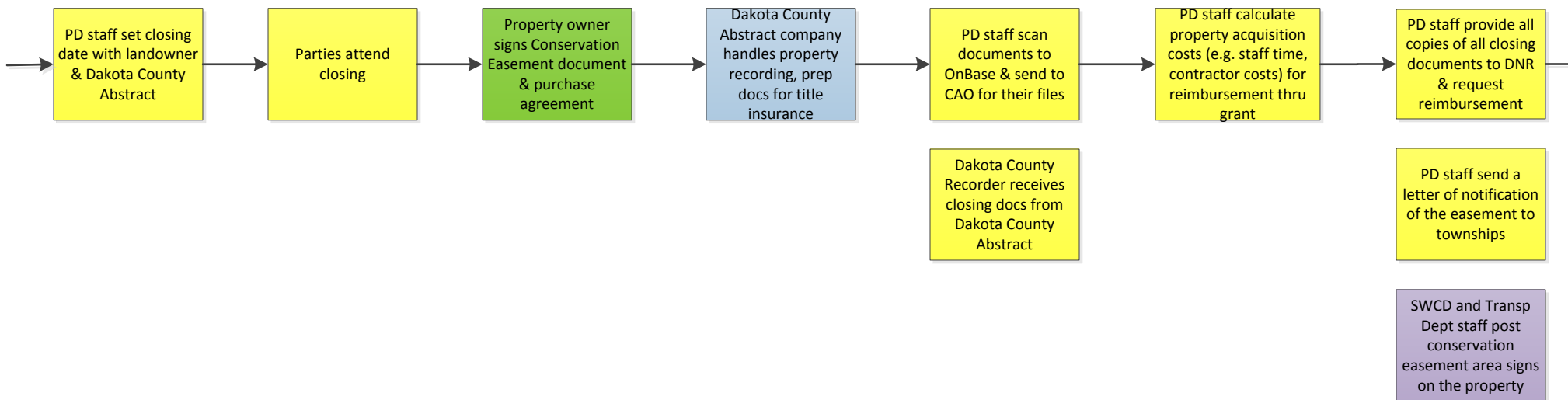
Document List	<p>Conservation Easement document Purchase Agreement Draft easement agreement</p>
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Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Conservation Easements (Current State)

Map Page 9

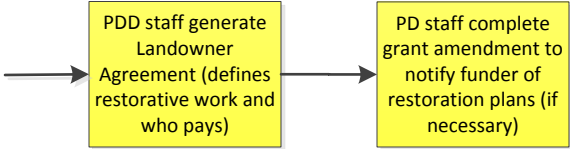
Final Agreement & Closing Phase

Post-closing Requirements Phase



Document List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement Statement Final title commitment Conservation easement document Purchase agreement Title insurance
----------------------	---

Post-closing Requirements Phase

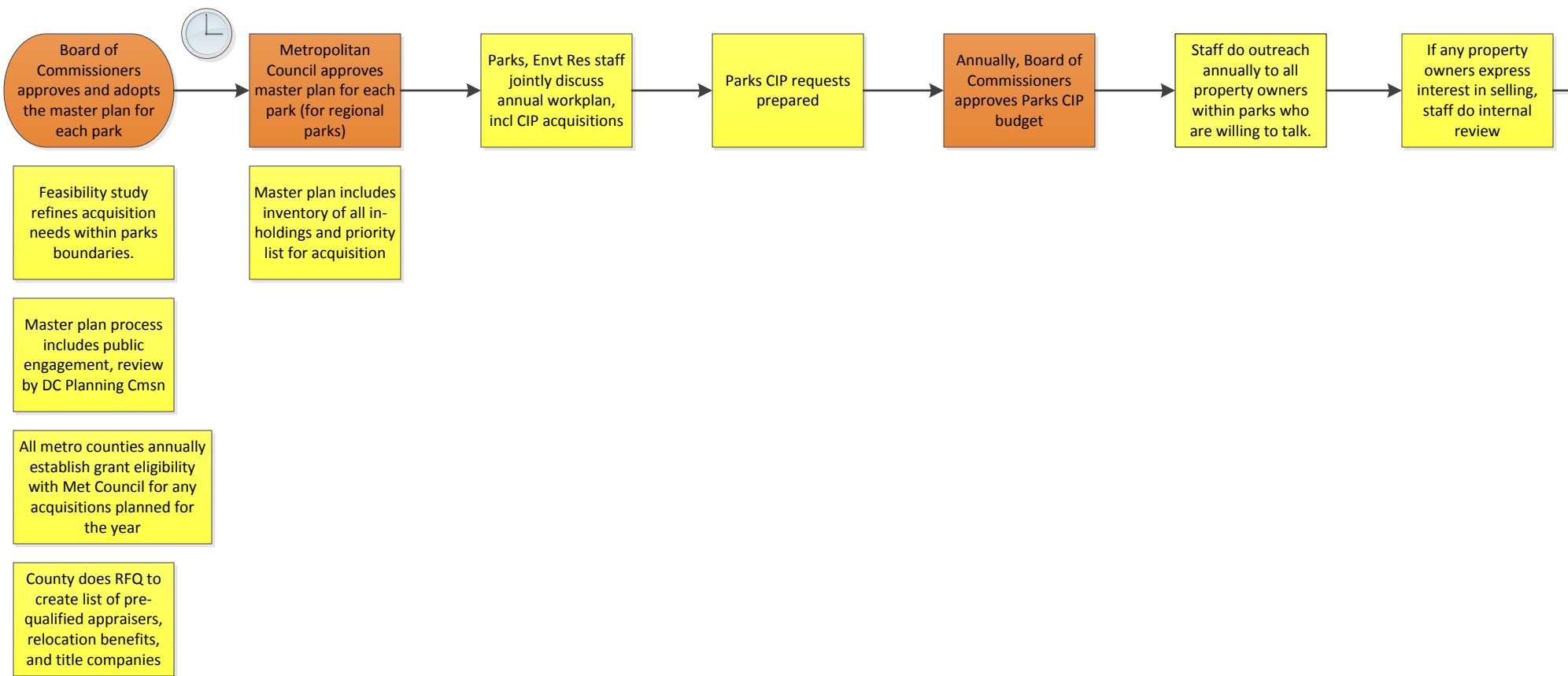


Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Map Page 1

Pre-Acquisition Project Planning Phase (for Parks in-holding properties)

Identify Willing Sellers Phase



Documents List	Master plan for parks or greenways	Appraiser report	Restrictive Covenant
	RFP for outreach coordinator	Certified Value Letter	List of docs uploaded to Met Council
	Contract with outreach coordinator	RBA for Board (purchase)	Title, Deed, Title Insurance documents
	Contract with appraiser	Title clearance report	Grant agreement w/Met Council
	Contract with title company	Phase I report	Reimbursement request to Met Council
	Environmental assessment report	Relocation benefits report	
Contract w/relocation benefits company	Purchase agreement		

Note: Though the same staff are involved, this part of the process map describes the process used to acquire in-holding properties within established park boundaries, which is done as opportunities arise (generally not via Eminent Domain). For trails/greenways, parts of the process are more similar to the Right of Way acquisition process used by the Transportation Dept.

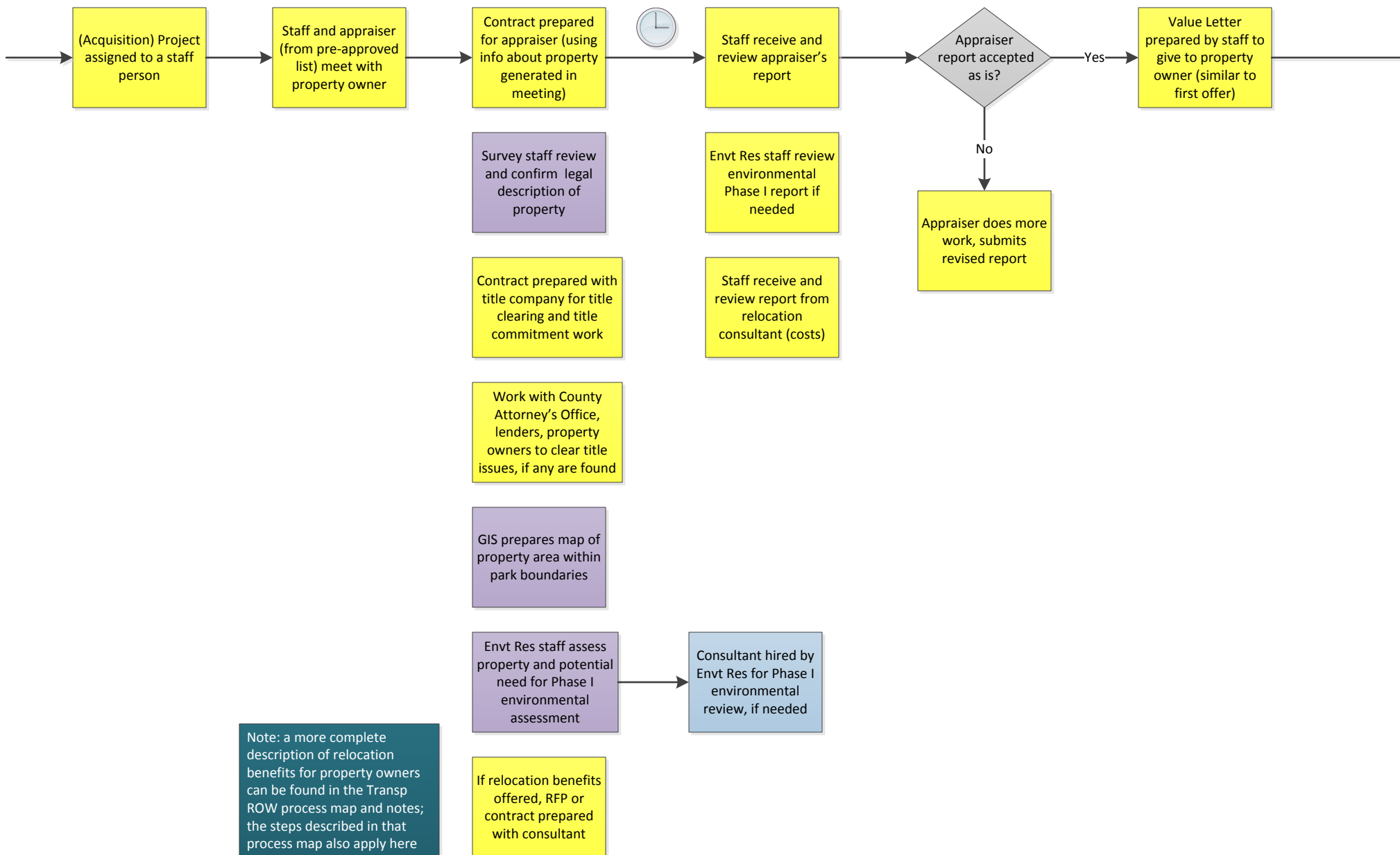
The process of acquiring property for greenways is shown in a separate process map.

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Map Page 2

Identify Willing Sellers Phase

Property Research Phase

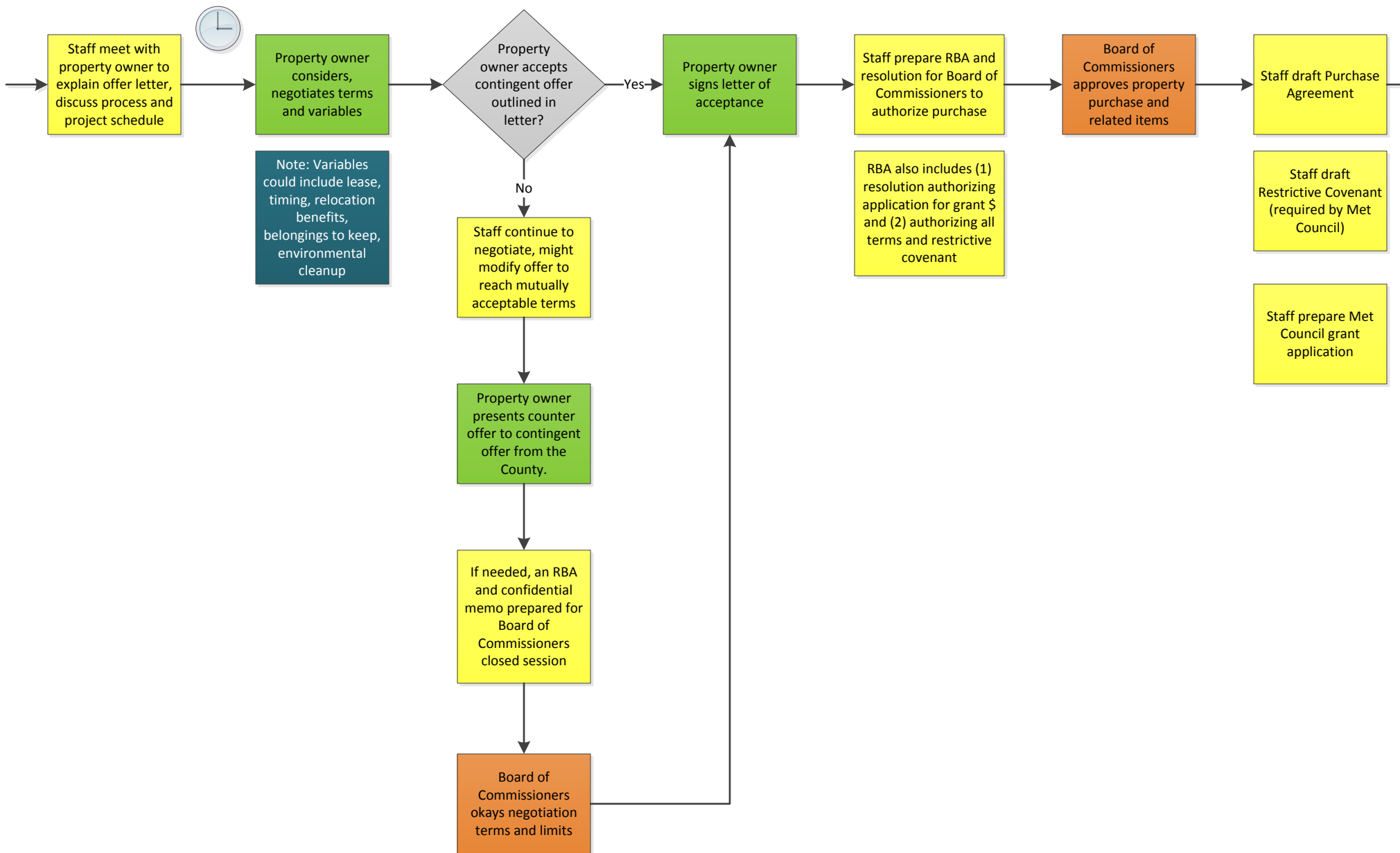


Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Map Page 3

Negotiation with Property Owner Phase

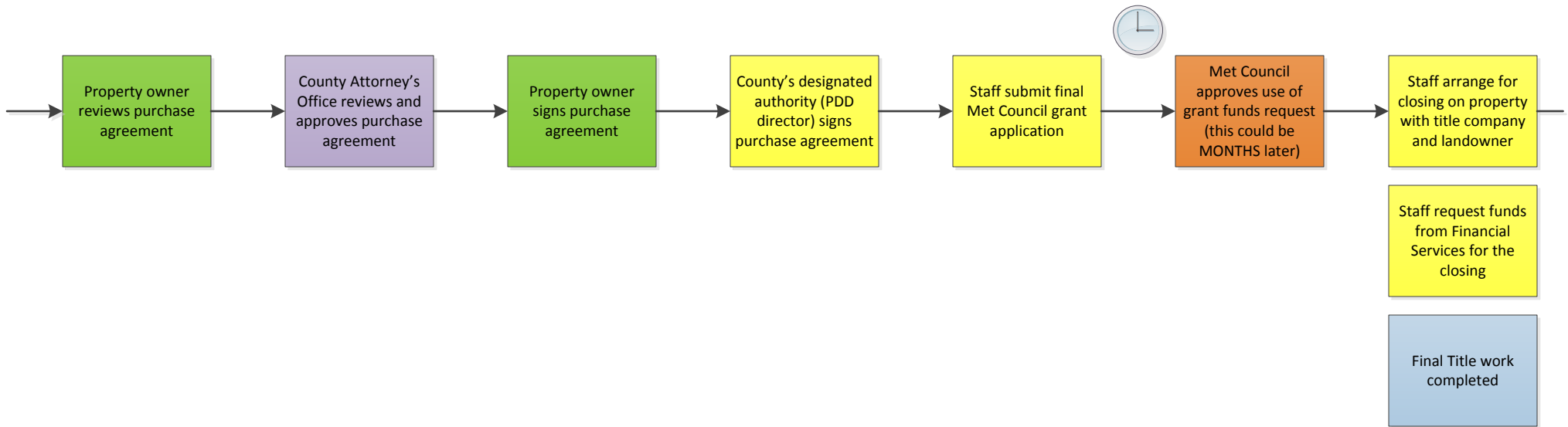
Property Purchase/Acquisition Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Map Page 4

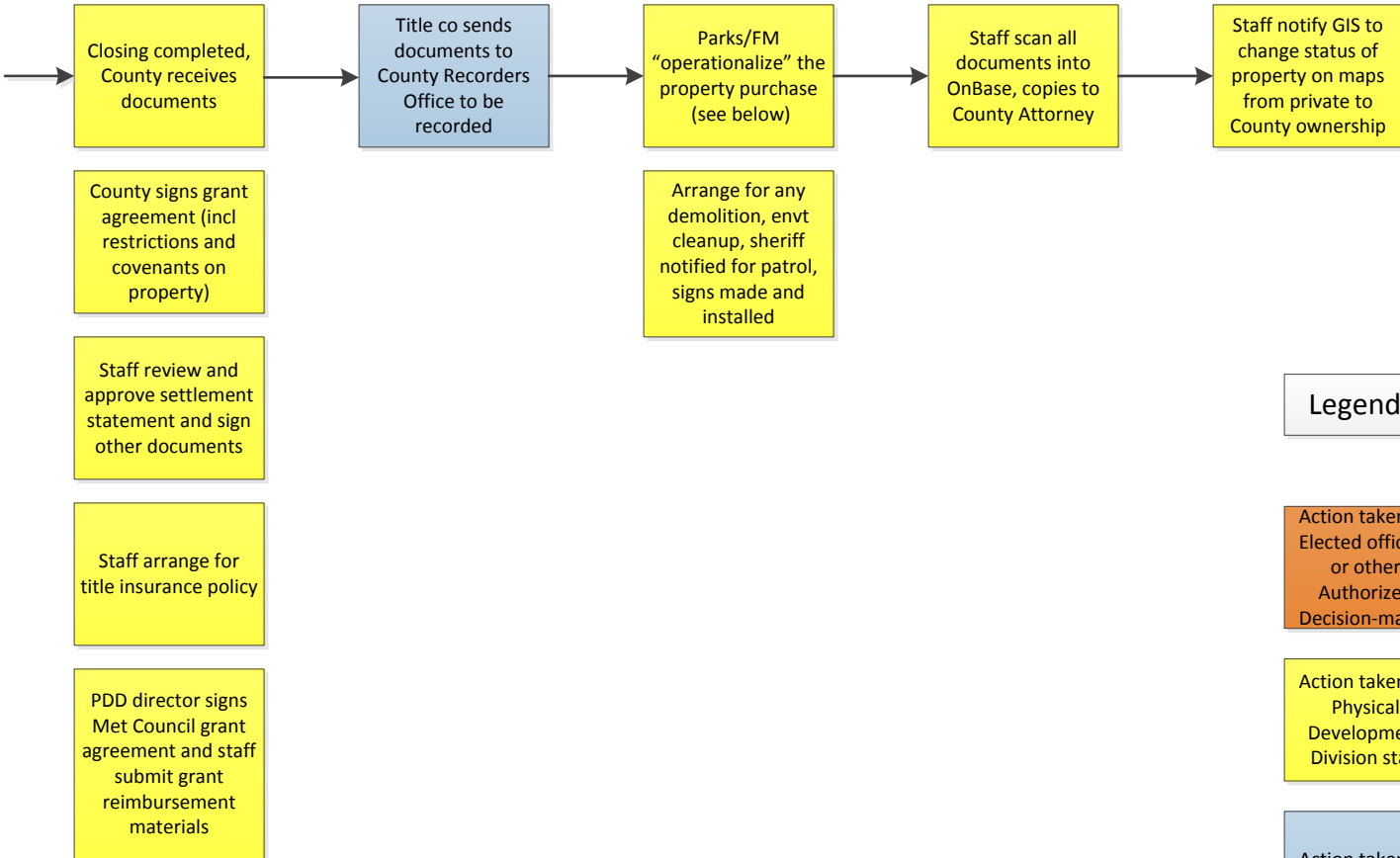
Property Purchase/Acquisition Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

**Property Purchase/
Acquisition Phase**

Post-Purchase Phase



Legend for Real Estate Acquisition Process Mapping

Action taken by Elected officials or other Authorized Decision-maker

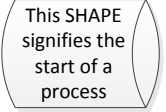
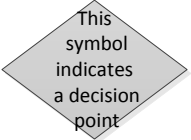
Action taken by Physical Development Division staff

Action taken by consultants

Action taken by property owners

Action taken by other Dakota County staff or depts

Note: on our process maps, we often show many tasks in a vertical lineup. That means those tasks are undertaken at about the same time, not consecutively. An arrow between tasks indicates they are done sequentially.

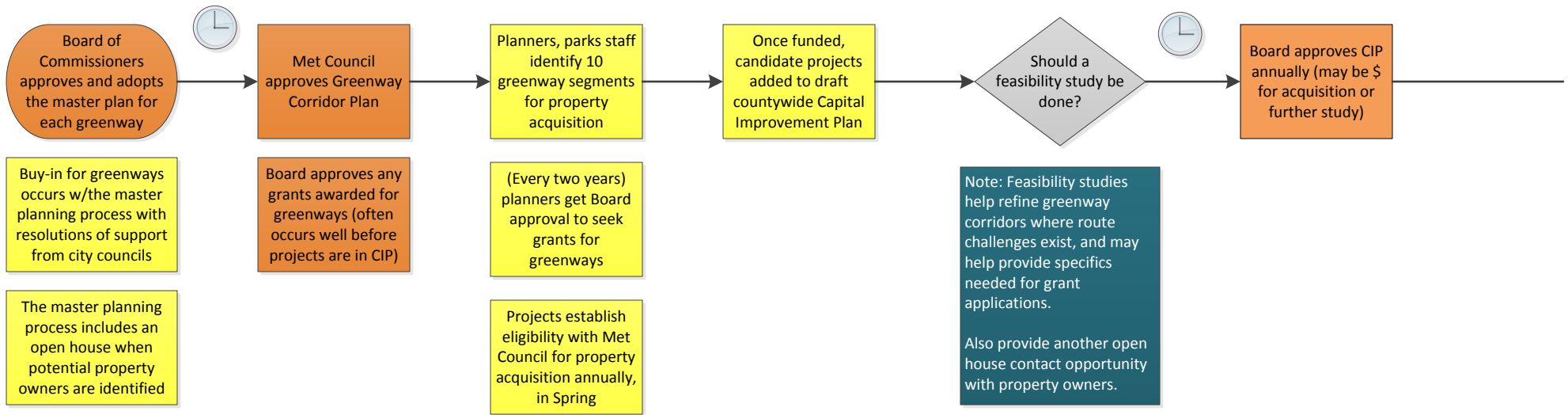


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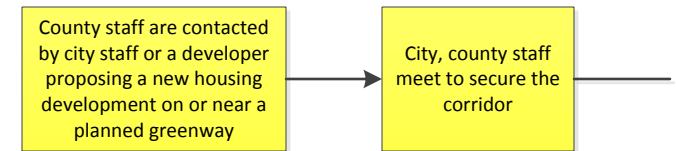
Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Map Page 1

Pre-Acquisition Project Planning Phase (for trails and greenways)



Development-Driven Property Acquisition (for trails and greenways)



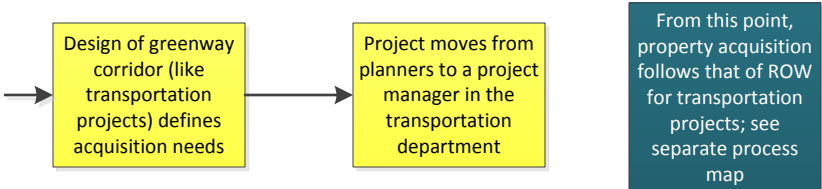
Note: This map shows the process for acquiring property for linear trails or greenways. This map includes: 1) the situation in which properties needed for greenways are acquired all at once, may involve eminent domain, and are done by the Transportation Dept project managers and ROW staff (see the separate process map for ROW acquisition); and 2) a description of other circumstances that offer staff an opportunity to acquire property they know will be needed for a future greenway or trail.

Except for an occasional “opportunistic” property acquisition very early in the planning stages for greenways, the processes described here are not very similar to that for acquiring property from in-holdings within park boundaries, which are generally acquired one at a time opportunistically from willing sellers. The parks in-holding property acquisition process is shown in a separate process map.

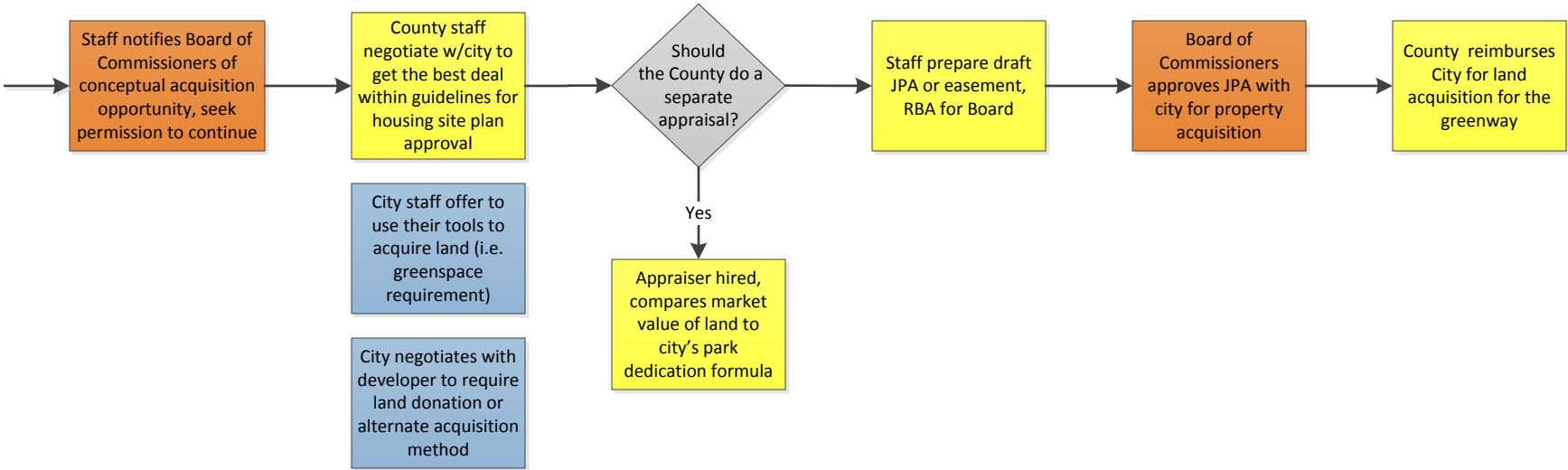
Documents List	Master plan for parks or greenways	RBA for closed session with Board
	Resolutions of support from cities	RBA for open session with Board
	Notifications/letters for open house	Joint Powers Agreement or easement
	Annual Capital Investment Plan (CIP)	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Parks/Trails/Greenways (Current State)

Pre-Acquisition Project Planning Phase (for trails and greenways)



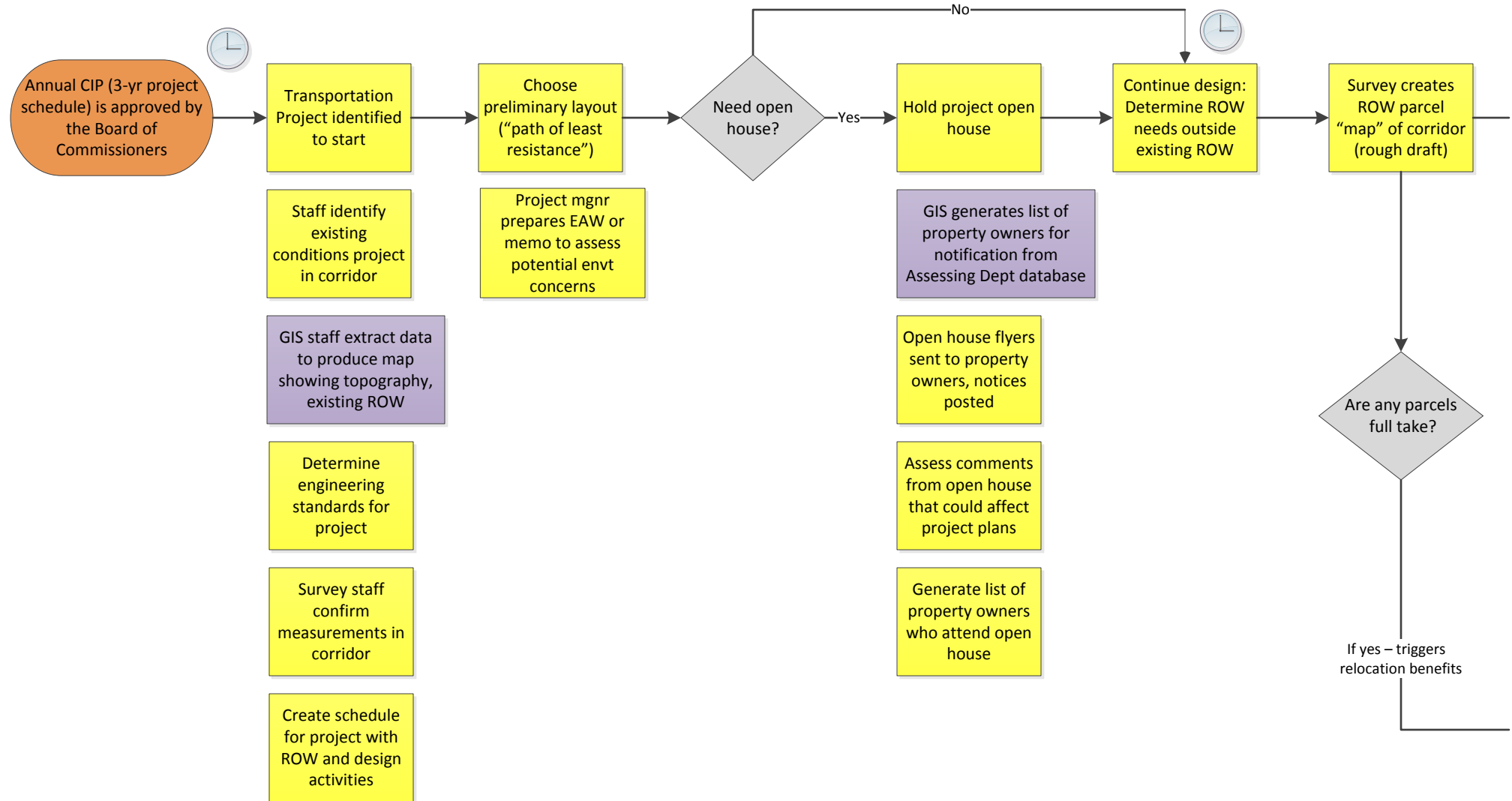
Development-Driven Property Acquisition (for trails and greenways)



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 1

Project Planning/Design Phase

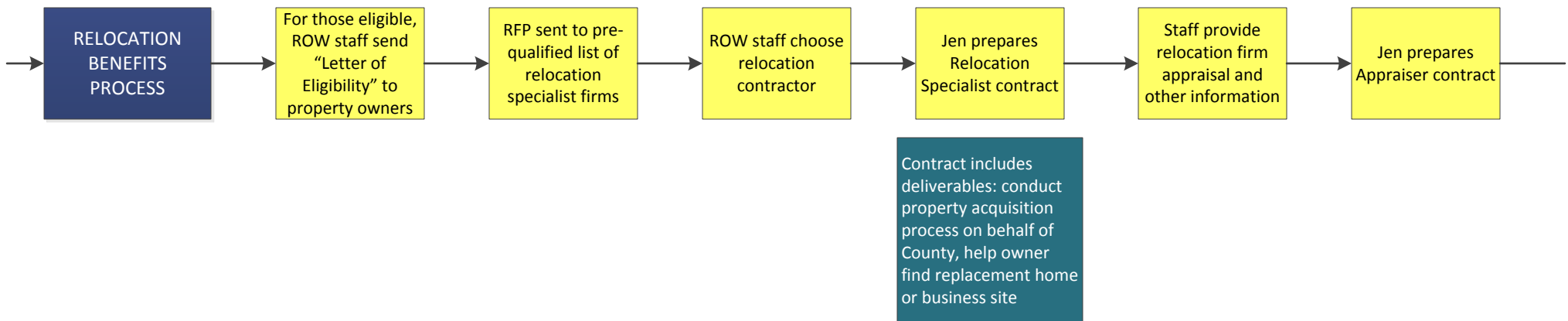
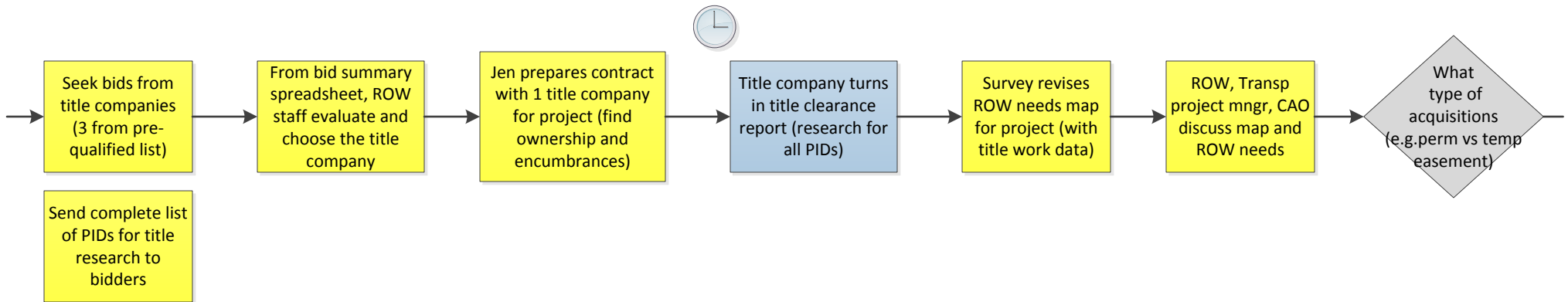


Documents List	Annual CIP	Contract for title company	RFP for review appraiser	Notice of Quick Take	Final certificate for all settlements
	ROW Map (Final)	Title company report (work product)	Contract for review appraiser	Notice of Hearing	RFP for relocation consultant
	Project Timeline	RFP for Appraisers Bids	Appraiser final report	Affidavit of Service (landowners)	Contract for relocation consultant
	Open House notification	Contract for Appraisals	RBA/Resolution (parcels cost)	Proposed Order/Memo of Law	Settlement Report (recommendations from relocation consultant)
	Contact list - open house	Individual parcel sketches	Property owner offer letter(s)	Info packets for condemnation panel	Settlement Report (recommendations from relocation consultant)
	Bid request for title company	Early notification Letter (with Field Title Investigation Form)	Eminent Domain Petition and related court documents	Condemnation panel award notices	EAW, project memo – environmental audit, or Phase I report
	Spreadsheet of bids (title co)			RBA – Board considers awards	

Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 2

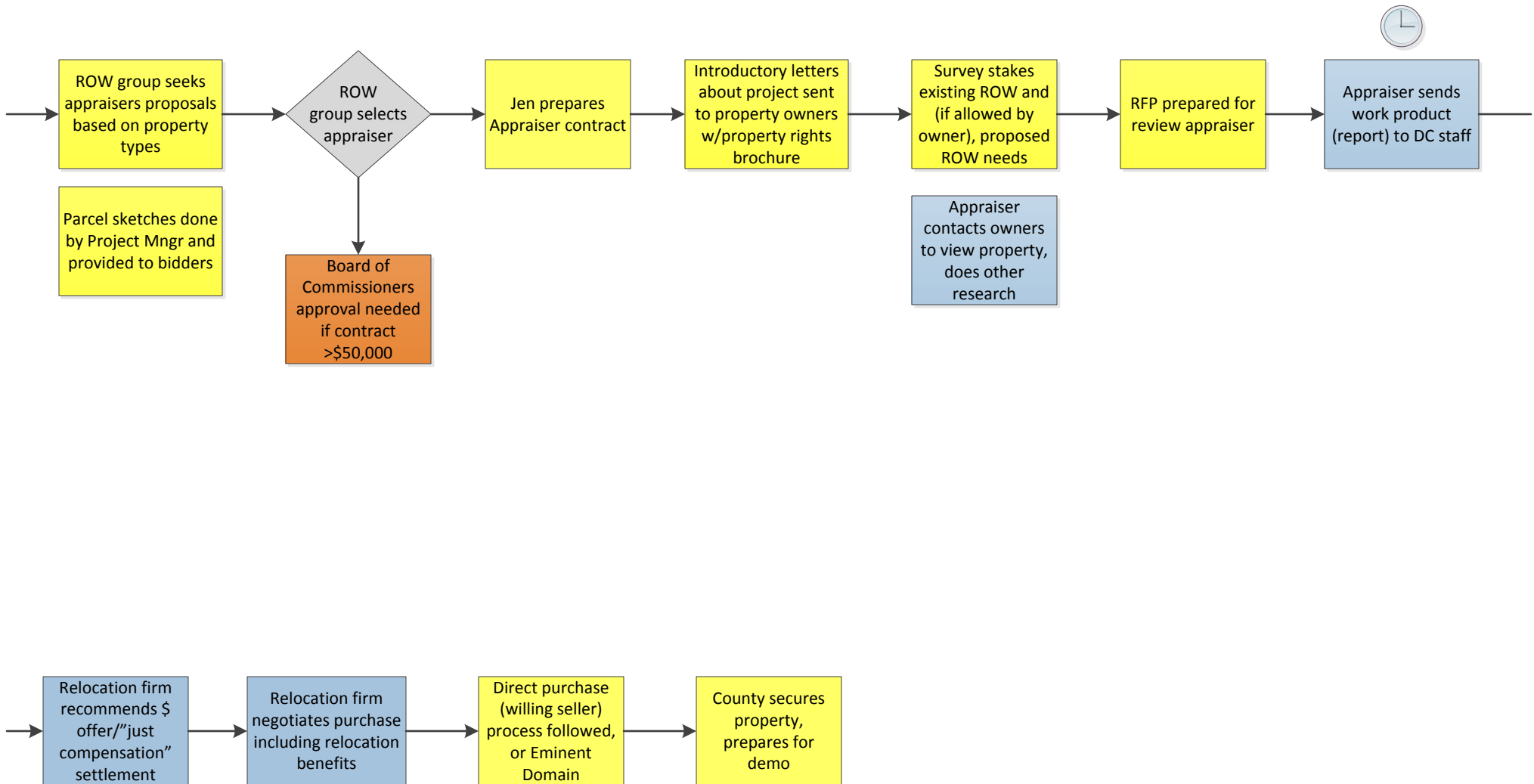
Title Research/Clearance Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 3

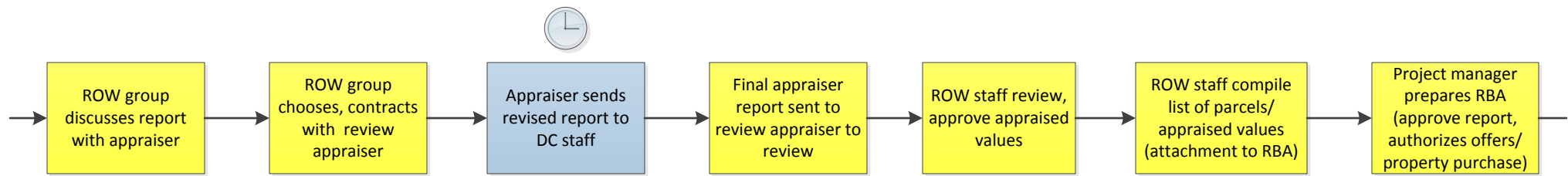
Appraisals Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 4

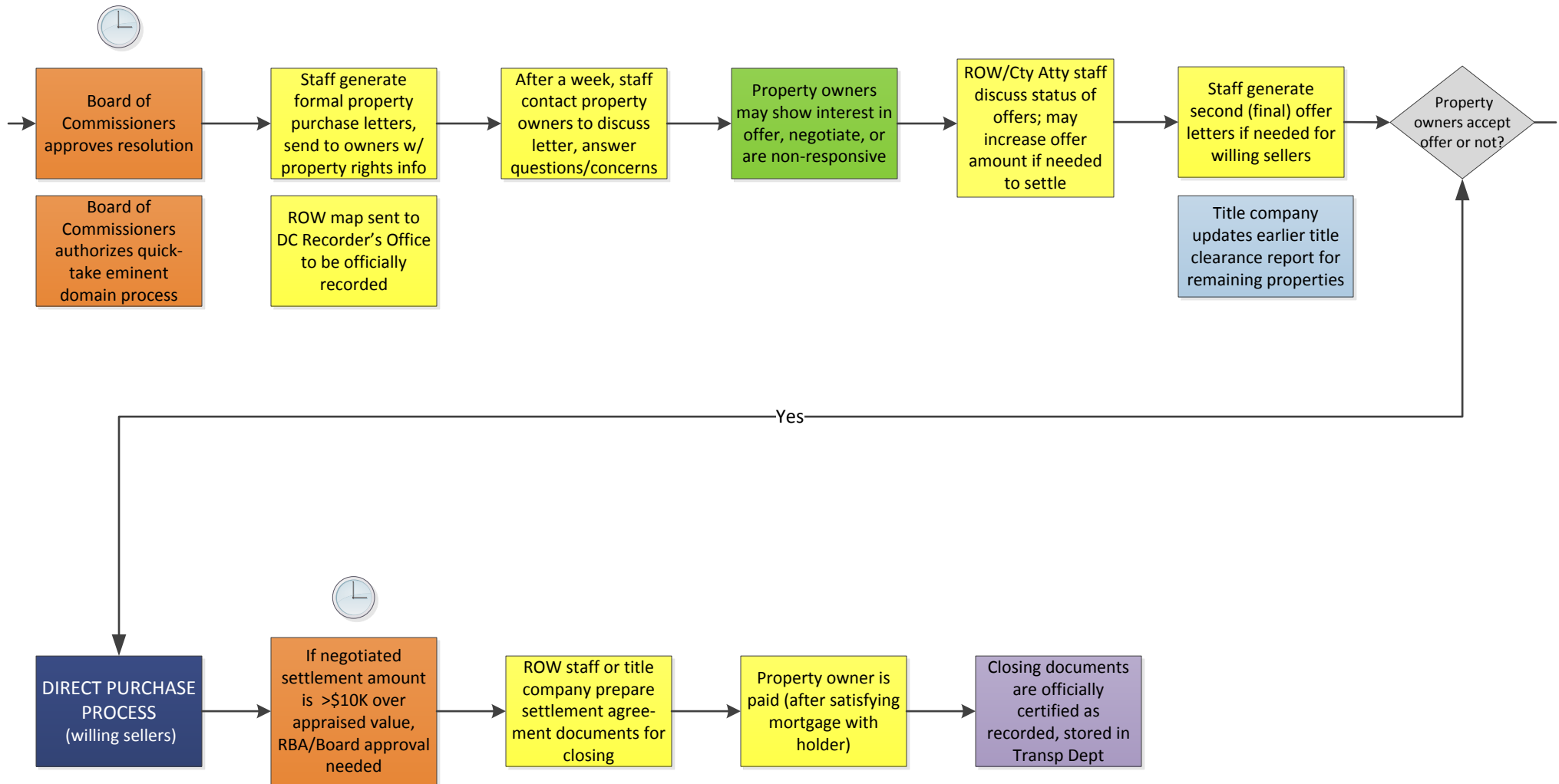
Appraisals Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 5

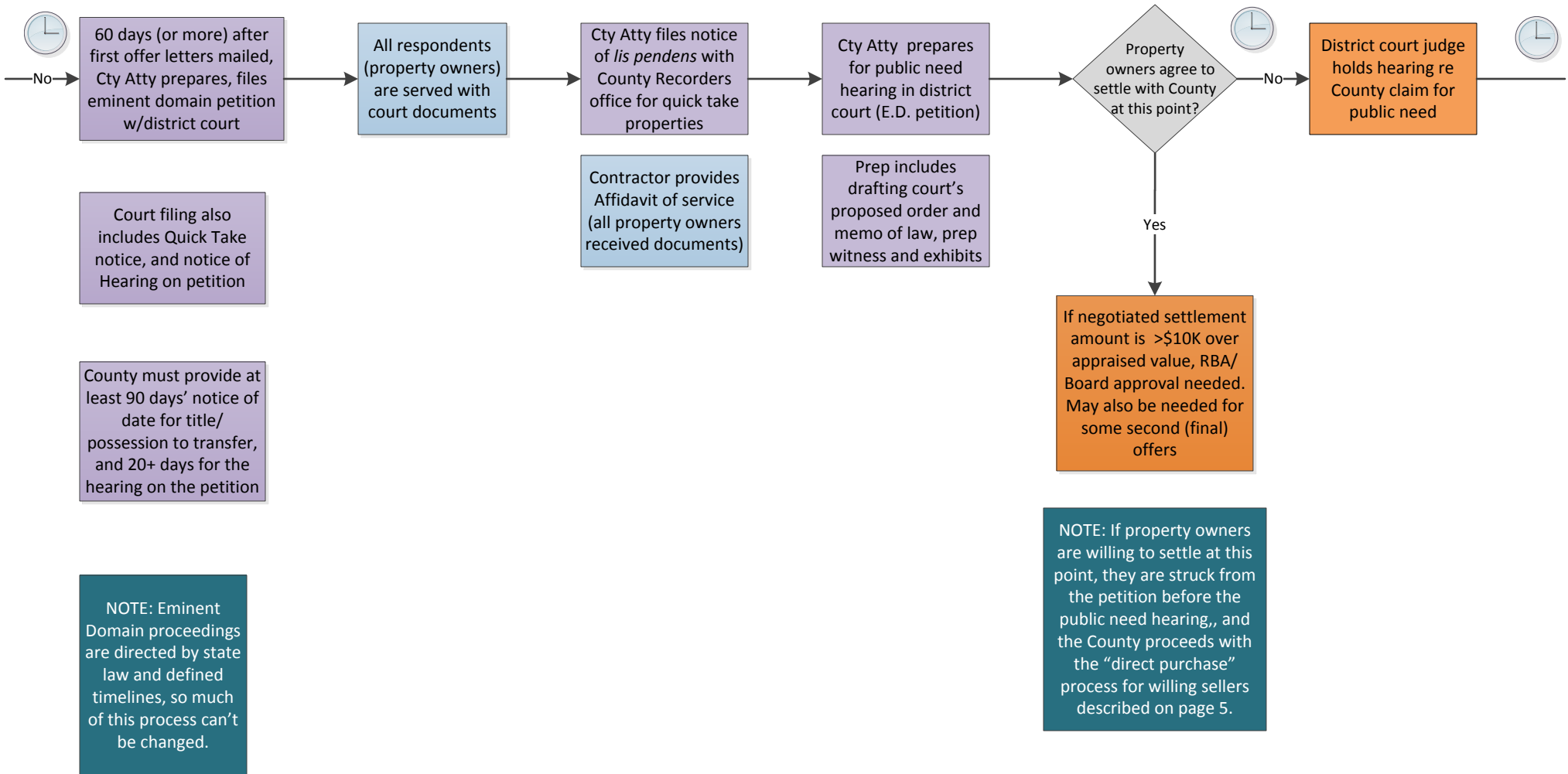
Direct Property Purchase Phase



Direct Purchase Documents	Request for Mortgage Release	Recording certification
	Signed Mortgage Release (owner)	RBA/Board approval for amounts >\$10K appraised value
	Easement Document (purchase agreement)	Confidential memo for Board
	Check Request (from?)	
	Evidence of property taxes paid	

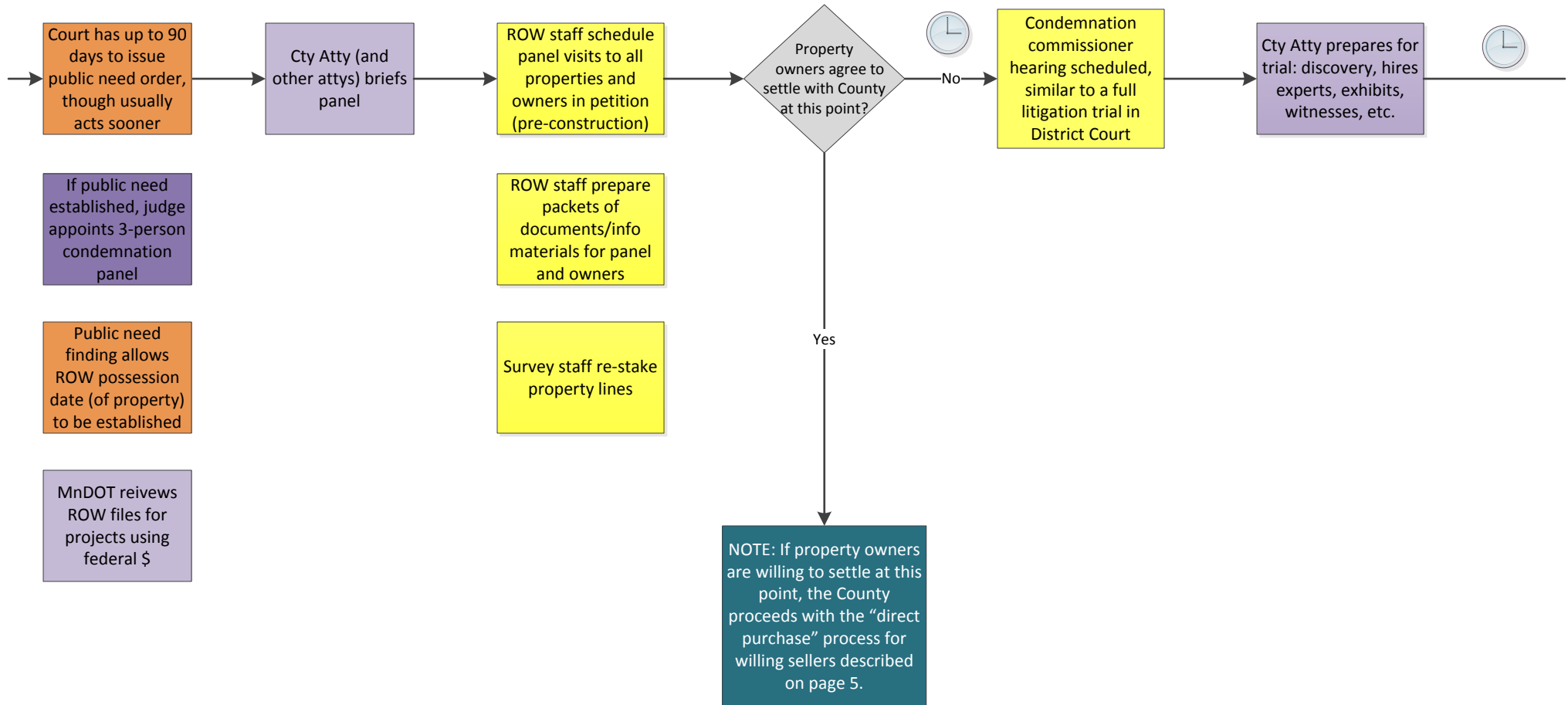
Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Eminent Domain (Quick Take) Property Purchase Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

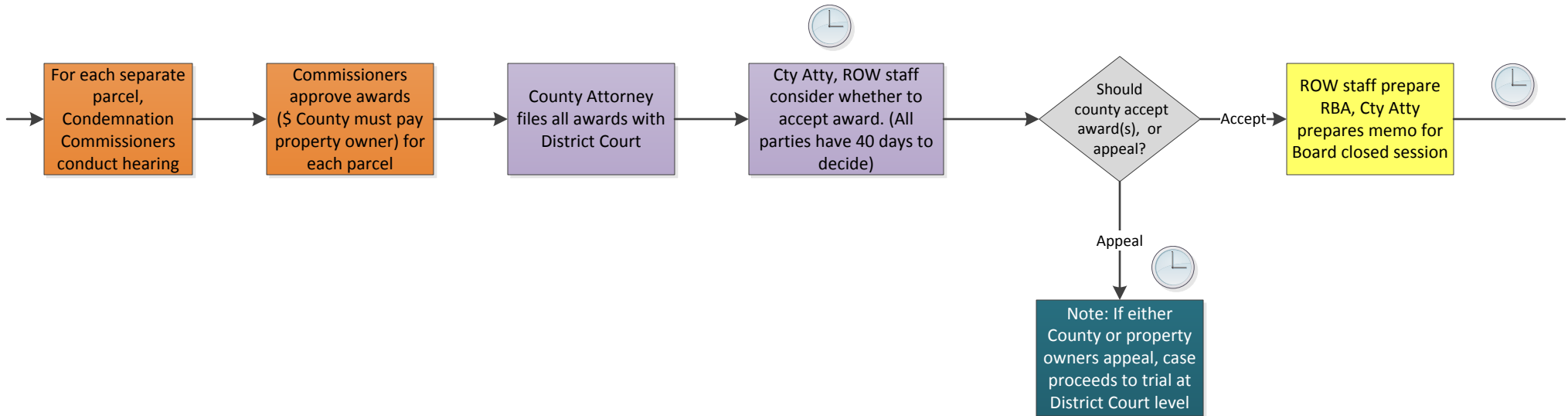
Eminent Domain (Quick Take) Property Purchase Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 8

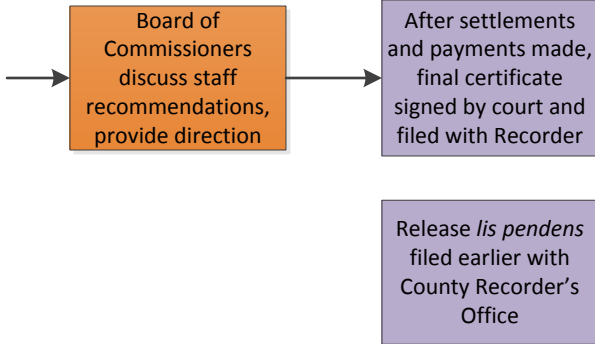
Eminent Domain (Quick Take) Property Purchase Phase



Real Estate Acquisition Project – Process Flow Map for Right of Way (Current State)

Map Page 9

Eminent Domain (Quick Take) Property Purchase Phase



Legend for Real Estate Acquisition Process Mapping

Action taken by Elected officials or other Authorized Decision-maker

Action taken by Physical Development Division staff

Action taken by consultants

Action taken by property owners

Action taken by other Dakota County staff or depts

Note: on our process maps, we often show many tasks in a vertical lineup. That means those tasks are undertaken at about the same time, not consecutively. An arrow between tasks indicates they are done sequentially.

This symbol indicates a decision point

This SHAPE signifies the start of a process



This symbol shows the passage of time – could be weeks or months.