



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
441 G STREET NW  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

CEMP-CR

JAN 10 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Real Estate Policy Guidance Letter No. 31-Real Estate Support to Civil Works Planning Paradigm (3x3x3)

1. References.

- a. Memorandum, CECW-CP, 8 February 2012, Subject: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Feasibility Study Program Execution and Delivery
- b. ER 5-1-11, USACE Business Process, 1 November 2006
- c. EC 405-1-04, Appraisal, 30 Dec 2003
- d. ER 1105-2-100, Planning Guidance Notebook, 22 Apr 2000
- e. ER 405-1-12, Chapter 12, Real Estate Roles and Responsibilities for Civil Works, Cost Shared and Full Federal Projects, Change 31, 1 May 1998

2. Purpose. In accordance with reference a, this memorandum provides interim policy and guidance for real estate efforts associated with feasibility studies under the new Planning Paradigm, "SMART Planning," and the 3x3x3 rule. In accordance with the 3x3x3 rule, all feasibility studies should be completed within three years, at a cost of no more than \$3 million, utilize three levels of vertical team coordination, and be of a "reasonable" report size.

3. Background. Real Estate has been fully engaged in the implementation of the 3x3x3 by actively participating in each webinar, the planning modernization workshop, and serving as part of the HQ Transition Team. In accordance with references b-e, Real Estate involvement is essential to the development and implementation of any pre-authorization project. Paragraph 12-16 of reference e. outlines the significant topics that must be covered in a real estate plan (REP). The level of detail necessary to apply the requirements of real estate policy and guidance will vary depending on the scope and complexity of each project.

As outlined in Chapter 12, the minimum interests in real property necessary to support various types of projects must be identified. As projects are scoped at the beginning of the feasibility phase (via a Charette or other forum), it is essential that Real Estate become familiar with the project authority and purposes to make a determination of the minimum interests and estate(s), both standard and non-standard, necessary as projects are scoped and alternatives evaluated. If a

CEMP-CR

SUBJECT: Real Estate Policy Guidance Letter No. 31-Real Estate Support to Civil Works Planning Paradigm (3x3x3)

non-standard estate will be needed, this should be discussed with MSC and HQ Real Estate as early as possible to ensure that the justification is sound and will serve the project purpose.

4. Policy. Typically, the attorney's preliminary opinion of compensability and gross appraisals are two areas that require more detail than may be readily available during the start of the feasibility phase, and are critical to determination of accurate estimates for real estate and total project costs. Due to the focus on 3 years or less for study duration, it will be essential for Real Estate to be adaptable and scale its requirements, decision making, and risk management in proportion to the significance of total project costs.

a. Gross Appraisals:

Specific to gross appraisals, EC 405-1-04 provides that cost estimates are utilized for preliminary planning of projects and in other cases, brief gross appraisals are acceptable. For purposes of the feasibility phase, the detail will vary as outlined below.

- (1) For projects in which the value of real estate (lands, improvements, and severance damages) are not expected to exceed ten percent of total project costs (total cost to implement project), a cost estimate (or rough order of magnitude) will be acceptable for purposes of the feasibility phase.
- (2) For projects in which the value of real estate (lands, improvements, and severance damages) do not exceed 30 percent of total project costs (total cost to implement project), a brief gross appraisal will be acceptable for purposes of the feasibility phase. A brief gross appraisal will follow format issued by Chief Appraiser.
- (3) For projects in which the value of real estate (lands, improvements, and severance damages) exceed 30 percent of total project costs (total cost to implement project), a full gross appraisal will be prepared in accordance with the appraisal regulation and guidance provided by EC 405-1-04 and the Chief Appraiser.

b. Attorney's Opinion of Compensability:

As described in paragraph 12-17 of Chapter 12, utility/facility relocations may require preliminary attorney's opinions of compensability. While the practice of obtaining preliminary attorney's opinions of compensability provides a high degree of certainty with regard to project costs during the feasibility phase, such opinions can be time consuming and may provide more certainty than may be optimal for feasibility purposes when potential utility/facility relocation costs do not constitute a large percentage of total project costs. In support of the goals set out in the new planning paradigm described in reference a., Districts shall adhere to the following guidance:

CEMP-CR

SUBJECT: Real Estate Policy Guidance Letter No. 31-Real Estate Support to Civil Works Planning Paradigm (3x3x3)

(1) Where the estimated total cost to modify all project utility facility relocations, including the value of any additional lands that may be required to perform the relocations does not exceed 30 percent of estimated total project costs, the District Office of Real Estate shall, in lieu of an attorney's opinion of compensability prepare a real estate assessment. Such a real estate assessment, will address the following questions:

- (a) Is the identified utility facility generally of the type eligible for compensation under the substitute facilities doctrine (e.g., school, highway, bridge, water and sewer systems, parks, etc.)
- (b) Does the District have some valid data or evidence that demonstrates that it has identified an owner with a compensable interest in the property

If the answer to both questions is yes, then the District Office of Real Estate shall reflect the cost of providing a substitute facility in the Real Estate Plan (REP) and all other feasibility study cost estimates. If the answer to either or both questions is no, the District shall not reflect the cost of a substitute facility in the REP or other feasibility study cost estimates. However, the REP narrative should still include a discussion on the facility with results of analysis and project impact. For cost shared projects, the non-federal sponsor must be advised that the inclusion of substitute facilities costs in the REP or other use feasibility study estimates is for planning and budgeting purposes only and does not constitute a preliminary or final determination of compensability by the agency regardless of whether the cost of substitute facilities are reflected in the feasibility study documents. Using a real estate assessment does not eliminate the need to obtain a final attorney's opinion of compensability prior to execution of the PPA.

(2) Where the estimated total cost to modify all project facility relocations, including the value of any additional lands that may be required to perform the relocations, has public or political significance or the costs exceed 30 percent of estimated total project costs, a preliminary opinion of compensability shall be prepared for each owner's facilities. The level of documentation for each relocation item should be based on the significance of the relocation item to project formulation and estimated project costs.

Real Estate products, such as the REP, must be adaptable and scaled based on the project scope. Additionally, Real Estate must utilize the risk register to highlight areas where cost, schedule or uncertainty is greater in order to manage risk. Going forward, the Real Estate Division will continue to work closely with the Planning and Policy Division, Engineering and Construction Division, the Programs Integration Division and the National Law Firm on the Planning SmartGuide. This SmartGuide will provide more on procedures, tips, techniques and tools for

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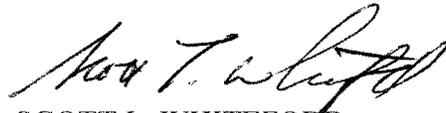
SUBJECT: Real Estate Policy Guidance Letter No. 31-Real Estate Support to Civil Works Planning Paradigm (3x3x3)

specific types of planning projects to aid in implementation of the new Planning Paradigm. All bulletins and updates on the SmartGuide can be found at:

<http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/>.

5. Duration. The policies stated herein will remain in effect until amended or rescinded by Policy Memorandums, Policy Guidance Letters, Engineers Circulars or Engineer Regulations.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



SCOTT L. WHITEFORD  
DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE

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SUBJECT: Real Estate Policy Guidance Letter No. 31-Real Estate Support to Civil Works  
Planning Paradigm (3x3x3)

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