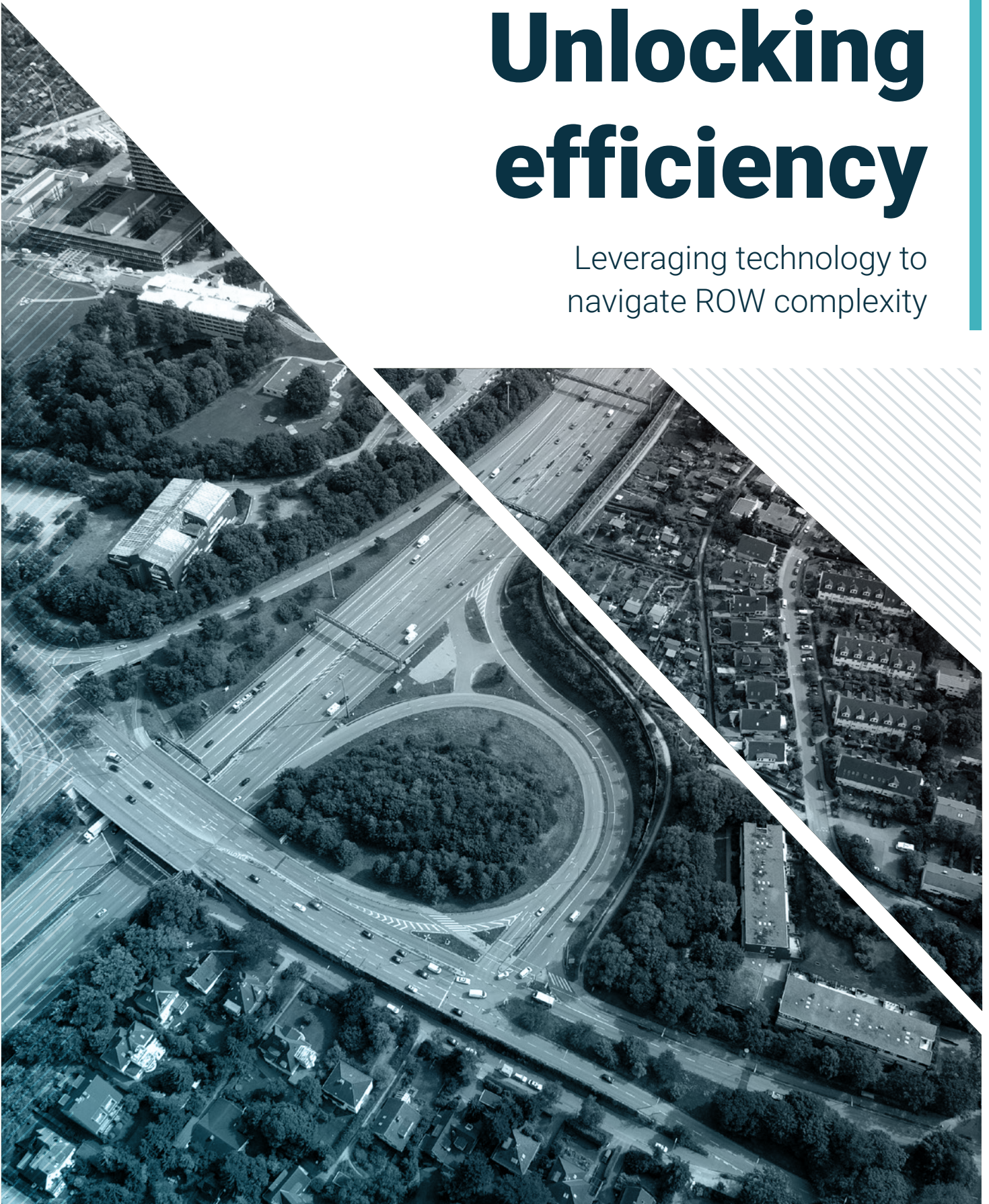


Unlocking efficiency

Leveraging technology to
navigate ROW complexity





The Right of Way (ROW) management process involves overseeing multiple parcels of land, requiring careful attention to detail in each case. While developing a concise plan and schedule is crucial, complications often arise when navigating the complexities inherent to ROW, leading to delays and setbacks. A project cannot proceed if ROW is not acquired for every single property in its trail—progress on the project will have to wait until that last ROW is in place. Effectively managing ROW involves maintaining consistent processes and staying vigilant throughout.

McKinsey estimates that the U.S. government could see productivity gains ranging from \$725 billion to \$765 billion, distributed between federal, state, and local levels, by improving operational efficiencies. Advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drones offer the potential to enhance and streamline ROW processes. While there are plans to significantly increase the adoption of AI within the U.S. government, a recent Federal Oversight Report highlights that it lags behind in establishing responsible policies for acquiring and utilizing such technology from private sector sources.

Leveraging digital tools can significantly improve communication and management, ensuring adherence to timelines and preempting additional complications throughout the process. A well-managed ROW is essential for aligning the anticipated plan with policies and practices, in addition to minimizing the risk of lawsuits. In this guide, we will discuss how a ROW management system can help increase efficiency and productivity.



Spot issues early on

A good ROW system can assist you in gathering information about protected properties governed by [Section 4\(f\) of the USDOT Act](#). It can also indicate the completion status of National Environment Policy Act ([NEPA](#)) procedures, identify potential ROW sharing with utility agencies, and assess the need for possible relocation of residents and businesses early on. Once a property is identified, this system can enable you to gather real-time information to share with everyone involved. Your projects likely involve many pieces of property, if not hundreds, that you need to expropriate, and these sites will have multiple owners and tenants. With a ROW management system, your team can quickly know who the owner is, what visible assets are on the premises, and specific limits of property lines and easements. Early notification can empower your ROW teams to collaborate with

environmental project managers, allowing them to devise schedules that provide ample time to complete all required documentation. This proactive approach ensures projects proceed according to schedule without delays. Similarly, when properties require complete acquisition and are leased by one party from another, teams can anticipate challenges and take anticipatory measures, such as exploring alternative routes or initiating acquisition proceedings in advance. Unlike Excel spreadsheets that typically exist in various departments and in isolation from one another, a ROW system consolidates information, enabling you to track completed structures outstanding agreements, and liabilities accurately. This facilitates proactive settlement forecasting within a secure, permission-based environment.





Manage complexity |



ROW often involves negotiation and compromise between multiple parties. For instance, a highway widening project may require relocating power poles and lines to new locations, purchasing additional land parcels from landowners, and coordinating with utility agencies to move the poles and lines. While the local DOT bears the responsibility for the cost of shifting the power lines, sufficient time must be allocated to acquire property and finalize agreements with utility agencies regarding the costs and schedules for relocating them. With a ROW system, you'll have clear information about property ownership, visible assets, property boundaries, and easements. You can also efficiently handle the documentation, scheduling, communication, and budgeting required to make this move possible, minimizing delays and errors. Your teams can

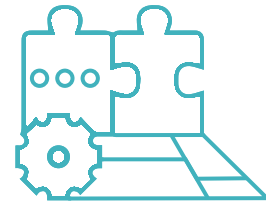
also keep track of the multiple offers and counteroffers for each parcel of land, manage negotiations with landowners, and securely store details, including unique agreements, for legal compliance and auditing. This information can be readily accessed at any time should any issues arise in the future. Furthermore, the system serves as a centralized hub for the ROW process, simplifying permit applications, securely storing signatures, and tracking approvals. It also provides the capability to receive timely notifications regarding the latest updates. The ROW system can help you handle relocation-related processes. Once a deal has been made to acquire land, your teams can manage payments to owners and automate financial tracking.



Establish a unified source of truth

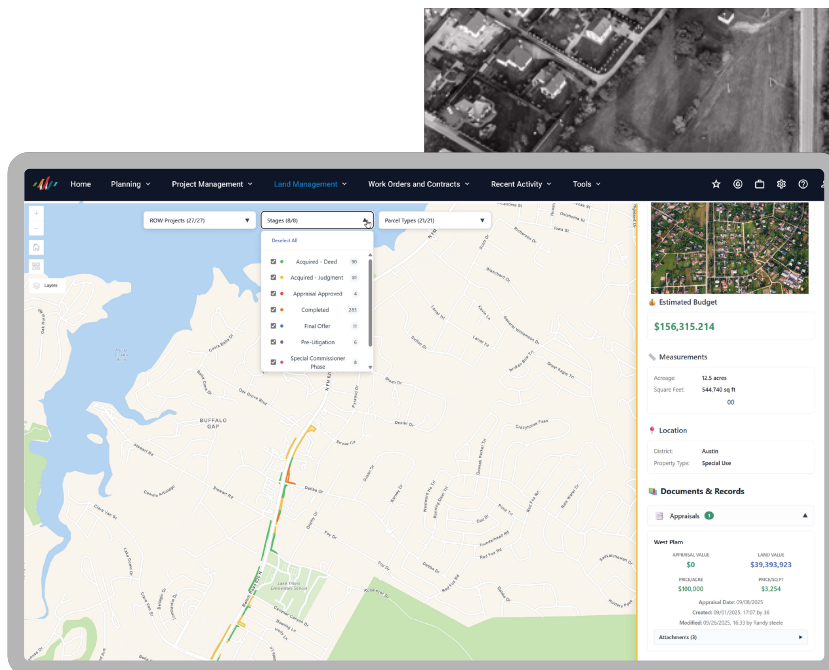
Using a centralized digital solution reduces paperwork and eliminates repeated manual data entry, ensuring your ROW teams stay informed at every stage. Automated reminders minimize the risk of missed deadlines and lapsed processes. While homegrown systems may appear functional initially, they quickly become outdated and disconnected while demanding significant IT resources for maintenance, leading to inefficiencies and increased costs in the long run. Centralizing data allows for quick analysis of hold, lease, and improvement costs through real-time dashboards and reports. You will be able to quickly gather information about the number of properties completed and the number of outstanding agreements, as well as the liabilities. Underpinned by a unified, dependable data source accessible to all team members, collaborative decision-making can become more efficient throughout the process of land acquisition. With role-based permissions, you can ensure that each user only has access to the data they need. Configurable workflows and integration with your current business and financial systems can make sure that the information your teams need is readily available in real time.

Visualize your ROW with GIS integration



It is hard to acquire land inventory if you do not know where it is. ROW projects vary in complexity, ranging from obtaining a single parcel for a parking lot to managing hundreds of properties for road widening projects. Each property requires a thorough assessment, valuation, offer, and negotiation process involving considerably complex paperwork. Integrating GIS with ROW streamlines this process by displaying property-related data on a map, providing context for discussions. It is helpful for your team to view information on a map so they immediately know they are discussing a property in the context of the

corner by the big intersection or the property next to the school. Otherwise, the data is just a list of names and property IDs with no context. GIS can integrate with ROW, exposing ESRI layers to show the latest existing or planned land inventories, utility lines, water pipes, and other geophysical information. GIS integration allows for the clear delineation of project boundaries, geotagging, and visualization of project details, ensuring synchronization of data between systems. This capability enables teams to view land features, utilities, and parcels alongside acquisition and financial data, facilitating optimal route selection without repeated field visits.



Organize and manage your documentation

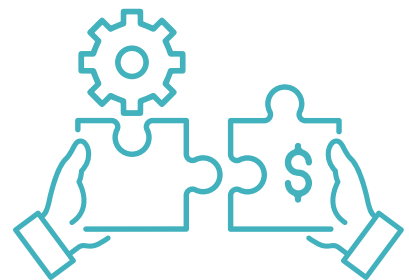


Acquiring land typically involves lengthy periods of back-and-forth correspondence spanning months or even years. This process entails managing deeds, guarantees, property values, partial easements, eminent domain cases, as well as negotiating offers and counteroffers. Organizing this wealth of information by property in a single, easily accessible location can significantly save time, allowing for a focus on urgent tasks. Additionally, you can centrally track and store details of public meetings and hearings so your agency will always have a clear and reliable record of the public outreach program run by your agency. A robust ROW

management system can help you organize paperwork by securely storing approvals and signatures, providing a transparent audit trail of revisions leading to the final sign-off. Your system can integrate with environmental compliance systems and help streamline related clearances with automated notifications. Leveraging and adapting templates provided by the system for contracts and legal documents can help your teams streamline the management of ROW documents, expediting processes and ensuring that correct information is being gathered and entered every time for every project.

Integrate your financial system

A reliable ROW system can easily integrate with other financial systems in your agency, enabling the management of payments to property owners and automating financial tracking. This guarantees timely, accurate, and consistent information, promoting fiscal transparency, improving operational efficiency, and facilitating informed agency-level policy decisions. Integrated systems enable swift analysis of hold, lease, and improvement costs through real-time configurable dashboards and exportable reports, ensuring all parties work from a unified source of truth and allowing effective management of critical aspects of the program.



ROW is easier with the right tools



While digital mapping and remote sensing tools can help create an optimal path to establish ROW, complete project management solutions can help keep the entire process moving with improved communication, document sharing, transparency, and trust.

Below are some features that a good ROW system should have:



Land management

- Land and parcel bank
- Deeds, easements, and expropriations
- Relocation management



GIS/ESRI integration

- Bidirectional data updates
- Geotagging of features
- Property boundaries
- Project ROW map



Surveys and appraisals

- Mobile field surveys
- Appraised values
- Environmental clearance



Legal compliance

- Online audit trail
- Offers and counteroffers
- Electronic agreement

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