Real Property
History

The Real Property Department provides professional advice and services to all County departments and the School Board in the acquisition, sale and lease of all real property used by the County.

The department is responsible for the acquisition of land and easements for new County roads, for the widening and improvement of existing roads and for utility and drainage projects throughout the County; and works with other County departments to acquire sites for schools, libraries, fire stations, parks and office property. The department handles the leasing requirements for the County as both lessor and lessee. In 2011, the department maintains 104 leases consisting of office, residential, and warehouse space and cell towers. Of the 104 leases, 44 of them are for the lease of cell towers or space on existing towers located on County property.

Real Property Department staff is involved in feasibility studies for locations for new facilities to provide services to the citizens of Henrico County. Staff also provides consults with and provides advice to the public regarding the disposition of County interests in real estate, including the vacation or abandonment of roads, alleys and easements and the sale of surplus real property.

The Real Property Department's history reflects the growth of Henrico County from post-World War II through the present.

During the post-war growth of the 1950's, the County would employ the services of real estate agents on an as-needed basis. In 1962, William D. "Bill" Sangster was hired to be the County Real Property Agent and he reported to the County Manager, Mr. Edward A. Beck. Mr. Sangster served in this capacity until 1965, and during his tenure, hired three right of way agents and a secretary. The department was located at 21st & Main Streets in Richmond, Virginia. Over the next thirteen years, the department would be relocated to West Marshall Street and then back to downtown at 22nd & Main Streets which was the old courthouse building. In 1977, the department was relocated to the new government complex at 4301 E. Parham Road, in the Administration Building.

Between the years 1976 and 1978, the office reported to Bill Broaddus, County Attorney. In 1978, the Real Property Agent's office began reporting to Acting County Manager William S. Dewhirst.

In 1965 Edward L. "Ted" Tarr, Jr. left his appraisal duties with the Real Estate Assessment Office to become the second Real Property Agent. He served the County until his retirement in 1992. Under Mr. Tarr's direction, the office grew to include an assistant, three right of way agents, an administrative assistant a part-time office assistant, and two contract personnel for acquisition and research. Over the course of the next several years, the department reported to Deputy County Managers for

Community Development – Philip T. Rutledge, Jr., Virgil R. Hazelett, Thomas W. Blekicki, and Harvey L. Hinson. In 2008, the Real Property Department was realigned to report to the Deputy County Manager for Community Operations, Mr. Robert K. Pinkerton.

On January 2, 1992, Willis W."Will" Pope was hired to replace Mr. Tarr upon his retirement and was under the direction of Deputy County Manager for Community Development - Thomas W. Blekicki until March 25, 1992 when Harvey L. Hinson became Deputy County Manager for Community Development. Mr. Pope had served as Right of Way Manager for Chesterfield County from 1975 to 1992. In 1993 the office was reorganized and the name was changed to the Real Property Department. Mr. Pope was named the Director of the Real Property Department, T.M. "Mike" Briggs was named Assistant Director, and the three agent positions were renamed Real Property Agents. The office also maintained an Administrative Assistant and a part-time office assistant until 1999, when an additional part-time office assistant was hired. Mr. Pope directed the automation of the office, an important factor in the department's ability to handle the increased work load of the late 1990's and early 2000's with the same number of employees. In 2003, the department was once again relocated from the Administration Building to across the street at 4300 E. Parham Road in the new Economic Development Authority Building, where it is currently located. Due to increased work load in 2007, one of the part-time office assistant positions became a permanent full time position. Mr. Pope retired in 2006.

T.M. "Mike" Briggs served as Director during 2006 with Andrew S. "Steve" Price as the Assistant Director. Mr. Briggs retired in 2007.

Between 2006 and 2008, the Real Property Department experienced several retirements of key personnel representing a total of 107 years of service to the County which had a major impact on the department. Director, Will Pope retired with 14 years of service, Administrative Assistant Diana Knight retired with 32 years of service, Director, Mike Briggs retired with 38-1/2 years of service and part-time Office Assistant Frances Vesely retired with 23 years of service.

Between 2011 and 2015, the Department had 2 additional retirements. Senior Real Property Agent J. B. "Jack" Beirne, SR/WA, with 22 years of service, and Office Assistant, Patricia J. Mills with five years of service.

Andrew S. "Steve" Price was Acting Director during 2007 and 2008 until November, 2008 when Mr. Jon B. Tracy was appointed Director of Real Property.

Today, the Real Property Department with its Director, Jon B. Tracy, consists of Assistant Director, Steve Price with 25 years of service; Senior Real Property Agent Keith D. Adams with 22 years of service; two Real Property Agents; Laura E. Long, SR/WA and Dennis E. Parker, R/W-NAC with over six and three years of service, respectively; and Administrative Assistant, Rae M. Willis with 20 years of service.

Virtually no project or expansion of County facilities can take place until the Real Property Department has acquired the property or property rights necessary for the project.

Over the course of the past 54 years, the Real Property Department has been a major participant in the County's growth. We've acquired rights of way, easements, and properties for major Public Utilities and Public Works projects such as Elko Tract, White Oak Semiconductor facility, Lakeside Avenue Enhancement, the County's Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant including the gravity lines and force mains running to it, Ridgefield Parkway, Gaskins Road, Parham Road Extension, Nuckols Road, Frances Road Improvements, Britton Road Overpass over Route 895 (Pocahontas Parkway), Nuckols Road Widening, Crestview Rehabilitation Project, Gillies Creek Sewage Pumping Station, Hungary Spring Road Widening, John Rolfe Parkway, Hungary Road Bridge replacement, Strawberry Hill Sewer Force Main, River Road Improvement Project, Pouncey Tract Road Water Main Project, the North Gayton Road Extension, Shane & Quioccasin Roads Recycling Center, Charles City Road Phase 1 Improvement Project, and the acquisition of approximately 1,800 acres of land in Cumberland County, Virginia for the future Cobbs Creek Reservoir Project.

The Real Property Department acquired property and property rights for most of the following public facilities:

Recreation & Parks – Currently there are 48 park sites in the County.

Fire Stations – Currently there are 22 Fire Stations and a Training Facility.

Libraries – the County currently has 13 library facilities throughout the County.

Schools – Currently, there are 46 Elementary Schools, 12 Middle Schools, and 11 High Schools (including Technical Centers).

The Government Center located at 4301 E. Parham Road, the Public Safety Building at 7721 E. Parham Road, and the Public Works Depot located at 10431 Woodman Road.

Police Central Station located at 7850 Villa Park Drive.

Although virtually unknown by most of the citizens of Henrico and unique to Henrico County, the Real Property Department has played a critical role in the growth and development of the County over the past half a century, and will continue to ensure fair and efficient acquisitions and management of real property in the future.