

St. Louis County Trustee Office Policies and Procedures

Authority

The operation of the Trustee Office is governed by and operated within all applicable Revised Statutes of Missouri (hereafter "RSMo."), including section 140.260 RSMo.

Purpose

The Trustee is responsible for protecting the interest of the taxing authorities by recovering, to the maximum extent possible, the back taxes owed to the taxing authorities, including school and fire districts, community college and special school districts, sewer districts, zoo and library districts. The Trustee has no duty to maintain the physical condition of the properties acquired as Trustee properties.

Function

The Director of Revenue is appointed the Trustee for St. Louis County by order of the St. Louis County Council. The Trustee obtains title to real property by a Collector's Deed of property that was not purchased at the Collector of Revenue's 3rd sale delinquent tax auction. The Trustee will transfer title in said property by a Trustee's Deed to any person who has made and paid the required bid to purchase the property.

Mission

The mission of the Trustee Office is to conduct the sale of properties acquired by the trustee in a fair and equitable manner so that taxes due on these properties are recovered and distributed to the appropriate taxing authority, and properties themselves are returned to the tax rolls where they can once again be productive.

The Trustee Office provides service in an impartial, reasonable and efficient manner in order to fulfill its statutory duties, and strives to have a positive impact on St. Louis County's quality of life.

Zero Bid Transfers – Municipalities

The Trustee considers any legislatively approved request from a municipality to transfer title of a Trustee parcel to a municipality if the transfer improves the quality of life for the community. The municipality is required to pay the recording fees and the cost of the title search, if needed.

Zero Bid Transfers - St. Louis County Departments

The Trustee considers any request from the Director of a St. Louis County department to transfer title of a Trustee parcel to the department if the transfer improves the quality

of life for the community. The Trustee may waive the recording fees and title search costs.

Transfer of Parcels from Collector's Delinquent Tax Auction

Real property that is at least three years delinquent in the payment of real property taxes is offered for sale at the Collector's delinquent tax sale auction that is held annually on the fourth Monday in August.

When a parcel has not been sold after three consecutive Collector's delinquent tax auctions and thus is at least five years delinquent in real property taxes, the parcel may be processed for transfer of ownership to the Trustee.

The Trustee Office orders an ownership search from a title company. That ownership search provides confirmation of ownership at the time of the Collector's delinquent back tax auction, and lists additional information about the parcel, such as liens, judgments and any other claims against the parcel.

A certified letter is sent to the owner(s) of record and any party that has a recorded lien on the parcel. The letter states that the parcel is being processed in order to transfer the ownership to the Trustee and that the owner(s) or any party that has a recorded lien on the parcel has a 90-day redemption period to pay the delinquent taxes and halt the transfer.

The Trustee signs an affidavit stating that the certified letter mentioned above has been sent.

If the parcel is not redeemed and transferred to the Trustee, a Collector's Deed and Certificate of Value are recorded in the Recorder of Deeds Office. After the deed is recorded, the ownership record of the parcel is changed to St. Louis County and the taxing code is changed to "B – St. Louis County Trustee (tax exempted)". The Trustee publishes an online inventory of parcels that are available for bid on St. Louis County's Trustee webpage.

Bid Process

Requirements to bid on Trustee parcels

- Both residents and non-residents of Missouri may bid. However, if a non-resident should become the purchaser, the non-resident shall meet the requirements of Section 140.190.2 & 3 RSMo before a Trustee's Deed will be recorded.
- Only completed, original bid forms are accepted.
- The Trustee Office accepts bids anytime during the year by mail or in person.
- Bidders must be current on their own property taxes, and must include copies of their paid real property and personal property tax receipts with their bid.

Minimum Bid Requirements

The minimum bid amount is the higher amount of the following two options:

- The base tax due, which consists of back taxes and sewer lateral fees, without interest & penalties, all costs incurred (title search, recording fees and postage);
or
- Twenty percent of the Assessor's opinion of value of the parcel and all costs incurred (title search, recording fees and postage). The Assessor's opinion of value is determined during the bid process.

For parcels with less than \$100 owed in delinquent taxes, the minimum bid is \$100.

Extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may result in consideration of a bid that doesn't meet the minimum bid requirements.

If multiple bids are received for the same parcel, all bidders are invited to submit a sealed bid by a deadline established by the Trustee. The highest bid continues in the process and the rest of the sealed bids are rejected. If multiple bids are received by the Trustee that satisfy the minimum bid requirements, the Trustee may recommend, on a case-by-case basis, approval of a bid from an adjoining parcel owner in preference to a bid from a non-adjoining parcel owner without a sealed bid process.

Steps of the Bid Process

The bid process consists of the following steps, and typically takes ten to twelve weeks to complete:

1. **Receipt and Review of the Bid Form** and all accompanying documents to insure that bid requirements are met.
2. **Assessor's Review:** An appraiser from the Assessor's staff performs an on-site physical inspection of the parcel. The report provided by the Assessor includes lot dimensions, description of the surrounding area, the Assessor's opinion of value, and photos of the parcel.
3. **St. Louis Economic Development Partnership Review:** Reviews the bid to determine if the parcel is involved in a redevelopment project. If the parcel is in a redevelopment project, the recommends that the parcel be placed in a "Hold" status and not be made available for bid.
4. **Planning Department Review:** Reviews the parcel to determine/confirm whether it is involved in a redevelopment project, and should be placed in a "Hold/Unavailable for Bid" status.
5. **Adjoining Parcel(s) Notification:** Property owners of parcels that are adjoining the Trustee parcel are notified via letter advising them of the bid received on the Trustee parcel. The adjoining parcel owner may submit a bid on the parcel within ten days of the date of the letter.

6. **Council Member Review:** The Trustee mails a letter to the St. Louis County Council Member in whose district the parcel is located. The letter recommends approval of the transfer of the parcel to the bidder. Also, included with the letter are copies of the bid form and the report from the Assessor. The Council Member may or may not approve the sale of the parcel.
7. **Request for Payment:** The Trustee mails a letter to the bidder requesting payment for the bid amount to the Collector of Revenue, payment for the recording fee to the Recorder of Deeds, and payment for the title report and notification costs to the St. Louis County Treasurer. The bidder is required to deliver the payments within 30 days of the date of the letter. Payment must be in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Personal checks are not accepted as payment.
8. **County Executive Review:** The Trustee sends a letter to the County Executive stating that payment for the bid amount and recording fee has been received, and recommends that the County Executive recommend to the County Council approval of the sale of the parcel to the bidder.
9. **County Council Review:** The recommendation from the County Executive is included on the agenda for the County Council meeting. Typically, the County Executive's recommendation is introduced and then passed after two successive County Council meetings.
10. **Trustee Deed and Certificate of Value Recorded:** The Trustee Deed and Certificate of Value are recorded with the Recorder of Deeds. A strike-off memo and the money collected from the bidder are delivered to the Collector and applied to the appropriate accounts for the subject parcel.
11. **Trustee Deed Mailed to New Owner:** After the appropriate time required for the Recorder of Deeds to record the deed, the Trustee Office is provided with the Deed. The original Deed is either picked up or mailed to the new parcel owner.