

Frequently Asked Questions About Tax-Title Properties

What is a tax-title property?

- Tax-title properties are properties that are acquired by the county due to a lack of bidders at a tax foreclosure sale. Tax-title properties are not owned by the county but are held in trust for the taxing districts.

What laws dictate how they are handled?

- The laws that the county follows are under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.35 and county code 2.105.

How does Thurston County handle tax-title properties?

- The County is required by RCW and Thurston County Code to hold tax-title properties in trust for the taxing districts. If someone has an interest and wants to place a bid on a property, they must complete a Tax-Title Application. The Treasurer's Office then finds out whether the property is practical to build on. If it is, then the Treasurer must take the property to a public auction. If it is not practical to build on, then the Treasurer may sell to the applicant via private negotiation. The final step is the approval of the sale by the Board of County Commissioners.

How much can I bid on a tax-title property?

- The minimum bid must be no less than the original minimum bid when the Treasurer attempted to sell at tax foreclosure auction. This dollar amount can normally be found on the Tax-Deed to Thurston County. However, the Treasurer or the County Commissioner's have the final say of what the sale price will be.

How many tax-title sales auctions do the Thurston County Treasurer's Office have a year?

- The Treasurer's Office holds a public auction only when necessary. If we do, it will be publicly advertised and done via the internet.



How long does it take to get a deed if I am the winning bidder?

- Once the Treasurer receives an application and receives a determination as to whether the property is practical to build on or not, the office will begin negotiation with the applicant. Once a price is agreed upon, the Treasurer will submit an Agenda Item Summary (AIS) to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. Once the transaction is approved, the Treasurer will contact the purchaser for payment. A Tax-Title Deed will be prepared within 30 days of the county receiving payment. If the property must go through a public auction, a date will be scheduled and all parties that completed an Application for Tax-Title will be notified of the date of auction. The auction is held online via Bid4assets. Once the auction is complete and the payment has been received, a Tax-Title Deed will be prepared within 30 days.

If I am a winning bidder and don't like what I bought, can I just not pay or get a refund?

- No. A bid on a property is an irrevocable offer to purchase property. The Treasurer has the right to pursue all available legal remedies. You may also be banned from all future tax foreclosure sales and banned from the company that we use for our online tax sale.

What happens to all the liens on a property that did not sale at tax foreclosure sale?

- In Washington State, the tax lien is the highest priority, see RCW 84.60.010. It is understood that most other liens are extinguished during the property tax foreclosure process. However, the Treasurer's Office makes no guarantees, warranties, or implications, and it is possible a lien holder may dispute their lien. There are specific liens that do survive a tax sale. You may want to consult an attorney for legal advice.

Does the Treasurer's Office know much about the properties?

- The Treasurer's Office knows very little about the suitability of tax title properties for any purpose. Our responsibility is to collect taxes owed to the county. All the information we use comes from other departments and our office knows nothing about condition, land use, or whether structures on properties are livable. Our office is also unable to give any legal advice.

What if people are living on or using a piece of property I purchased at tax-title sale?

- Per RCW 84.64.080(4), all sales are “buyer beware, as is, where is.” If you purchase a property and people are on the property, it is between you and the parties on the property to resolve. The Treasurer is unable to assist in any way.

Before I make a bid, can I go onto the property and look?

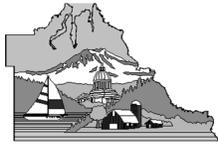
- Although, tax-title properties are held in trust by the county, the county has no legal responsibility to maintain them. We suggest contacting our office and we may be able to meet at the property for a review. We cannot guarantee its condition.

Some of the properties are bare land, can they be built upon?

- In Washington State, all property is taxable unless specifically exempt by law. This means there are many different types of real property, which can include; private roadways, easement properties, oyster and clam beds, wet lands, zoning issues, hills and mountainous topography, property under water, and other properties which have specifications for use per plat maps. You must do your own due diligence and be sure that property you are purchasing can be used for your intentions. A property is not necessarily buildable merely because it is being taxed.

Will I be able to resell or get title insurance on property purchased at tax sale?

- You can sell property purchased from a tax-title foreclosure; however, many title companies may not insure the property. You may get a quiet title action by going through Superior Court. A title company may insure after a quiet title action is complete, but it is the decision of the title company. We suggest contacting a title company before purchase.



THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON

SINCE 1852

JEFF GADMAN
TREASURER

2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, Washington 98502-6080 • 360-786-5550 • FAX 360-754-4683

What are market improvements?

- Market improvements are something being assessed on real property that is a structure of some sort. These may include but are not limited to; houses, mobile homes, barns, garages, lean tos, sheds, and others. Therefore, when reviewing the assessed values of property, you may come across a land value and a market improvement value. When added together it is the total value of the property. Be aware, just because land has a market improvement value, does not mean it is a house or a buildable lot.

May I get on a mailing list for notifications of upcoming auctions?

- No. Thurston County Treasurer's Office does not maintain a mailing list.