

Checklist Before Purchasing Land

Local Amenities and Government

- ❑ Look into the location of your perspective lot and the local government in that area. Is public transportation available? Are schools close? How about shops, parks, libraries, or medical care? Consider amenities as well as necessities associated with your location.
- ❑ Take utilities and road access into account. Access to electric, gas, water and roads is not a factor when buying a home but may be a factor when buying stand alone land. If the infrastructure is not set up you will need to take that into account for the feasibility of building/using that land.

Environmental Matters

- ❑ Investigate the immediate vicinity of the land. Do not take shortcuts here if you are purchasing a large parcel of land. Look for concerns like nearby landfills, industrial uses, highways or other sources of noise pollution. Know if your plot is near conservation land. Feel free to use google maps, the GIS, or FEMA to better understand your land.
- ❑ An environmental assessment can be incredibly valuable in limiting liability for a variety of factors. Soil contamination will be one aspect of the environmental assessment that is a common obstacle for land buyers. An environmental assessment will identify possible obstacles/issues that you can attempt to have the owner resolve before you purchase the land.

Building Permit Obligations and Zoning Challenges.

- ❑ You will want to be fully informed on the necessary permits that you or your general contractor will need to obtain before the construction of your home. Some of the most common ones are listed below.
 - ❑ Water
 - ❑ Public vs private wells, public water hookups, private septic systems, may all require permits or have various obligations associated with them.
 - ❑ Water features can significantly limit your building ability. If there is protected water within your proposed property hire an engineer to evaluate it.
 - ❑ Zoning
 - ❑ Make sure your land is zoned residential if you intend to live on it!
 - ❑ Zoning will also regulate minor but important things like length of driveway, lot lines, the possibility of additions, and other zoning issues that may affect the construction of the home.
 - ❑ Make at least one trip to the county zoning and planning office to better understand any possible zoning challenges.
 - ❑ Subdivision - If the land is within an established subdivision additional regulations may apply. Speak to the county clerk and look at the subdivision plans to better

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understand various rules governing aspects of living and performing construction there.

- ❑ Hazardous Materials - If your property ever had the possibility of hazardous materials on it, like it was formerly zoned industrial, have an engineer evaluate it.
- ❑ Special Regulatory Issues - Your land may be located in a historic district. You can check this with records at city hall.
- ❑ Possible Title Issues - Ask the following questions: are there easements associated with this property? Has the property been foreclosed on? Are back taxes being collected by the town? Seek these answers out.

Are there any endangered animals or plants on the land?

- ❑ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may enforce protections on endangered species within your land. Such obstacles like minimum distances between endangered species and new construction may be present. One can view maps published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that locate federally protected species near your land.
- ❑ If your land does serve as a home to endangered species you may need to obtain additional permits in regards to construction and activities on said land.
- ❑ Do not risk building on the land without necessary permits concerning endangered species. This is a very big deal! Consult an environmental engineer or environmental biologist when in doubt.

Hire an Professionals

- ❑ Make sure you are working with a good agent with experience in land sales as they will be connected to the right professionals and help you through a lot of these processes.
- ❑ Go ahead and hire an expert if you can. Even after the land sale has gone through, an attorney may still be needed to avoid missing or catching anything important.

Info obtained from

<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/checklist-for-purchasing-vacant-land.html>

<https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/articles/the-dos-and-donts-of-buying-vacant-land>

<https://www.realestate.com/articles/buying-a-house/a-quick-guide-to-buying-land>

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