

BUYING LAND IN TEXAS

What You Need to Know Before You Buy

The most important question isn't simply:

“Do I like this property?”

It's:

“Will this property work for what I want to do with it?”

Buying land can be exciting, but it's a little different from buying an existing home. Two properties that look very similar may have completely different restrictions, utility availability, development requirements, or costs.

This guide covers some of the questions we'll consider as you evaluate a property.

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Can You Use the Land the Way You Want?

Before buying land, think specifically about what you plan to do with it.

✓ Build a home	✓ Bring in a manufactured or mobile home
✓ Keep horses or livestock	✓ Build a shop or additional structures
✓ Operate a business	✓ Divide the property later
✓ Hold the land for future use	

Once we know your plans, we can investigate property details that may affect them.

Things to Research

Restrictions

Are there deed restrictions or other recorded restrictions affecting how the property can be used?

Zoning

Is the property zoned? Does the current zoning allow your intended use? If not, is rezoning possible and what would that process involve?

City Limits & ETJ

Is the property located inside city limits or within a city's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)? This can affect development requirements and who you'll need to contact about your plans.

Platting & Subdividing

Is the property already platted? Could replatting be required? If you eventually want to divide the property, can it be subdivided?

TIP: Never assume that because neighboring properties are being used a certain way, you'll automatically be able to do the same thing.

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Can You Get the Utilities You Need?

A beautiful piece of land may not already have the infrastructure you need. Before purchasing, it's important to determine what utilities are available and what may be required to connect them.

Electric

- Is electricity available at or near the property?
- Who is the electric provider?
- What is required to establish service?

Water

- Is public or co-op water available?
- Who is the water provider?
- If water isn't available, what alternatives will need to be investigated?

Septic

Raw land may require an on-site septic system rather than public sewer. You'll want to determine what will be required for the property and your intended development.

Permits & Addressing

Depending on the property and your plans, you may also need information regarding development requirements, permits and obtaining an address.

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What Should You Know About the Property Itself?

What you see while standing on the property is only part of the picture.

Access & Road Frontage

Does the property have legal access? How much road frontage does it have? Access can affect both how you use the property and what you may be able to do with it in the future.

Survey

Is there an existing survey? Will the seller provide one, or will a new survey be needed? A survey can help identify boundaries and other important features affecting the property.

Flood Zone

Is any portion of the property located within a designated flood zone? This doesn't automatically mean you shouldn't purchase the property, but it is something you'll want to understand before moving forward.

What Could Affect Ownership or Future Costs?

Some land-related issues aren't immediately visible when you tour the property.

Agricultural Exemption

Does the property currently have an agricultural valuation? If so, will your intended use allow it to continue? A change in use can have tax implications, so this is something that should be investigated before purchasing.

Rollback Taxes

Certain changes in the use of agricultural land may have tax consequences. If this could apply to the property you're considering, a call to the tax office can provide valuable information.

Mineral Rights

Are any mineral rights excluded from the sale? This should be investigated rather than assumed.

Title

The title commitment provides important information about the property and should be carefully reviewed during the purchase process.

Remember: One question and answer often leads to another that you may not have thought of before. Land due diligence is a process - not a single checkbox.

Before You Make an Offer

Before moving forward with a piece of land, make sure we're asking the right questions.

- Does the property work for my intended use?
- Is there legal access?
- How much road frontage does it have?
- What utilities are available?
- Who are the utility providers?
- What are the water and septic options?
- Are there restrictions?
- Is the property in city limits or an ETJ?
- Is it platted?
- What is the zoning, if applicable?
- Can it be subdivided if that matters to me?
- Is a survey available or will one be needed?
- Is any of the property in a flood zone?
- Does it currently have an agricultural valuation?
- Could my intended use affect that valuation?
- Are mineral rights excluded?
- Have I considered the additional costs associated with developing the property?

You Don't Have to Figure All of This Out Yourself

When I help you purchase land, my job isn't simply to send you properties and open gates. I'll help you identify properties that fit your goals, research available property information, ask the right questions, coordinate showings, prepare and negotiate your offer, and guide you through the contract and due-diligence process.

Some questions require answers from utility providers, municipalities, development departments, surveyors, lenders or other professionals. I'll help you identify what needs to be investigated and who you need to contact so you can make an informed decision.

Ready to Find Your Property?

Let's talk about what you're looking for, how you plan to use the land, your preferred location and your budget - and start looking for a property that makes sense for you.