



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

What to Ask BEFORE Buying Vacant Land

Prior to buying any vacant parcel of land in Ventura County, you should visit the site and obtain answers to at least the following questions. This list may exclude special factors unique to the lot in question, therefore, proceed in a cautious and informed fashion.

PLANNING & ZONING

Contact the Planning Division at 805/654-2488, know the Assessor's Parcel number of the lot in question and ask the following questions:

- Is it a legal lot? If not, how do I make it legal?
- Does the Zoning on the property permit my project?
- Does the County General Plan permit what I wish to do?
- Are any planning permits required prior to building on the lot?
- Are there any zoning violations on the lot?
- Are there any special building restrictions in this area?
- Are there any cultural heritage sites on the property?

BUILDING AND SAFETY

Contact the Building and Safety at 805/654-2771 for property in the western part of the County and 805/582-8064 for property in eastern areas. Know the property's Assessor's Parcel number and address before asking the following questions:

- Describe the structures on the property and are there permits for them? What other permits have been issued?
- Describe the structures on the property and are there permits for them?

ACCESS

- Does the lot have legal access to a public road? (For example, if the only access to the public road system is via a private road over a neighboring property, will the buyer of the lot acquire a legal right to drive over that private road?)

Contact your real estate agent, read the title report, and if necessary contact a land use attorney.

- Does the existing access roadway meet the Fire Department requirements?

Contact the Ventura County Fire Prevention Bureau at 805/389-9710. Request VCFD Form 126.

- If the access road is not adequate, what will it cost to improve the road?

Contact a private civil engineer for a cost estimate.

SANITATION

- Is the lot served by a public sewer system?

Contact the appropriate sewer district.

- What is the sewer connection fee?

Contact the appropriate sewer district.

- Does the sewer district have the capacity to serve my lot?

Contact the appropriate sewer district.

- If a public sewer connection is not available, what do I do?

Contact the Environmental Health Division at 805/654-2811.

- Will I be able to install a septic system on the lot if a sewer is not available?

Contact the Environmental Health Division.

- What does it cost to prepare a percolation report for the septic system?

Contact a private soils engineering firm for a cost estimate.

WATER

- Is the lot served by a public water system?

Contact the appropriate water company or district.

- Does the water purveyor have enough capacity to serve the lot? Ask the water company or district.

- How much is the water connection fee?

Contact the water company or district.

- If a water purveyor does not serve my lot what do I do?

Contact the Environmental Health Division at 805/654-2811.

- What are County Fire Department water requirements?

Contact the Fire Prevention. Request VCFD Form 126 at 805/389-9710.

- Can the County Fire Department water requirements be met?
Verify with the water company.
- Is it possible to drill a water well on my property?
Call the Public Works Hydrology Section at 805/654-2025.
- What does it cost to drill a water well?
Contact a water well drilling company for an estimate.

OTHER UTILITIES

- Can the lot be serviced as needed by gas, electric and telephone utilities?

TRAFFIC IMPACT MITIGATION FEE

- How much will I have to pay?
Contact the Public Works Agency at 805/654-2080.

FLOODING

- Is my lot subject to flooding?
Contact the Ventura County Flood Control District at 805/654-2005.

GEOLOGIC HAZARD

- Is my lot in a geologic hazard area (unstable soils, landslide, earthquake fault, etc.) and will it increase the cost of developing the lot?
Contact a private Engineering Geologist.
- Should I have a geologic report prepared?
Contact Public Works at 805/654-2030
- What does a geologic report cost?
Call a private Engineering Geologist for an estimate.

HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION/ DEED RESTRICTIONS

- Does a Homeowners Association have jurisdiction over the lot?
Contact your real estate agent and read the title report.
- Are there any Homeowner Association or Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R's) related to the development or use of the lot?
Read the title report.
- What deed restrictions exist on the lot?
Contact your real estate agent and read the title report.

SURVEYING

- Should I have my lot surveyed?
Contact the Ventura County Surveyor at 805/654-2066.
- What will it cost to have my lot surveyed?
Contact various private land surveyors and request a cost estimate.
- What will it cost to record a Record of Survey?
Contact the Ventura County Surveyor at 805/654-2066.

BUILDING PERMITS

- What building permits are required to build on the lot?
Contact the Building and Safety Office at 805/654-2771.
- What do building permits cost?
Obtain an estimate of building permit costs after submittal of construction drawings to Building and Safety.

BUILDING COST

- What will it cost to construct a house on my lot?
Tabulate all the cost figures received, contact an architect to design the structure, and have a number of building contractors submit cost estimates for building the structure.

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SHOULD I BUY THE LOT?

Consider all the County and jurisdictional requirements, obtain cost estimates for these improvements, and then it's up to YOU to decide if it's worthwhile to buy the lot. You should keep in mind, if the deal seems too good to be true, there is probably a good reason, and in many cases the development costs may be very high.