



Nine things to check before you buy land

A parcel that looks cheap is usually cheap for a reason, and the reason is almost always on the public record. None of this needs a professional to find. All of it needs finding before the money moves.

1 What is it zoned for today?

Not what the seller says it could be. What the code says it is.

2 Is it in a flood zone?

FEMA's map is free and public. A flood zone changes insurance, financing and what you can build.

3 Where does water and sewer actually stop?

Ask the utility, not the seller. "It is close" has bankrupted people.

4 Is there legal access?

A road you can drive on is not the same as a recorded right to use it.

5 What easements are on the deed?

Pipeline, power, drainage, access. They do not move because you bought it.

6 Does the acreage agree across sources?

Deed, assessor, GIS. When they disagree, one of them is going to cost you.

7 What is next door, and what is coming?

Check the planning commission agenda for the last year and the next three months.

8 Are the taxes current, and are there liens?

A title search finds this. Ask before you are under contract, not after.

9 What did it last sell for, and when?

Public in most counties. A long-unsold parcel at a low price is a question, not a bargain.

This list finds the questions. It does not answer them. A Bird's Eye report does that in writing, cited to the code and the record — but do the free ones first, because two or three of them settle most parcels on their own.