

# I FOUND A LOT FOR SALE AND WANT TO KNOW IF IT IS BUILDABLE?

A buildable lot is a legally defined, zoned, and physically suitable parcel of land ready for structural construction, typically featuring access to utilities and road frontage. Verification requires checking local zoning, soil, and setback regulations, often found via County GIS maps or planning departments, to ensure the land supports building plans.

A lot becomes buildable once an application for a Building Permit with all supporting plans and documents have been submitted to the local Building Department for review and approval. **Only upon the issuance of an approved Building Permit does a lot become buildable.**

## Key Factors of a Buildable Lot

- Zoning Restrictions: Review zoning, setbacks, and land-use regulations with the local planning department to ensure your project is allowed.
- Utility Access: Access to electricity, water, and sewer (or onsite septic feasibility) is crucial for development.
- Topography and Soil: The lot's slope and soil quality must support a foundation without requiring expensive retaining walls or extensive grading or fill.
- Access: The lot must have legal access to a public or private street.
- Setbacks and Easements: Legal restrictions indicating how close to property lines you can build, which directly impact the usable building area.
- Environmental Factors: Land must not be in protected stream buffers, wetlands or a floodplain, which can prevent or severely limit construction.

## Due Diligence Checklist

Before buying a lot, ensure you:

- Check County Geographical Information System (GIS): To help identify various attributes associated with the property (utilities, floodplain, streams, lot lines, elevation contours, prior sales history, etc.).
- Review the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map: Check the local City or County zoning ordinances.
- Order a Soil Test: Verify that the ground can support a foundation with no artesian springs in vicinity.
- Confirm Utility Location: Ensure water, power, and sanitary sewer connections (or onsite septic system approval) are readily available and respective connection costs.
- Obtain Copy of Recorded Plat or Final Plat: Contact County Superior Court's land records.
- Check for Deed Restrictions: Review if an HOA or subdivision has special restrictions or identified as protected Open Space.
- Hire a Surveyor: A professional land survey is crucial to define property boundaries and identify potential encroachments and easements.
- Consult a Builder: Bring a builder to the lot to evaluate its suitability and estimated cost of development and construction before finalizing the purchase.
- Request a Feasibility Study: Consult a civil engineer to prepare a feasibility study on the proposed development.+2

## Red Flags to Look For:

- Lot remains undeveloped after a long period of time since the subdivision was originally platted and developed.
- Frequent prior sales history.
- Seller requiring a short due-diligence period.
- Lot impacted by floodplain, wetlands, streams, or easements.
- No access to sanitary sewer and failure to pass a Level 3 Soil Survey (Percolation Test).
- Land locked with no access to a public or private street.