

SELECTING A HOMESITE

Determine what geographic area or town/city you want to live in.

- Reasons you might select a particular town/city
 - Respected name
 - Resale values historically have been good
 - Quality of schools
 - The type/size/price of home compatible with what you want to build
 - The downtown area is attractive
 - Distance to airport
 - Freeway accessibility
 - Convenient shopping
 - Family and/or friends close by
 - Other

ANALYZING HOMESITE

Write down the following issues on a pros and cons sheet (some can be deal breakers).

- Property is a legal lot or parcel
- Mailing Address
 - Is it same as the town it is located in?
- Residential Zoning
 - town/city/county will have this info
- Allowable Lot Coverage
 - Defined as the amount of land that the building can cover. Foundation footprint (i.e.; if lot is 45,000 square feet and the foundation footprint square feet is 9,000 square feet; the lot coverage is 20%)
 - City/town planning department will have their specifications. Be sure to check whether impervious surfaces (sidewalks, driveways) are included in the municipal's total allowable lot coverage
- FAR (floor area ratio)
 - Defined as the lot square footage divided by the amount of total floor square footage of the building (all floors at or above grade, including garages, covered porches (i.e.; if the lot square footage is 45,000 and the building is 14,500 the FAR is $45,000/14,500=30\%$)
- Volume Restrictions
 - Is there a 3-dimensional-volume restriction
 - 3-dimensional-volume combines square footage and height
 - formulas vary widely with jurisdictions, so be sure to ask what formula is preferred.

- Current Survey (12 months old or less)
 - Access
 - served by a town/city/county road
 - curb cuts-amount and width of each
 - Topography
 - dramatic slope
 - auto access
 - foundation issues
 - Location of Utilities
 - water
 - sewer
 - natural gas
 - electricity
 - Overall size & lot dimensions
 - Is the lot large enough for what you want to build?
 - Building setbacks/easements
 - The town, City or County has established “setbacks” from each edge of a lot. This is the area where you cannot build on a lot.
 - After taking into account the setbacks is there enough left to present the kind/size of home you want/envision
 - Trees
 - Know what removing restrictions are as set by the municipality
 - Know the replacement requirements as set by the municipality
 - Include the added cost of removal and replacement to your budget
 - Consider whether there will be enough or not enough sunshine on your lot
 - Consider if existing tree pose a potential home hazard
 - Water/pond/ creek/shoreline
 - Are there any restrictions?
 - What are the proscribed setbacks?
 - What is the access?
 - Do you have use or ownership?
 - Wetlands
 - If an area has been designated as a wetland area by the Army Corps of Engineers, then there are restrictions as to what you can do in these areas
 - Floodplain
 - Again, this is determined by the Army Corps of Engineers and restrictions as to what if anything can be done with the property apply.
 - There can be insurance requirements associated with Flood Plain properties
- Offsite noise
 - Road/traffic noise
 - Railroad
 - Airport
 - Neighbors
 - Nearby shopping centers/manufacturing/industrial
 - Farms, pigs, cows etc.
 - Specialty uses, sports arenas, car racing, etc

- Offsite smells
 - Sewage treatment plant/lift station
 - Farms, pigs, cows etc.
 - Dying lake/decaying/swamp
- Views
 - What do you like and want to see from the home
 - What do you dislike and do not want to see from the home and how it will impact design
- Weather
 - Heavy rains/lot drainage
 - Strong winds/wind zone
- Homeowners CCR's (restrictions)
 - Can be anywhere from a few to many restrictions
 - There usually is an architectural review committee
 - Style restrictions
 - Size
 - Colors
 - Materials
 - Can have huge impact on the "look" of the home
- Adjoining properties
 - Other homes proximity to yours
 - Quality/size
- Soil testing (bearing capacity)
 - Soil test will have to be done
 - Type of soil can have an impact on foundation design
 - Water table level can have impact on design
 - Soil type (septic analysis if sewer service not available)
 - Tests will have to be done
 - Size of field dependant on # of bedrooms and soil quality, can have significant impact on where you can build the home and footprint

This might not be everything but it will help you get started and prepare you for the process.