



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PURCHASING OR OBTAINING ACCESS TO A VACANT LOT

Why purchase or use a vacant lot?

Vacant lots have tremendous potential to become amenities like community gardens, parks, playgrounds, or gathering spaces that improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods! This guide will provide you with a basic overview of what you or your association should consider before you purchase a vacant lot.



1: Find out who owns the lot

Find out who has ownership of the vacant lot and contact the owner to see if you can use or purchase the property. You can visit the Fort Wayne Geographical Information System (GIS) website at maps.cityoffortwayne.org to learn the name and billing address of the person or entity who owns the lot you're interested in. If ownership of the lot is unclear, or if the property belongs to the City of Allen County, dial 311 to request assistance from staff in the Department of Planning Services.

2: Find out if the lot is for sale or available for use

Once you know who owns the lot, you can find out if the property is for sale or if the property owner (either an individual or entity) will allow you to use their lot for the project you have in mind. If you intend to use or purchase the lot, consider establishing a written agreement or contract- and working with an attorney to ensure you are comfortable with the terms and conditions in the deal that's been created before you start to make any improvements.

You can ask about City-owned lots by calling 311 and asking for a staff member in the Property Management Department. For Allen County-owned lots see the resource list below.

3: Review Zoning & potential uses

There are regulations about what a lot can be used for, or if you are able to build on a lot due to how the property is zoned, floodplain locations, etc. Don't worry, you can call the Department of Planning Services at (260) 449-7607 or 311 before you purchase the lot to find out how it is zoned and what its allowable uses are.

4: Visit (or drive by) the lot

Nothing can take the place of taking a look at a property for yourself. It's a good practice to at least drive or walk past the property to gain a better understanding of its condition and potential. Be sure to obtain permission from the property owner beforehand if you plan to traverse the property itself.

5: Remember insurance & maintenance costs

Remember that once you own a vacant lot, whether you decide to develop the land or not, you will become responsible for that property's maintenance and upkeep. Ongoing costs related to owning a lot can include maintenance, mowing, weeding, insurance, taxes, etc. Don't forget to think about them while you're making your decision.

6: Make a well-informed decision

Like any real estate transaction, buying or leasing a vacant lot can be a complex and important decision. Once you complete your due diligence, weigh the potential costs, risks, opportunities, and benefits carefully to make a decision that works well for you and/or your neighborhood association.



Example of vacant lot activation project "Unity Park" in the Mount Vernon Park Neighborhood. *Photo credit: Google Maps*

For information about vacant lot activation, check out the "Activating a Vacant Lot" Neighborhood 101 Guide.

Resource List

THE CITY OF FORT WAYNE GIS MAP!



ALLEN COUNTY PURCHASE PROCESS



ALLEN COUNTY'S GIS MAP!



This guide was created by the City's Department of Neighborhoods and AMP Lab students in partnership with the Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services and Allen County Indiana. For more information visit our website or scan the QR Code.



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