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NEW HOME CHECKLIST

As anyone will tell you, the single most important criteria in selecting land is its location. But what are the factors that make one location more valuable than another? Some of the more tangible factors are listed below.

- What is the general feeling and character of the property?
- What is the general feeling and character of the neighborhood and surrounding properties?
- Is the property located within an area zoned for residential construction? See council zoning maps.
- Is the property away from any undesirable type of zoning. i.e. industrial or heavy manufacturing? See council zoning maps.
- Are properties contiguous with yours already developed?



- If not, find out if there are any current plans for potential development.
- Determine if the future development could be detrimental to the value or usability of your site.
- Are there any significant construction projects planned that may adversely influence the

- property? i.e. a major freeway or new development. Review council plans to expand arterial roadways, etc.
- Do the adjacent properties have any nice features or potential problems that would adversely effect or enhance the enjoyment of the property?
- Are the values of the houses in the area commensurate with the value of the house you plan to build? These values can significantly affect your future home's resale value.
- Are there good views to the site (curb appeal)?
- Are there good views from, or within, the site around which to orientate the house?
- Are property rates in the area reasonable?
- Is the property near the following:
 - Schools
 - Shopping
 - Places of worship
 - Public transportation
 - Medical facilities
 - Police and fire protection
 - Parks and playgrounds
 - Work, family and friends
 - Other services or amenities

AMENITIES

Does the site have any of the following amenities?

- Privacy
- Woods
- Lake, ocean or river frontage
- Lake Access
- Scenic views
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- Interesting site features such as a pond or wetland, rock outcroppings, old ruins, or mature trees

SERVICES

Availability of services can be an important factor in the cost or practicality of building a house. For example, If water supply is unavailable, a well must be drilled. This may cost \$5,000-\$20,000, or more. Similarly, if a sanitary sewer is unavailable, a septic system must be installed (there are many restrictions on location and size of these systems



that could affect the placement of the house or even the ability to build a house - consult your local council for more information.

Are the following available to the site:

- Water
- Electricity
- Telephone
- Natural gas
- Broadband
- Sanitary sewer
- Storm sewer

- Rubbish collection
- Snow plowing services

ZONING REGULATIONS AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS

Building codes, zoning requirements, and restrictive covenants can affect everything from the location of the house on the site, to the size, height, style, cost, number of garage stalls, etc. Understanding these requirements prior to purchasing the property can save untold headaches in the future. Verify these requirements with your local council.

Is there a reasonable building pad (place to build the house) after subtracting the appropriate setbacks and easements from the property? Setbacks and easements are restrictions placed upon the property by the council that prevent building in certain areas. The most common are property line setbacks. These determine how close you can build to a property line. Easements are similar except they may fall anywhere on the property. For example, a neighbouring property may have an access easement that allows them access across your property in a designated area. Setbacks are often different for the main house than secondary structures like decks, detached garages and sheds. Some common setbacks and easements are:

- Property setbacks (front, rear, and sides)
- Wetland setbacks
- Shoreline setbacks
- Flood plain setbacks
- Service easements
- Access easements
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- View or scenic corridor (neighboring property's right to view through the property - construction may be restricted in this area)
- Are there any permeable area restrictions on the property? Many councils limit the area of the property that may have buildings, patios, driveways, pools, etc. This is to ensure rain water can absorb into the soil rather than running off the property.
- Are there height restrictions?
- Are there other regulations that restrict fencing or retaining walls around the property, location of pools and outbuildings, tennis courts, landscaping and the like? What about restrictions on home offices or granny flats?
- Are there regulations governing trees that may be removed or other disruptions of the natural landscape?
- Is the property within an historical preservation zone or otherwise restricted in the appearance of built structures?
- Are there any restrictive covenants on the property (some properties have restrictive covenants enacted by the developer or seller of the property that establish style, or minimum house sizes or values. Some may require acceptance of your proposed house by a design review committee.

