COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

VACANT LAND

Buyer's Guide

What to investigate before you buy a lot in San Diego County

The short answer: when you buy vacant land, you are really buying the right to build, and that right depends on zoning, legal access, utilities, soils, fire rules, and fees that you cannot see from the street. The safest approach is to verify each of those items in writing during your contingency period, before you commit your deposit.

This guide expands the standard vacant land checklist into plain language. For each item you will find what to confirm, why it matters, and who can give you a reliable answer. It closes with a cost planning table, red flags, answers to common questions, and a one page checklist you can work from.

A home purchase comes with a structure that already passed inspection. A lot comes with questions. In my experience, the buyers who do well on land are not the ones who find the cheapest parcel. They are the ones who learn the true cost to build before the contingency period ends.

How to use this guide

1. Before you write an offer: read Sections 1 through 3. These are the deal breakers: legal lot status, zoning, and access.

2. In your offer: ask for a contingency period long enough for reports to come back. Land studies often take longer than a home inspection.

3. During escrow: work through Sections 4 through 8 with your consultants and use the checklist at the end to track answers.

4. Before removing contingencies: make sure every answer you rely on is in writing from the agency or professional who issued it.

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Start Here: Know Which Agency Has Jurisdiction

Many vacant land questions are answered by the agency that controls the parcel, so the first step is knowing whether the lot sits inside a city or in unincorporated San Diego County. The answer changes which zoning code applies, where permits are issued, and which fees you will pay.

If the lot is in...	Planning and permits are handled by...
An incorporated city such as La Mesa, El Cajon, Santee, Lemon Grove, or the City of San Diego	That city's planning and building department, under its municipal code and general plan
An unincorporated community such as Lakeside, Spring Valley, Jamul, Alpine, Casa de Oro, Rancho San Diego, or Eucalyptus Hills	County of San Diego Planning & Development Services (PDS), under the County Zoning Ordinance, General Plan, and the local community plan
Any location	Water and sewer come from a separate water or sanitation district. Fire review comes from the local fire agency. Septic and wells are reviewed by the County Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ).

Tip: a mailing address is not proof of jurisdiction. A lot with an "El Cajon" or "La Mesa" address can be in unincorporated County territory. Confirm jurisdiction with the parcel number (APN) through the County or city before you rely on any rule.

1. Legal Status and Land Use

These items decide whether you can build at all, and what you can build. Resolve them first.

1. The parcel is a legal and buildable lot

What to confirm: That the parcel was created in compliance with the California Subdivision Map Act and local ordinances, and that nothing prevents a building permit from being issued. If the history is unclear, ask whether a Certificate of Compliance exists or would be required.

Why it matters: Having its own APN does not make a parcel a legal lot. Parcels created by an unrecorded split, or by a deed that skipped the approval process, may not qualify for permits until the problem is cured, which can take months and cost thousands.

Who to ask: City or County planning counter, a land use consultant, and your title officer.

2. Current zoning

What to confirm: The zoning designation, permitted uses, minimum lot size, density, and any special overlay or regulation that applies (for example, design review, scenic, or agricultural overlays).

Why it matters: Zoning determines whether your intended use is allowed by right, needs a discretionary permit, or is not allowed. A discretionary permit adds time, cost, and public review.

Who to ask: City planning department or County PDS zoning counter; parcel lookup tools online.

3. General plan and community plan

What to confirm: The general plan land use designation, the community plan policies that apply, and whether any update or rezoning is pending that could affect the lot.

Why it matters: Zoning must be consistent with the general plan. Community plans can add design, density, or road standards beyond the base zoning, and a pending update can change what is allowed.

Who to ask: City or County planning staff; the published general plan and community plan documents.

4. Setbacks, height limits, and lot coverage

What to confirm: Front, side, and rear setbacks, maximum height, lot coverage or floor area limits, and any additional setbacks from slopes, easements, or watercourses.

Why it matters: Setbacks shrink the buildable area. On narrow, sloped, or irregular lots, the true building envelope can be much smaller than the lot size suggests. Ask your designer to sketch the envelope before you finalize plans.

Who to ask: Planning counter; architect or designer; civil engineer.

5. CC&Rs and HOA building requirements

What to confirm: Whether recorded CC&Rs or an HOA apply, and what they require: architectural approval, minimum home size, materials, height, view protection, fencing, or timing to build.

Why it matters: CC&Rs are private restrictions that can be stricter than the city or County. They run with the land and bind you as the new owner.

Who to ask: Preliminary title report (ask for copies of all recorded documents); the HOA, if one exists.

6. Open space easements or restrictions

What to confirm: Whether any part of the lot is dedicated as open space, a biological easement, or a no build area, and where those boundaries fall.

Why it matters: Open space areas usually cannot be graded, built on, or cleared beyond limited fire clearance. They can reduce usable area significantly.

Who to ask: Preliminary title report, recorded maps, and the planning department.

7. Covenants of improvement and prior conditions of approval

What to confirm: Whether recorded covenants or conditions from the original parcel map require improvements before permits are issued, such as road paving, curbs, undergrounding utilities, or drainage facilities.

Why it matters: These obligations transfer to you. A lot that looks ready to build may require you to complete public or private improvements first, at your expense.

Who to ask: Title report, the recorded parcel or final map, and the planning or public works department.

8. Lot split and ADU potential (if part of your plan)

What to confirm: Whether the lot qualifies for a lot split, a parcel map, an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), or a two unit project under state law such as SB 9, and which local standards apply.

Why it matters: State law has expanded options on many residential lots, but eligibility depends on zoning, location, fire hazard zone, utilities, and access. Do not pay a price that assumes a split until a professional confirms it is feasible.

Who to ask: Land use consultant, civil engineer, and the planning department.

2. Boundaries, Title, and Easements

Know exactly what you are buying and who else has rights to use it.

9. Surveyor's corner monuments identified

What to confirm: That the property corners are located and marked by a licensed land surveyor, and that fences, driveways, or neighbor improvements do not cross the boundary.

Why it matters: Lot lines on online maps are approximate. A survey confirms the true boundary, the actual square footage, and any encroachments before you design or grade.

Who to ask: Licensed land surveyor.

10. Preliminary title report and recorded easements

What to confirm: Every recorded easement, lien, and restriction listed in the preliminary title report, including where each easement sits on the lot.

Why it matters: Easements can allow others to cross your land, run utilities through it, or limit where you can build. Ask your surveyor to plot each easement so you can see its effect on the building area.

Who to ask: Title officer and surveyor.

11. Utility easement issues

What to confirm: Whether overhead power lines, underground pipelines, or utility easements cross the lot, and what restrictions the utility places on building or grading near them.

Why it matters: Utilities can prohibit structures within their easements and may need access at any time. Relocating a line, if allowed at all, is usually costly.

Who to ask: SDG&E or the relevant utility; title report; surveyor.

3. Access and Roads

A lot you can drive to is not always a lot with legal access. Both physical and legal access must be confirmed.

12. Public road or recorded easement access

What to confirm: Whether the lot fronts a publicly maintained road, or relies on a private road or recorded access easement. If private, confirm the easement is recorded, covers the full route, and allows the use you intend.

Why it matters: Without recorded legal access, lenders may not finance, title insurers may exclude coverage, and permits may be denied. Informal access across a neighbor's land can be withdrawn.

Who to ask: Title officer, surveyor, and the city or County public works department.

13. Road width and suitability for your intended use

What to confirm: That the road and easement are wide enough for construction traffic, emergency vehicles, and your finished project.

Why it matters: If the access is too narrow, too steep, or unpaved, you may be required to widen or improve it, which can involve neighbors and additional easements.

Who to ask: Civil engineer and the fire agency.

14. Agency and fire department road improvement requirements

What to confirm: Whether the city, County, or fire agency will require road improvements as a condition of your permit, such as paving, widening, a turnaround, or maximum grade.

Why it matters: Off site road work can become one of the largest costs of a land project and is often not visible when you write an offer.

Who to ask: Public works department and the local fire agency.

15. Road maintenance agreement

What to confirm: Whether a recorded road maintenance agreement exists for a private road, how costs are shared, and whether the road is in good repair.

Why it matters: Without an agreement, California law generally requires easement users to share maintenance in proportion to their use, but disputes are common. Lenders often require a maintenance agreement for private road properties.

Who to ask: Title report; neighboring owners; lender.

4. Utilities and Services

Utility costs vary more than any other land expense. Get written answers and written cost estimates, not verbal assurances.

> **Ask for a "will serve" letter**
>
> A will serve letter (or availability letter) is a written statement from a water or sewer provider confirming it can serve the parcel and listing the conditions. It is one of the most useful documents you can obtain during escrow. Note the expiration date, the required meter or connection size, and any main extension the provider requires you to build.

16. Source of water

What to confirm: Whether water comes from a public water district or a private well, and if public, the distance to the nearest main and the required meter size.

Why it matters: Bringing a water main to a lot can be expensive. In rural areas, a well may be the only option, and some areas have groundwater rules that affect new wells.

Who to ask: The local water district; DEHQ for wells.

17. Water source testing (for wells)

What to confirm: For an existing well, a flow or yield test and a water quality test. For a planned well, local groundwater conditions and nearby well records.

Why it matters: A well that cannot meet household and fire flow needs, or that produces water requiring costly treatment, can stop a project.

Who to ask: Licensed well driller or pump contractor; certified water testing lab; DEHQ.

18. Sewer availability and existing sewer stub

What to confirm: Whether a public sewer is available, whether an existing lateral or stub serves the lot, and which city, County, or sanitation district provides service.

Why it matters: Sewer connection and capacity fees can be significant, and extending a sewer main can cost far more. If no sewer is available, the lot will need a septic system.

Who to ask: The sewer or sanitation district; city or County public works.

19. Septic feasibility, percolation test, and approved septic design

What to confirm: If sewer is unavailable: whether a current percolation test exists, whether an onsite wastewater (septic) design has been approved, and how much of the lot the system and its reserve area will occupy.

Why it matters: Soils that do not drain properly can require an engineered system or make the lot unbuildable for your plan. The septic area and setbacks also limit where the house can go.

Who to ask: DEHQ; a qualified septic designer or engineer.

20. Electricity and power source

What to confirm: The distance to the nearest usable power line or transformer, whether the service would be overhead or underground, and a written estimate from the utility.

Why it matters: Line extensions can cost tens of thousands of dollars in rural settings. California energy rules also require solar on most new homes, which affects design and budget.

Who to ask: SDG&E new service planning; electrician; solar contractor.

21. Gas, telephone, and internet

What to confirm: Whether natural gas is available at the street, or whether the home will be all electric or use propane. Confirm telephone and broadband providers that can serve the lot.

Why it matters: Some jurisdictions encourage or require all electric new construction. Reliable internet matters for resale and daily life, and coverage in rural areas can be limited.

Who to ask: SDG&E; local building department; telecom providers.

5. Physical Site Conditions

The ground itself sets much of the construction cost. Most of these items are answered by engineering reports ordered during escrow.

22. Soil stability and filled lots

What to confirm: Whether the building area is on natural ground or on fill, whether any fill was compacted and documented, and whether soils are expansive or otherwise unstable.

Why it matters: Undocumented fill or expansive soils can require deeper foundations, over excavation, or soil replacement. These costs are invisible on a site visit.

Who to ask: Geotechnical engineer.

23. Soils and geological reports

What to confirm: Whether any prior soils or geology reports exist, and whether a new report will be required for permits. Ask the seller for copies of anything on file.

Why it matters: Most new construction requires a soils report. Reading an existing report during escrow can reveal foundation costs before you commit.

Who to ask: Seller; planning or building department records; geotechnical engineer.

24. Geological hazard zones

What to confirm: Whether the lot is in a mapped earthquake fault zone, seismic hazard zone (liquefaction or landslide), or other geologic hazard area. Review the Natural Hazard Disclosure (NHD) report.

Why it matters: Hazard zones can require special studies, larger setbacks, or engineered foundations, and can affect insurance and resale.

Who to ask: NHD report; California Geological Survey maps; geotechnical engineer.

25. FEMA flood zone and local floodplain

What to confirm: The FEMA flood zone designation and whether the lot is in a locally mapped floodplain, floodway, or drainage course.

Why it matters: Building in a flood zone can require elevating the home, flood studies, and flood insurance. Floodways may prohibit building entirely.

Who to ask: FEMA Flood Map Service Center; city or County flood control; NHD report.

26. Grading permit and use of fill

What to confirm: How much grading the driveway and building pad will need, whether fill will be imported or used to cross any areas, and whether the work will trigger a grading permit.

Why it matters: Grading permits add engineered plans, inspections, bonds, and time. Importing or exporting large amounts of soil adds trucking and disposal cost.

Who to ask: Civil engineer; city or County grading or building department.

27. Hillside and steep slope review

What to confirm: Whether the lot is subject to hillside development standards, steep slope restrictions, or ridgeline and view protections.

Why it matters: Slope rules can limit building area, require retaining walls, and add discretionary review. Hillside construction typically costs more per square foot.

Who to ask: Planning department; civil engineer; architect.

28. Stormwater runoff requirements

What to confirm: What stormwater controls will be required for construction and for the finished project, such as erosion control, detention, or low impact development features.

Why it matters: Stormwater rules are enforced through your permits. Drainage that cannot leave the lot as it does today may require on site detention or easements across neighboring land.

Who to ask: Civil engineer; city or County stormwater or watershed protection staff.

29. Biological resources and the MSCP

What to confirm: Whether the lot falls within the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) area or contains sensitive habitat, wetlands, protected plants, or wildlife that would require a biological survey or mitigation.

Why it matters: Sensitive habitat can limit where you build, require mitigation fees or land preservation, and restrict clearing to certain seasons.

Who to ask: Planning department; qualified biologist.

30. Cultural resources

What to confirm: Whether the lot is in an area with known archaeological or tribal cultural resources that could require a survey or monitoring during grading.

Why it matters: Discovery of resources during grading can pause work. Knowing the sensitivity in advance lets you plan for monitoring costs.

Who to ask: Planning department; qualified archaeologist.

6. Fire Safety Requirements

Much of East County is in a mapped fire hazard severity zone. Fire rules affect design, materials, access, water supply, and insurance.

31. Fire hazard severity zone and defensible space

What to confirm: The fire hazard severity zone designation, the required defensible space clearance, and the building standards that apply (ignition resistant construction for wildland urban interface areas).

Why it matters: Fire zones affect construction materials, landscaping, and the availability and cost of homeowners insurance. Check insurance options during escrow, not after closing.

Who to ask: CAL FIRE hazard zone maps; local fire agency; insurance agent.

32. Fire department access and water supply requirements

What to confirm: Whether the fire agency will require a fire hydrant, minimum fire flow, a water storage tank, a fire lane, a turnaround, or address and gate standards.

Why it matters: These requirements are set during plan review and can add substantial cost, especially on long driveways or lots far from a hydrant.

Who to ask: Local fire protection district or fire marshal.

33. Fire sprinklers

What to confirm: The sprinkler requirements for your planned structure and whether the water service can supply them. Confirm the meter size the sprinkler system will need.

Why it matters: The California Residential Code requires fire sprinklers in new one and two family homes, so plan on them rather than treating them as a possibility. A larger meter may increase water connection fees.

Who to ask: Fire agency; water district; fire sprinkler contractor.

7. Fees and Development Costs

Development impact fees are charged when permits are issued, and together they can add up quickly. Ask each agency for a written fee estimate based on your planned home size.

34. School impact fees

What to confirm: The school fee rate per square foot charged by the local school district(s) for new residential construction.

Why it matters: School fees are collected before your building permit is issued and are based on the size of the home. A lot may be served by more than one district.

Who to ask: The elementary and high school districts that serve the parcel.

35. Road and transportation impact fees

What to confirm: Whether a transportation or road impact fee applies, and the current amount.

Why it matters: These fees fund road improvements tied to new development and are separate from any road work you are required to build yourself.

Who to ask: City or County public works or fee schedule.

36. Park impact fees

What to confirm: Whether a park fee or parkland dedication fee applies to new homes in the area.

Why it matters: Park fees are another permit stage cost that buyers often overlook.

Who to ask: City or County parks or planning department.

37. Water and sewer connection and capacity fees

What to confirm: The meter, connection, and capacity charges for water and sewer service, plus the cost of any main extension.

Why it matters: For many lots, these are the single largest fees in the project. They vary widely by district and meter size.

Who to ask: Water and sewer districts (request a written estimate).

Cost Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to build a realistic budget before you remove contingencies. Costs vary widely by lot, so enter written estimates from your consultants and agencies rather than rules of thumb.

Cost category	Typical source of the number	Your estimate
Survey and boundary staking	Licensed land surveyor	
Soils / geotechnical report	Geotechnical engineer	
Percolation test and septic design	Septic designer; DEHQ fees	
Biological or cultural surveys	Biologist; archaeologist	
Architecture and engineering plans	Architect; civil and structural engineers	
Plan check and permit fees	City or County fee schedule	
School, road, and park impact fees	School districts; city or County	
Water and sewer connection fees	Water and sewer districts	
Utility extensions (power, water, sewer)	SDG&E; districts; contractors	
Grading, retaining walls, and driveway	Civil engineer; grading contractor	
Road or off site improvements	Public works; fire agency	
Fire requirements (hydrant, tank, sprinklers)	Fire agency; contractors	
Construction of the home	General contractor bid	
Contingency reserve	Your lender and contractor	

8. Financing, Taxes, Insurance, and Your Contract

Financing vacant land

- Land loans usually require a larger down payment, shorter terms, and higher rates than home loans. Many land purchases close in cash or with seller financing.
- If you plan to build soon, talk with a lender about a construction loan or a construction to permanent loan before you buy. The lender may want to review your plans, budget, and builder.
- Lenders will look closely at legal access, utilities, and zoning. Issues in those areas can stop financing even when you are ready to proceed.

Property taxes and assessments

- Your purchase price sets the new assessed value of the land. When the home is completed, the new construction is added to the assessed value.
- Expect a supplemental tax bill after closing and again after construction is completed.
- Check the tax bill for special assessments, Mello-Roos (Community Facilities District) charges, or fire and water district assessments.

Insurance

- Ask about liability coverage for the land while you own it, and builder's risk coverage during construction.
- In fire hazard areas, get a homeowners insurance quote for the planned home during escrow so the cost is part of your decision.

Protecting yourself in the purchase agreement

- **Use the right form.** In California, land is typically purchased on a vacant land purchase agreement, which includes terms that a standard residential agreement does not.
- **Negotiate enough time.** Soils reports, perc tests, surveys, and agency answers take time. Ask for an investigation period that matches the studies you need, and build in a way to extend it if an agency is slow.
- **Review the seller's disclosures.** Read the vacant land questionnaire, the Natural Hazard Disclosure report, the preliminary title report, and any reports the seller has on file.
- **Get answers in writing.** Verbal answers from a counter or a phone call are a starting point, not a guarantee. Ask for written confirmation of anything your decision depends on.

Build Your Due Diligence Team

No single person can answer every vacant land question. These are the professionals buyers most often rely on:

Professional	What they help you answer
Land use consultant or civil engineer	Legal lot status, zoning, entitlements, grading, drainage, road and utility requirements
Licensed land surveyor	Boundaries, corner monuments, easement locations, encroachments, topography
Geotechnical engineer	Soil stability, fill, expansive soils, slopes, foundation recommendations
Septic designer and perc tester	Percolation testing and onsite wastewater system design
Well driller or pump contractor	Well yield, water quality, and new well feasibility
Architect or home designer	Building envelope, setbacks, design that fits the site and the rules
General contractor	Realistic construction costs and schedule
Biologist or archaeologist	Habitat, MSCP, and cultural resource surveys when required
Title officer	Recorded easements, CC&Rs, liens, and legal access
Lender and insurance agent	Land and construction financing; liability and homeowners coverage

> **An important note about the role of agents**
>
> Real estate brokers and agents are not qualified to determine the many technical requirements and conditions related to vacant land. My role is to help you ask the right questions, connect you with qualified professionals, and keep your contract timelines on track. Your decision should rest on written answers from the appropriate experts and agencies.

Red Flags That Deserve a Closer Look

- The listing says "buyer to verify buildability" and the seller has no reports, surveys, or agency correspondence.
- Access is by an informal dirt road or across a neighbor's property with no recorded easement.
- The price is well below nearby lots without an obvious reason.
- The lot was created by a deed split rather than a recorded parcel map.
- Water or sewer providers will not issue a will serve letter, or the nearest main is a long distance away.
- A prior perc test failed, or the only septic option is an engineered alternative system.
- Power lines, a drainage channel, or a utility easement cross the middle of the buildable area.
- Steep slopes, visible fill, or evidence of past slides or erosion.
- The lot is in a floodway, a high fire hazard area with limited road access, or a mapped open space or habitat area.
- Recorded conditions require road or utility improvements before any permit can be issued.

A red flag does not always mean walk away. It means the issue needs a written answer and a cost before you remove contingencies.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if a vacant lot is buildable?

A lot is buildable when it is a legal parcel, the zoning allows your intended use, it has recorded legal access, and water, sewer or septic, and power can be provided. Confirm each item in writing with the planning department, utility providers, and your consultants before you remove contingencies.

How long does due diligence on vacant land take?

It depends on the studies needed. A lot with sewer and water at the street may only need a few weeks. A rural lot that needs a perc test, soils report, survey, and biological review can take considerably longer. Negotiate an investigation period that fits the studies before you sign.

Do I need a percolation test?

If the lot cannot connect to a public sewer, yes. The perc test measures how well the soil absorbs water and is the basis for designing a septic system. If the seller has an older test, ask whether it is still accepted.

Are fire sprinklers required in a new home?

Yes. The California Residential Code requires fire sprinklers in new one and two family homes. Confirm the water meter size the system will need, since it can affect your connection fees.

Can I get a loan to buy land?

Yes, but land loans typically require a larger down payment and carry shorter terms than home loans. If you plan to build, ask lenders about construction or construction to permanent financing before you make an offer.

How much does it cost to bring utilities to a lot?

It varies too much to estimate without the facts. Distance to existing lines, terrain, required meter sizes, and district fees all drive the number. Request written estimates from SDG&E and the water and sewer districts during escrow.

Can I split my lot or add an ADU?

Possibly. State law has expanded lot split and ADU options in many residential zones, but eligibility depends on zoning, location, fire hazard designation, utilities, and access. Have a land use professional confirm feasibility before you pay a price that depends on it.

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Vacant Land Due Diligence Checklist

Track each item as you receive written answers. Record the source and date in the notes column.

Property: _____ **APN:** _____

Contingency removal date: _____

#	Item	Done	Source, date, and notes
1	The parcel is a legal and buildable lot	☐	
2	Current zoning	☐	
3	General plan and community plan	☐	
4	Setbacks, height limits, and lot coverage	☐	
5	CC&Rs and HOA building requirements	☐	
6	Open space easements or restrictions	☐	
7	Covenants of improvement and prior conditions of approval	☐	
8	Lot split and ADU potential (if part of your plan)	☐	
9	Surveyor's corner monuments identified	☐	
10	Preliminary title report and recorded easements	☐	
11	Utility easement issues	☐	
12	Public road or recorded easement access	☐	
13	Road width and suitability for your intended use	☐	
14	Agency and fire department road improvement requirements	☐	
15	Road maintenance agreement	☐	
16	Source of water	☐	
17	Water source testing (for wells)	☐	
18	Sewer availability and existing sewer stub	☐	
19	Septic feasibility, percolation test, and approved septic design	☐	
20	Electricity and power source	☐	
21	Gas, telephone, and internet	☐	
22	Soil stability and filled lots	☐	
23	Soils and geological reports	☐	
24	Geological hazard zones	☐	
25	FEMA flood zone and local floodplain	☐	

#	Item	Done	Source, date, and notes
26	Grading permit and use of fill	☐	
27	Hillside and steep slope review	☐	
28	Stormwater runoff requirements	☐	
29	Biological resources and the MSCP	☐	
30	Cultural resources	☐	
31	Fire hazard severity zone and defensible space	☐	
32	Fire department access and water supply requirements	☐	
33	Fire sprinklers	☐	
34	School impact fees	☐	
35	Road and transportation impact fees	☐	
36	Park impact fees	☐	
37	Water and sewer connection and capacity fees	☐	

Questions About a Specific Lot?

Every parcel has its own history, and the answers above change from one lot to the next. If you are considering land anywhere in East County San Diego, I am happy to walk through the property with you, pull the recorded documents, and help you line up the right professionals before your contingency period starts.

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28+ years serving East County San Diego | 1,000+ closed transactions

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Disclaimer

This guide lists some of the issues buyers of vacant land may need to address. It is general information, not legal, engineering, tax, or financial advice, and it is not a complete list. There may be additional issues before a party may perform a lot split or build on vacant land. Brokers and agents are not qualified to determine the many requirements or problems related to vacant land. Buyers should consult building contractors, engineers, other qualified experts, and city, county, or state agencies to determine whether a property will meet their needs. Requirements, fees, and codes change; verify all information with the appropriate agency. Equal Housing Opportunity.