Inspiration Homes / Planning resource

Land & Lot Checklist

The questions to answer about a parcel before you commit to a design.

Drawn from our published guides to building on your own land in Tennessee and choosing a builder in Williamson County. It organizes what you know and what still needs confirming. It is not a survey, a soil test, a zoning determination or a permit decision.

BUILD WITH INTENTION.

How to use this checklist

Start with the land.

The property you build on sets many of the rules. Mark what you already know, note what still needs confirming, and bring these pages to a private meeting or to a walk of the lot.

Use it for

Gathering what you know about a lot you own or are considering, and listing what still needs to be confirmed.

It is not

A survey, soil test, zoning determination or permit decision. Those come from licensed professionals and the permitting office.

Before you close on land

Talk to a builder before you close on a property. An experienced builder can walk the lot with you and identify red flags such as poor drainage, difficult soil, limited utility access or zoning issues.

NO FORM IS REQUIRED TO USE THIS CHECKLIST.

Three checks come first.

Not every parcel can support a home. Your county planning department can answer most of these questions in a single phone call.

1 Zoning

Does the zoning allow residential construction?

- ☐ Confirmed
- ☐ Not yet checked
- ☐ Not sure yet

2 Legal access

Does the property have legal access from a public road?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not yet confirmed
- ☐ Not sure yet

Is there an existing driveway or paved access, or will one need to be built?

- ☐ Existing access
- ☐ Needs a driveway
- ☐ Not sure yet

3 Utilities

Are utilities at the road, or will the home need a well and a septic system?

Water	☐ Public water	☐ Well needed	☐ Not sure yet
Sewer	☐ City sewer	☐ Septic needed	☐ Not sure yet
Electric	☐ At the road	☐ Needs a run	☐ Not sure yet
Gas	☐ Available	☐ Not available	☐ Not sure yet

Reports and restrictions.

A land survey and a soil test inform every decision that follows. Restrictions on the parcel limit where and what you can build.

4 Land survey and soil test

The survey shows boundaries, easements and restrictions that affect where the home can sit. The soil test tells your builder what foundation the ground can support.

Survey	☐ On hand	☐ Ordered	☐ Not yet
Soil test	☐ On hand	☐ Ordered	☐ Not yet

5 Septic and percolation

A lot outside sewer service must pass a percolation test before a septic permit is issued. Failing that test can make a property unbuildable, so investigate it before you buy.

- ☐ Percolation test passed
- ☐ Not needed (city sewer)
- ☐ Test scheduled
- ☐ Not sure yet

6 Flood zones and setbacks

Is any part of the lot in a flood zone? What setbacks apply from property lines, roads and waterways?

- ☐ Checked
- ☐ Not yet checked
- ☐ Not sure yet

7 Restrictions on the parcel

Mark anything that applies, then read the documents before you close.

- ☐ HOA covenants
- ☐ Deed restrictions
- ☐ Environmental protections
- ☐ Architectural review board
- ☐ Easements
- ☐ None known yet

Know the land and the office.

Site preparation can be modest on a flat, cleared lot and extensive on a steep, rocky or heavily wooded one. The permitting office depends on where the parcel sits.

8 Site conditions

- ☐ Cleared
- ☐ Lightly wooded
- ☐ Heavily wooded
- ☐ Flat
- ☐ Sloped
- ☐ Rocky

Mature trees you want to keep, and whether they sit near the home, the driveway or the foundation:

9 Permitting office

In Williamson County, a lot inside a city's limits is permitted by that city. A lot in the unincorporated county goes through the Williamson County Department of Building Codes.

- ☐ Franklin
- ☐ Brentwood
- ☐ Nolensville
- ☐ Spring Hill
- ☐ Thompson's Station
- ☐ Fairview
- ☐ Unincorporated Williamson County
- ☐ Outside Williamson County

10 Rules attached to the parcel

These attach to the parcel before any builder is involved. Mark the ones to confirm.

- ☐ Septic feasibility
- ☐ Floodplain
- ☐ Tree ordinances
- ☐ Hillside and slope rules
- ☐ Subdivision or HOA design review
- ☐ Not sure yet

Bring the address.

Most Tennessee counties require a residential building permit and, where it applies, a septic permit. Some lots also need a grading or stormwater permit. Your builder should handle these.

11 Permits likely needed

- ☐ Residential building permit
- ☐ Septic permit
- ☐ Grading or stormwater permit
- ☐ Not sure yet

12 Questions to bring

What do you want to understand about this lot first?

When you are ready

Already have a lot or a short list of lots? Bring the address to a private meeting and we will walk through what the parcel allows before you commit to a design.

Drawn from the Inspiration Homes Journal: “Build on Your Own Land in Tennessee - What to Know First” and “How to Choose a Custom Home Builder in Williamson County, TN”.

BUILDWITHINSPIRATION.COM