

9 CHECKS

BEFORE YOU BUY

TEXAS LAND

Understand the property.

Verify the possibilities.

Calculate the full cost.

3 QUESTIONS / 6 DOCUMENT GROUPS / 9 CHECKS

A practical buyer's guide with worksheets
and a section for buyers abroad.

READ FIRST

A practical guide to better questions

This book is for people considering Texas land for a home, a long-term hold, a family legacy, or a small business project. It teaches a repeatable research process: define the use, collect evidence, identify uncertainty, and involve the right professional before committing.

You do not need to become a lawyer or engineer to ask better questions. You do need to understand which answers a listing, a map, a seller, and a professional can each provide.

How to use the book

Read the nine checks first. Then use the worksheets with one actual property. Save documents with their dates and sources. Mark each conclusion as verified, preliminary, or unresolved. A blank field means the answer is unknown; it does not mean the property passed.

Scope and limitations

General education only. This publication is not legal, tax, investment, engineering, surveying, environmental, appraisal, or brokerage advice. It is not a certification that a parcel is buildable, insurable, safe, or suitable. Rules, maps, forms, and fees change, and local requirements vary. Verify the current requirements for the exact parcel and intended use with the relevant authority and qualified professionals.

All case studies and dollar figures are fictional teaching examples, not listings, local quotes, valuations, or promised returns. No government agency or cited organization endorses this publication.

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YOUR ROADMAP

3 questions. 6 documents. 9 checks.

The three questions

Use: What exactly must this land allow you to do?

Evidence: What documents and independent checks support that possibility?

Cost: What will it take to acquire, prepare, operate, and eventually sell?

The six document groups

1. Current deed and legal description.
2. Survey and relevant recorded plat.
3. Title commitment and the underlying exception documents.
4. Recorded restrictions, easements, leases, and applicable amendments.
5. Tax statements, appraisal records, and special appraisal information.
6. Parcel-specific feasibility records: provider responses, permit history, engineering or environmental reports, and written cost estimates.

The nine checks

Check	Pages
1 / Ownership, title, and boundaries	5-6
2 / Legal and practical access	7
3 / Intended use and restrictions	8
4 / Flooding, drainage, soil, and wetlands	9-10
5 / Water supply and wastewater	11
6 / Utilities and service capacity	12
7 / Taxes and carrying costs	13
8 / Minerals, pipelines, and competing rights	14
9 / Market evidence and project economics	15-16

Then read: contracts (17), buying from abroad (18), a worked case study (19), worksheets (20-23), glossary (24), and sources (25-26). Page references include the cover.

BEFORE THE NINE CHECKS

Define the job the land must do

A property can be attractive and still fail your plan. Begin with a written buyer brief. “Five acres near Houston” is a search description. “A home plus a permitted workshop within my total budget” is a researchable goal.

Turn a dream into requirements

Describe the buildings, activities, vehicles, people, water demand, operating hours, and timeline you expect. A home with a garden raises different questions from a truck yard, event venue, container storage business, rental cabin site, or subdivision. Tell the authorities and providers the actual use; a vague residential inquiry will not resolve a commercial project.

Separate must-haves from preferences. A must-have might be legal truck access, sufficient wastewater capacity, or a buildable area large enough for the layout. A preference might be mature trees or a particular road. Set a total project ceiling before browsing prices.

Ask what would stop the purchase

Name your deal breakers in advance. Examples include unresolved access, a use restriction that conflicts with your plan, an unmanageable flood exposure, or preparation costs that exceed available capital. An appealing photograph should not change those limits.

Build a decision team early

Use a Texas real estate attorney for legal questions; a licensed broker or agent for brokerage; a registered professional land surveyor for boundaries; and appropriate engineers, environmental specialists, water professionals, and tax advisers for their fields. Ask each professional what their engagement includes and excludes.

Practice: write one sentence beginning, “I need land that can legally and practically support...” Complete it with a specific use, total budget, and deadline.