

Zoning & Use Planning Checklist

Downloadable Guides: FOR SELLERS

Zoning is the single most overlooked factor by rural property buyers — and the most common source of regret after a purchase. Just because a parcel looks perfect doesn't mean you can do what you want with it. Every piece of land in Ontario is subject to zoning by-laws, environmental controls, and planning policies that can shape — or completely block — your intended use.

Zoning & Planning Checklist for Buyers and Sellers

Zoning Type

- ☐ What is the property currently zoned for? (e.g. A1 – Agriculture, RU – Rural, EP – Environmental Protection)
- ☐ Are residential dwellings permitted on the land?
- ☐ Are you allowed multiple dwellings (e.g. farm + laneway home)?

Permitted Uses

- ☐ Is farming allowed?
- ☐ Can you operate a business? (e.g. kennels, workshops, event spaces)
- ☐ Are there restrictions on building sizes, setbacks, or height?

Environmental Constraints

- ☐ Is the land regulated by a Conservation Authority?
- ☐ Are there wetlands, floodplains, or protected features?
- ☐ Is an Environmental Impact Study required for building permits?

Road Access

- ☐ Is there year-round municipal access?
- ☐ Is it a private or shared road? Is there an agreement in place?
- ☐ Are you responsible for maintenance or snow plowing?

Subdivision or Severance Potential

- ☐ Can the land be severed into smaller parcels?
- ☐ Does it meet minimum frontage and area requirements?
- ☐ What is the local policy on lot creation?

Building Permits & Approvals

- ☐ Do you need a Minor Variance or Zoning Amendment?
 - ☐ What department do you apply through (City, Township, County)?
 - ☐ What studies are needed (e.g. soil, water, noise)?
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Final Notes

Never rely on verbal confirmation from a previous owner or realtor. Always verify with the **local planning department** or **municipal office**, and request information in writing. What you can or cannot do on your land will determine its **value**, **marketability**, and **livability** for years to come.