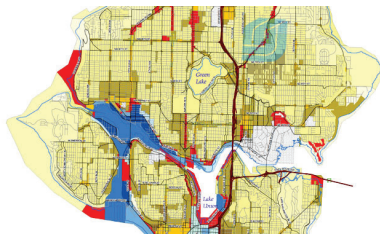


Zoning Resources

Is my property subdividable?
Can I start a home-based business here?
Are there height restrictions?



Buyers or sellers may ask questions like the ones above. The answers may often be found deep in the zoning code for a particular neighborhood or parcel.

Verify Zoning Jurisdiction

When questions about land use or zoning come in to our Tigor Title Customer Service team, the first thing we'll do is verify which jurisdiction the property is in. This is important because zoning can be under the jurisdiction of a city or the entire county. There's no point in calling Pierce County Planning and Land Services if the property is inside the city limits of Tacoma and vice versa.

To make matters more complicated, the same zoning code designation could be used by more than one city, and it could mean different things in different jurisdictions. (For example, R-4 in the city of Bellevue has a minimum lot width of 65' while in Covington the minimum lot width is 30'. Setbacks, minimum dimensions, and height restrictions may be very different from city to city, even if they use some of the same codes.)

Connect with the Right Department

It's important to get the facts. Your client may be basing important decisions on the answers to their questions. Zoning and related issues are subject to changes due to annexations and/or changing regulations. You or your client will want the most current and direct information possible. Your Tigor Title customer service team can help connect you with the right department where an engineer or technician will be able to answer your client's questions with authority!

In some cases, the zoning classification may not be exactly what you or your client was hoping for. Fear not. There may be options. Check with the jurisdiction to see if they might allow a variance for a specific parcel. If all the neighbors in an

area agree, it may also be possible to request a rezone that would affect a whole block or neighborhood. In cases where the surrounding zoning is all like-kind, it may be harder to get a variance or rezone than if the neighborhood is a patchwork of different zoning codes.

King, Pierce, and Snohomish County Resources

To see the unincorporated county zoning on a map, check out these great sites:

<http://www5.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer/>
<http://epip.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/atr/epip/search.cfm>
<http://gis.snoco.org/maps/permits/viewer.htm>

Often cities will provide mapped zoning information as well, often in a PDF format.

Here is a link to a great site with links to city web sites and municipal codes:

<http://www.mrsc.org/codes.aspx>

As with many property issues, there's more to than story than meets the eye. The information provided by your title company is usually just the tip of the iceberg. Buyers and sellers should always perform thorough research before making any big plans or decisions. In fact, it might be a good idea to consult with a land use attorney.

Consider CC&R's

In addition to zoning regulations, another possible factor to consider may be CC&Rs (add hyperlink here to definition of CCRs). A change that fits within the current zoning code regulations may be prohibited by a property's CC&Rs. For example, a property that is zoned SF 5000 in the City of Seattle may have maximum height of 30' in the zoning code but the same property may also have a recorded view easement or plat covenants that limit homes on the lot to a single story. When the various regulations conflict, the rule of thumb would be to abide by the most restrictive among them.

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