

Where is My Property Line?

Basic guidelines to assist you in finding your property boundaries

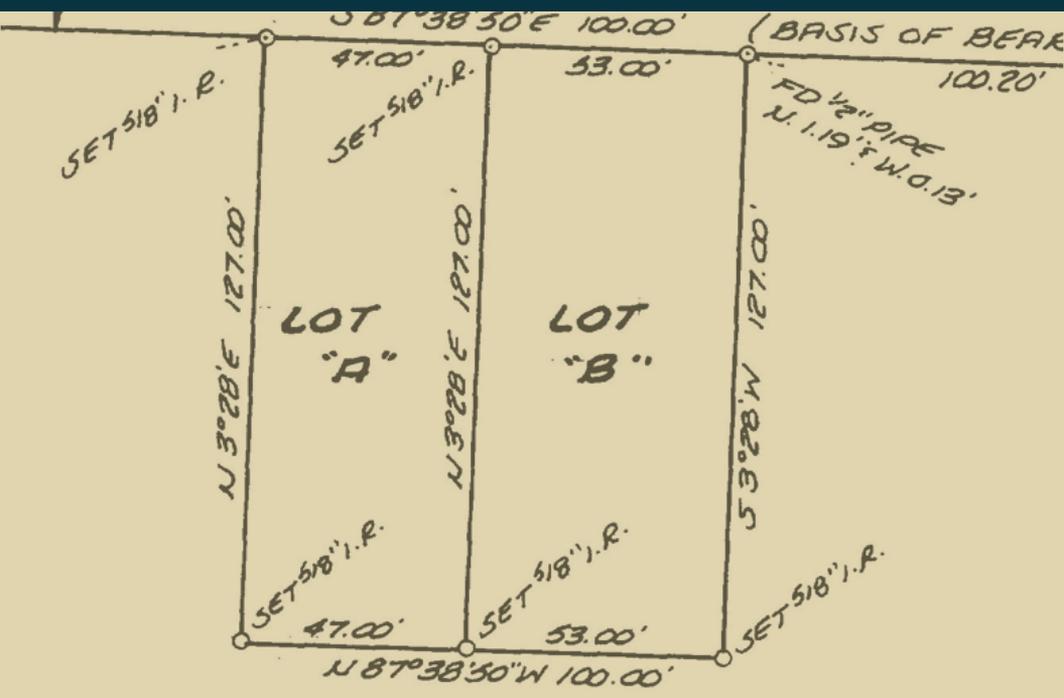
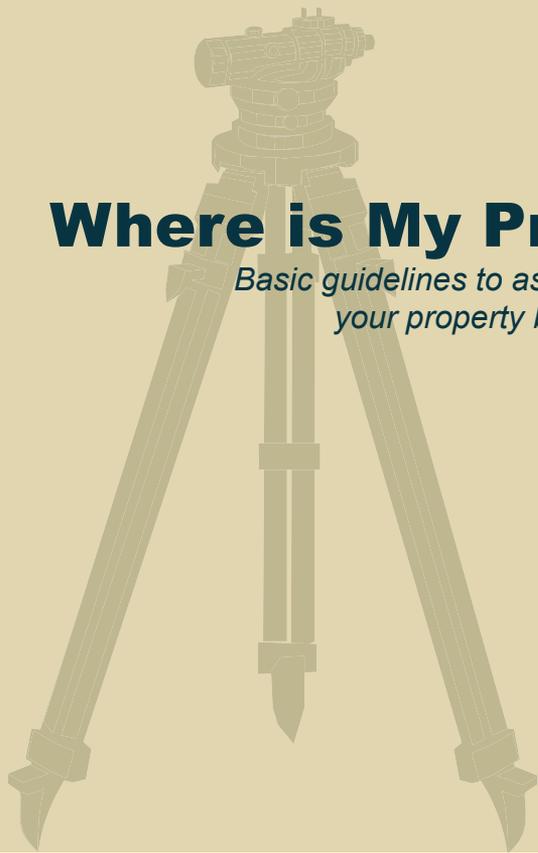


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INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this booklet is being provided as general information about what a property owner can do to help them understand the boundaries of their property. This information is important when building a boundary fence, constructing improvements in the vicinity of the boundary, caring for landscaping, and making the most use of your land. In this booklet you will find helpful general information about boundaries, who can determine them, how they are determined, and how a property owner can take advantage of the survey information that is available to the public. City staff is often asked the following questions:

- *I want to build a fence; how do I know where to put it?*
- *How do I find my property corners?*
- *How do I know what are the dimensions of my property?*
- *There is a dead tree between my neighbor's house and mine. How do I know whose tree it is? Can I cut a branch from the tree?*
- *My neighbor and I have a dispute about our property line. What do I do?*

Assistance regarding these questions is given in this booklet, but first, here are general guidelines.



GENERAL GUIDELINE #1:

The City Survey Section's responsibilities are determining property boundaries of the lands owned by or dedicated to the public within the City of Springfield. We do surveys and keep records about all of the City publicly owned properties. This includes the streets, parks, easements for utilities, and many other public properties. We protect the rights of everyone to use these properties. ***The City Survey staff does not do work on private property boundaries. City staff does not work on boundary disputes between adjoining private property owners. That is the responsibility of a licensed surveyor who works for private citizens.*** Thus, this advice is designed to help you with general questions and provide general information to direct you to the right places and people to get the information you need.

GENERAL GUIDELINE #2:

When it comes to disputes regarding property boundaries and the precise location of a property boundary, the opinion or work of a licensed land surveyor who works for private citizens is required. A map prepared by a licensed surveyor and the property corners that the surveyor sets are the highest accepted evidence of a true property boundary. When there is a dispute, and at unfortunate times when disputes go to court, the boundaries and property corners set by a licensed surveyor are held to the highest importance. The best advice given to solve a boundary problem, dispute, or a potential problem/dispute is to first call a licensed land surveyor, whom you can find in the phone book under "Surveyor" or by researching on the internet.

With that being said, there are places you can research to find out if a map has already been made of your property by a licensed land surveyor, and some guidelines you can follow to help find the corners on your property that were set by a past survey and shown on a map.

GENERAL GUIDELINE #3:

There may be disputes that even survey cannot resolve. These are situations where a person has been using or possessing another person's property for a period of time, usually ten years. Such disputes should be discussed with an attorney of your choice.



A type of property corner monument: a rebar with a yellow plastic cap.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

I want to build a fence; how do I know where to put it? How do I find my property corners?

In order to build your fence, or find a property corner, you need to know where your property line is. It is obviously important that you have your fence on your property, and may be even more important that you and your neighbor are in agreement as to the location of the property line. It is important not to “guess” about the location of the property line. Therefore, you will first want to determine if there are existing monuments or an existing survey map that shows or marks your property corners. With a computer and access to the internet, you can find the survey maps that possibly exist for your property by visiting the Lane County Surveyor’s Office website. The last several pages of this document demonstrate the steps to follow to research on the County website. ***If you don’t feel comfortable in researching your property on your own, you are well advised to contact a licensed surveyor.*** A surveyor can provide services ranging from:

- assisting you in finding existing monuments and an existing survey, which can be inexpensive or
- doing a property survey when a survey didn’t previously exist, which includes research, calculations, setting the monuments and drawing a map, which can be expensive



Standard property corner monuments can be iron pipes, iron rods (or rebar), or sometimes yellow plastic caps on the end of a rebar. This photo shows the top of a yellow plastic cap on a rebar, and the previous page shows a rebar with plastic cap sticking up. They are commonly found both buried and visible. The map on the cover of this booklet shows an example of the dimensions and details you will find on a survey map.

How do I know what the dimensions of my property are?

You can find the maps for your property by accessing the County Surveyor's website with a computer with internet access. The last several pages of this document demonstrate the steps to follow to research on the County website. The dimensions of your property are shown on the **Tax Map**, or are shown on a recorded survey map, subdivision, or partition map of your property if any of these exist. Again, ***if you don't feel comfortable in researching your property on your own, you are well advised to contact a licensed surveyor.***

There is a dead tree between my neighbor's house and mine. How do I know whose tree it is? Can I cut a branch from the tree?

The general answer to that question is that a property owner may trim the branches overhanging his/her property up to the common property line and not beyond. However, because it is a question of law and a civil matter between the two property owners, and we don't know all the factual circumstances regarding your question, we cannot assure you that in your specific situation the general answer is correct. We recommend that you talk with both the neighbor and an attorney of your choice in order to be sure that you are legally correct before cutting any neighbor's trees. If you are not correct, you may be subject to liability and damages.

There are books available in the Springfield Library that can provide further general information. They are "Neighbor Law" by Cora Jordan, Springfield Library Catalog No. 346.7304 J 2006, and "Trouble Next Door: What To Do With Your Neighbor" by Margaret C. Jasper, Springfield Library Catalog No. 346.7304 J 2007.

My neighbor and I have a dispute about our property line. What do I do?

A disputed property boundary is a serious situation and proving where a property boundary is should be the job of a licensed surveyor or an attorney. If you have done the steps listed above to locate a survey map or monuments, have tried consulting with your neighbor, and there is still a dispute about a property line, contact a surveyor or an attorney who can be found in the phone book.

It is important that you not take any action with respect to a disputed property line until the dispute is resolved. Do not tear down the fence, do not build the fence, do not take out the shrubs. Know what the facts are before you do anything, or you may incur damages.

TIPS FOR FINDING PROPERTY CORNER MONUMENTS:

Property corners that are on a survey map can be difficult to find. Professional surveyors use metal locators and precise measuring devices to find monuments. If you have a survey map, for example the map shown on the front page of this flyer, that states there is an iron rod ("SET 5/8" IR") at a corner, then you can try to measure from a monument (one you have located) to find another monument based on the measurement shown. Also there are some equipment rental companies that rent metal locators which you can use to find a property corner monument.

City Survey Section staff would be happy to assist if you have any questions about what the contents of a Survey Map mean or other general questions about these steps.

CONTACT THE CITY SURVEY SECTION:

Phone: 541.726.3753

Email: publicworksmail@springfield-or.gov

Website: www.springfield-or.gov

Survey page: www.springfield-or.gov/Pubworks/technicalservices.htm

Survey Section:

City Surveyor: Chris Moorhead

Surveyor/Plat Checker: Jon Driscoll

Survey Party Chief: Guy Dent

Survey Party Chief: Rick Foss

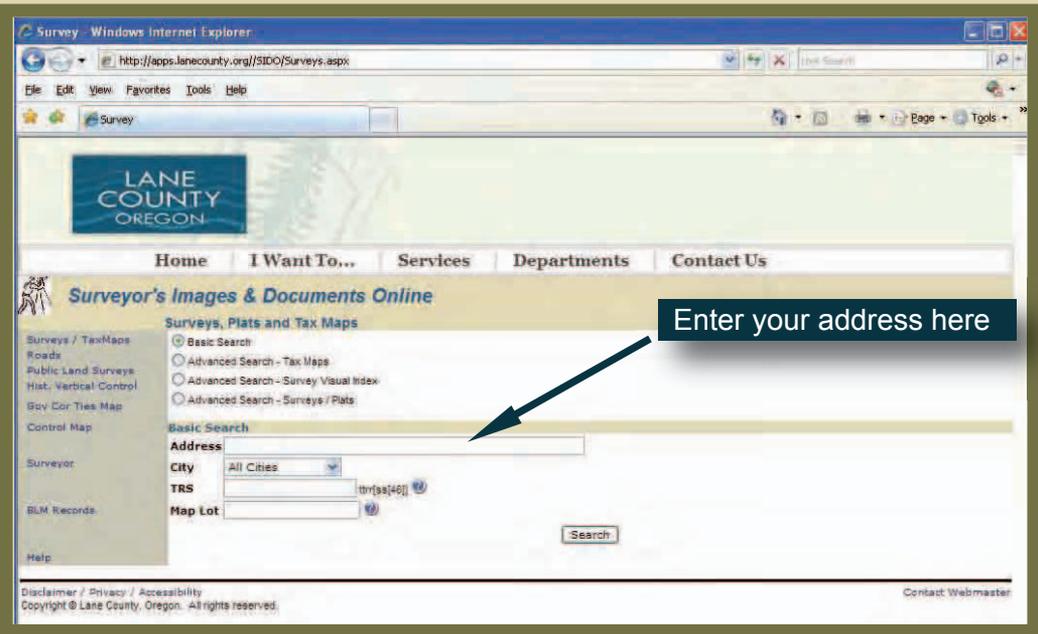


The following pages detail how to search on your own for Tax Maps and Survey Maps for your property.

RESEARCHING ON THE COUNTY SURVEYOR'S OFFICE WEBSITE

By following the steps below you can determine if there is an existing boundary survey and existing monuments for your property. **If by following the steps below you find that there are no existing surveys of your property you are well advised to contact a licensed surveyor, either under "Surveyors" in the phone book or by researching the internet before attempting to determine your property lines.**

You can view Property survey maps and Tax Assessor's maps on the Lane County Surveyor's office website, which is very simple. Go to the website address: <http://apps.lanecounty.org/SIDO/Surveys.aspx>



Enter your address in the appropriate boxes and click "Search". The following page shows an example of what results you will receive.

First note and write down your “Map Lot” number. The last five digits of this number is your Tax Lot number . In the following example the Tax Lot number is 03300. The first eight digits of this number is the “T ax Map” number for the Assessor’s Tax Map that your property is on. In the following example the Tax Map number is 17033531.

The first row of results is “TaxMaps”. There will be one or more listings, and you can click to view the TaxMap by clicking “V iew” under “Image”. Click to open the Tax Map and look over the map to find your Tax Lot number.

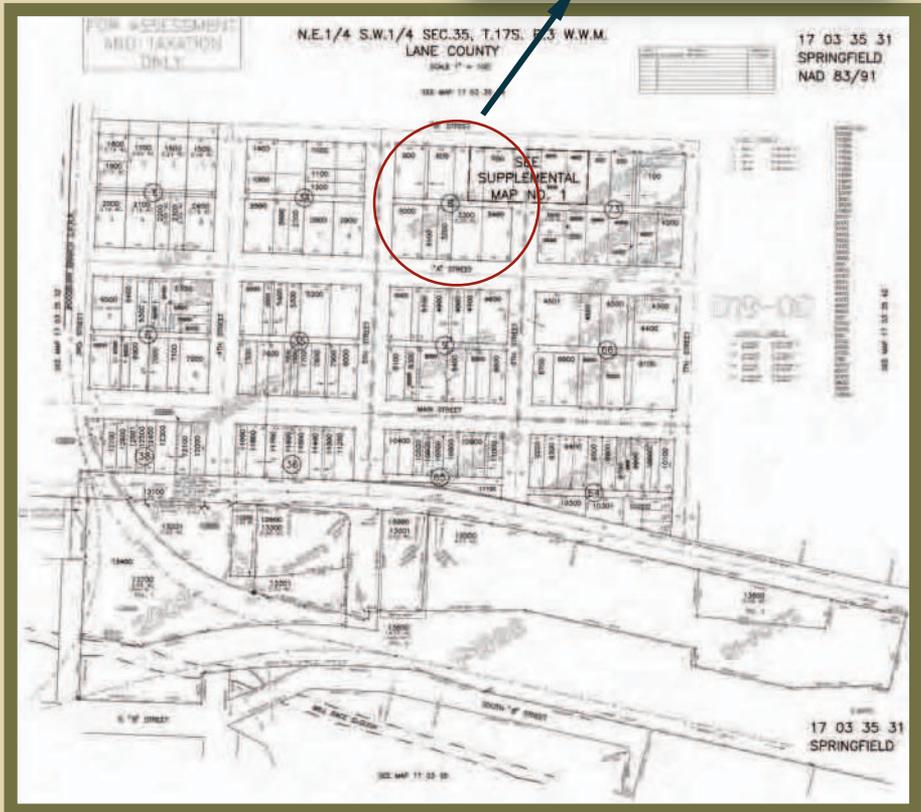
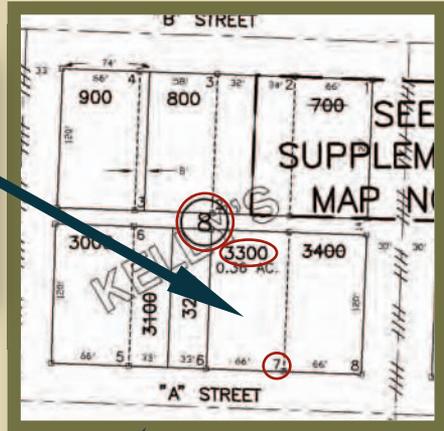
Tax Map: First 8 digits --17033531
Tax Lot: Last 5 digits -- 03300

Address	City	Map Lot	Map Name	Image
122 5TH ST	Springfield	17033531000	17033531 17033531000	Image View
122 5TH ST	Springfield	17033531000	17033531	Image View

Tax Map Number	Survey Number	Document Date	Filing Date	Image	Detail
17033531	5033	02/07/1989		View	SURVEYOR: SPURDIN, E. S. CLIENT: VALLEY VIEW ADD TRS - 17033531
17033531	1284	08/01/1928		View	SURVEYOR: WADSWORTH, GEORGE H. CLIENT: BOUTHWELL LANE CO TRS - 17033531
17033531	1942	02/01/1966		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: SUNSHINE C. CLIENT: WICKERSON, ALMA TRS - 17033531
17033531	3009	08/01/1967		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: PLANT OF SPRINGFIELD TRS - 17033531
17033531	11237	11/01/1947		View	SURVEYOR: GUNDEL, JOHN H. CLIENT: WADSWORTH TRS - 17033531
17033531	8881	03/01/1948		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: BRYAN RADE TRS - 17033531
17033531	98	03/01/1948		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: BLOCK IS SPRING CLIENT: FELD TRS - 17033531
17033531	1084	05/01/1948		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: WILLIAMS, WES TRS - 17033531
17033531	1316	01/01/1948		View	SURVEYOR: WADSWORTH, GEORGE H. CLIENT: WADSWORTH TRS - 17033531
17033531	7981	04/01/1948		View	SURVEYOR: THOMPSON, EARL S. CLIENT: BRADLEY TRS - 17033531

The Tax Lot for this example is 03300, shown by the arrow. This Tax Map shows the subdivisions and partitions for the lots in angled text, and a small number in the lower right hand corner of a Tax Lot is the Lot number for the subdivision or partition. The number in the circle is the block number for the subdivision. Note that for this example, Tax Lot 03300 is in KELLY'S ADDITION, in block 8, and it is lot 7 of the subdivision.

Tax Lot: Number at top of the square -- 03300
Lot Number: Number at lower right hand corner -- 7
Block Number: Number in the circle -- 8

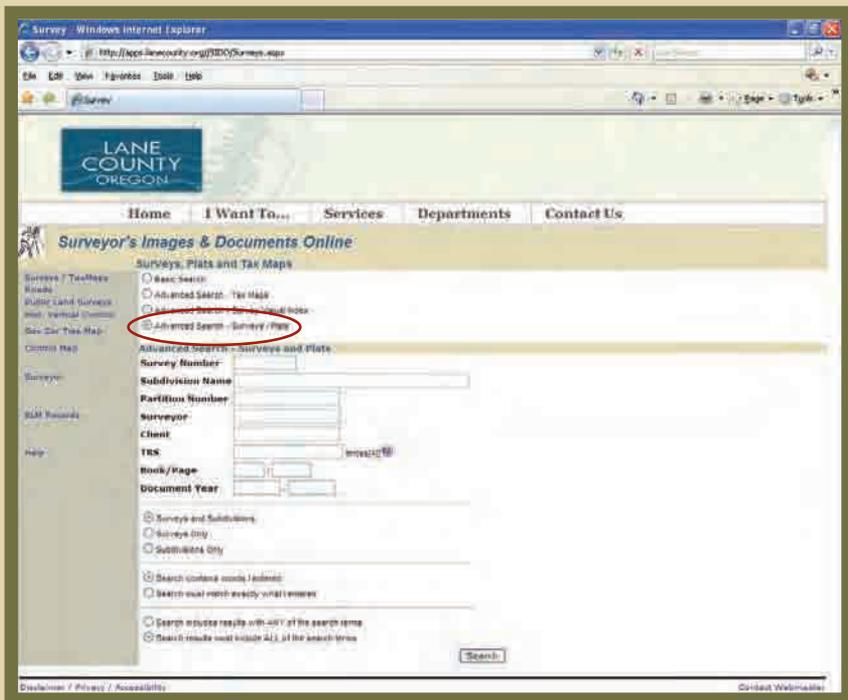


Back to the results for this example, on the row titled “**Visual Index**”, you can click on the **Image, View** to see another **Tax Map** which has outlines around the properties that have recorded Survey Maps, and show a Survey Map number.

Address	City	Map Lot	Map Name	Image View
225 5TH ST	Springfield	1703359103300	17033531	Image View

The recorded Survey Maps, and the subdivisions and partitions are the maps done by a licensed surveyor that will show any property boundary monuments, or “pins” that could be found to exist on your property, that you could find.

To view the Survey Map (by number, example “C-19562”) or the Subdivision (by name, example “Kelly’s Addition”) or the Partition number (by number, example “2003-P1698”), click on the link on the Lane County Surveyor’s Office Website <http://apps.lanecounty.org/SIDO/Surveys.aspx> that says “Advanced Search – Surveys/Plats”



On that page enter the appropriate information for Survey Map, Subdivision, or Partition, “Search”, and then “View” the map. Information will be contained on these maps that will help you find your property lines and monuments.

City Survey Section staff would be happy to assist if you have any questions about what the contents of a Survey Map mean or other general questions about these steps.

Survey Number: Enter the survey map “19562,” numbers only

Subdivision Name: Enter the name “Kelly.” shortening the name is required to obtain matches

Partition Number: Enter the partition number “2003-P1698”



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