

If you have questions about a particular subdivision, contact:

**City of Salina
Development Services Department
Planning and Community Development Division
785-309-5720**

or

**City of Salina
Public Works Department
Engineering Division
785-309-5725**

TDD: 785-309-5747

Website: www.salina-ks.gov



**City of Salina, Planning and
Community Development**

Building or Buying a New Home?



Tips for Avoiding SURPRISES

COVENANTS

In addition to special assessments for internal improvements, it is possible that some subdivisions may be included in a future benefit district to improve an adjacent public facility such as a major street. In some cases, a covenant may have been recorded at the County Register of Deeds office obligating lot owners to pay part of the cost of such future public improvements. In other cases, instead of special assessments, a lot owner may have to pay a capital cost recovery charge or a hook-up fee for a public facility that has already been built such as a water or sewer line or a street or drainage structure.

HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATIONS

Finally, home buyers need to know if their subdivision includes a Homeowner's Association. If there is a Homeowner's Association, each property may be assessed dues for maintenance of common areas and facilities and streets if they are private. The association may also be involved in enforcing architectural controls and restrictive covenants home buyers must follow. Home buyers should check with the developer or the Register of Deeds office to obtain a copy of any deed restrictions or covenants that apply to lots in their subdivision.

Home buyers should also inquire about zoning patterns in the surrounding area. City planners can tell you whether adjacent land is platted and zoned for another residential subdivision or a use such as a shopping center. **Purchasers must be aware that even if vacant land is zoned residential, there is no guarantee it will stay that way.** Things change and developers always have the ability to apply for changes in their original plans. Any property owner can change zoning at any time if City Commission approval is obtained.

NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING

The City Planning Division suggests that home buyers look at the City's Comprehensive Plan prior to making a commitment. The plan will show where the house or lot is in relation to the entire city, and will illustrate how different areas are planned. The plan also includes major street and utility improvement plans, where parks and other facilities are planned, and subdivisions and development projects that have been approved and not yet built.

STREET SYSTEM

Street classifications and street improvement plans should be a concern to any property or home buyer. Is the street nearby scheduled for improvement or widening? If so, who will be responsible for the cost? Is the street my house or lot sits on classified by the City as a residential street, a through street or a collector street? If it is a through street or collector street, it will most likely carry more traffic as the city develops.

On the subject of streets, you should also ask whether the subdivision's streets are public or private. In most cases, they are public. This means the City pays for maintenance, lighting and snow removal. If they are private streets, the home owner will be responsible for a share of the maintenance costs. Site drainage is also a common issue in newly developed areas, particularly as the block begins to fill up and storm drainage patterns become limited. Each lot owner or home builder is responsible to provide positive drainage away from their lot into the City's collection system, which is usually located in the street. The rear yard utility easement does not constitute a drainage collection system. Some of Salina's newer subdivisions have storm water detention ponds which may have to be maintained by home owners in the development. If your subdivision has such a pond, you should check with the City about the ownership and maintenance status of that pond.

WATER and WASTEWATER

Water and sanitary sewers are often overlooked issues. Is your home site hooked up to City water and sewer, or is it connected to a private water line or to a septic system? If it is not currently served by City water and sewer, the property may be subject to a capital cost recovery charge or hook-up fee for tying into that line. The charge is to recover a portion of the construction costs from those benefiting from the system. You should contact the City Planning Division or Engineering Division to see if your property is subject to such a charge.

EASEMENTS

In order to serve your area with utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas, and telephone lines) your subdivision or your lot may contain dedicated utility easements. These easements give the right to use or enter part of your property to install or repair above or below ground utility lines. A copy of the subdivision plat or your mortgage survey should show the location and width of any easements on your property. City ordinances prohibit the placement of any buildings within a utility easement. However, a property owner may place a fence, trees, shrubs or other non-structural improvements within a utility easement. **Be aware that these improvements are placed at your own risk.** The utility company may remove or relocate these improvements without having to restore or replace them.

A property owner may not place fill or any other object, structural or otherwise, that would impede the flow of water within a designated drainage easement.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

Special assessments can also be a surprise to new home owners. These assessments are usually for public improvements within the subdivision such as water mains, sewers, paving and curbing for streets. Charges from a few hundred to several thousand can be assessed by the City against the property. Special assessments may be paid in one lump sum or in installments over 10 or 15 years. This information should be available from your title insurance company.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Here are some steps a home buyer can take to avoid some of the common pitfalls that may occur when building or buying a home in a new or undeveloped area.

When you have found a home or lot you are interested in, it is a good idea to look at or get a copy of the entire subdivision plat and then walk or drive around the subdivision development to see how it is laid out. It is important to know how many lots are in the subdivision and how many have been sold. Knowledge of the schedule for installing public improvements such as streets, water and sanitary sewers can also be beneficial.

LOCAL ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Check the current zoning with the City Planning Division. This will tell you about required setbacks and other building restrictions. You should also be aware of whether or not the property or lot you are interested in is located within the 100 year flood plain. If it is, you may be prevented from constructing a standard basement and may be required to purchase flood insurance as part of your mortgage. In Salina, there are also restrictions on excavation (including basements) within 1000 feet of the city's flood control levee. Basement plans within the 1000 foot zone of the levee must be approved by the City Engineer and will require additional concrete and structural steel to withstand hydrostatic pressures.