Property research resources

Property information records maintained by the City of Milwaukee are available to answer questions about zoning, permitted uses, and code violations and orders. Many of these resources are found on the Internet. Free Internet access is available to the public at all Milwaukee Public Libraries.

What single source gives me the most information about a property in the city of Milwaukee?
From the Milwaukee Development Center's web site (**www.mkedcd.org/build**), click on "Map Milwaukee." Click on "find address." Enter the property address on the lower right portion of the screen. (Hint: if the building, such as a duplex, has multiple addresses, enter the lowest street address.)

Click "submit." When a list of one or more addresses appears, choose the correct address and click on its taxkey.   A map showing the property will appear on the left side of the screen. Data about the property will appear on the right side of the screen. The data includes property owner, zoning, historic status, and tax assessment information

What's the zoning for a particular property?
Check the Internet to determine how a particular property is zoned. Use the Development Center's web site: www.mkedcd.org/build. Click on the button called "zoning and parcel information by address" and follow the instructions.

You can see zoning displayed in a map format if you prefer. From the Development Center's web site, click on the button called "Map Milwaukee." Click on "show map list," and check "zoning." Then enter an intersection or an exact address. A map will display showing the zoning. (A color key for the zoning will be found in the upper right corner of the screen.) Use the "zoom in" tool to look at a smaller area, and the "zoom out" tool to look at a larger area.

What's the zoning for a group of adjacent properties?
View zoning for a group of properties in map format on the Internet.   From the Development Center's web site, www.mkedcd.org/build, click on the button called "Map Milwaukee." Click on "show map list," and check "zoning." Then enter an intersection or an exact address. A map will display showing the zoning. (A color key for the zoning will be found in the upper right corner of the screen.) Use the "zoom in" tool to look at a smaller area, and the "zoom out" tool to look at a larger area.

What does the zoning for a particular property permit (and prohibit)?
Once you know the zoning of a particular property, you may consult the City of Milwaukee zoning ordinance to determine the uses that are permitted and prohibited. The code of ordinances is available online at http://www.ci.mil.wi.us/citygov/council/isysintro.htm. Zoning law is contained within chapter 295 of the ordinance. The zoning ordinance also is available at Milwaukee Public Libraries and at the City's Legislative Reference Bureau, located in room B-11 of City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. The zoning ordinance may be purchased from the Bureau; call (414) 286-2297 for information. Your purchase includes a subscription to an update service.

What if the zoning is DPD?
"DPD" means "detailed planned development." This is a special type of zoning in which the Common Council has approved very specific development restrictions to apply within a geographic boundry. To learn more about the restrictions for a property zoned DPD, contact the Department of City Development's Planning Administration office at (414) 286-5716.

Has this property received Board of Zoning Appeals approval for a special use, use variance or dimensional variance?
The Board of Zoning Appeals maintains a web site listing all appeals during the last 10 years. The site is located at www.mkedcd.org/boza. Click on "online database" and follow the

instructions. To obtain records of BOZA cases older than 10 years, contact the BOZA office at (414) 286-2501.

Does this property have a certificate of occupancy for a particular use? What building permits have been issued for the property?
All certificates of occupancy and building permits issued since 1997 may be viewed on the Internet. Go to the Development Center's web site at www.mkedcd.org/build. Click on the button "permit and violation information by address" and enter the property address. When the record appears, click on "permits." This information is updated every 24 hours.

If you are searching for a certificate of occupancy or building permit issued before 1997, you are welcome to search the Development Center's microfilm archive. It contains permit records dating back to 1900. The archive is available to the public at the Development Center, 809 N. Broadway (first floor) from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Microfilm copying machines are available.

Is this property "conforming"?
To answer this question, you must:
1) Determine the zoning of the property.
2) Examine the zoning ordinance for the district that matches the zoning of the property.
3) Compare the actual circumstances of the site and building to what the zoning ordinance allows for the district.

The comparison involves two key issues: the **use** of the building, and the **dimensional characteristics** of the building and site (such as setback from property line, height, number of parking spaces, etc.). If the actual circumstances of the building match the requirements of the code, the property is likely to be "conforming."

If the actual circumstances of the building do not match the requirements of the code, you need to do a little more research. If the **dimensional characteristics** of the building do not match code requirements, look at microfilmed and electronic permit records to determine if permits were issued for the building or alterations to it. You also can check the Board of Zoning Appeals database for decisions that allow a property

owner to vary from the dimensional requirements of the code.

If the use of the building does not match the requirements of the code, you need to search permit records to determine if an occupancy certificate had been granted for the use. You may find a Board of Zoning Appeals decision allowing a special use or variance for that particular use.

Is this property "legal"?
A property is said to be "legal" if its use and physical improvements were created through approved permits. So you need to check the permit record to answer this question.

All certificates of occupancy and building permits issued since 1997 may be viewed on the Internet. Go to the Development Center's web site at www.mkedcd.org/build. Click on the button "permit and violation information by address" and enter the property address. When the record appears, click on "permits." This information is updated every 24 hours.

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Are there outstanding building code violations or orders on a property?
All building code violations and orders written since 1997 may be viewed on the Internet. Go to the Development Center's web site at www.mkedcd.org/build. Click on the button "permit and violation information by address" and enter the property address. When the record appears, click on the word "view" in the "violations" column. Any violations that have not been corrected will be indicated with an "O" (for "open") in the "status" field. If the word "view" does not appear in the violations column, it means there are no violations or code orders for the property.

Is a property in a flood plain?
The Milwaukee Development Center, 809 N. Broadway (first floor), has copies of Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain maps. They may be viewed from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

FEMA has a web site, www.esri.com/hazards/makemap.html, that allows you to see the flood hazard status of your property. Users select a geographic area, and the site displays the boundaries of the flood area colored in two shades of green. There are 500-year (or .2%) annual chance floodplain areas and 100-year (1%) annual chance floodplain designations. When using the site, Level 1 provides the greatest detail.

The Federal Insurance Agency recommends that determinations using the website generally be made only when structures are located 250 feet or more outside a Special Flood Hazard area boundary (shaded areas). If a parcel lies within 250 ft. of a floodplain boundary, you should refer to paper flood plain maps to make your final determination.

If you frequently seek flood plain information, it may be useful to buy a set of paper maps. Call the Map Service Center at 1-800-358-9616 for purchase information.

Are there outstanding City of Milwaukee special assessments on a property?
Call the Milwaukee Department of Public Works at (414) 286-3316 to receive special assessment information.

What is the assessed value of a particular property? Are property tax payments up to date?
Check the Development Center's web site, www.mkedcd.org/build. Click on "zoning and parcel information by address" and follow the instructions. Hint: if you want information for a building that has several street addresses (such as a duplex), enter the lowest address number.

Where are the property lines for a particular property?
You need to look at a property survey to determine the location of property lines. The City of Milwaukee does not perform surveys for private citizens. However, if a survey has been submitted in connection with a permit application, the Milwaukee Development Center adds the survey to its microfilm archive. To find out if there is a survey for a particular property in the archive, call the Development Center at (414)

286-8211 between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

If the Development Center archive does not have a survey, and you cannot find a survey with your mortgage papers, you will need to hire a surveyor to prepare one for you. Check the yellow pages under "Surveyors – Land."

Does a particular property meet all applicable subdivision requirements?
A building permit is issued only when a property meets all applicable municipal subdivision regulations. These include combinations or division of land by platting or by the Certified Survey Map approval process. So if you can locate a building permit for a property, you can assume that required municipal subdivision regulations have been met. For private subdivision requirements, contact the subdivision's board of trustees, or check to determine whether the private subdivision requirements are on file with the Milwaukee County Register of Deeds, (414) 278-4000.

Are there easements on a particular property?
Easements that have been recorded with Milwaukee County are on file with the Milwaukee County Register of Deeds, (414) 278-4000.

Has a property been designated historic, or is it located in a historic district?
From the Milwaukee Development Center's web site (www.mkedcd.org/build), click on "Map Milwaukee." Click on "find address." Enter the property address on the lower right portion of the screen. Click "submit." When a list of possible addresses appears, click on taxkey for the correct address.   A map showing the property will appear on the left side of the screen. Data about the property will appear on the right side of the screen. The data includes the property's historic status.

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