



## Land Use Planning & Zoning Department

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Land Development Code Enforcement County Surveyor GIS Land Information

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### Using the Green Lake County Survey Records webpage

Surveys that do not change the legal description of a parcel of land can go by many names depending on the purpose or size of the finished survey, but all surveys should be on record with the County. The Green Lake County Land Use Planning & Zoning Department hosts and maintains digital versions of these land records online with no access fee. If you already know the number of the survey document you are looking for, you can find the “Search and View Survey Office Records” website under ‘Related Links’ from the Land Use Planning & Zoning Department’s website.

1. If you don’t have the survey document number, utilize the Department’s Land Records website to find out information about the property, including the location information and previous owners. *Gathering this information before you search Survey Records may help you search faster and more efficiently!* The Land Records website can be accessed using the “Property Tax Data” link under “Related Links” also located on the Land Use Planning & Zoning website.
  - From the land records page, search (by parcel number, address, and/or name) and navigate to the parcel overview page by selecting the parcel number hyperlink. The property information page will have owner information on the top left and Public Land Survey System (PLSS) information on the top right of the page. *This handout is not a crash course in understanding the PLSS ([WI DNR has a great PDF on that available online](#)), but the two pairs of letters under ‘Location’ indicate the quarter-quarter section and quarter section, of the section, town, and range where the property is located.*
  - The legal description (a metes and bounds description, CSM detail, or plat information) is listed near the middle-bottom of the page.
  - From the ‘Select Detail’ dropdown, you can see when the property changed owners under ‘Documents’. Usually, a ‘Warranty Deed’ means a new owner. Take note of the date the sale document was recorded, then view the ‘Taxes’ information to retrieve names of previous owners.
  - For waterfront lots, you will need the legal description, quarter section, AND the **government lot** to search most effectively. Find Gov Lot information by viewing the property on the County’s GIS Viewer, opening the Layers list > PARCEL > Base Map > Government Lot and selecting/checking the box. *A “government lot” is where the straight lines of the original section surveys ran into water (irregular shapes), and were assigned different location descriptors, usually single digit numbers, to simplify the legal description. Again, see DNR handout linked above for more details.*
2. With the information about the property navigate to the “Search and View Survey Office Records” website. Using the PLSS information select from the drop down menus the Section, Town, and Range and select the “Search” button. *All surveys within Green Lake*

County are Town (#) *N* and Range (#) *E*, which are North and East respectively. Once results populate, change the “Results per page” from the default 10 to 20.

- Again, If you know the survey document number you can search the Document number from the box above the Section Town Range drop downs.
3. At the top of the search results, the documents are usually organized alphabetically by the first column, which is document number/name. **Clicking any of the column titles will sort all pages of the list by that column.** If you hover your mouse over the column titles, you should see your mouse icon change, indicating you can click on it.
  4. Utilize the information you obtained in step 1, to help locate the survey for which you are searching. If the parcel is part of a subdivision or plat, sort by “Subdivision”, “Lot”, or “Block”. Using “QtrGov” column will sort your results into their respective quarter sections (NW, NE, SW, SE) or Government Lot (*very useful for waterfront lots!*)
  5. If there are still too many records to sift through, knowing previous ownership may now be useful. The “Description” (furthest right column) will show who commissioned the survey. This can help pinpoint the survey document for which you are searching.

Important: Even armed with all info about a property, records may not be easy to find...

- These databases are created and managed by real humans, so data entry errors have happened. Please let us know if you find an error so we can review and correct it.
- Sometimes the real estate agency facilitated the survey of the property, in which case knowing ownership will not help narrow down documents by ‘Description’ field. In that case, you may need to download and open several documents to find the one for which you are looking.
- Department staff are available during normal business hours to help. Please call the office at 920-294-4156 and we will get you connected to a staff member who can assist you in your search.