The Landowner Guide

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOUR LAND IS WORTH AND HOW TO SELL IT WELL

Land is valued on what can be built on it and how quickly. This guide explains what actually drives a developer's offer, what to gather before you go to market, how to read an offer that looks generous but is not, and which tax questions to raise with your CPA before you sign anything.

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A Note From Patricia



Landowners are often approached directly by someone who knows more about the property's potential than they do. That is not a reason for suspicion, but it is a reason to be informed. I will tell you what a developer is calculating when they look at your acreage, and what parts of your file will either raise your price or hold it back.

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What Actually Drives Value

Two neighboring tracts of identical size can be worth very different amounts. The difference is almost always in these items rather than in acreage.

- Utility access and capacity. Sewer availability is frequently the single largest factor.
- Drainage, detention requirements, and floodplain designation, which reduce usable area.
- Frontage, access, and the shape of the developable portion. Long narrow or landlocked tracts yield less.
- Jurisdiction and entitlement status, including plat status and whether the tract sits in a city, ETJ, or district.
- Easements, pipelines, mineral and surface rights, and any existing leases.
- What has recently traded nearby, and whether growth is moving toward you or has already passed.

Prepare Before You Market

- Get a current survey with a clear legal description. Old surveys and metes and bounds discrepancies delay closings.
- Order a title review early to surface easement, access, heirship, or lien issues while there is time to cure them.
- Collect any engineering, plats, utility letters, soil work, or environmental reports you already hold.
- Confirm ownership is clean, especially with inherited property, multiple heirs, or a trust. This is the most common cause of a failed land closing.
- Document current use, income from grazing, hay, hunting, or billboard and pipeline leases.

How to Read an Offer

In land, the structure of the offer often matters more than the number at the top of it. A high price with a long free look and small deposit is an option, not a sale.

- Look at the feasibility period length and the earnest money amount together. Ask when the money goes hard.

- Understand whether closing is contingent on plat approval, rezoning, utility commitments, or the buyer's own financing.
- Compare net proceeds and certainty across offers, not headline price.
- Understand takedown and staged closing structures, and what happens if the buyer stops taking down phases.
- Ask who pays for rollback taxes, survey, and any required abandonments or easement work.
- Extension fees should be non refundable and applied or not applied to price by clear agreement.

Tax and Timing Questions for Your CPA

These decisions belong to your CPA and attorney, and they should be raised before you sign, not at the closing table. I coordinate their input into the transaction schedule.

- Agricultural or wildlife valuation and rollback tax exposure when use changes.
- Capital gains treatment, holding period, and basis, especially for inherited land.
- Whether a 1031 exchange fits your plan, and the strict timelines that begin at closing.
- Installment sale or seller financing treatment if you want income rather than a lump sum.
- Estate and family considerations if the property is held among several owners.

Selling Quietly

Many landowners do not want a sign, neighbors asking questions, or a family situation discussed publicly. Land can be marketed confidentially to qualified developers and investors with information released under agreement.

How I Work: Transparency, Integrity, and Privacy

I will explain the developer's math to you rather than translating an offer into optimism. Your ownership circumstances, family considerations, and reasons for selling stay confidential.

Questions Worth Asking

Bring these to me, to your lender, or to your attorney. If I do not know an answer, I will tell you and get it from the right professional. Use the space to write down what you learn.

- ☐ Is sewer and water available, and at what capacity?
- ☐ How much of my acreage is actually developable after detention and floodplain?
- ☐ What comparable tracts have closed nearby, and on what terms?
- ☐ When does the buyer's earnest money go hard?
- ☐ Is closing contingent on approvals the buyer may never get?
- ☐ What is my rollback tax exposure and who pays it?
- ☐ Does a 1031 exchange or installment sale fit my situation?

Speak With Patricia

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