

## WHERE ARE MY PROPERTY LINES?

How can you be certain just where your property lines are? City records have property descriptions that may reflect the dimensions of your lot, but not precisely where the lot lines are. Lot lines can be located by a surveyor.

There are several registered land surveyors who can be found by searching the internet for surveyors in your area

Unfortunately, people often want to know where their property lines are because of a conflict with a neighbor. Perhaps they want to put up a fence, or some of the neighbor's belongings are encroaching on their lot. These types of issues are **civil matters**- that is, they are disputes between two parties which are typically settled in court.

A note on long-term encroachments: (such as a fence that has been there for a long time).

In some cases, after 15 years under Michigan case law, the concept of "adverse possession" comes into play. For example, if a survey does show the neighbor's fence has been on your property, if it's been there for 15 years or more, you may not be able to do anything about it. There are also other legal concepts like "easement of necessity," or "prescriptive easements" that may come into play. Consult your attorney for more information.

If you feel like you cannot approach your neighbor to openly discuss and resolve the issues, you may need to seek legal advice. If you cannot afford an attorney, Legal Aide of Western Michigan may be able to provide some information. Their number is (231) 726-4887

The Westshore Dispute Resolution Center can also provide mediation services between neighbors, and the service is often free. Their number is (231) 727-6001.