

# LAND SURVEYING SERVICES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who performs surveys for the City of Dallas?

*The City of Dallas obtains survey data by two methods: The Survey Services Section of the Department of Public Works has the capability to perform land-boundary surveys and produce the documents required for the City to either acquire or sell land. However, the Survey Services Section consists of only ten personnel, with only one field party, so projects too large for our capacity are contracted with private sector surveyors. All land-boundary survey documents produced for the acquisition or sale of City property are submitted to the Survey Services Section for review.*

2. What exactly does the Survey Services Section do?

*-Survey Services provides land-boundary services to all City of Dallas departments  
-Reviews all submittals from private sector surveyors under contract to provide land-boundary surveying to the City for all City departments  
-Provides research to all City departments for City ownership and boundary record documents as well as past construction projects  
-Maintains the Survey Records Vault, providing historical evidence of boundary and ownership information for all City of Dallas properties.*

3. Do you have to be a Dallas resident to access information stored in the Survey Vault?

*No, anyone can have access to these records.*

4. Can this department survey my land for me?

*Survey Services does not conduct surveys for private individuals or proprietors. Those entities should consult a Texas Registered Professional Land Surveyor. More information concerning this topic may be found by visiting the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyor's website at: <https://txls.texas.gov/roster/>*

5. Does Survey Services Section have any surveys from "X" survey company?

*Survey Services seldom has any surveys conducted by private surveyors. It is advised to reach out to the private company or surveyor that conducted the survey.*

6. What is a plat?

*By historical usage, the word "plat" refers to any drawing depicting the results of a boundary survey. However, at the City of Dallas we restrict the meaning of the word "plat" to mean only a subdivision, or addition plat. A subdivision or addition plat is the owner's plan for the development of their property. It lays out all the blocks, lots, streets, alleys and public utility easements. In order to control development within the City of Dallas, the platting process is highly regulated, with most City departments having a role in reviewing and approving the subdivision or addition plat.*

## Land Surveying Services FAQs (continued)

7. Is a "Land Title Survey" the same thing as a plat?

*No. A Land Title Survey is a document prepared for a Land Title Company, to their specific requirements. It usually contains a great deal of topographic information (surface improvements) which is of interest for a title commitment but has no relevance on an addition plat. The Land Title Survey does not establish blocks, lots, street or alley easements or any other easement or public use areas, and it is not a legal document in the way an addition plat is and is not recorded in the Public Records of any county.*

8. Is a block map the same as a plat?

*No. A "block map" is NOT an official plat. In the City of Dallas, block numbers were assigned to all property within the city whether or not it had been platted. In most other cities, block numbers are assigned by the developer at the time of platting. However, in order to track billing for property taxes, the City and County of Dallas adopted the practice of assigning block numbers for this purpose. The maps used for this purpose were originally referred to as "Tax Plat" (remember that any drawing depicting a boundary), which was later changed to "Block Maps."*

9. I need information on a plat or survey. Can the Survey Services Section find the information for me?

*Survey Services does not conduct private research for any reason. Survey Services will assist in helping individuals locate the area where the information they seek may be located in the Survey Records Vault, but it is up to the individual to perform the research to find the information they need.*

10. I need a large amount of information on a large area I am planning on developing, can Survey Services give me the information?

*Survey Services staff may assist individuals to find land boundary, platting/development information, but will not locate and send large amounts of information to anyone. All individuals coming into the Survey Records Vault are responsible for conducting their own research.*

11. I need a new plat. Can I just have a surveyor draw one up?

*As previously stated, the word "plat" is restricted in meaning in the City of Dallas to subdivision or addition plat. If what is required is simply a single property, containing whatever additional information other than just the boundary, you will need to engage a private sector surveyor for that work. If what you need is indeed a new addition or subdivision plat, you will need to start by engaging a private sector surveyor, but the platting process is very complex so you will also need to visit the offices of the Subdivision Administrator and obtain a copy of the platting guidelines for the City of Dallas.*

## Land Surveying Services FAQs (continued)

12. What are developers responsible for once they have secured the proper permits and can begin work?

*If you are developing an area as a developer, you are responsible for establishing necessary roadways, water and sewer, as well gas and electrical lines, as needed.*

13. Who inspects the developed area?

*All development construction is inspected by City of Dallas inspectors and must be built to City of Dallas construction standards.*

14. What exactly is an “easement”?

*An easement is the nonpossessory right to use and/or enter onto the real property of another without possessing it. Easements are specific to the language expressed in the body of the deed which creates the easement. What all this means is that an easement gives a person, or the public, the right to use private property for a specified purpose. The owner retains title, or ownership, of the land, but the land is burdened with that right of use by a third party.*