How To Find Property Lines
Using GISsurfer And Free Government GIS Data

By Joseph Elfelt https://mappingsupport.com
Mastodon social media: https://m.ai6yr.org/@mappingsupport
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/GISsurfer

There are a number of phone apps you can use to see GIS data that shows approximate property lines. Popular examples include LandGlide, Regrid, onX. Those apps show you a **copy** of the GIS parcel data maintained by most counties. Many people use those phone apps to try and find property lines.

A bit more than half of the states are hosting GIS parcel line data for the entire state in a single GIS layer. You can use **GISsurfer** to view any of that data with **no ads, no tracking, no signup and no fees**. GISsurfer is a general purpose web map that I developed as a public service and part of my way to 'pay it forward'. GISsurfer maps open in your browser on almost any device. To turn on the **geolocation feature** tap Menu > My location.

For example, the following link opens GISsurfer and displays GIS parcel lines for a random spot in Washington State.
https://mappingsupport.com/p2/gissurfer.php?center=48.133459,-122.186508&zoom=15&basemap=USA_basemap&overlay=Washington_all_parcels&data=https://mappingsupport.com/p2/parcels/USA_public_private_parcels.txt

If you open the map and click any parcel then you will see a popup with all the attribute data for the parcel you clicked. Part of the attribute data includes a link you can click to see more details about that parcel. Keep in mind that the amount of parcel attribute data varies widely from one state   to the next.

The GISsurfer map link you see above can also help you find property lines for many other states. To check to see if your state is included:
1. Open the map
2. Click the basemap button (next to the Menu button)
3. Look under the 'Overlay' heading and click Washington to turn that GIS data off. Mobile users need to scroll down to the overlay section.
4. If your state is listed then close the overlay list. Desktop users do this by moving your cursor out of the dropdown and onto the map.
5. Click Menu > Search. Enter an address or town and state.
6. Click the basemap button to open the overlay list and click your state to turn on the GIS parcel line data.

For some states the GIS parcel line data displays with a solid background. That is a limitation of how the data is defined on the GIS server.

If you would like to learn more about GISsurfer please see https://gissurfer.com. There are links to both video and PDF tutorials on the Help page.

What's the catch?

There isn't one. I am making this map freely available simply because I can.

Caution!

GIS property line data is not a survey and does not authoritatively find property lines. Over the years I have seen a great deal of GIS parcel line data. Sometimes the data is reasonably good. Other times the GIS property lines for entire neighborhoods are shifted. Another problem that happens is that the shape of the property in the GIS data does not match the shape of the property according to the legal description on the deed. And if you are looking for existing survey stakes where your property line only has a slight bend, typically GIS parcel line data will not be useful.

Want help?

If the GISsurfer map link on the prior page does not include your state or the GIS data for your property looks wrong, then you might take a look at https://FindPropertyLines.com. This is a consulting service I offer which uses either (1) a survey or (2) the legal description from your deed. That data is processed with software I developed. You will get a GISsurfer map link that displays your approximate property lines on the Google aerial. Client's often use this service to help find 'lost' survey stakes.