

Helpful Tips for Locating Property Pins

The City of Grimes does not provide surveying or property pin location services. However, the following tips may help you in locating your property pins.

What are Property Pins?

Property pins are thin iron bars, two to three feet long, and sometimes capped with plastic, which the original survey crew inserted on the property lines. If your property is a platted lot, there should be property pins located at all corners of your property. The top of the cap should be at ground level. However, they may get pushed underground over time. Surveyors may also place a metal T-bar post at the property pin location.

How to Locate Property Pins

- Contact a Surveyor (Recommended by the City)
 - Although surveys can be more costly than other methods, the most accurate way to locate property lines is to hire a licensed land surveyor. They can visit your property and place markers to define the property boundary. It is often best to consult with a few surveying companies to determine which service is best for your needs. Land surveys are also helpful to resolve or avoid property line disputes with neighbors.
- Obtain a Plat Map of Your Property
 - Plat maps will provide the property dimensions, easements, and often the right-of-way (ROW) information. The maps can be accessed on the County Assessor websites. If you have questions about searching their sites or reading the maps, contact your County Assessor.
 - [Polk County Assessor](#) - Search for your address and then click the link to “Bigger Map” to see the map.
 - [Dallas County Assessor](#) - Search by property owner or by address.

- Measure from the Centerline of the Road
 - Using your plat map as a guide, measure half the distance of the total ROW from the road centerline toward your property. **Be safe when doing so!** The road along with any shoulders, ditches and sidewalks are all included within the ROW. Your property line should not be measured from the edge of the road. It should be measured from the center of the ROW. This will provide an approximate location of the front property line. In a newer subdivision, property pins are normally located within 12” of the sidewalk on the side closest to the house. In very old subdivisions, the front property line may actually be under the paved road.

- Check the Sidewalks
 - Examine the lines that are cut in the sidewalk in front of the house. Oftentimes the contractor who poured the sidewalk started and stopped on the property lines, so those cut lines may coincide with the edges of your property. The appearance of the concrete on your side of the property may be slightly different from that on your neighbor’s side. These tricks may help you locate the side property lines.

- Use a Metal Detector
 - You may be able to rent a metal detector from a hardware store. Move the metal detector over the ground beginning about one (1) foot inside the sidewalk toward the house to locate the property pin. The pins may be buried just under the surface, or up to a foot below. **If you need to dig to find the pins, call Iowa One Call (811) a few days before digging.** The utility company will come out and mark any buried lines so you don’t accidentally hit one. There is no charge for this service. **You will be financially responsible for the repair of any damage to underground utilities.**

- Don’t Assume
 - Existing fences may have been built without property lines being located, so do not assume they are a correct guide for determining your property lines.

- Ask Your Neighbor
 - It’s possible your neighbor may know the location of property pins you share, or they may have had a survey performed. If they know the location of any of their other property lines, you can also use the dimensions from the plat maps to measure the approximate locations of your property lines.

- Beware of Moved Property Pins
 - Over the years, previous owners, utility workers, or a neighbor, may have dug up a property pin and reinserted it nearby or tossed it aside. Your property line does not change just because something happened to the pin. For example, if you locate property pins 60 feet apart along the front of your property, but the plat says your lot is 50 feet wide, one of those pins may have been moved, and the front of your property is still 50 feet wide.