

Access Oakland

Access Oakland Questions and Answers

1. What is *Access Oakland*?

Access Oakland is a leading edge Internet tool built to provide immediate access to the land and property records. It will be expanded on an ongoing basis to serve informational needs identified by those who live, work, visit and do business in Oakland County.

The initial informational products offered through *Access Oakland* are:

- I. Mortgage Application Acceleration Program (M.A.A.P.)
- II. Residential Property Profile (R.P.P.)
- III. Residential Property Analyzer (R.P.A.)
- IV. Delinquent Tax Statements (D.T.S.)
- V. Current Tax Profile (C.T.P)
- VI. Commercial Industrial Profile (C.I.P.)
- VII. Recorded Document Profile (R.D.P.)
- VIII. Map Atlas Viewer (M.A.V.)

2. Weren't Oakland County records already stored on a computer system and readily available?

Oakland County data is stored in several mainframe systems that previously could only be accessed through a direct connection to the system or by personally visiting Oakland County offices and using a terminal or requesting assistance of a staff member. *Access Oakland* unlocks the power of the data held by the county with individuals interested in Oakland County information with immediate "anytime, anywhere" access.

3. How do I subscribe to *Access Oakland*?

To become a subscriber, access the Oakland County web site at www.co.oakland.mi.us and click the *Access Oakland* icon. Complete and submit the simple on-line form. Please be sure to include your e-mail address. After it is reviewed and approved (which may take up to five business days), an account will be established and a password assigned. Any questions can be addressed to the *Access Oakland* help line at (248) 858-2100.

4. Why do I have to pay a fee to access what are supposed to be public records?

No fee is charged for viewing public records; anyone can still come to Oakland County offices to do so. The nominal cost for using *Access Oakland* supports the immediate Internet access to these records. The fees assist in:

- ✓ Recouping some of the costs associated with developing this leading-edge program.
- ✓ Provide funds for additional development of *Access Oakland* to serve both residential and public needs for information about Oakland County.

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- ✓ To mitigate the costs that individual units of local government expend to collect and provide the records.

5. How much of taxpayer money was used to develop *Access Oakland*?

It is difficult to isolate the amount spent to date on *Access Oakland* and compare that to the amount normally spent in the course of the responsibilities to collect manage and provide public records. Oakland County is committed to providing efficient services to its constituencies, and have developed a modest fee schedule for *Access Oakland* users to further expand the convenient, immediate access of public records without asking for increased taxpayer support.

6. What type of information is available now through *Access Oakland*?

Currently residential property records and Commercial Industrial records are available through *Access Oakland*.

7. When will *all* public records held by the county be available through the Internet?

Through 2003 Oakland County will continue to expand the scope of *Access Oakland* in response to needs identified by Oakland County residents, businesses and others with an interest in accessing public records.

8. *Access Oakland* seems geared to the needs of businesses. How does this program serve the needs of residents?

Oakland County citizens frequently need information about their own property, whether reviewing their current assessment, selling their current residence or seeking to buy new property. Currently, residents have to travel to their local city or township hall or the county offices to obtain information they need.

Access Oakland provides convenient, immediate access to information that residents need to research potential value of their home and analyze the potential value of property they would like to buy. Without leaving home and for a nominal fee, individuals can become a knowledgeable buyer or seller of residential property within Oakland County. New informational products will be actively pursued to further serve the direct needs of residents as they are defined.

9. How is the privacy of residents protected? Couldn't the information be used in inappropriate ways by the wrong people?

Access to certain types of information is restricted for privacy reasons. It is not possible to search for residential properties by name. Due to privacy concerns, the county has adopted a policy regarding digital photographs of properties. These photographs are not available to the general user of *Access Oakland* – they are only available to REALTOR[®] subscribers and public safety officials. The amount of information that can be downloaded

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per search is also limited, putting practical time and financial constraints on anyone who is seeking access to a “complete” database.

10. What is the benefit of *Access Oakland* to county operations?

Access Oakland will increasingly help us do more with the same resources. While the county continues to provide service to those who physically come to the offices, many individuals will have the ability to immediately access information through the easy-to-use Internet resources. This saves the staff time in answering questions and assisting in on-site record searches, and allows them to concentrate on other aspects of their jobs. This system will improve efficiency and ultimately enhance service to Oakland County taxpayers.

11. Do other counties, either locally or nationally, have a similar system?

While other counties may have web sites with some information available, none of them currently provide the up-to-date information or the scope of information available by *Access Oakland*.

12. How long did it take to build the infrastructure?

Development started in 1997, establishing a Data Warehouse that collects and allows data from the many different systems in place at the county to be accessed and organized into usable reports. The first *Access Oakland* product was launched on February 1, 1999.

13. Where do you see *Access Oakland* going? What other information will it provide for county residents and/or businesses?

It is anticipated that *Access Oakland* will serve additional information needs for those who live, work, visit or do business in Oakland County. The county will seek input and ideas for further ways to serve its customers.

14. How does Oakland County plan to obtain the input and ideas from others?

The county will seek input and ideas in many ways, including through the web site (www.co.oakland.mi.us) and one-on-one discussions with county residents. Plans also include making presentations about *Access Oakland* to community, business and civic groups, where input will be obtained from those in attendance.

15. What else should we know about *Access Oakland*?

It is important to reinforce that this is a tremendously time – and cost-effective way for individuals and real estate/mortgage professionals to access timely, updated and accurate information without the need to travel to local government offices in Oakland County. It is a state-of-the-art service provided by one of the United States’ most contemporary counties.