



Preparing to Sell

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SELLING YOUR HOME



REALTOR®



mike
harcarik

Bringing Real Life to Real Estate



About My Business

Whether you're relocating, upsizing, downsizing, or selling an investment property, the sale of your home is a responsibility I take seriously. From listing and marketing to showings and negotiations, I'm with you every step of the way—not just as your agent, but as your teammate. We'll get to know each other, talk through strategy, navigate tough decisions, and stay focused—while keeping the process positive and even fun. Selling your home should be exciting, and you should never feel like you're doing it alone. My goal is for you to feel heard, supported, and understood from our first meeting to closing day.

I've worn many hats; business professional, educator, traveler, outdoors enthusiast, husband, father, and military veteran—experience that helps me connect with clients from all walks of life and navigate relationships with care. My commitment goes far beyond putting a sign in your yard—I provide honest advice, strong advocacy, and a clear plan designed to maximize your results.

Your goals matter, and the equity in your home is too valuable to leave to chance. I'll do everything possible to ensure your experience starts strong and ends with success.



My Mission

To build genuine relationships, simplify the real estate process, and help connect you to the local community.



My Belief

That success should be measured through client satisfaction rather than sales volume or commissions.



My Process

A clear, step-by-step approach that keeps you involved, minimizes stress, and delivers consistent, reliable results.



My Goal

To wow every client with personalized, attentive service and create the most rewarding experience possible.



Seller Philosophy

No matter your circumstance, you're not just selling a house—you're navigating a major life moment; investing your time, energy and emotions. That commitment deserves careful attention, and a process grounded in clarity, collaboration and respect. And it should be as rewarding as the end result.

My role is to act in your best interest—not to push, pressure, or take shortcuts, but to support your decisions with honesty and transparency. I'll listen closely to your goals, keep you informed at every stage, and make sure you always feel in control. Together, we'll reduce stress, avoid surprises, and work toward a smooth, quick, and successful sale that leaves you feeling confident and proud.

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 Windermere City Group

My Promise

To **ACHIEVE** your goals, I will:

A

ADAPT to your needs, not ask you to adapt to mine.

C

COMMUNICATE regularly regardless of news.

H

HIGHLIGHT next steps so nothing is missed.

I

INVITE feedback to improve my service.

E

EDUCATE you about the home selling process.

V

VALIDATE your questions through timely feedback.

E

ENSURE you feel heard and trusted.

Preparing to Sell

A Step-by-Step Guide

Selling your home is a big step—and while it can be exciting, the process can also be overwhelming, especially if you're not sure what to expect. There's paperwork, decisions, deadlines, and lots of emotions involved.

Whether it's your first time selling or you've done it before, this guide will walk you through the key steps—from partnering with the right agent to handing over the keys. The goal is to keep you on track, help avoid common pitfalls and give you the confidence to move forward with clarity and peace of mind.

So, let's take it one step at a time—because selling your home should be a rewarding experience, not a stressful one.





STEP 1

Find a REALTOR®



STEP 2

Prepare to List



STEP 3

Strategize Timing & Price



STEP 4

Prepare Your Home



STEP 5

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STEP 6

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STEP 7

Review Offers



STEP 8

Navigate Contingencies



STEP 9

Finalize Details

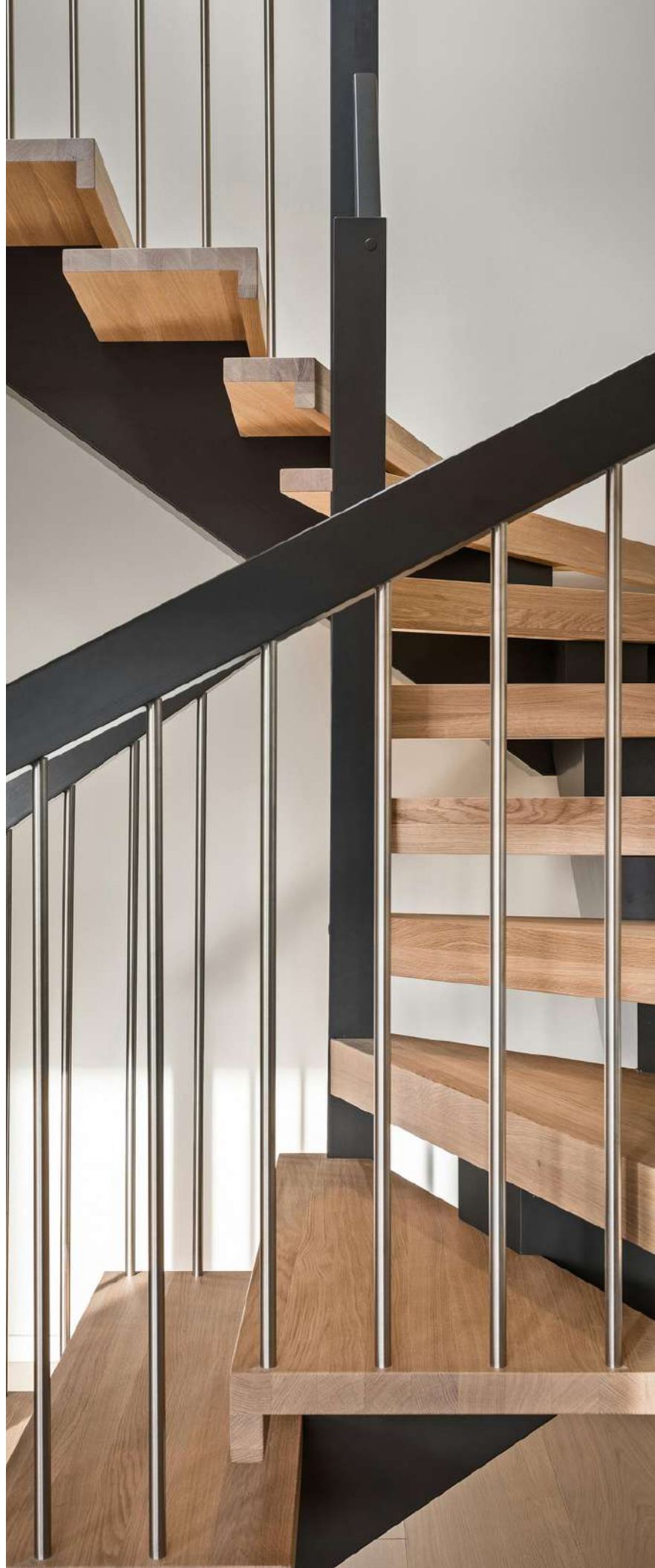


STEP 10

Close the Deal

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Common Mistakes to Avoid
- Understanding the Market
- Understanding the Contract
- Understanding Taxes
- Buyer Broker Commission
- Real Estate Glossary
- Frequently Asked Questions



Find a REALTOR®

Tools & Strategies

Initial Consultation

Meeting to discuss goals, outline services, create timelines, strategize marketing and preview contracts.

Home Walk-Through

To identify key features and selling points, highlight repair opportunities, and discuss preparation and staging.

Preliminary Title

I'll organize prior to listing to ensure you have a clean and transferable title, eliminating issues later on.

Photography

I'll hire a professional photographer, but include your perspective on best ways to showcase the property, and discuss options like video, virtual tours and aerial photos.

SentriKey Lockbox

I'll install a top-rated lockbox to control access and track visitors like REALTORS® and other service professionals to your home.

Listing Sign

I'll install a Windermere Exclusive FOR SALE sign w/ solar lights to elevate visibility.

Marketing

Including MLS, world-wide-web, social media, office listings and more.

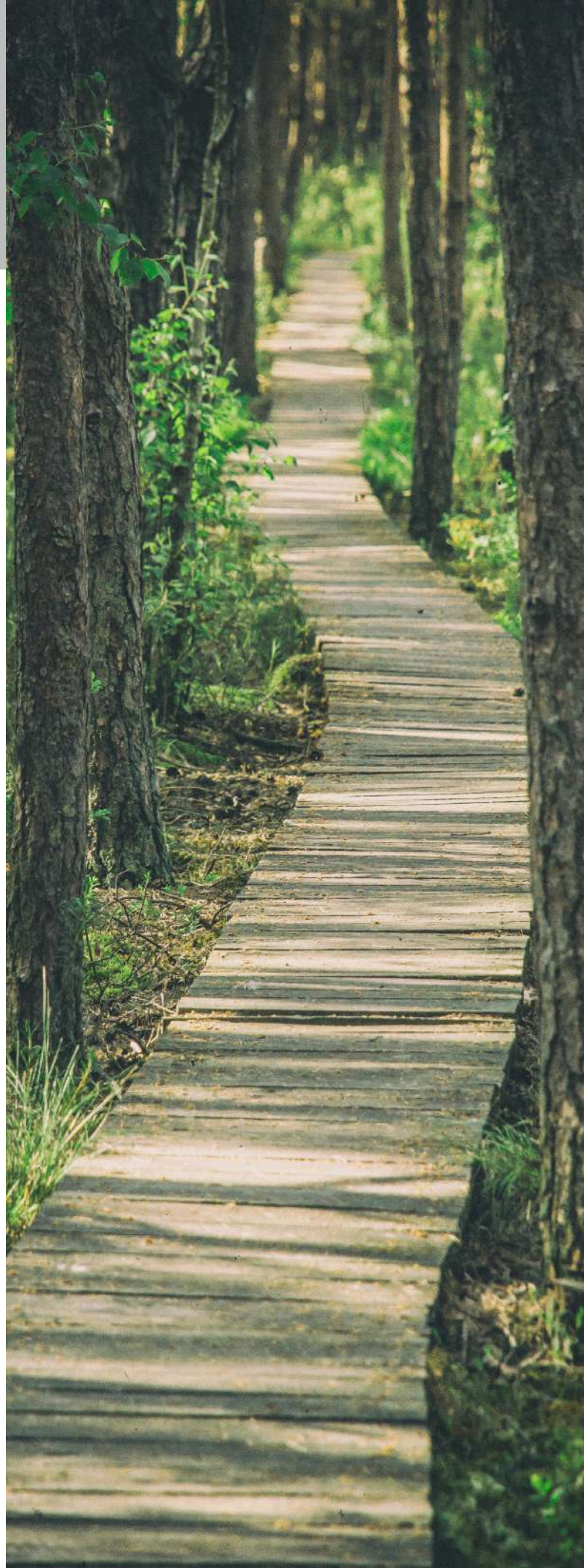


With all the moving parts involved in selling a home you've got a lot on your plate. From preparing the property and making repairs, to reviewing offers and planning your next move—you need someone in your corner who can juggle all the details, walk through the process, and actively drive the sale forward. From our initial consultation to closing, my job is to anticipate and callout challenges, ease the pressure, and make sure you feel informed, confident, and supported.

My Path to Success

In addition to using traditional tools, I take an active approach to keep you confident, create buzz and drive interest in your home. As part of my path to success, I will:

- Schedule regular check-ins and updates so you're never left wondering what's next.
- Provide honest, strategic advice and feedback—even if it's not what you want to hear.
- Create a HomeBook with lending resources, neighborhood stats, school and community info, area services, home cost estimates, and more to attract and educate potential buyers.
- Set up a buyer welcome table with viewing instructions, flyers and resources like shoe coverings to protect your home.
- Visually highlight features of your home with signage and info for potential buyers.
- Perform both sales and price-based CMAs to accurately position and price your home.
- Follow up with buyer agents about showings to determine interest and solicit feedback.
- Strategize counteroffers with you and break down contracts in advance so you're not making last-minute decisions.
- Send you activity recaps on showings and open houses.
- Provide you and potential buyers with market updates and neighborhood news relevant to your home.
- Engage neighbors to let them know we're listing your home, invite them to a special home tour, provide a personalized property report, and share info on how your listing might impact them.



Prepare to List

Identify Priorities & Motivation

WRITE DOWN YOUR PRIMARY
REASON(S) FOR SELLING ☐

LIST 3-4 THINGS YOU LOVE
MOST ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY ☐

PRIORITIZE THE FOLLOWING
(1 = most important, 10 = least important)

CONTRACT TERMS ☐

CLOSING DATE ☐

SALE PRICE ☐

INCLUDED / EXCLUDED ITEMS ☐

SETTLEMENT / CLOSING COSTS ☐

BROKER COMMISSIONS ☐

INSPECTIONS & REPAIRS ☐

ADVERTISING ☐

BUYER CONCESSIONS ☐

OCCUPANCY TIMELINE ☐



Reviewing Contracts

GETTING STARTED

READ THIS GUIDE
(Preparing to Sell)

☐

Why it's important:

To ensure you understand the process, feel confident and know what questions to ask along the way.

REVIEW LISTING PAPERWORK
(Form 1A-SWF & Real Estate Brokerage in WA)

☐

Why it's important:

To ensure you understand our agreement, our listing details and timelines, and your rights and responsibilities.

COMPLETE SELLER DISCLOSURE
(Form 17)

☐

Why it's important:

Allows buyers to make informed decisions and protects you from potential legal issues later on.

REVIEW PURCHASE & SALE AGREEMENT
(Form 21)

☐

Why it's important:

It details the terms of your sale and spells out timelines, deadlines and obligations of both parties.

REVIEW CONTRACT ADDENDA
(As included)

☐

Why it's important:

Multiple forms exist in a typical agreement and it's crucial the seller read and understand them all.

DECIDE ON INCLUDED ITEMS

☐

Why it's important:

So we can promote early on to buyers and eliminate questions or confusion during the offer process.

COLLECT MORTGAGE INFO

☐

Why it's important:

To help estimate your net proceeds and ensure you are prepared with necessary closing documents.

GATHER HOA DOCS (if applicable)

☐

Why it's important:

It's required as part of the sale of your home and can help prevent delays or issues later on.

MAKE 2 EXTRA HOUSE KEYS

☐

Why it's important:

For access to your home when showing as well as other service professionals like home appraisers and inspectors.



Strategize Timing & Price

Market Timing & Seasonal Trends

When it comes to selling your home, timing and pricing aren't just details—they're strategy. Listing at the right moment and at the right price can create momentum, attract buyers, and lead to a quick sale. While every market is different, we'll look at current data and local trends to make sure your home stands out and gets the attention it deserves from day one. Seasonal shifts can also play a role as certain times of year bring out more buyers, while others move more slowly.



Spring

The busiest season for real estate—inventory rises along with buyer demand, creating ideal selling conditions. Warm weather and natural light make for strong showings and families often aim to move before the next school year.

Fall

A quieter but motivated market. Buyer activity slows a bit, but those still looking are often serious and ready to move quickly. Homes that are priced right can still sell fast. Curb appeal remains strong with autumn colors.

Summer

Still active, especially early on. The market often remains strong through June and July, but may slow slightly later as vacations and heat pick up. A good time to sell if your home has outdoor features like decks or gardens.

Winter

Slower season, but not without opportunity. Inventory is low, which means less competition for sellers. Buyers who are shopping during the winter are usually highly motivated. A cozy, well-staged home can stand out more than ever.

Market Value

WHAT A BUYER IS WILLING TO PAY

While it's natural to feel your home is special—especially if you've invested lots of time and money—it's the market and buyers that ultimately determine what it's worth. Understanding the difference between market value and market price (the price at which you list your home), is crucial to a successful sale. But pricing a home isn't easy, it's a combination of art and science that relies on many variables to get it right.

WHAT DETERMINES MARKET VALUE?

Comparable Home Sales

Recent sales of similar homes nearby

Market Conditions

Buyer demand, interest rates, average days on market, seasonality, months of supply, absorption rate.

Location

School district, access to amenities, views, noise, zoning, taxes.

Neighborhood

Parks, paths, roads, residents, HOA.

Condition

Cleanliness, staging, curb appeal and presentation.

Upgrades

Renovations to key home features; floors, kitchen/bath, furnace & A/C, garage, finished space,

Age

Affects condition, resale.

Competition

Inventory of similar homes currently for sale



Overpricing with the idea that you can always lower the price later is a risky strategy that can backfire. The first two weeks your home is listed are critical for gaining interest and momentum. If the price is too high, targeted price-range buyers may not even see your home, you risk developing a negative perception of quality/value, and you may end up sitting on the market, receiving lower offers, or just being overlooked.

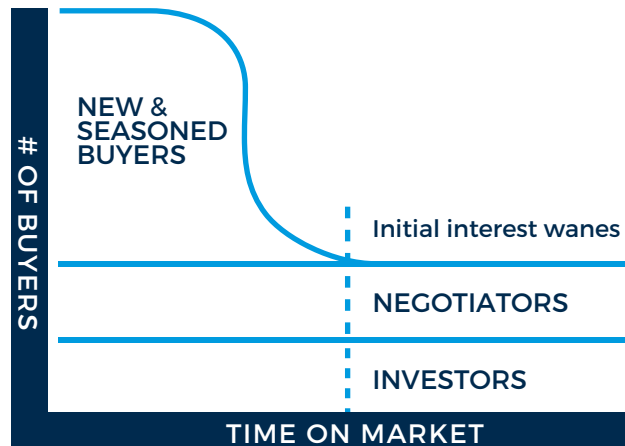
WHAT DOESN'T SET VALUE?

- The price you paid for the home
- The cost you paid for renovations
- Emotional attachment

The First Offer

When selling, it's tempting to pass up initial offers in hopes that better ones will come. But early interest often brings the strongest offers. Fresh listings create buzz—motivated buyers are watching closely and ready to act quickly. As time goes on, momentum fades and newer showings bring more strategic buyers who are less willing to pay top dollar. Acting early can often lead to a better outcome than waiting too long.

OVERPRICING AND INACTION LEAD TO DIMINISHING RETURNS



NEW BUYERS: Excited about a new home—often focused on quality and value more than price.

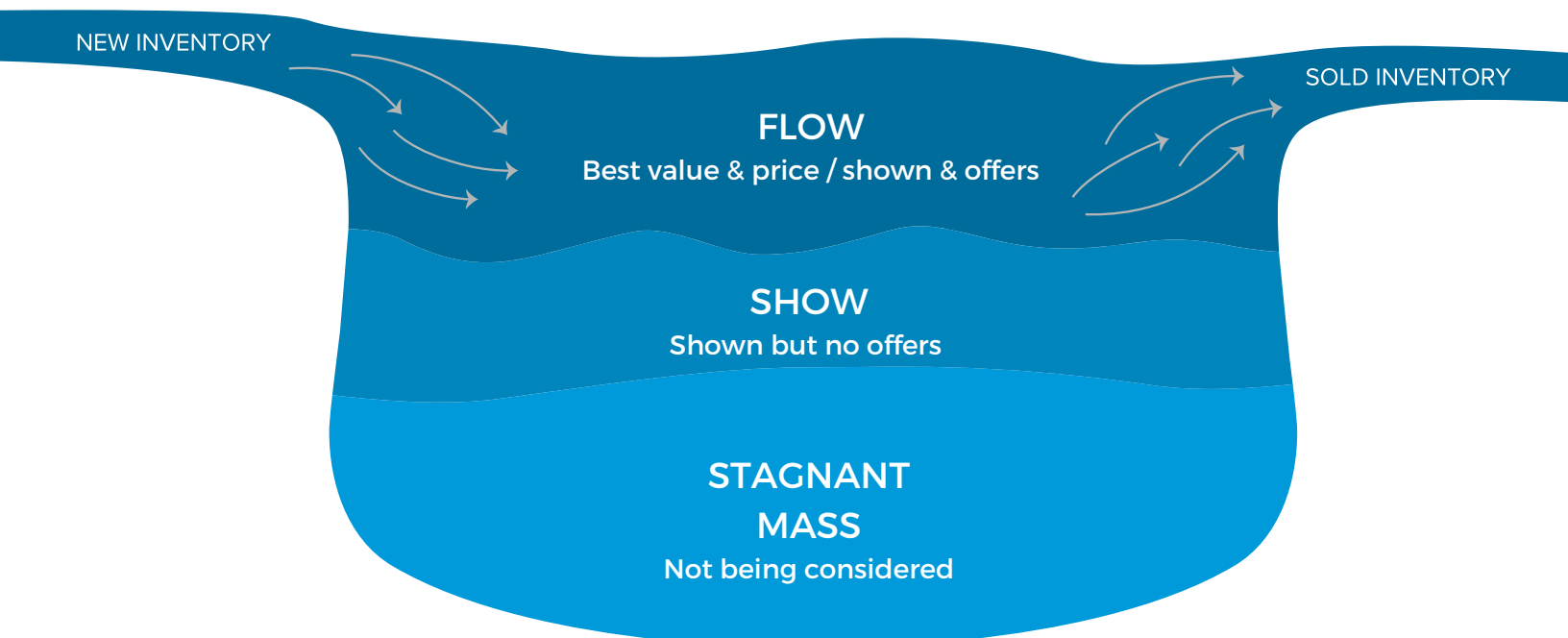
SEASONED BUYERS: Experienced about the process and objective about decisions. Usually more particular about homes and focused on both value and price.

NEGOTIATORS: Experienced and objective—drawn to listings with price changes and longer time on the market.

INVESTORS: Strong negotiators, drawn to “just reduced” or “must see” listings—looking to build/maximize ROI.

The Pond Analogy

Consider real estate a pond—like fresh water, new houses flow in but when overpriced or listed poorly, end up trapped and stagnant, falling below other new properties and failing to receive showings, offers or even notice.

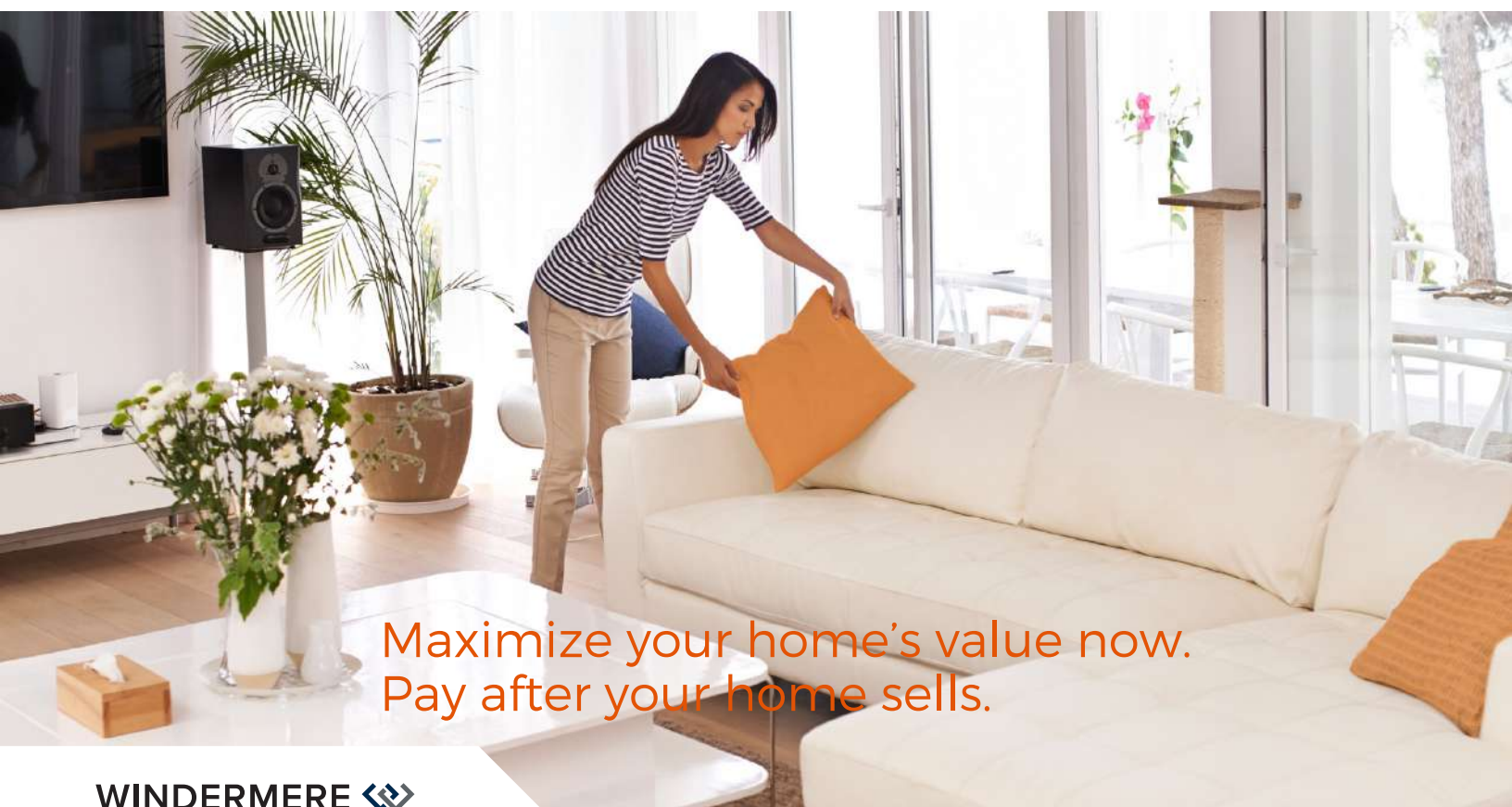




Prepare Your Home

Curb Appeal & First Impressions

Before your home hits the market, it's important to step into the shoes of a potential buyer. First impressions matter—and the better your home shows, the more likely it is to stand out and attract stronger offers. From decluttering and deep cleaning to small touch-ups or full staging, thoughtful preparation and a small investment now can make a big difference later.



Maximize your home's value now.
Pay after your home sells.

WINDERMERE 
READY

If you're unable to invest in home preparation now, we can cover your home improvement costs and provide concierge services to make your home more competitive and set you up for selling success.

Windermere Ready provides a loan to pay for things like painting, landscaping, cleaning, and staging. You'll receive the funds quickly and pay nothing until your home sells.

I'll work with you to determine which improvements will have the biggest impact and I can suggest service providers, or you can choose your own.

Home Staging

While general preparation involves repairing, cleaning and redecorating, staging is about intentionally creating a space in which buyers can picture themselves living. A well-staged home is inviting from the start—it has furniture but remains spacious, has décor but remains neutral, is clean, well-lit, and helps buyers focus on the features of the home rather than the belongings inside. It makes your home stand out in photos and showings, produces longer visits, more home viewings, stronger offers, and faster closings.

Home Preparation Checklist

Follow the below steps to maximize your home presentation for pictures and buyer showings.

Curb Appeal

- Clean or paint the front door
- Tidy or remove outside furniture
- Touch up exterior paintwork
- Rake and remove fallen leaves
- Paint, stain and/or repair wood fences
- Mow lawn, trim shrubs, and remove weeds

General Cleaning

- Wipe down all surfaces (floors, baseboards, counters, sinks, tubs, windows, etc.)
- Clean or replace shower curtains
- Place fresh clean towels and mats
- Declutter closets and shelving
- Organize or remove furniture to look spacious
- Launder bedding and pillows
- Clean and straighten pet areas (if applicable)

Repairs & Touch Up

- Ensure all lights are strong and working
- Fix leaky faucets, loose handles, or squeaky doors
- Touch up scuffed walls and fill holes



List & Market Your Home

Listing Agreement & Options



Once you've decided to work with a REALTOR®, the next step is choosing how to list your property. This decision plays a key role in how your home will be marketed—determining when and where it's seen, and by whom. The listing strategy you choose can affect your timeline, exposure, and the offers you receive.

You have several options, from full exposure with immediate and broad marketing to an office exclusive or even a delayed marketing exempt listing. Each approach has its advantages depending on your goals, timing, and comfort level with visibility.

TYPE OF LISTING	WHAT IT MEANS	BEST FOR	EXPOSURE
Active Listing	Your home is listed immediately and publicly on the MLS and all major home search sites.	Sellers ready to hit the market right away.	Maximum visibility
Office Exclusive	Your home is shared only within the listing brokerage; not posted to MLS, websites, or publicly advertised.	Sellers who want privacy or limited exposure.	Limited to agent's network
Delayed Marketing (Exempt) Listing	Listing is submitted (available) to MLS participants and subscribers but only marketed by listing firm during delayed period.	Sellers who may want time for repairs, staging, or planning.	No public exposure until active

Marketing

STRATEGY & PLANNING

Effective marketing takes more than just putting a sign in the yard. It's about crafting a strategy that highlights your home's best features, attracts the right buyers, and creates excitement from the moment it hits the market. As your listing agent, I'm committed to getting your home sold to the strongest buyer. Below are steps I will take to make your home stand out, generate strong interest, and get you the best possible results.



Competitively price your home using recent market data



Emphasize open houses and private showings



Professional photography to showcase your home



Create a compelling MLS listing with detailed descriptions



Plan & time listing to maximize exposure



Ongoing market analysis to adjust strategy as needed



Engage with neighbors to build word of mouth



Network and promote with local agents & firms



Online exposure across major sites and social media platforms



Optimize condition of your home for viewings



Photography

THE POWER OF PROFESSIONAL VISUALS



Buyers form impressions in seconds—starting with their search online, and the quality of your photos can determine whether they book a showing, visit your open house, or just keep scrolling. High-impact visuals are memorable, generate buzz, and help sell homes faster and for more money. As your agent, I'll coordinate with professionals who know how to make your home shine. Together, we'll build a listing that grabs attention, creates excitement, and draws in the right buyers from day one.

Why professional photography matters

- 1 Receive more views and showings across all price tiers.
- 2 Homes with more photos spend less days on the market.
- 3 Quality photos create an emotional connection and higher perceived value, boosting buyer confidence
- 4 Have a higher asking price per square foot.





Types of Visual Marketing

✓ Standard Photography

Clean, well-lit images that highlight your home's best features: kitchen, living areas, bedrooms, bathrooms, and outdoor space.

✓ Video Tours

Create an emotional narrative and allow buyers to feel like they're experiencing the home in real-time.

✓ 3D Tours & Virtual Walkthroughs

Let buyers "walk" through the home online—perfect for out-of-area buyers and increasing time spent on your listing.

✓ Aerial (Drone) Photography

Showcase your home's exterior, lot size, neighborhood, or proximity to parks, lakes, or landmarks.

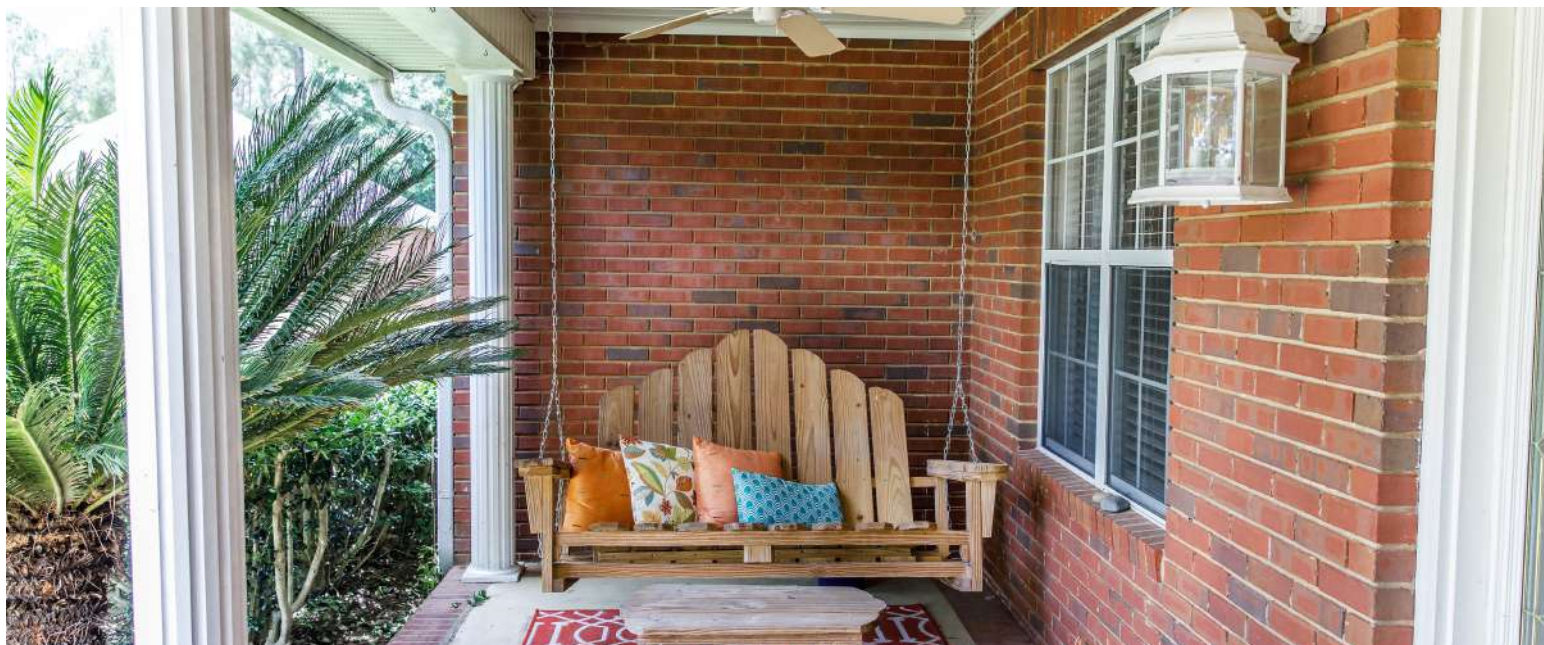
✓ Floor Plans

Help buyers visualize flow, room size, and furniture placement before they visit in person.



Show Your Home

Things to Consider



Buyers have lots of homes to shop, but you have only one home to sell—one chance to stand out. First impressions matter, and how your home looks, feels, and functions during a showing can make all the difference. Going the extra mile with preparation is integral to attracting the right offer and selling faster.

✓ Flexibility

Be as accommodating to buyer's schedules as possible. You never know when someone might be ready to make an offer, so do whatever you can to avoid missed opportunities.

✓ Temperature

Ensure a comfortable temperature and give buyers time to wander, rather than rushing through your house because they're too hot or cold.

✓ Odors

Avoid strong-smelling foods and clear out your refrigerator if possible; empty trash cans and consider using lightly scented candles.

✓ Pets

While some will enjoy seeing your pet space, not all buyers are pet lovers. Cover or remove cages, bedding and toys so you don't hinder their ability to picture themselves in your home.

✓ Lighting

Open blinds and curtains to maximize natural light. Add lamps to any dark spaces and turn on lights before a showing.

✓ Ambiance

From fresh flowers to light music, consider adding ambiance to make buyers comfortable. Write a welcome note, turn on ceiling fans and turn off sprinklers.

Open Houses

MAKING YOUR HOME STAND OUT

An open house is more than just a showing—it's your home's debut to the public and a proven method to create buzz about your property. With the right timing and presentation, open houses create a sense of urgency through competition.

REALTOR® secret: Open houses aren't just about buyers—they're about neighbors and agents too. Rarely does an open house result in an immediate buyer offer, but when done well, can create awareness and spread excitement about your home.

✓ **In-Person Promotion**

I'll walk your neighborhood to meet residents, inform them of your listing and invite them to a private showing.

✓ **Online Marketing**

I'll advertise on Windermere, my personal website, and others like Zillow, REALTOR®, Homes, and Trulia as well as in the local newspaper and the multiple listing service (MLS).

✓ **Signage**

I'll place multiple (6-10) professional "Open House" signs in the neighborhood on key corners/streets.

✓ **Social Media**

I'll post your open house event on popular social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor).

✓ **Marketing**

I'll send out postcards and print flyers highlighting your open house.



Review Offers

Negotiation & Mutual Acceptance

Receiving an offer is an exciting moment—but it's just the beginning of a process that involves strategy and decision making. Understanding the dynamics involved is essential to success. I'll help you break down the terms, assess your options, and respond in a way that protects your interests while keeping the sale on track.

UNDERSTANDING THE OFFER

More than just purchase price, all terms play a role in determining the overall strength of an offer and it's fit relative to your needs.

- Closing Date
- Contingencies
- Financing Terms
- Earnest Money
- Property Inclusions
- Verification Period
- Buyer Broker Compensation

RESPONDING TO AN OFFER

When an offer is made, you have the option to accept, reject, or counter.

Acceptance means you agree to ALL terms without changes and the countdown to closing begins.

Rejection means you disagree with one or more terms and aren't open to negotiations.

A counteroffer means you offer changes to one or more terms and move the decision back to the buyer who can then accept, reject, or counter again.

NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

Negotiation is about balancing your goals with those of the buyer. Yes, you want the best price and terms but it's about compromise, not one side winning—it's about creating an agreement where everyone walks away happy about the deal.

Consider your flexibility in the following areas before receiving your first offer so you're ready to negotiate.

- Price
- Timelines
- Certainty vs. Risk
- Buyer Motivation
- Concessions

WHEN TO WALK AWAY

Not every deal will work out—knowing your limits helps you avoid risk & frustration.

Only you and your agent can decide when it's right to walk away, but pay attention to red flags in buyer behavior or offer details such as:

- Financing issues or uncertainty
- Unreasonable contingencies or timelines
- Lack of flexibility



Buyer Broker Commission

WHY YOU SHOULD OFFER TO PAY IT



Maximizing your home's exposure and appeal is paramount. Offering compensation to buyer agents can significantly enhance interest, word of mouth, and your chance of a successful sale.

Attract More Buyers

By offering buyer broker compensation, you incentivize agents to show your home to their clients, increasing your pool of prospective buyers.

Competitive Edge

Offering a buyer agent compensation sets your home apart. It signals to agents that you are a serious seller, making your property more appealing compared to those without.

Higher Sale Price

Homes offering a buyer agent compensation often sell for more—the increased interest and competition fostered by commissions can drive up the final sale price of your home.

Faster Sales Process

Buyers are more likely to prioritize viewing properties offering buyer agent compensations, leading to quicker offers and reducing the time your home spends on the market.

Professional Negotiation

By engaging buyer brokers through compensation, you ensure that negotiations are handled professionally, leading to better terms and a smoother closing process.

Smooth Transactions

Buyer agents help manage the paperwork, coordinate inspections, and handle details that ensure a seamless transaction. Their expertise reduces the likelihood of delays and complications.

Navigate Contingencies

What Sellers Should Know

Once under contract, several key milestones—called contingencies—must be satisfied. These are conditions that allow the buyer to cancel or renegotiate the deal if certain things don't go as planned. As a seller, knowing what's standard, what's negotiable, and where potential delays or risks can arise will help you control of the process. The most common seller-related contingencies include title, inspection and appraisal. Each plays a different role in protecting the buyer, but also have implications for you as the seller.

TITLE CONTINGENCY

The title contingency gives the buyer time to ensure there are no legal issues with the property—like unpaid liens, boundary disputes, or ownership claims—that could affect their purchase.

If problems are discovered, you may need to resolve them quickly—such as paying off old liens, correcting deed errors, or providing additional documentation. Even minor title issues can delay or derail a sale, so working with a reputable title company and reviewing your property's title history early helps ensure a smoother transaction.

HOME INSPECTION

The inspection contingency gives buyer's 10 days (default) to hire a licensed home inspector to assess the condition of your property and take one of the following actions:

- accept property as is
- ask for more time
- ask for repairs to be done
- ask for reduced purchase price
- ask for seller concessions
- back out of the deal

Addressing known issues in advance or even conducting a pre-listing home inspection can reduce surprises and strengthen your negotiating position.

HOME APPRAISAL

The appraisal contingency protects the buyer in case the home appraises for less than the agreed purchase price. If the appraisal comes in low, the buyer can renegotiate, ask you to lower the price, bring in more cash themselves—or back out of the deal if no agreement is reached.

Accurately pricing your home, based on recent comps helps avoid appraisal issues that could derail the sale. While you can't control the appraiser's price opinion, having documentation of upgrades or recent sales can help support your home's value if questioned.



Buyer Financing

WHY IT MATTERS



Despite accepting an offer, a deal isn't totally secure until the buyer's financing is fully approved. A financing contingency gives the buyer the right to cancel the contract if they're unable to secure a mortgage by a specified deadline. This introduces risk for the seller—especially if counting on a smooth, timely closing.

What Sellers Should Ask:

IS THE BUYER PRE-APPROVED?

Pre-approval, as opposed to pre-qualification, means the lender has already reviewed the buyer's credit and financials, reducing risk of loan denial later.

ARE THEY WORKING WITH A LOCAL LENDER?

Established local relationships mean that clients and agents tend to have an easier and faster time communicating with local lenders leading to stronger reliability and reduced risk of last-minute delays.

IS BUYER ASKING FOR CLOSING COST ASSISTANCE?

Requests for help with closing costs could indicate tighter finances

HOW MUCH ARE THEY PUTTING DOWN?

A larger down payment can signal stronger finances and greater commitment, and could speed up loan approval.

WHAT TYPE OF LOAN IS BUYER USING?

Conventional loans typically require higher credit and down payment but also tend to close more quickly.

Government backed loans (FHA, VA) have lower credit and down payment requirements, but stricter property standards, longer timelines, or other conditions such as fees or amounts a buyer can pay, which can affect negotiations and ultimately the ability to close the deal.

What Sellers Should Know:

PRE-APPROVAL ≠ GUARANTEED LOAN

A buyer's pre-approval letter is a strong start, but it's not a promise. Final approval only happens after the lender completes underwriting—a review of buyer income, credit, employment, assets, and the home itself.

FINANCING DEADLINES MATTER

If the buyer has not waived the financing contingency, they may be able to walk away, wasting valuable time you could have spent marketing to other buyers.

BACKUP OFFERS

A tried and true strategy is to accept backup offers in case the first buyer's financing is denied. This creates a quick turnaround and saves some time from having to re-list your property and start the process all over again.

BUYER WARNING SIGNS

Low earnest money, low down payments, inconsistent employment, or a sudden switch in lenders could indicate issues in financing. Review all of these carefully with your agent.

LOAN DENIAL AFTER ACCEPTANCE

Pre-approval does not guarantee loan approval. Changes to a buyer's situation such as job loss or credit score drop could result in loan denial.

APPRAISAL GAPS

If the appraisal comes in lower than the buyer's offer price, the buyer may not be able to secure the full loan amount. In such cases, the buyer will likely renegotiate the offer or possibly walk away.

Finalize Details

Approaching Closing Day

You're almost there! With an accepted offer in hand, you're in the home stretch. The closing process involves a handful of final steps that ensure a smooth, legal, and successful sale. Here's what to expect—and what you need to do—as a seller in the final days of your transaction.

1

Complete All Repairs

If you agreed to repairs during negotiations be sure they are complete before final walk-through. Keep all receipts and documentation.

2

Clear Title & Legal Documents

Your escrow/title company will ensure all liens or title issues are resolved. You may need to sign payoff documents for your mortgage or other obligations.

3

Schedule Your Move-Out

Plan to vacate the home by the agreed closing date (or as per any post-closing possession). Leave the home clean and free of belongings unless negotiated otherwise.

4

Utilities & Services

Contact utility providers to schedule shut-off or transfer on closing day. Be sure to stop recurring services (internet, lawn care, etc.) as needed.

5

Final Walk-through (by Buyer)

The buyer typically does a final walkthrough 24–48 hours before closing. Make sure the home is in the condition agreed to, with all negotiated items left behind.

6

Review Closing Statement

You'll receive a final settlement (or closing) statement with all debits, credits, and net proceeds. Review it with your agent to ensure accuracy.

7

Sign Closing Documents

Your escrow officer will schedule a time for you to sign the final paperwork—either in person or remotely. Bring ID and ask any final questions.

8

Hand Over Keys & Remotes

Leave all keys, garage remotes, and any manuals or codes for the new owner. Some sellers leave a welcome note or helpful tips for the home.

Preparing For Your Move



2 TO 4 WEEKS BEFORE:

- Make reservations with airlines, hotels and car rental agencies as needed.
- Obtain boxes and packing materials if moving yourself.
- Begin packing nonessential items and arrange for storage as needed.
- If you have items you don't want to pack and move, hold a yard sale.
- Get car license, registration and insurance in order.
- Transfer your bank accounts to new branch locations and cancel any direct deposit or automatic payments from your accounts if changing banks.
- Make special arrangements to move pets.
- Have your car checked and serviced for the trip.

2 TO 4 DAYS BEFORE:

- Defrost your refrigerator and freezer.
- Have movers pack your belongings or pack yourself.
- Label each box with the contents and the room where you want it to be delivered.
- Arrange to have payment ready for the moving company (if applicable).
- Change your utilities, including phone, internet and power, from your old address to your new address.
- Set aside legal documents and valuables that you do not want packed.
- Pack clothing and toiletries, along with extra clothes in case there are delays.

Close the Deal!

Handing over the keys

“Once you and the buyer sign all paperwork, pay your share of the settlement fees, and the documents are recorded, you’ll hand over the keys and the deal is done!

We’ll review your closing disclosure ahead of time so you understand the final numbers, and I’ll be there for support—to help walk you through anything that needs clarification.

I’ll also keep in touch throughout the process and after you’ve moved. I’ll provide relocation resources as able, referrals for service providers as needed, or help finding you a new home. And if you’d like I’ll share info on community events or recreation either here in Spokane or at your new location.

If you’re happy with my service, the best compliment you can give is to share my name with family and friends. Your trust means everything, and I’d be honored to help the people you care about, too.



**“Congratulations
your home has
sold!”**





Common Mistakes

FAILING TO PROPERLY PREPARE THE HOME

THE MISTAKE: Not cleaning, ignoring repairs or neglecting exterior curb appeal.

HOW TO AVOID: Plan time to clean, organize and de-clutter. Hire someone if necessary and be open to agent feedback.

PRICING THE PROPERTY TOO HIGH

THE MISTAKE: Subjectively valuing your home rather than using market indicators.

HOW TO AVOID: Review CMA data with your REALTOR®, including both sold and active properties.

USING POOR LISTING PHOTOS

THE MISTAKE: Taking pictures yourself of what you like best and not following professional guidance.

HOW TO AVOID: use professionals to highlight the home and ensure quality.

LIMITING THE # OF SHOWINGS

THE MISTAKE: Restricting access for buyers especially if still residing in the home.

HOW TO AVOID: vacate the home if possible, set aside daily time slots or increase flexibility for viewings.

FAILING OR REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE

THE MISTAKE: Digging in your heels or haggling over costs, repairs, or contingencies.

HOW TO AVOID: Expect and plan for compromise from the start. Create a list of areas where you might be flexible.

NOT OFFERING BUYER BROKER COMPENSATION

THE MISTAKE: Trying to save money or viewing this as unnecessary.

HOW TO AVOID: Discuss alternative areas with your agent to potentially save money.

UNDERESTIMATING CLOSING COSTS

THE MISTAKE: Not educating yourself or thinking about selling costs beforehand.

HOW TO AVOID: Use a net sheet and discuss fees, taxes, costs and potential buyer concessions.

NOT DISCLOSING ISSUES ABOUT THE HOME

THE MISTAKE: Trying to hide or downplay problems—can lead to broken deals and possibly legal issues.

HOW TO AVOID: Be honest about issues and deal with them up front.

IGNORING MARKET CONDITIONS

THE MISTAKE: Not adjusting price or expectations to match market demand.

HOW TO AVOID: Understand existing market type (buyer/seller) and local market statistics and trends.

ALLOWING EMOTIONS TAKE OVER

THE MISTAKE: Letting personal attachment to your home cloud your judgment.

HOW TO AVOID: Stay focused on your end-goal and rely on your agent for advice around price and offers.

Understanding the Market

“How’s the market?” is a question sellers ask just as often as buyers—but the answer carries different weight when you’re getting ready to list your home. Understanding the current real estate landscape helps you set the right price, time your listing, and attract the right buyers from day one.

From a seller’s standpoint, market trends aren’t just interesting, they’re strategic. For example, the absorption rate and closed sales give an idea of how long it may take to sell, which impacts how aggressively you price. Average days to close can help you plan and visualize the process from start to finish, especially important if moving. The list-to-sale price ratio reveals whether homes are selling above or below asking, which helps set realistic expectations. Median sale prices give you a sense of what buyers are actually willing to pay, while months of inventory indicate if you’re in a buyer’s or seller’s market—key when it comes to negotiation power.

Selling without this context involves guesswork rather than a tactical approach. But by understanding what’s happening in the local market, you and your REALTOR® can develop a smart pricing and marketing strategy that puts your home in the best possible position to sell quickly and for top dollar.



Avg/Median Sales Price



Closed Sales



Average Days to Close



List-to-Sale Price Ratio



Sold Price per Square Foot



New Listings



Pending Sales



Active Inventory



Months of Supply



Understanding the Contract

Selling a home is exciting, but rarely simple or fast. It involves lots of paperwork and legal language that can carry serious consequences if not fully understood.

At the center is the WA Purchase and Sale Agreement—a binding contract that outlines the terms of your agreement with the buyer and sets the course for everything that follows: inspections, negotiations, deadlines, and closing.

Despite its importance, many sellers are tempted to just skim the documents, overlooking important details. A strong, clear grasp of the contract protects your interests so it's important to go over each section with your REALTOR® or a qualified legal expert to understand your responsibilities, avoid unnecessary complications, and move forward with confidence.



Key Components of the Contract (for Sellers)



Property Disclosure (Form 17)

Your obligation to report known issues or material facts about property



Purchase Price & Earnest Money

Agreed price for the home & buyer's good faith deposit



Financing Addendum (Form 22A)

Buyer's financial info including right to back out if unable to obtain loan



Inspection Addendum & Response (Forms 35 & 35R)

Buyer's right to inspect the property and ask for concessions or repairs



Closing & Possession Dates

When the deal is expected to close and you're required to move out



Included/Excluded Items

Which appliances or fixtures stay with the house



Title Contingency

Shows you hold marketable title and the right to sell the property



Appraisal Contingency

Required by lender—buyer can renegotiate if appraisal comes in low



Signatures

Both parties must sign for agreement to be binding

Quick Tips for Sellers

- Read every page and addendum, including the fine print. Make sure you understand exactly what you're agreeing to before signing.
- Go through the offer with your agent. Ask questions and talk through contingencies, timelines, and what's negotiable.
- Pay close attention to deadlines. Missing a timeline can delay or complicate your sale.
- Double-check every detail. Verify the buyer's financing type, included items, closing date, and ensure all signatures and initials are in place.

Understanding the Settlement

One of the key documents you'll review at closing is the Settlement Statement, sometimes called the Closing Disclosure or ALTA statement. This document is a detailed breakdown of all financial details and disbursements involved in the transaction, including money owed and money due to the buyer and the seller.

The Seller Pays:

- Brokerage commissions for listing agent and buyer broker (if applicable)
- One-half of escrow or legal fees paid to the attorney or escrow company for closing
- Document preparation fees, if applicable
- Recording and notary fees, if applicable
- Owner's title search and insurance
- Prorated property taxes (prior to date of sale)
- State and local taxes, if applicable
- Agreed-upon repairs as part of inspection
- Mortgage balance, fees and prepayment penalty (if applicable)

The Seller Receives:

- Utility deposits held by gas, electric, cable, telephone and other companies
- Prorated portion of pre-paid property taxes
- Prorated mortgage interest from payments made during the current month
- Fuel rebate (if applicable) for oil or propane remaining in storage tank
- Net proceeds after seller's expenses are paid

The Buyer Pays:

- Down payment & purchase price of home
- Buyer brokerage commission (if applicable)
- One-half of escrow or legal fees paid to the attorney or escrow company for closing
- Document preparation fees, if applicable
- Recording and notary fees, if applicable
- Lender's title search and insurance
- Prorated property taxes (from date of sale)
- Lender's title insurance
- Homeowner's insurance
- Inspection & appraisal fees
- Loan fees as agreed with lender

The Buyer Receives:

- Earnest money deposit
- Agreed upon seller-paid closing costs
- Prorated portion of pre-paid property taxes
- Seller credits (if applicable)
- Lender credits (if applicable)



Understanding Taxes

When selling a home, it's important to understand the taxes involved so you're not surprised at the closing table. The WA state excise tax, prorated property taxes and potential capital gains affect your bottom line, and while most of them are handled at closing, it's good to chat with your REALTOR® or tax specialist ahead of time to move forward with confidence.

PROPERTY TAXES (PRORATED)

What is it? Property taxes for the portion of the year you owned the home.

How does it work? Taxes are prorated at closing, meaning you'll pay your share from January 1 to the date of closing. If you've already paid the full year in advance, you may get a credit from the buyer.

When is it paid? Handled during closing by the escrow team and reflected on your settlement statement.

EXCISE TAX (REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX)

What is it? A state and local tax on the sale of real property, paid by the seller at closing.

How much is it? Tiered amount, typically 1.10% to 3.0% based on final sales price and property location.

When is it paid? Automatically deducted from your proceeds at closing and paid to the county/state by the escrow company.

Note: This tax applies to the entire sale price—not just your profit.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX

What is it? A federal tax on the profit you make from a real estate sale.

Exclusion benefits:

You may exclude up to \$250,000 (single) or \$500,000 (married) if:

- It's your primary residence
- You've lived in the home for 2 out of the last 5 years

When is it paid? When you file your annual tax return. Talk to a tax professional to determine whether you owe.





Real Estate Glossary

Adjustable-Rate Mortgage (ARM)	interest rates on this type of mortgage are periodically adjusted up or down depending on a specified financial index
Annual Percentage Rate (APR)	the actual finance charge for a loan, including points and fees, in addition to the stated interest rate
Appraisal	an expert opinion of the value or worth of a property
Assessed Value	the value placed on a property by a municipality for purposes of levying taxes. It may differ widely from appraised or market value.
Balloon Payment	a large principal payment due all at once at the end of some loan terms
CAP	a limit on how much the interest rate can change in an adjustable-rate mortgage
Certificate of Title	a document, signed by a title examiner, stating that a seller has an insurable title to the property
Closing	the deed to a property is legally transferred from seller to buyer, and documents are recorded
Closing Costs	see "settlement" or refer to "Settlement and Closing" in this guide
Commission	a fee (usually a percentage of the total transaction) paid to an agent or broker for services performed
Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)	a survey of the attributes and selling prices of comparable homes on the market or recently (CMA) sold; used to help determine a correct pricing strategy for a seller's property
Contingency	a condition that must be met for the sale to go through
Contract	a binding legal agreement between two or more parties that outlines the conditions for the exchange of value (for example: money exchanged for title to property)
Deed	a legal document that formally conveys ownership of a property from seller to buyer
Down Payment	a percentage of the purchase price that the buyer must pay in cash and may not borrow from the lender

Real Estate Glossary

Earnest Money	a good-faith deposit towards the purchase of a home, made pursuant to an executed purchase and sale agreement.
Equity	the value of the property actually owned by the homeowner: purchase price, plus appreciation, plus improvements, less mortgages and liens
Escrow	a fund or account held by a third-party custodian until conditions of a contract are met
Fixed-Rate Mortgage	interest rates on this type of mortgage remain the same over the life of the loan. Compare to "adjustable-rate mortgage"
Fixture	a recognizable entity (such as a cabinet or light) that is permanently attached to a property and belongs to the property when it is sold
Hazard Insurance	compensates for property damage from specified hazards such as fire and wind
Interest	the cost of borrowing money, usually expressed as a percentage rate
Lien	a security claim on a property until a debt is satisfied
Listing Contract	an agreement whereby an owner engages a real estate company for a specified period of time to sell a property, for which, upon the sale, the agent receives a commission
Market Price	the actual price at which a property sold
Market Value	the price that is established by present economic conditions, location and general trends
Mortgage	security claim by a lender against a property until the debt is paid
Multiple Listing Service	a system that provides to its members detailed information about properties for sale
Origination Fee	an application fee(s) for processing a proposed mortgage loan
PITI	principal, interest, taxes and insurance, forming the basis for monthly mortgage payments
Point	one percent of the loan principal. It's charged in addition to interest and fees
Prepayment Penalty	a fee paid by a borrower who pays off the loan before it is due
Principal	one of the parties to a contract; or the amount of money borrowed, for which interest is charged
Prorate	divide or assess proportionately
Settlement	all financial transactions required to make the contract final. See "Settlement and Closing" in this guide.
Title	a document that indicates ownership of a specific property
Title Search	detailed examination of the entire document history of a property title to make sure there are no legal encumbrances

Frequently Asked Questions

01

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SELL AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

While spring and early summer are often peak selling seasons, good homes sell year-round. The right time is when it works best for you—your agent can help align timing with market conditions. How long it takes depends on the market, price, condition, and location of your home. On average, homes that are well-priced and well-presented can sell in just a few weeks, especially in a seller's market.

02

HOW MUCH IS MY HOME WORTH?

A Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) prepared by your real estate agent will give you a data-driven estimate based on recent sales of similar homes in your area, current competition, and market trends. Additionally, various factors including the age, location, amenities and condition of your home impact value so a thorough walk-through and research of your property will be done to determine the best price.

03

SHOULD I MAKE REPAIRS OR SELL AS-IS?

Minor repairs and updates can make a big difference in both curb appeal and value. Your agent can help you decide what's worth fixing based on your goals, timeline, budget, and the current market.

04

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY HOME?

This depends on the current condition of your home, but first impressions matter. At a minimum you'll want to clean, declutter, and organize the home so it looks its best. Your agent may also recommend simple updates or professional staging to maximize appeal.

05

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF SELLING MY HOME?

Many factors weigh in and no two properties are the same. Typically, among the costs of selling a home are agent commissions, closing costs, title and escrow fees, taxes, and possible buyer concessions. Other potential or optional costs may include home staging, repairs, or even pre-inspection fees.

Frequently Asked Questions

06

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I ACCEPT AN OFFER?

Once you've accepted an offer, the home sale enters the pending phase—but several important steps remain before closing. The buyer will typically schedule a home inspection and may request repairs or negotiate credits. Meanwhile, they'll begin due diligence and work through financing, including an appraisal ordered by their lender. Your agent will help coordinate timelines, manage contingencies, and ensure required documents are completed on time.

07

DO I HAVE TO VACATE MY HOME BEFORE CLOSING?

Not necessarily. You can negotiate a rent-back or flexible possession date if you need time to move after the sale. Just make sure these details are raised early and become part of the contract terms.

08

CAN I STAY IN THE HOME WHILE SELLING OR BEING VIEWED?

Yes, many sellers continue to live in the home while marketing it for sale. You'll just need to keep your home clean and ready for showings and work with your agent to schedule them around your routine. As for being present, it's best to leave during showings. Buyers need space to explore and imagine themselves in the home without feeling rushed or watched.

09

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE APPRAISAL COMES IN LOW?

If the appraisal comes in low, you may need to renegotiate with the buyer on price or terms as it could impact the buyer's ability to obtain financing. Your agent can guide you through this and help preserve the deal.

10

DO I HAVE TO ACCEPT A FULL-PRICE OFFER?

No—sellers aren't legally required to accept any offer, even one at full asking price. You can choose to accept, reject, or counter based on your priorities and terms. However, turning down a full-price offer without a clear reason can cause confusion, so it's always best to review all offers carefully with your agent and talk through your goals together.

