



TRUE NORTH REALTY

HOME *buying* GUIDE



THE ROAD TO HOME

JANET AUSTIN

BROKER / REALTOR®



HELLO, NICE TO MEET YOU!

I'm a proud wife, mom of three kids, and a dog lover who loves playing with my furry friends. My family and I are lucky enough to live on beautiful Lake Hickory, NC, where we enjoy the peaceful surroundings, tight-knit community, and of course time playing on the lake. Born and raised in the foothills of North Carolina, I have known this area since a child and love sharing all that it has to offer.

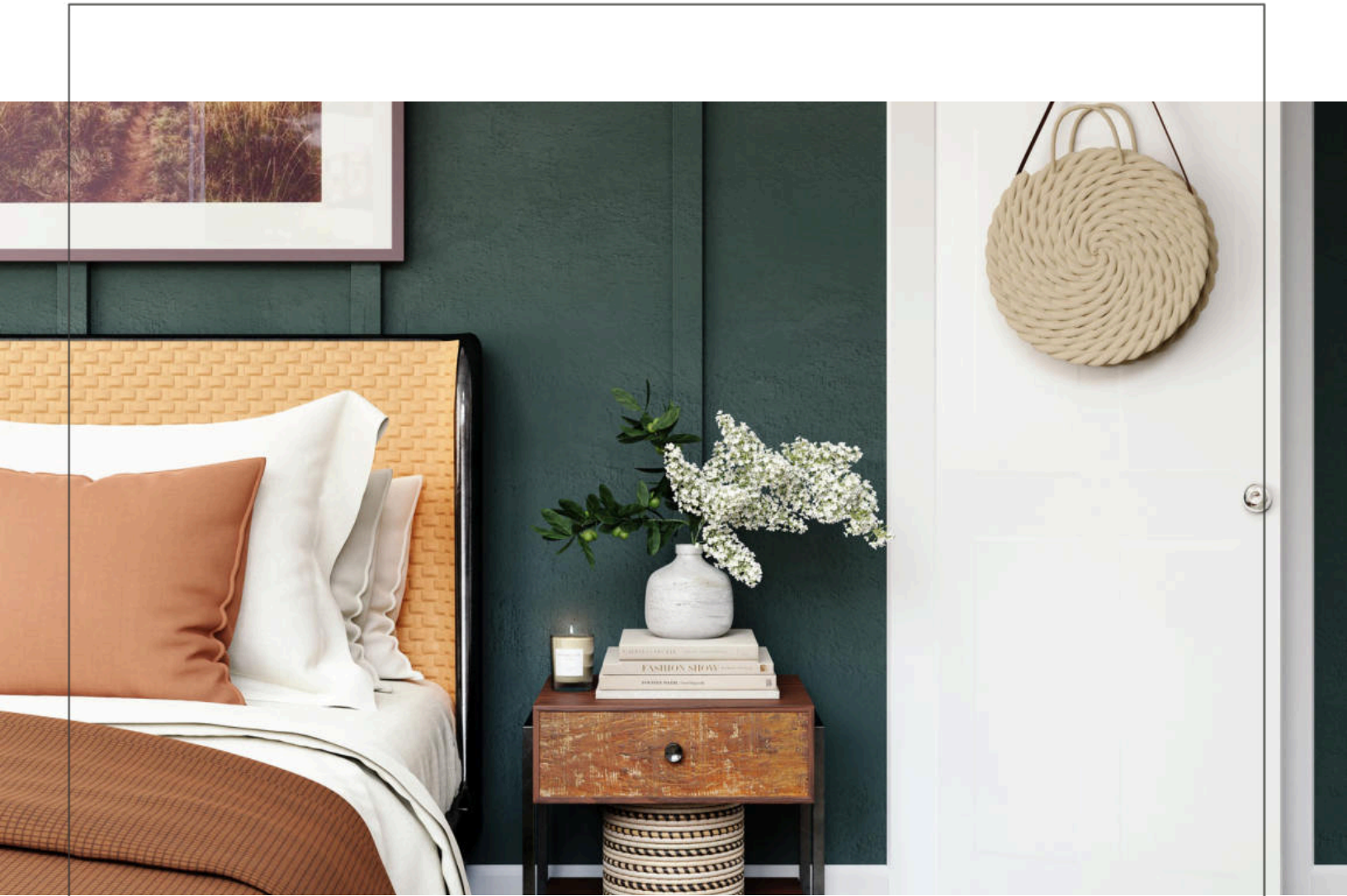
Since becoming a licensed realtor in 2018, I have been combining my passion for helping people with my knowledge of the local area. I love real estate because it allows me to use my background in education and marketing. These skills allow me to connect with people & understand their needs so I can negotiate in a way that everyone wins. Let me help you feel comfortable and confident as you buy or sell your property!

LET'S CONNECT



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SCAN TO CONTACT



THE HOME BUYING
PROCESS

THE 10 STEP HOME BUYING PROCESS

- 1 FIND THE RIGHT AGENT
- 2 PREPARE FINANCES
- 3 GET PRE-APPROVED
- 4 START HOME SHOPPING
- 5 MAKE AN OFFER
- 6 NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER
- 7 ORDER AN INSPECTION
- 8 APPRAISAL ORDERED
- 9 SCHEDULE THE MOVE
- 10 CLOSING DAY



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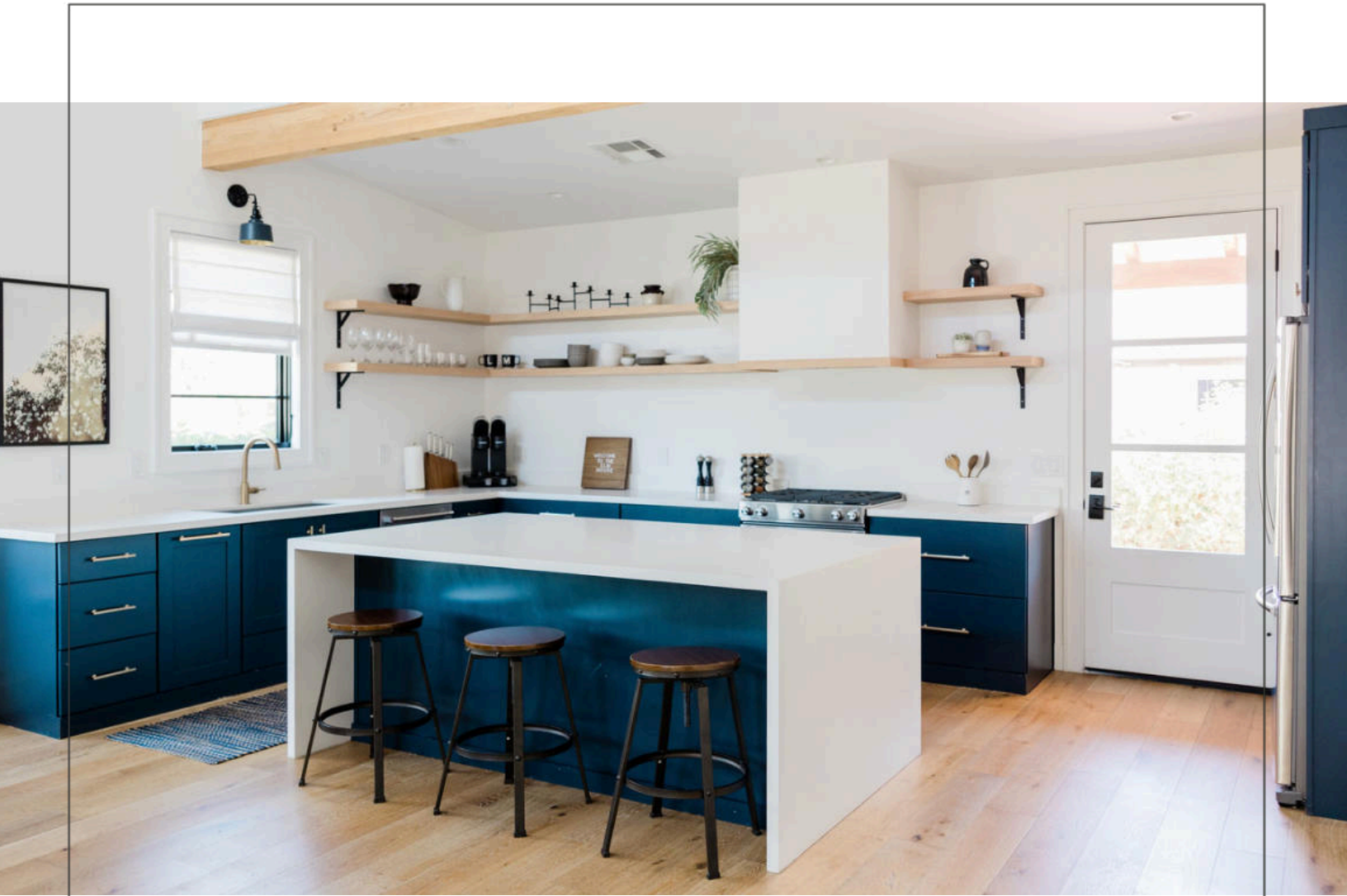
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1

FINDING THE RIGHT
AGENT

YOUR ADVOCATE



Buying a home is one of the most significant purchases in a lifetime. It is essential to have an experienced agent in your corner, always looking out for your best interest. A buyer agent's fiduciary responsibility is to represent the buyer and to ensure that they are protected.

After all, a seller has someone in their corner. A listing agent has an allegiance to the seller. Their goal is to get the seller top dollar for their home. There is incredible value in having someone working for YOUR best interests when buying a home.

GETTING YOU IN THE DOOR

We will narrow down the homes that fit your unique wants and needs and get you in the door. I look at dozens of homes every week, and I can help you identify potential problems within a home. When repairs or changes in price need to be made, I will be your guide and handle requesting any repairs or changes in price to the sellers.

STAYING ON TOP OF THE PAPERWORK

Buying a home involves many types of documentation. I have the experience and knowledge to navigate real estate contracts. Ensuring that nothing is overlooked, and that you truly understand what a paper means before ever signing on the dotted line.

ON YOUR SIDE

A buyer's agent will represent your best interests. With a pulse on the local market and a sound understanding of how various amenities effect the value of a home, we will make sure we submit a competitive offer on the right house for you.

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT

I work daily in neighborhoods with inspectors, contractors, and negotiating with sellers. I have the market knowledge you need to get you the home of your dreams at the best price! Understanding the local real estate market is essential when it comes time to make an offer on a house.

PROBLEM SOLVER

I will work hard to protect all of your interests and take on any issues that may arise throughout the entire process. I work tirelessly to make sure buying a home is a fun and stress-free process.

AFFORDABILITY

The seller typically pays the commission for both the seller's agent and the buyer's agent, in that commission comes of the sellers proceeds of the house - therefore built into the sale price.



2

PREPARING YOUR
FINANCING



PREPARING YOUR FINANCING

1

AFFORDABILITY

Mortgage lenders recommend you do not buy a home that is more than 3 to 5 times your annual household income. If you are not purchasing a home with cash, you will need a mortgage pre-approval provided by your mortgage lender. A lender will work with you to get a loan that meets your needs. Some buyers are concerned with keeping their monthly payments as low as possible, others want to make sure that their monthly payments never increase.

2

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

A mortgage requires a good credit score. Improve your score by:

- Paying down credit card balances
- Continuing to make payments on time
- Avoid applying for new credit until you have been approved
- Avoid making big purchases until you have been approved
- If possible, avoid job changes until you have been approved

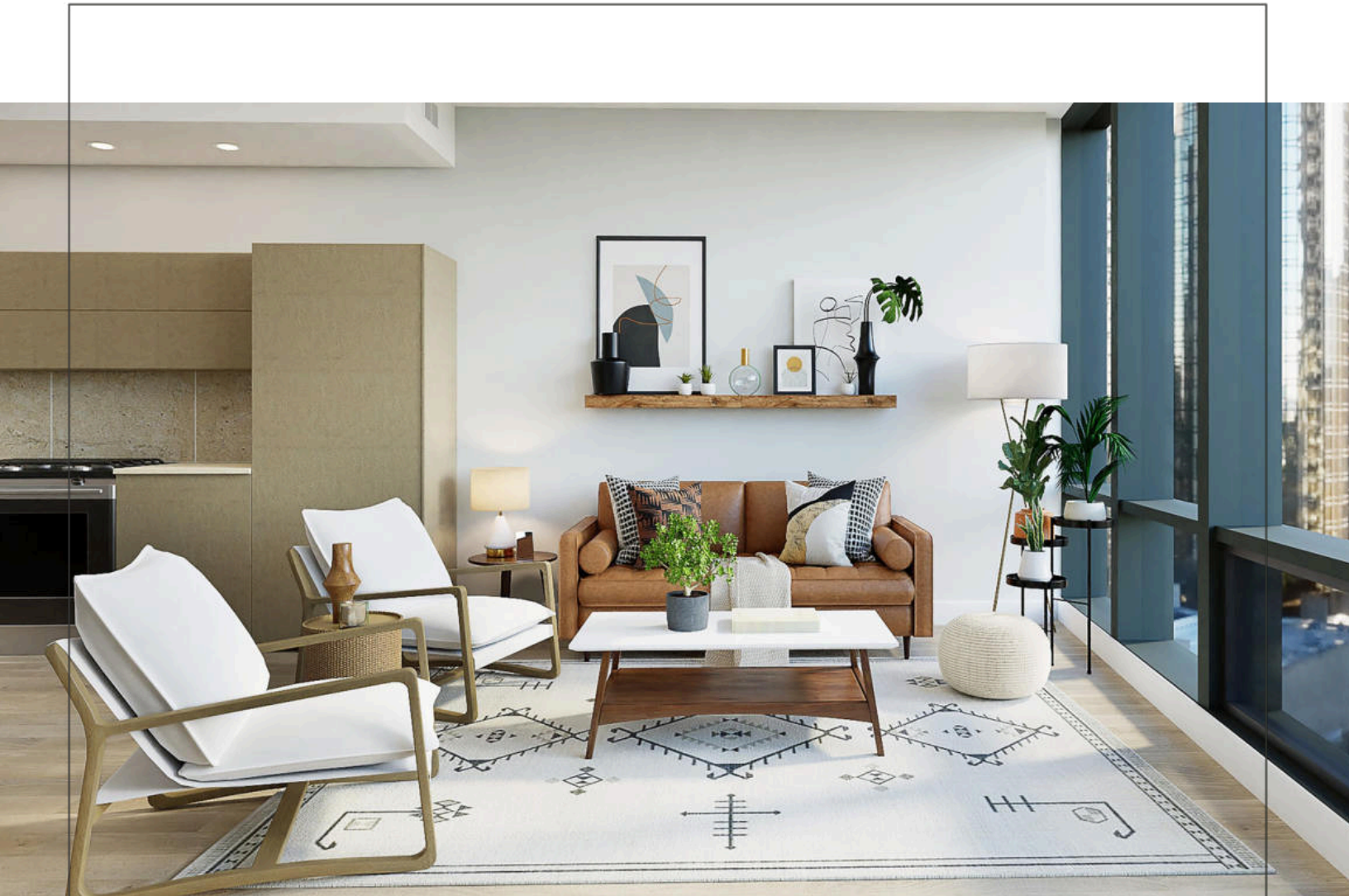
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DOWN PAYMENT

You will need to save cash for your down payment, earnest money/due diligence money, closing costs & possibly appraiser and home inspector.

- A Down Payment is typically between 3.5% & 20% of the purchase price
- Earnest Money & Due Diligence is money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home. It is applied to your purchase at closing.
- Closing Costs for the buyer run between 2% & 5% of the loan amount
- A Home and Appraisal each cost between \$400 to \$600





3

GET

PRE-APPROVED

GETTING AHEAD

IN THE HOME BUYING PROCESS



Being pre-approved, unlike being pre-qualified, means you've actually been approved by a lender for a specific loan amount. You will need to provide documented financial information (income, statements, assets, debt & credit reports etc.) to be reviewed & verified by the lender.

WHY SHOULD YOU GET PRE-APPROVED?

KNOW YOUR BUDGET

One of the biggest benefits of getting pre-approved for a home loan is that it helps you understand how much house you can afford. This knowledge can help you set a realistic budget when searching for potential homes and prevent you from wasting time looking at homes that are out of your price range and budget.

NEGOTIATING POWER

When you're pre-approved for a home loan, sellers and their agents know that you're serious about buying a home and that you have the financial backing to make an offer. This can improve your negotiating power and give you an advantage over other potential buyers who may not be pre-approved.

CLOSE FASTER

In today's competitive real estate market, being pre-approved can help you close on your home faster because you've already completed some of the financial checks required to get a mortgage. This can help you beat out other potential buyers who may not be pre-approved and speed up the home buying process.



4

START HOME
SHOPPING

FIND YOUR



START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE

Time to start shopping! We will take notes on all the homes we visit. It can be hard to remember all the details of each home, so take pictures or videos to help you remember each home, and review the notes you have written. Once we have found THE house for you, we will present an appropriate offer based on recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its current condition. Additional negotiations may take place after the offer is presented.



DREAM HOME TIP:

We will perform a visual inspection to make sure to check each house for functionality of major systems, such as plumbing, heating/cooling, open and close the windows & doors to make sure they work properly. A home inspector will perform a detailed inspection and report after the acceptance of your offer.

Evaluate the neighborhood and surrounding areas

- Are the surrounding homes well maintained?
- How much traffic is on the street?
- Is it conveniently located to schools, shopping, restaurants, & parks

HOME NOTES & BUYER PREFERENCES

WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET FOR YOUR NEW HOME?

WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERRED NEIGHBORHOODS OR LOCATIONS?

HOW MANY BEDROOMS AND BATHROOMS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC STYLE OR DESIGN PREFERENCES?

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-HAVES AND DEAL-BREAKERS FOR A NEW HOME?

notes

BUYER PREFERENCES

WANT NEED



Kitchen:

- Updated appliances (e.g. refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, microwave)
- Ample counter space
- Plenty of cabinet storage
- Pantry
- Island or breakfast bar
- Quality flooring (e.g. tile, hardwood)



Living Room:

- Open floor plan
- Natural lighting
- Cozy fireplace
- Space for a home entertainment system
- Quality flooring (e.g. hardwood, carpet)



Bedrooms:

- Sufficient space for a bed and furniture
- Walk-in closet
- Natural lighting
- Quality flooring (e.g. carpet, hardwood)
- Ensuite bathroom



Bathrooms:

- Updated fixtures (e.g. shower, toilet, sink)
- Adequate storage
- Quality flooring (e.g. tile, stone)
- Good lighting
- Separate shower and bathtub



Outdoor Spaces:

- Backyard or patio
- Pool or hot tub
- Outdoor cooking area (e.g. grill, smoker)
- Outdoor dining area
- Low maintenance landscaping



Other Rooms:

- Laundry room
- Storage space (e.g. attic, basement)
- Office or den
- Garage or off-street parking

5

MAKE AN
OFFER



MAKING AN OFFER

WHEN TO MAKE AN OFFER:

So you have found THE house! Congrats! In today's market when the demand is higher than the amount of homes available it is important to act fast!

HOW MUCH TO OFFER:

We will sit down and look at recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its present condition. Putting all this information together, we will determine the price that you would like to offer.

SUBMITTING AN OFFER

There are some components to an offer that makes it more appealing to the sellers.

•PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

We will work together to discuss your options and create your very best offer. Depending on the circumstances, you may have only one chance to make a good impression.

•PUT DOWN A HEALTHY DUE DILIGENCE/EARNEST MONEY

A large earnest and/or due diligence deposit shows the seller you are serious

•CASH TALKS

A transaction that is not dependent on receiving loan approval is more attractive to a seller

•SHORTER INSPECTION PERIODS

Try shortening the inspection period to 10 days

•OFFER TO CLOSE QUICKLY

Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.



AFTER YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

THE SELLER COULD

•ACCEPT THE OFFER

•DECLINE THE OFFER

This happens if the seller thinks your offer isn't close enough to their expectations to further negotiate.

•COUNTER-OFFER

A counter-offer is when the seller offers you different terms. If this happens, you can:

•ACCEPT THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

•DECLINE THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

•COUNTER THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away.

OFFER IS ACCEPTED - CONGRATS!

You will sign the purchase agreement and you are now officially under contract! This period of time is called the due diligence period. Now inspections, appraisals, or anything else built into your purchase agreement will take place.

6

ORDER AN
INSPECTION



INSPECTION TIME

During the inspection period, we will schedule an inspection with a reputable home inspector to do a thorough investigation of the home.

STEP 1: EXTERIOR INSPECTION

Conduct an exterior inspection, examining the roof, gutters, exterior walls, windows, doors, and foundation for damage or wear that could compromise the home's safety and integrity.

STEP 2: INTERIOR INSPECTION

Conduct an interior inspection, examining the condition of walls, ceilings, floors, doors, and windows, as well as major appliances, electrical, plumbing, heating, and cooling systems.

STEP 3: ATTIC AND BASEMENT INSPECTION

Inspect the attic and basement for the condition of insulation, ventilation, and structural components, and check for signs of pests or water damage.

STEP 4: REPORT WRITING AND COMMUNICATION

Inspector will provide a detailed report with a summary of results, concerns, and repair/maintenance recommendations. The inspector may advise on addressing issues found. Buyers can accept or request the seller to address them, with significant issues given priority over smaller ones.



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FINAL

NEGOTIATIONS



NEGOTIATE

FINAL CONTRACT REVISIONS/TERMS

Issues occasionally arise after the home inspection, and those issues can sometimes result in another round of negotiations for credits or fixes.

STEP #1

ASK FOR CREDIT FOR THE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE
Likely, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair work.

STEP #2

THINK "BIG PICTURE" AND DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF
A tile that needs some caulking or a leaky faucet can easily be fixed. Repairs are still up for negotiation and perhaps a small credit would help with closing costs.

STEP #3

KNOW THE SELLER'S RIGHTS
The purpose of your due diligence period is to inspect the home and gather all information to make an informed decision. Every contract is "as is" - meaning, the seller doesn't "have" to make requested repairs or concessions. It's within your right to ask, and it's within your right to terminate if you decide that the repairs are too much.





ORDER

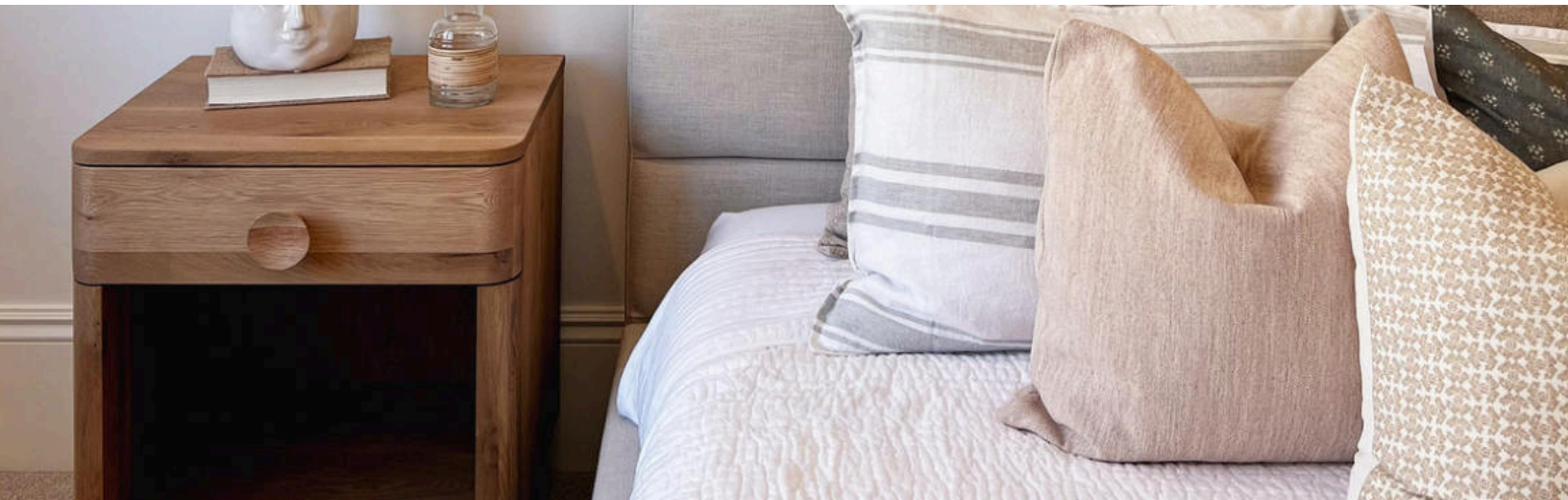
APPRAISAL

APPRAISAL

ORDERED

Your lender will arrange for a third-party appraiser to provide an independent estimate of the value of the house you are buying. The appraisal lets all parties involved know that the price is fair. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter.

If approved you will receive your final commitment letter that includes the final loan terms & percentage rates.



PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH

A property title search is the process of examining public records to determine the legal ownership and any outstanding liens or encumbrances on a property. It is performed during the home-buying process to ensure clear ownership and address any issues before the sale. It is typically done by a title company or real estate attorney.

HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

You'll need insurance for the new home before closing. This will protect against things like fire, storms, and flooding. Homeowner's insurance is important because it provides financial protection against losses or damage to your property, liability coverage, is often required by mortgage lenders, and provides peace of mind.



9

SCHEDULING

YOUR MOVE

SCHEDULING

YOUR MOVE

AFTER OFFER IS SIGNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Finalize Home Mortgage•Schedule Home Inspection•Declutter! Sort through every drawer, closet, cupboard & shelf, removing items you no longer need or like. Donate or sell items that are in good condition•Get copies of medical records and store them with your other important documents•Create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move•Get estimates from moving companies
4 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Give 30 days notice if you are currently renting•Schedule movers/moving truck•Buy/find packing materials•START PACKING
3 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The lender will arrange appraisal•Attorney will complete title search
2 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Get quotes for home insurance•Confirm time/date for closing•Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)•Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.•Minimize grocery shopping•Keep on packing
1 WEEKS TO MOVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Obtain certified checks for closing•Schedule and attend a final walkthrough•Finish packing•Clean•Pack essentials for a few nights in new home•Confirm delivery date with the moving company. Write directions to the new home, along with your cell phone number



10

CLOSING

DAY



CLOSING DAY

CLOSING DAY

Closing is when you sign ownership and insurance paperwork and you receive your new home's keys! Typically, closing takes four to six weeks. During this time, earnest money funds are held in escrow, where your money is held safe until the transaction is complete.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE

Lenders are required to provide you with a closing disclosure, at least three days before closing. This will show you what your final loan terms and closing costs will be. You will have three days to review the statement. This is done to ensure that there are no surprises at the closing table. If there is a significant discrepancy between the loan estimate and the closing disclosure, we must notify your lender and title company immediately.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH

We will do a final walk through the home within 24 hours of closing to check the property's condition. This final inspection takes about an hour. We will make sure any repair work that the seller agreed to make has been done. We will be sure to:

- Make sure all appliances are working properly
- Run the water in all the faucets and check for any possible leaks
- Open and close garage doors with opener
- Flush toilets
- Run the garbage disposal and exhaust fans

CLOSING TABLE

Who will be there: • Your agent • The seller • The seller's agent • Your loan officer • Any real estate attorneys involved in the transaction The closing typically happens at the attorney's office. You will be signing lots of paperwork so get your writing hand warmed up! Some of the papers you will be signing include: the deed of trust, promissory note, and other documents.



CLOSING COSTS

Closing costs can vary depending on your home's purchase price and where you are located. You can generally expect your closing costs to be around 3% to 4% of the home's sales price. These closing costs can sometimes be shared with the seller. We will make sure you know exactly how much to bring to closing. The attorney prefers this to be provided as a certified bank check.

BRING TO CLOSING

- Government-issued photo ID
- Proof of funds to cover the remainder of the costs

RECEIVE YOUR KEYS

Congratulations! After the deed is recorded, the home is YOURS! It was a lot of hard work but you are now officially homeowners!! Time to throw a party and get to know your new neighbors!



NOTES & *Questions*

buying

GUIDE

THE ROAD TO HOME

WHAT TO EXPECT
HONESTY & TRANSPARENCY
INTEGRITY
RESPECT
TIMELY & REACHABLE
ACTING IN YOUR BEST
INTEREST

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