

NEVADA & PLACER COUNTIES

YOUR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA FOOTHILLS GUIDE

Home Buyer's Guide

COLDWELL BANKER
GRASS ROOTS REALTY

A thoughtful plan for your next move.

Know your numbers. Compare homes clearly.
Make your next move with a plan.

MIKE FAULKENBERRY
REALTOR® | CA DRE #02246897
Coldwell Banker Grass Roots Realty

530-270-9219
mikesellsnorcal.com

A NOTE FROM MIKE

Working with Mike.



Buying a home starts with your life, your budget and the move you want to make. Whether you're ready to tour or exploring your options, we'll begin with what matters to you.

I'm a Nevada County native and a U.S. Air Force veteran with 15 years of service. I bring a practical, personal approach to helping you make your next move.

I'll help you compare homes, ask property-specific questions and understand the choices ahead. We'll connect the numbers, the property and the timing before you decide.

YOUR PATH FROM PLANNING TO POSSESSION

Plan & prepare

Budget, representation, financing and priorities.

Pages 3-7.

Search & compare

Property details, tours, pricing and offer choices.

Pages 8-16.

Investigate & close

Disclosures, inspections, escrow and possession.

Pages 17-22.

I look forward to hearing what you have in mind.
Mike

Cover: Mike's Buck Ridge listing. Other property images illustrate the topics; page 13 identifies a listing example.

START WITH YOUR NEXT CHAPTER

Your next chapter.

Your answers help us focus the search, protect your budget and plan a move that fits your life.

Why are you considering a move?

When would you like to move, and what must happen first?

What is your biggest question or concern?

What are your three must-have features?

What could you compromise on for the right home?

IF YOU'RE SELLING AND BUYING

Map both transactions before committing. Discuss selling first, buying first and temporary housing with your agent and lender. Check available cash and the cost of an overlap or delay.

Bring these notes to our Buyer Game Plan conversation on page 24.

01 / KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Planning your upfront cash.

The down payment is one part of the cash plan. Leave room for closing costs, moving and a reserve.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE $600,000 PURCHASE

Down payment + closing costs

Down payment (assumes 10%)	**$60,000**
Purchase price used in this example	**$600,000**
Closing costs at an illustrative 2-5%	**$12,000-$30,000**
ILLUSTRATIVE CASH BEFORE CREDITS	**$72,000-$90,000**

Illustration only: $60,000 down plus $12,000-$30,000 in closing costs. CFPB describes a typical 2-5% closing-cost range, excluding down payment. Actual costs vary. Ten percent down is an assumption, not a minimum. Moving and reserves are additional.

Get your own figures

Ask your lender and escrow for a property-specific estimate. Account for deposits already paid, credits, adjustments and any buyer-broker fee you owe without counting an expense twice. Review your compensation agreement on page 5.

Planning resource: consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/prepare/determine-your-down-payment/



YOUR AGREEMENTS / YOUR CHOICES

Your representation choices.

Understand the services, the agreement and the potential cost before touring homes together.

Agree on the services and fee

We'll review a written buyer representation agreement before touring: services, scope, term, compensation, payment timing and cancellation. All broker compensation is negotiable and is not set by law.

Request a seller contribution

At your direction, I'll request a seller contribution toward my fee in the offer. The seller may accept, counter or decline. A contribution can help preserve your cash, but it is never guaranteed.

Know your potential obligation

Your signed agreement controls any uncovered amount you may owe and when it is due. We'll review that exposure before you commit. Ask about existing representation obligations and get agreed changes in writing.

PLAN BEYOND THE PAYMENT

Your monthly ownership budget.

A lender's approval and your comfortable spending limit answer different questions. Plan for both.



See the full monthly picture

Include loan principal and interest, property taxes, homeowners insurance, mortgage insurance and any association dues. Count each expense once if it is already included in the payment.

Allow for the property

Add utilities, internet, fuel, routine maintenance and a reserve for future repairs. A pool, acreage, private road or older system may affect the budget. Ask for available records and obtain appropriate quotes; past bills do not guarantee your costs.

Keep a cash cushion

Decide how much cash you want left after closing for emergencies, moving and immediate work. Review the estimate again when the property, loan terms or insurance quote changes. Share your comfortable limit with your own advisors.

02 / PREPARE YOUR FINANCING

Finance your next move.

Know what remains.

Work with your lender before the search becomes urgent. A preapproval is conditional and may need updating.



COMPARE

Compare loan offers using the same purchase price, down payment and timing.

CONFIRM

Ask what documents, property conditions and insurance requirements remain before final approval.

PROTECT

Check with your lender before new debt, major purchases, job changes or moving funds.

MY FINANCING PRIORITIES

TASK / WHY IT MATTERS

START WITH THESE QUESTIONS

Compare Loan Estimates to understand rate, fees and cash needed.

Ask which loan programs fit your eligibility and cash plan.

Confirm your preapproval amount, assumptions and renewal date.

MY NEXT STEP	AMOUNT / DATE	WHO / BY WHEN

Cash purchase? Confirm documented funds, an ownership budget, appropriate investigations and an insurance plan. You still need confirmed closing and possession arrangements.

Cash reserve: $_____ Preapproval review: _____



Water.
Access.
Confidence.

03 / THE FOOTHILL PROPERTY FILE

Look beyond the setting.

Every address has its own systems, exposures and obligations. Confirm what applies before deciding.

Water and wastewater

Confirm the water source and sewer or septic system. For a private or shared well, review records and agreements and ask qualified providers about yield and water-quality testing. Review septic capacity and condition; a pumping receipt alone is not an inspection.

Insurance and wildfire

Get an address-specific insurance quote early. Review coverage, exclusions, cost and lender requirements. Confirm when coverage can begin. Look at wildfire exposure, defensible-space information and evacuation routes with the right professionals.

Access and recorded rights

Ask title and qualified professionals about legal access, easements, liens and shared-road obligations. Confirm seasonal access, road maintenance and the services you need at the actual address. County lines do not make every property alike.

TURN UNKNOWNS INTO QUESTIONS

Keep a written list: question, who can verify it and the deadline for your decision.



THE DETAILS BEHIND THE ADDRESS

What comes with the home?

Features can affect comfort, costs and future obligations. Confirm ownership, condition and transfer terms.

Look closely at the systems

Ask about the roof, heating and cooling, tankless water heater, windows, batteries and other systems. Review available ages, service records and warranties. An upgrade's description does not establish its condition or remaining life.

Check improvements and approvals

Review available permits, plans and final approvals for additions and changes. Compare records with the property and your intended use. Ask qualified professionals about unresolved questions before committing to work or relying on a feature.

Read the equipment agreements

Is solar owned outright, financed, leased or under a power purchase agreement? Review payment, transfer and payoff terms. Include propane tanks, batteries, security and other equipment. Confirm which items and warranties transfer under the contract.



04 / PRICE WITH EVIDENCE

Deciding what to offer.

A listing price is the seller's asking position. Your offer should connect property evidence with your budget.

COMPARE RELEVANT HOMES

Review recent closed sales and current competing homes in the relevant area and price range. Look at property type, condition, size, land, access and systems. A county median alone does not price one home.

ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENCES

Discuss what makes this property different and which facts remain uncertain. An online estimate, remodel cost or seller's desired price is one input; it does not settle market value.

SET YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES

Choose your comfortable maximum and cash limit before negotiating. Review appraisal, financing and investigation risks with your team. Decide which tradeoffs fit your plan and which would make you walk away.

OFFER RANGE / THE EVIDENCE BEHIND IT

My maximum: $_____ Questions to resolve: _____

Keep your offer boundaries private with your own advisors.

MAKE EVERY SHOWING USEFUL

Tour with a purpose.

A focused tour turns first impressions into observations, questions and a useful next step.



Test the everyday fit

Bring the priorities on page 3. Consider room layout, stairs, storage, work space, outdoor use and everyday routes. Verify the services and amenities that matter at the actual address. Look beyond staging and furniture.

Notice what needs an answer

Note visible concerns involving water, structure or systems for qualified evaluation. Ask about records, property boundaries and included items. A tour is not an inspection; photographs and seller statements are starting points for verification.

Choose the next step

After each tour, decide whether to revisit, investigate further or pass. Record the question that could change your decision. Use page 16 to compare your strongest options while the details are fresh.



05 / SEARCH WITH A PLAN

A search that fits your life.

Clear priorities and a focused search help you compare real options without losing the bigger picture.

Define the search together

We'll start with your timing, budget and must-haves. Discuss property types, locations and tradeoffs that fit your needs. You choose what matters; I'll help you find and compare relevant options.

Review useful matches

We'll agree on search criteria and how you want to receive listings. We can adjust as we learn from tours, available inventory and the questions that change your priorities. Availability and listing details need confirmation.

Plan the visits

Coordinate access and timing before touring. Follow showing instructions, respect privacy and avoid photographing personal information. Keep offer strategy and confidential finances for a private conversation with your own advisors.

Search review: _____ Tour window: _____ Next step: _____

USE THE MEDIA AS A STARTING POINT

Reading a listing.

Photos, a floor plan and a description help you decide what to explore. Verify the details that matter.



8980 UPPER VALLEY ROAD, AUBURN

Listed by Mike Faulkenberry | Listing example

STUDY THE SETTING

Look at indoor and outdoor spaces, then check what the photographs leave unknown.

EXPLORE THE LAYOUT

A 3D tour helps you explore how rooms connect; verify dimensions and use in person.

LIST YOUR QUESTIONS

Separate described features from facts that need records or professional review.

EXPLORE THE PHOTOS + 3D TOUR

Use this listing example to practice spotting features and questions to confirm on a tour.

An educational example, not a recommendation to buy. Listing availability can change.

STAY INFORMED

Communication throughout your purchase.



You should know what changed, what needs an answer and what happens next.

A useful update, on your schedule

We'll agree on a preferred communication channel and a regular review of the search. Tell me when a priority changes. After an accepted offer, we'll track deadlines, open questions and the people responsible for each next step.

What if the right home is not available?

We'll review the actual choices, budget and timing together. You can adjust a preference, broaden the search or wait. A busy market does not change your comfortable limits or remove the need to understand a property.

Decisions without loose ends

We'll identify the question, who can answer it and when you need to decide. Bring significant findings to the team promptly. Confirm negotiated changes in writing and ask before a deadline or unresolved issue becomes urgent.



READ THE WHOLE AGREEMENT

Building your offer.

Price, cash, protections and timing work together. Understand the whole proposal before you sign.

Connect price to cash

Review price, financing, deposit, requested credits and any contribution toward your broker's fee. Ask your lender how the proposed terms affect cash needed and loan eligibility. Set your boundaries before a counteroffer arrives.

Understand your protections

Review investigation, loan, appraisal and any home-sale conditions, including deadlines, removal requirements and cancellation rights. Taking on more risk can affect your deposit and ability to close. Ask about the consequences before waiving a protection.

Plan the dates and next steps

Agree on closing and possession dates that fit the move. The seller can accept, counter or decline; required parties must agree in writing. Once accepted, confirm the deposit deadline and independently verify escrow's payment instructions.

06 / COMPARE YOUR OPTIONS

Comparing homes.

Use one column per property. Record facts, unknowns and the effect on your budget before choosing your next step.

DETAILS TO COMPARE	HOME A	HOME B	HOME C
Address + asking price			
Must-haves + compromises			
Records still to verify			
Monthly cost + cash needed			
Condition + likely work			
Insurance + investigation questions			
Access + services + obligations			
Move timing + availability			

Write the address above each column. Estimates and listing claims need confirmation. Use current lender and insurer figures and appropriate professional evaluations. A preferred home still needs a considered offer and the investigations your agreement allows.

MY BEST FIT / THE QUESTION TO RESOLVE BEFORE I DECIDE

07 / INVESTIGATE BEFORE DECIDING

Disclosures and inspections.

Use records, reports and qualified advice to understand the property and the decisions ahead.



Read the disclosures

Review seller disclosures, title information and available records promptly. Ask about material facts, recorded rights and unresolved questions. An as-is sale still requires careful investigation; a disclosure packet is not a substitute for your own evaluation.

Choose appropriate inspections

Discuss which inspections fit this property and your intended use. Consider systems, structure, water, septic and specialist concerns as applicable. Understand each report's scope and limitations, and ask qualified professionals to explain significant findings.

CLEAR INFORMATION, BETTER DECISIONS

Keep questions and deadlines in writing. Share new information with your team. Page 18 explains how to weigh findings and possible responses.

California DRE consumer resources: dre.ca.gov/Consumers

WHEN NEW INFORMATION ARRIVES

Making sense of inspection findings.

Understand the issue, put a cost to it and review your options before removing contract protections.



Get clear on the finding

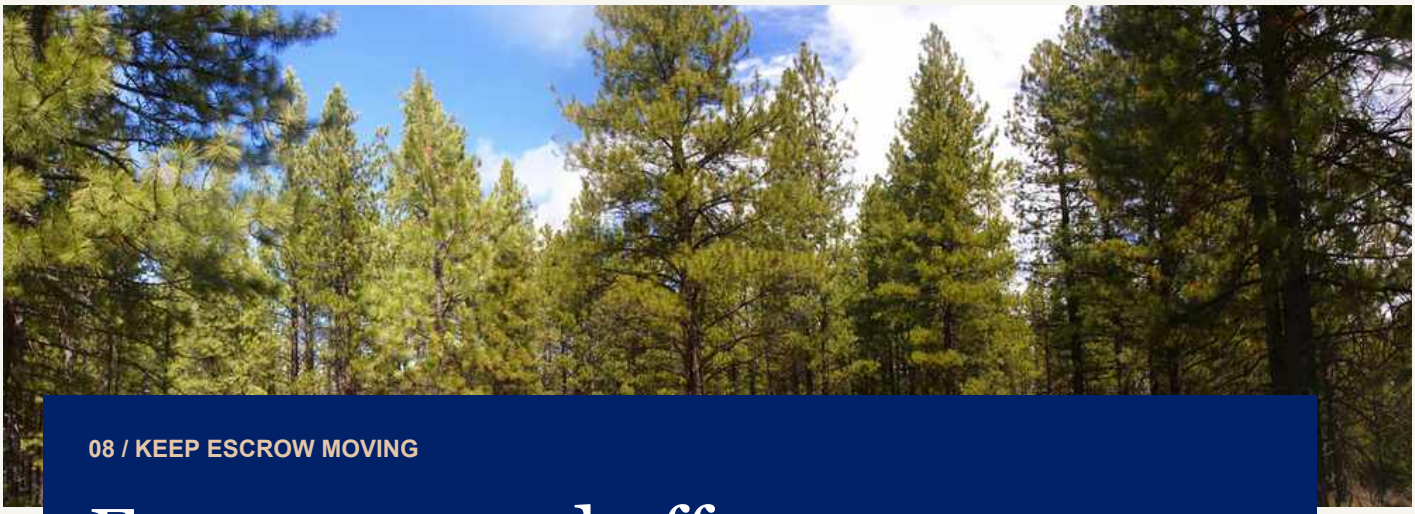
Ask qualified professionals to explain safety, condition or use concerns. Obtain appropriate estimates. Separate immediate needs, future replacements and cosmetic preferences. Review how the finding affects your budget and willingness to proceed.

Compare the available responses

Depending on the contract, you may investigate further, request repairs or a credit, proceed, or discuss cancellation rights. The seller does not have to agree to a request. Review financing, insurance, deadlines and deposit risk before deciding.

Confirm the next step

Put agreed changes in writing. Clarify the work, timing and verification. Track remaining questions and review completed repairs and agreed condition at the walkthrough. A deadline passing does not necessarily remove a contingency.



08 / KEEP ESCROW MOVING

From accepted offer to closing.

Escrow coordinates funds and documents. Your agreement and lender set the conditions to complete.

Track the agreement

Confirm the deposit due date, inspection access, investigation periods and each contract deadline. Know who owns the next step. Ask about removal requirements and cancellation rights before making a decision that could affect your deposit.

Complete the financing

Respond to lender requests and confirm remaining conditions. An appraisal estimates value for the lender; an inspection investigates condition. If value is low or loan terms change, review your contract and financing options with your team.

Keep the plan current

Verify insurance coverage and effective dates. Tell your agent and lender promptly about changes in funds, employment or the property. Cash buyers still need verified closing funds, investigations and agreed possession arrangements.

NEXT DEADLINE / OPEN ITEM / WHO IS RESPONSIBLE



09 / CLOSE WITH CONFIDENCE

Closing and your next move.

Signing, closing and possession are separate milestones. Confirm the dates, funds and remaining conditions.

Review the closing figures

For most home loans, review the Closing Disclosure at least three business days before closing. Compare it with your Loan Estimate. Ask about fees, credits, adjustments, monthly payment and cash to close before proceeding.

Verify before wiring funds

Call escrow using a trusted number you independently verified. Confirm wiring instructions and any changes by phone. Do not rely on a new number or changed payment instructions supplied only in an email.

Confirm closing with escrow before taking possession.
Your contract sets the possession date and any occupancy terms.

Closing guidance: consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/closing-disclosure/



A THOUGHTFUL MOVE

Preparing for move-in.

Use the agreed possession terms to coordinate your walkthrough, services and move.

Confirm the final walkthrough

Check the property's condition and agreed repairs under your contract. Bring unresolved issues to your agent before closing. A walkthrough is a final check, not a replacement for earlier inspections or proof that every system will perform indefinitely.

Arrange the handover

Confirm keys, remotes, included items, appliance manuals and available warranties. Plan secure transfer of smart-home devices and subscriptions. Coordinate insurance, utilities, movers and access around the agreed possession date.

Confirm before moving in

Wait for escrow's confirmation of closing and follow your contract's possession terms. If there is a rent-back or other occupancy arrangement, review written dates, access, coverage and costs before committing to the moving schedule.

PLAN BOTH SIDES OF THE MOVE

Buying when you also need to sell.

Connect your current home, available cash and housing timeline before making commitments on the next one.



Compare the order of events

Discuss selling first, buying first and temporary housing with your agent and lender. Consider where you would live, where belongings would go and how an overlap or delay could affect the budget. Start with your needs.

Confirm when funds are available

Use a current estimated seller net alongside the lender's purchase figures. Loan payoffs, selling costs and timing affect the cash you can use. Ask your lender what is required before relying on proceeds for the next purchase.

Review the actual terms

Review any home-sale condition, financing requirements and possession arrangement. Selling and buying have separate agreements and negotiated compensation. Confirm your potential obligations and the consequences of delays before signing.



BEFORE YOU DECIDE

Common buyer questions.

You can get useful answers before you choose a home or commit to an offer.

What if I'm not ready to buy?

We can start with your timing and the questions you want answered. A Buyer Game Plan conversation can identify a useful next step while you decide when a purchase fits.

Does preapproval guarantee a loan?

Preapproval is conditional. The lender still reviews the property, appraisal, documents and other requirements. Keep your information current and ask which conditions remain before final approval.

Do I need 20% down?

Some programs offer lower down payments for eligible buyers. Ask your lender about eligibility, insurance, fees, monthly cost and cash needed. A smaller down payment does not remove the need for reserves.

Who pays your fee?

We negotiate my fee in the written buyer representation agreement. At your direction, I'll request a seller contribution in the offer. The seller may accept, counter or decline. Your agreement controls any uncovered amount you may owe. We'll review that exposure before you commit.

USEFUL INDEPENDENT RESOURCES

Buyer guidance: dre.ca.gov/Consumers | Mortgage planning: consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Your Buyer Game Plan.



Start with a 15-minute Buyer Game Plan conversation. Text me the areas you're considering and the question you'd most like answered.

WE'LL START WITH

Your next chapter

Where you want to go, your priorities and your timing.

Your budget and property questions

The numbers, home features and unknowns to confirm.

One useful next step

A lender conversation, a focused search or time to consider your options.

Scan to start a text

CALL OR TEXT MIKE

530-270-9219

mikesellsnorcal1@gmail.com

Mike Faulkenberry | REALTOR® | CA DRE #02246897

Coldwell Banker Grass Roots Realty | mikesellsnorcal.com

Educational guide. Your property and agreement determine the details. Consult qualified legal, tax, lending, insurance and inspection professionals. Equal Housing Opportunity. October 2026.