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THE ROAD TO *HOME*

YOUR PATH TO SUCCESSFULLY BUYING YOUR DREAM HOME

Gary W. Fox 
Realtor® | Real Broker, LLC

real

HELLO

I AM GARY FOX, YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERT



THE *RIGHT* AGENT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Hi! I'm Gary Fox, a Maryland real estate agent proudly partnered with Real Broker, LLC (REAL)—and I couldn't be more excited to help you take the next step toward your real estate dreams.

Whether you're buying your first home, selling a place full of memories, or searching for that just-right next chapter, I'm here to guide you every step of the way. I believe real estate is about more than transactions—it's about people, goals, and finding the place that truly feels like home.

By teaming up with Real Broker, I'm able to combine local Maryland market knowledge with cutting-edge technology, powerful support, and a modern approach that puts your needs first. That means clear communication, honest guidance, and a tailored experience designed specifically around you.

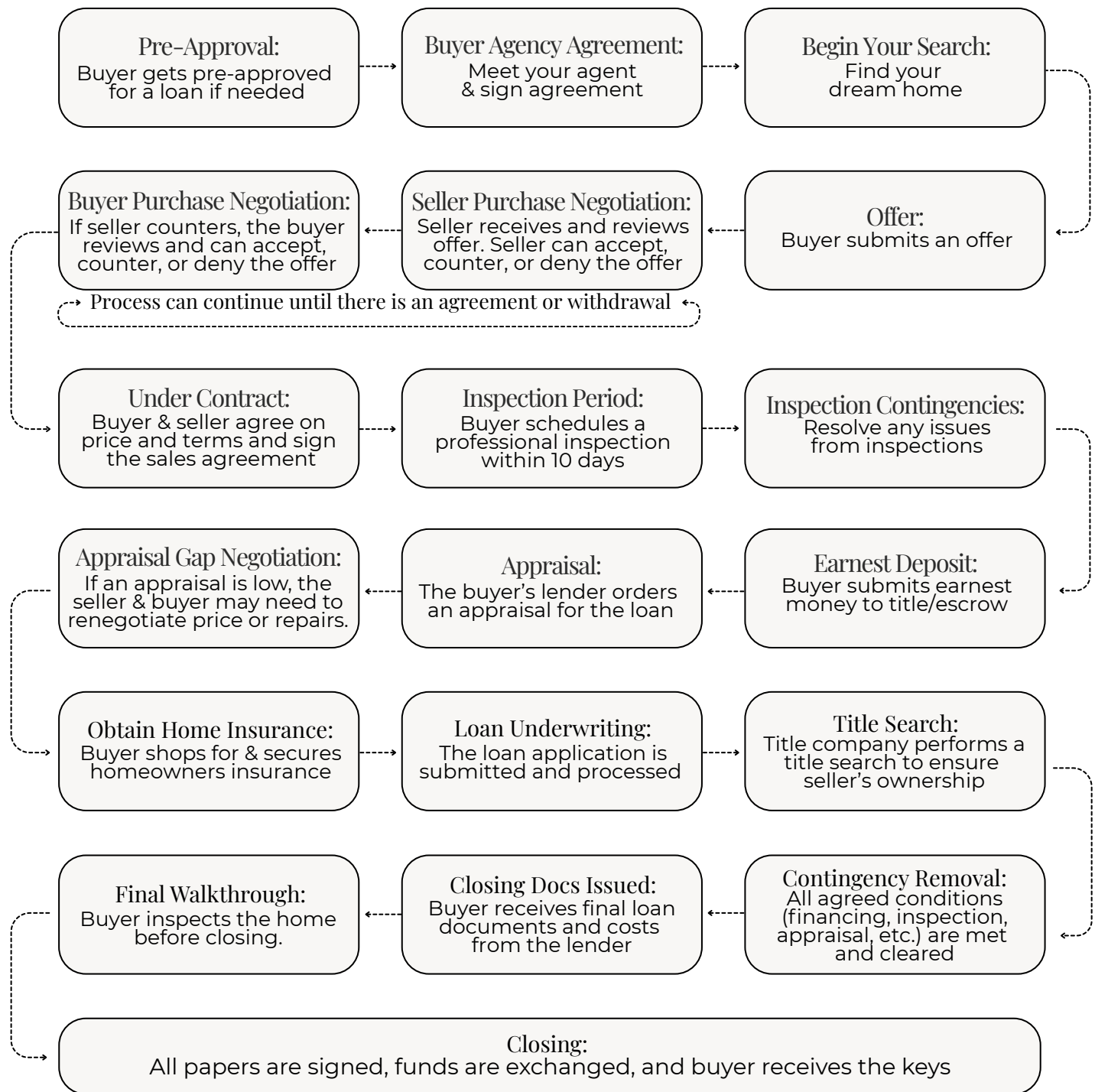
I bring energy, dedication, and a strong attention to detail to every client relationship. My goal is simple: to make the process smooth, informed, and even a little fun—while helping you feel confident in every decision.

When you're ready to get started, I'm ready to help. Let's make your next move a great one!

A modern kitchen with a large island, white cabinets, and large windows. The island has a white countertop and is surrounded by wooden stools. The kitchen features a high ceiling with exposed wooden beams and large windows that provide a view of the outdoors. The overall aesthetic is clean and contemporary.

My goal is to
understand your
unique needs and
goals, so we can
create a tailored
plan to achieve the
best possible
outcome for you.

Real Estate *Buying* Process





Ten Steps To Home

SIMPLIFYING THE JOURNEY

01

Consultation & Sign Agreement

We'll start with a consultation to understand your needs and goals. Then, we'll sign a Buyer's Agent Agreement, officially starting our collaboration and outlining how I'll represent your best interests.

02

Secure Financial Pre-Approval

Getting pre-approved for a mortgage is crucial. This step defines your budget, shows sellers you're a serious buyer, and gives you confidence during your search.

03

Define Your Dream Home

Let's talk specifics! We'll detail your must-haves, preferences for location, size, style, and features to create a targeted search profile for your ideal property.

04

Search for Properties

Using your criteria, I'll actively search the market, leveraging MLS access, network connections, and even off-market opportunities to find homes that fit your needs. You'll receive personalized alerts for new listings.

Ten Steps To Home

SIMPLIFYING THE JOURNEY



05

View and Evaluate Properties

Time to explore! We'll schedule showings for promising properties, allowing you to experience them firsthand, ask questions, and evaluate their potential to be your future home.

06

Craft a Competitive Offer:

Once you've found the right home, I'll provide market insights and guide you in structuring a strong, attractive offer designed to appeal to the seller while meeting your goals.

07

Negotiate Effectively:

Offer submitted! I'll use my negotiation skills to communicate with the seller's agent, working to reach a mutually agreeable price and terms that protect your interests.

08

Secure Financing & Lock Rate:

With an accepted offer, you'll work with your lender to finalize your mortgage application, submit required documents, and lock in your interest rate.

09

Conduct Due Diligence:

Protect your investment! We'll coordinate essential steps like the home inspection and property appraisal to assess the home's condition and confirm its value.

10

Close the Deal & Get Your Keys!

The final step! I'll guide you through the closing process, reviewing documents, coordinating with the title company, and ensuring everything is in order for you to receive the keys to your brand new home!

BUYING CONSULTATION

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

This first meeting is all about understanding your needs and concerns as a buyer. If you've thought about your priorities beforehand, it will help us get started effectively. I'll also provide you with valuable market insights to guide your search.



During our consultation, I will:

- Understand your home buying goals, timeline, and any concerns so we're completely on the same page.
- Share my market knowledge, explain the buying process step-by-step, and answer all your questions.
- Outline how we'll approach your property search, including the types of properties we'll look at and how we'll stay informed of new listings.

To make the most of our time, please think about:

- Your ideal moving timeline: Are you looking to buy quickly or do you have more flexibility?
- Your financial parameters: What's your budget and what are your financing pre-approval details?
- Any concerns about the buying process or specific neighborhoods: Jot down any questions you have.

By the end of our consultation, you can expect:

- A clear understanding of the home buying process.
- An initial outline of your potential property search strategy.
- Confidence in my guidance and support.
- Preliminary insights into the current market and what to expect.

From there, we have a few paths we can take:

- **We're a Great Fit:** We decide to partner up, sign the buyer representation agreement, and then I'll develop a personalized plan to find your ideal home.
- **I'm Not the Right Fit:** If my approach isn't what you need, that's perfectly okay. I'm happy to answer any remaining questions and provide referrals if needed.
- **I may suggest a different approach:** I might recommend exploring different types of properties or areas that better align with your goals. Your success in finding the right home is my priority, even if it means suggesting an alternative path.

I'm here to be a resource for you, whether you choose to work with me or not.

THE ART OF SECURING YOUR DREAM HOME

Establishing a confident partnership that provides expert guidance, clear communication, and invaluable support throughout your entire journey to a smooth and successful home purchase.



Reasons to Hire an Agent

Your home is likely the single largest investment of your life. But navigating this huge step alone? That's a gamble. Without an expert agent, you might dramatically overpay, missing vital market insights and sharp negotiation skills. Hidden flaws and unexpected repairs could quickly drain your savings. An agent finds hidden gems and secures savings you'd never spot. In a fast-moving market, going solo means costly mistakes that turn your dream into a nightmare. Don't let your biggest investment become your biggest regret.

Real estate's legal side is a complex maze. Contracts are dense, disclosures tricky – and one misstep can lead to huge financial penalties, a broken deal, or even a lawsuit. Your agent is your legal shield, meticulously reviewing every document. They protect you from hidden pitfalls, unfavorable terms, and missed deadlines that could jeopardize your earnest money or lead to unforeseen liabilities. With an expert handling the legal details, you gain peace of mind and a smooth, legally sound transaction.

NAVIGATING THE BUYER-AGENT AGREEMENT

Before searching for your dream home, it's crucial to establish a solid foundation with the Buyer's Agent Agreement, ensuring a smooth and successful home-buying experience.

WHAT IS A BUYER'S AGENT AGREEMENT?

Before we start searching for your dream home, let's discuss the Buyer's Agent Agreement. This agreement helps us work together smoothly and successfully.

STARTING WITH A SOLID FOUNDATION

Due to the recent NAR settlement, new rules require us to sign this agreement upfront so you have more control, transparency, and clarity over how agent fees are handled. Signing this agreement upfront ensures we are aligned from the start.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT:

- **My Services:** I will help you find homes, set up showings, negotiate offers, and guide you through closing.
- **Your Role:** You will be available for showings and make timely decisions.
- **Exclusivity:** You agree to work only with me during our set timeframe, so I can fully focus on your home search.
- **Duration:** The agreement lasts for a set period but can be adjusted as needed.
- **Compensation & the MLS:** Buyer agent compensation is no longer listed on the MLS, but we can still discuss it directly. Sellers and buyers can negotiate these details as part of the transaction.

BENEFITS OF A BUYER'S AGENT AGREEMENT:

- **We're on the Same Page:** The agreement makes everything clear.
- **I'm Your Advocate:** I'm here to support you and protect your interests.
- **Fits Your Needs:** We can adjust the agreement to work for you.
- **Less Stress:** You'll have a pro on your side, making the process easier.

OPEN COMMUNICATION AND NO PRESSURE:

My priority is to ensure you're fully informed and comfortable throughout this process. I encourage you to ask questions and raise any concerns about the Buyer's Agent Agreement. This partnership is built on trust and transparency, and there's no obligation to sign until you're absolutely ready.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE:

This agreement ensures we work together effectively. Once you're ready to sign, we can officially start your home search!



SETTING YOUR *BUDGET*:

YOUR FINANCIAL ROADMAP

THE CORNERSTONE OF YOUR HOME SEARCH

Defining your home-buying budget is the crucial first step before browsing listings. It serves as a financial roadmap, guiding your search and preventing overspending while ensuring you focus on homes that align with your lifestyle and goals. Your budget includes all financial aspects of homeownership, helping you understand your limits and make informed decisions. This clarity reduces stress and boosts confidence, allowing you to avoid the disappointment of pursuing homes beyond your financial reach.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO *DEFINE YOUR BUDGET*

GET PRE-APPROVED FOR A MORTGAGE:

Pre-approval is crucial. A lender assesses your finances to determine your maximum loan amount, setting a realistic budget limit for your home search and providing a powerful negotiating tool.

CALCULATE ALL COSTS BEYOND THE PURCHASE PRICE:

Consider all home costs, not just the price. Budget for upfront expenses like down payment and closing costs (typically 2-5% of the loan). Also, account for monthly payments (mortgage, taxes, insurance, HOA fees) and a buffer for maintenance and repairs.

ASSESS YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND LIFESTYLE:

Beyond what lenders say you can afford, decide your comfortable monthly payment. Factor in your lifestyle, other financial commitments, and savings goals to ensure housing costs leave room for comfortable living and emergencies. Avoid being 'house-poor'.

THINK ABOUT YOUR CAREER STAGE:

Your current and future income can significantly influence your budget. If you're early in your career, you might anticipate future income growth, potentially allowing for a more flexible budget over time. If you're nearing retirement, prioritizing lower monthly housing costs and minimizing debt might be key for long-term financial security.

REVIEW YOUR CREDIT SCORE:

Your credit score directly impacts your mortgage interest rate. A healthier score can lead to lower monthly payments and significant savings over the life of your loan. Check it and work to improve it if needed.



YOUR DOWN PAYMENT

OPTIONS & IMPACT

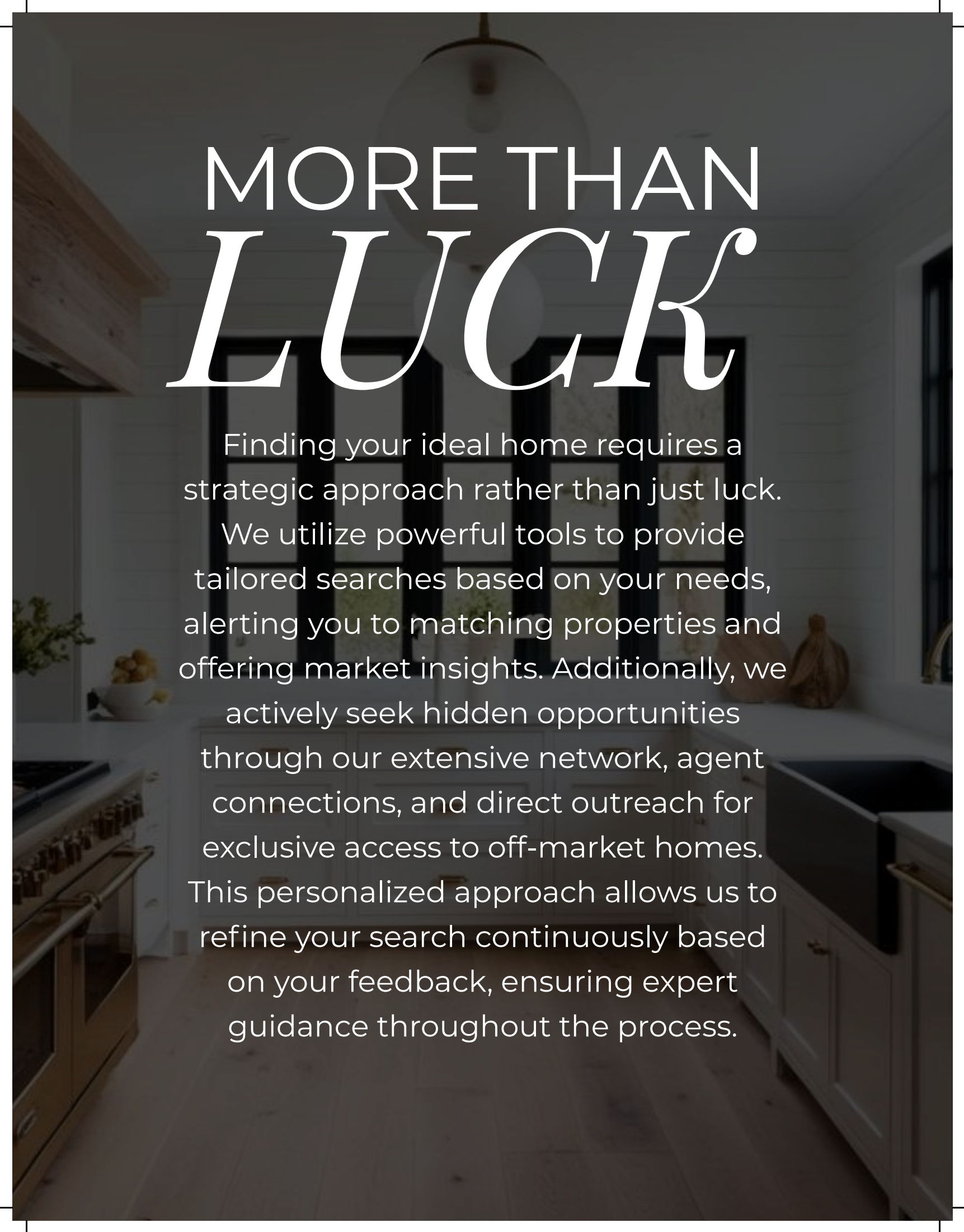
Your down payment is the initial sum of money you pay towards the purchase of your home, with the remainder covered by your mortgage loan. It's a crucial part of your home-buying budget, directly impacting your loan amount and potentially your interest rate and monthly payments. While a 20% down payment is often cited as ideal to avoid Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) on conventional loans, many loan programs allow for much lower down payments, some even as low as 3.5% or 0% for qualified buyers (e.g., FHA, VA, USDA loans). The size of your down payment can also influence your loan options and how competitive your offer appears to sellers. Common sources for a down payment include personal savings, gifts from family, or down payment assistance programs and grants. Understanding your down payment options is a vital step in preparing for homeownership.



YOUR ESSENTIAL LENDER MEETING

Now that you have a clear vision of your dream home and a target budget, the next crucial step is to reach out to a mortgage lender. During this important consultation, be ready to present financial documents such as pay stubs, tax returns, and bank statements. Your lender will assess your income, debts, assets, and credit history to determine how much you can genuinely afford and which loan programs are available to you.

Every buyer should obtain a pre-approval, as many agents require it before showing properties. This not only demonstrates your serious intent but also prevents sellers from preparing their homes for unqualified buyers, particularly in the luxury market where proof of funds is often necessary.



MORE THAN *LUCK*

Finding your ideal home requires a strategic approach rather than just luck.

We utilize powerful tools to provide tailored searches based on your needs, alerting you to matching properties and offering market insights. Additionally, we actively seek hidden opportunities through our extensive network, agent connections, and direct outreach for exclusive access to off-market homes. This personalized approach allows us to refine your search continuously based on your feedback, ensuring expert guidance throughout the process.

SMART SHOWINGS SELECTING & TOURING HOMES



① Smart Selection: Choosing Homes to Visit

After your customized home search is established, you will receive immediate notifications as soon as a new property that fits your criteria becomes available. If a listing grabs your attention, we will quickly schedule a showing for you to walkthrough it. It's essential to concentrate solely on homes within your budget to honor both your financial plan and the seller's time. Viewing properties beyond your budget often results in disappointment, as it can make your actual options feel less desirable.

② Touring Etiquette: Making the Most of Your Visit

During tours, remember you're stepping into someone's personal home and space, so please be respectful. Always remove your shoes if requested, and when small children are present please walk the home with care. Remember to save comments until after you've left the property.

Helpful Showing Tips:

- Avoid making any negative remarks while in the home but make quiet notes.
- Avoid discussing offers while inside the home.
- Remember there are almost always cameras present.
- Try to look past the current home decor as that will change.
- Imagine your belongings and style in the space.
- Focus on the home's layout, flow, natural light, and structural elements.
- Discuss your candid thoughts and feedback once you've left the property.

OFFER MAKING PROCESS

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



You've found the perfect house – congratulations! Now it's time to make it yours. This guide outlines the offer-making process, detailing each step to help you navigate this crucial stage of your home-buying journey confidently.

STEP ONE

Research and Due Diligence:

- Comparative Market Analysis (CMA):** Your agent will analyze recent sales of similar properties to determine the home's fair market value and help prevent overpaying.
- Property Condition Assessment:** Conduct a pre-offer walkthrough or limited inspection to identify potential issues, which can inform your offer price and contingency strategy.

STEP TWO

Determine Your Offer Price:

- Market Conditions:** Determine if it's a buyer's, seller's, or balanced market, as this affects your offer strategy; be more aggressive in a seller's market.
- Property Condition:** Consider necessary repairs or updates; we will help estimate costs.
- Your Budget:** Adhere to your pre-approved loan amount and budget to avoid overspending due to emotions.

STEP THREE

Craft Your Offer:

Your offer to purchase is a legally binding contract. Key components include:

- Purchase Price:** The amount you're offering.
- Earnest Money Deposit:** A good-faith deposit (typically 1-3% of the purchase price) held in escrow. A larger deposit can signal your seriousness.
- Contingencies:** These are conditions that protect you the buyer and that must be met for the sale to proceed. Conditions like:
 - **Financing Contingency:** Your offer is contingent on securing a mortgage at acceptable terms.
 - **Appraisal Contingency:** The property must appraise at or above the purchase price.
 - **Inspection Contingency:** A satisfactory home inspection. Never waive this lightly.
 - **Sale of Existing Home Contingency (if applicable):** Dependent on the sale of your current home.
- Closing Date:** Your preferred closing date.
- Possession Date:** When you can take possession.
- Inclusions and Exclusions:** Specify which items are included (appliances, fixtures) and excluded (personal belongings).
- Addenda:** Any additional agreements or requests.

Offer Making Process:

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP FOUR

Submitting Your Offer:

Your offer is your first formal communication with the seller. I will ensure it's professionally prepared and presented. I will highlight your offer's strengths (pre-approval, deposit) and explain the next steps. We will also work to understand the seller's priorities. Clear communication with your agent is key throughout the process.

STEP FIVE

Negotiation:

- Seller's Response:** The seller can accept, counter, or reject your offer.
- Counteroffers:** If the seller counters, don't panic! This is normal. We will review the counteroffer, prioritize your key terms, and decide where you're willing to compromise. I will help you craft a strategic response. The seller can then counter again and this back-and-forth continues until a final agreement is reached or either party withdraws.
- Multiple Offers:** In a competitive market, you might encounter multiple offers. I can help you navigate this situation, potentially suggesting a strong initial offer, an escalation clause crafted with care, or other tactics.

STEP SIX

Acceptance:

Once all terms are agreed upon, the offer is accepted, and you move forward with the remaining steps of the purchase process (inspections, appraisal, financing).

TIPS:

- Being prepared is essential:** Ensure financial readiness, choose the right agent, and conduct thorough market research.
- A thoughtfully designed offer safeguards your interests:** Incorporate necessary contingencies and be strategic about pricing and terms.
- Having a master in negotiation by your side is important:** Be ready to compromise, pay close attention, and rely on your agent's expertise in negotiation.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR OFFER WAS ACCEPTED!

You're now under contract and in escrow,
beginning the crucial due diligence period.

What is Next?

Earnest Money Deposit:

Submit your deposit shortly after acceptance (often by check or wire transfer) to a neutral third party like an escrow or title company. This good faith deposit shows your commitment to the purchase and is held in a secure account, usually applying towards your down payment or closing costs.

Inspections:

You will hire and arrange a thorough home inspections with a qualified professional of your choosing. These inspections provide a detailed report on the home's systems and structure. Based on the findings, I will then help you negotiate any necessary repairs or price adjustments with the seller.

Appraisal:

Your lender will order an independent appraiser to confirm the home's market value at the property. This step is crucial as it ensures the property's value justifies your loan amount, protecting both your investment and the lender's interest. If the appraisal comes in lower than the purchase price, I will help you navigate potential impacts on your loan terms or further negotiation with the seller.

WHAT TO EXPECT During a Home Inspection

Inspections are crucial when buying a home. After your offer is accepted, a professional inspector evaluates the property for issues such as structural damage, plumbing, and electrical problems. This helps you understand the property's condition and negotiate repairs or price adjustments with the seller, allowing for an informed buying decision.



TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

- General Home Inspection
- Pest Inspection
- Radon Inspection
- Mold Inspection
- Sewer and Septic Inspection
- Chimney Inspection
- Lead-Based Paint Inspection
- Asbestos Inspection
- HVAC Inspection
- Roof Inspection

A TYPICAL INSPECTION PERIOD IS 10 DAYS

Most inspections almost always have a report with some findings, as there aren't any perfect houses. After receiving the report, discussions about credits or repairs typically follow. As your agent, I will help explore options to address these issues.

YOUR OPTIONS AFTER RECEIVING THE INSPECTION REPORT

•ACCEPT AS-IS:

Minor issues can be tolerated in competitive markets, but consider repair implications.

•REQUEST REPAIRS:

Ask the seller to fix key safety and structural issues, focusing on critical repairs.

•RENEGOTIATE PRICE:

If major issues exist, negotiate a lower price to account for necessary repairs using estimates as justification.

•REQUEST CLOSING CREDITS:

Ask for credits to cover repairs post-closing, allowing you to manage the work.

•WALK AWAY:

If serious issues are found and unresolved, you may cancel the contract under the inspection contingency to protect your investment.

NAVIGATING APPRAISALS

The appraisal process is crucial in real estate transactions, particularly with financing. It includes an independent evaluation of a property's market value by a licensed appraiser, ordered by the lender to confirm the loan amount aligns with the property's worth.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN APPRAISAL:

- Appraiser conducts a thorough inspection evaluating:
 - Square footage and layout
 - Condition of the structure, roof, and foundation
 - Quality of finishes and upgrades
 - Recent renovations or improvements
- Appraisers use recent sales of similar nearby homes ("comps") to determine your home's fair market value
- The appraiser creates a comprehensive report and submits it to the lender

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES & CONSIDERATIONS:

APPRAISAL MATCHES OFFER:

If the appraised value matches or exceeds the agreed-upon purchase price, the transaction typically proceeds smoothly.

APPRAISAL BELOW OFFER:

If the appraised value is lower than the offer, it can create challenges.

OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Renegotiating the purchase price
- The buyer paying the difference
- The seller challenging the appraisal with additional comps
- The deal falling through

Timeline: Appraisals typically take 1-2 weeks to complete.

Factors like appraiser availability and property complexity can influence the timeline.

TITLE & INSURANCE



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.

Finalizing Your Finances

As your closing day gets close, staying in touch with your lender is key. They might ask for more documents or information, so please respond quickly. Even more important, be very careful with your money: avoid taking out any new loans or getting new credit cards. Buying a new car, a boat, or even furniture on a credit card can quickly change your financial picture. This might hurt your debt-to-income ratio and could jeopardize your entire home purchase. Please wait to buy big things until after you've successfully closed on your new home. Being patient now means a smooth and easy path to getting your keys!

FINAL WALK THROUGH

Next, you'll conduct a final walk-through of the property. This typically happens a day or two before closing and allows you to confirm that any agreed-upon repairs have been completed and the home is in the expected condition.



Take your time during this walk-through to ensure everything is in order. Once satisfied, you'll proceed to closing, where you'll sign the necessary documents and officially become the owner of your new home.

CLOSING THE SALE

WHAT TO EXPECT

Closing day is the final step in becoming a homeowner, where funds and legal documents are transferred. A neutral third party, like an escrow officer, guides the process, ensuring accurate payments, preparing paperwork, settling any property debts, recording the title, and confirming any funds due to you. This structured process ensures a smooth and secure transfer of ownership.



YOUR COSTS

Beyond your down payment, you'll need to cover "closing costs," which are various fees and expenses paid at this final stage. These can range from 2-5% of your loan amount and typically include fees related to your loan, title and escrow services, prepaid property taxes and insurance, and government recording fees. Your lender will provide a detailed Loan Estimate early on and a final Closing Disclosure a few days before closing, clearly outlining every cost you'll be responsible for.

WHAT TO BRING

BUYERS NEED TO BRING TO CLOSING:

- A government picture ID
- Certified Funds: A cashier's check or proof of wire transfer for your remaining down payment and closing costs.
- Your Personal Checkbook: For any small, unexpected prorations.

AFTER CLOSING

SAVE THESE FOR TAXES:

- Copies of all closing documents
- All home improvement receipts



YOUR QUESTIONS MATTER

I understand that buying a home is a significant decision,
and I want you to feel assured about our strategy.

- Is there anything that still raises questions for you?
- Do you believe this is the right strategy to purchase your dream home?

I am confident that we can reach your objectives together.
I'm excited to partner with you and will ensure you get the service you deserve!

IF YOU ARE READY, LET'S TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

1. Sign the Listing Agreement:

We'll review the paperwork and officially start working together.

2. Loan Pre-Approval:

Let's get you pre-approved for a mortgage to strengthen your offer. I can connect you with lenders.

3. Defining Your Ideal Home:

Tell me your dream home features, and I'll set up custom listing alerts.

4. Exploring Properties: We'll tour promising homes, and I'll share insights on each property and neighborhood.

5. Market Updates & Communication:

I'll keep you updated on the market and new listings. As always I'm available and happy to answer your questions.

6. Offer Strategy:

When you're ready to offer, I'll guide you through negotiations and the process.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity to present my services in your home-selling journey!

My mission is simple:

I aim to help you sell your home at the best possible price, within your desired timeframe, and with as little stress as possible. Your successful sale is within reach, and I'm here to ensure the process is smooth and rewarding. Let's embark on this exciting journey together! By getting started today, we can tailor the selling strategy to your needs and soon transform that 'For Sale' sign into a 'Sold' one, marking the next chapter in your life.

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