



2020

HOME SELLERS GUIDE



U.S. REAL ESTATE PREDICTIONS FOR 2020



Housing and real estate experts are out with their 2020 market predictions, and they're well worth a look – especially if you're in the market for a new home next year – or looking to sell one. Let's take a glimpse and see what shots the gurus are calling for real estate in 2020, with these 12 top predictions foremost in the housing market crystal ball.

BRIAN O'CONNELL, TheStreet

Home Sellers Will Sit 2020 Out

Realtor.com predicts residential property inventory to "evaporate" in 2020. "That will make it more challenging for buyers to find a home despite attractive interest rates," the Santa Clara, Cal.-based company states.

Millennials Will Get Aggressive About Buying Homes

Realtor.com also notes that one demographic will be big buyers in 2020 – even if inventories are thin. That's the millennials. Apparently, younger buyers are eschewing inner-city living and have their sights set on 1,800 square-foot homes in the suburbs, with good neighborhoods and decent schools. Millennials will take more mortgages than baby boomers and gen-x'ers in 2020, the company predicts. Down payments from millennial buyers will also likely be bigger than ever.

Realtor.com also says millennials – with the oldest members approaching 40 and the biggest cohort turning 30 in 2020 – will surpass 50% of all home purchase mortgages.

Home Prices Will "Flatten"

"They also predict that U.S. home prices will flatten, increasing just 0.8% nationwide. Prices will decline in more than 25% of the 100 largest metros, including Chicago, Dallas, Las Vegas, Miami and San Francisco, according to Realtor.com.

The Housing Market Will Be "More Competitive"

"Seattle-based Redfin predicts the U.S. housing market will be more competitive in 2020 as the cool-down that began in the second half of 2018 comes to an end. "Low mortgage rates started to revitalize the market at the end of this summer, but we won't see their full impact on demand for housing until next year," says Redfin chief economist Daryl Fairweather. "In 2020, buyers will have fewer homes to choose from than they have in five years. But the return of bidding wars is good news for sellers who may have been holding out this year as the market stabilized. The competition and faster price growth will tempt more homeowners and builders to list homes, which will help improve the balance between supply and demand by the end of the year."

Go South, Young Buyer

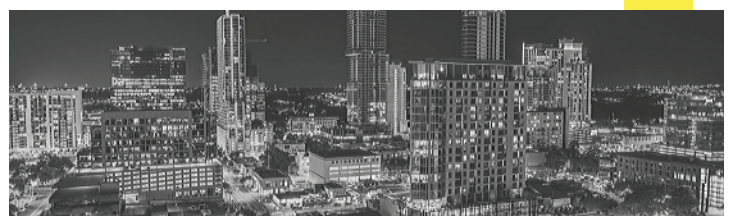
Redfin also notes that southeastern U.S. states will rule the roost on the home price appreciation price. "Charleston and Charlotte will lead the nation in home-price growth as more people and employers move to affordable Southeast cities," the company states.

Mortgage Rates Stabilized at the Low End of the Range

Expect 30-year fixed mortgage rates to remain low, hovering around 3.8%, Redfin predicts.

"Faced with slowing economic growth, the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates low," Redfin reports. "Although the housing market is strong, weakness in other sectors, like manufacturing, is pulling down on the economy.

"The company does see some leeway on rates, dependent on the U.S. economy in 2020. Because investors are already bracing for the possibility of a recession, Redfin doesn't expect mortgage rates to fall much lower than 3.5% in 2020 even if the economy weakens. If the economy strengthens, Redfin expects mortgage rates to stay below 4.1%





.. But Mortgage Rates Decline Should Be Temporary

Mortgage rates matter, but the current decline won't last, experts say.

"More than any other factor with the potential to impact home-buying demand through 2020, mortgage rates are viewed by our expert panel to be most significant," says Terry Loeb, founder of Pulsenomics, a housing industry analysis and research firm located in Boston, Mass.

Loeb says that although 30-year mortgages are near 18-month lows and available now at rates below 4%, "the near-term outlook for home prices has actually weakened a bit" from the previous survey in February. "Together, these data suggest that most experts believe the recent rate move is a temporary dip, and that home-buying demand through next year will be dampened by other, more persistent factors that affect affordability, such as constrained inventory and the growth of house prices relative to wages."

Expect "Bidding Wars

"Thanks to low mortgage rates and thin residential housing inventories, sellers can expect bidding wars in 2020, Redfin reports.

"Low mortgage rates will continue to strengthen homebuying demand, but due to a lack of new homes for sale and homeowners staying put longer, there will be fewer homes on the market in 2020 than in the past five years," the company predicts. "More demand and less supply mean bidding wars will rebound in the first quarter."

Altogether, Redfin expects about one in four offers to face bidding wars in 2020 compared to only one in 10 in 2019. "This increase in competition will push year-over-year price growth up to 6% in the first half of the year, considerably stronger than the 2% growth seen in the first half of 2019," the company states. "Supply and demand will become more balanced later in the year as more listings of new and existing homes hit the market and price growth will moderate to 3%."

If a Recession Occurs, Housing Won't Be Overly Affected

There is talk of a U.S. recession next year, although that sentiment is becoming muted after strong economic numbers in December. And if an economic slowdown does occur, the housing market will weather the storm.

"Unlike past recessions, there is now an extremely low inventory of homes," says Dr. Ralph G. DeFranco, global chief economist for Arch Capital Services Inc., in Walnut Creek, Cal. "That's why we expect the price of entry-level homes to once again grow faster than incomes in 2020."

First-time homebuyers are in a difficult spot because builders aren't constructing enough homes at the more affordable end of the market, DeFranco says. "But the positive side is that low inventory and very high mortgage quality will likely limit the severity of a future recession, though we aren't predicting when the next downturn could occur," he says.

Hispanics Gain

According to Realtor.com, Hispanic Americans will gain more wealth from home equity than white Americans for the first time ever. That's because the majority of new homeowners are Hispanic and home values in Hispanic neighborhoods are increasing faster than in white neighborhoods, the company states.

Analysts at Realtor.com point to Texas as a Hispanic homeowner hotspot. There are more Hispanic homeowners in Texas than in any other state and Texas cities are likely to experience strong gains in home values over the next decade as people move there from expensive cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles, Realtor.com predicts.

Climate Change Is Now a Buying Factor

2020 will mark the first decade where climate change will factor into home-buying decisions. "The financial costs of climate change are already becoming more tangible as fire and flood insurance premiums rise," Realtor.com reports. Over the next decade, higher insurance premiums in high-risk areas will make housing even less affordable to more people. And in areas with the highest risk, insurers may stop providing insurance altogether, which means it will be nearly impossible to secure a mortgage in those areas.

Overall, U.S. Home Values to Rise in 2020

According to Matthew Gardner, chief economist at Windermere Real Estate in Seattle, home values will be up by 2.9% in 2020, and that should lead to more buying activity.

"I feel confident that 2019 will end with a slight rise in home sales," Gardner states in his annual real estate prediction list for Windermere. "For 2020, I expect sales to rise around 2.9% to just over 5.5 million units."

Gardner expects home prices next year will continue to rise as mortgage rates remain very competitive. "Look for prices to increase 3.8% in 2020 as demand continues to exceed supply and more first-time buyers enter the market." In the year ahead, Gardner says he anticipates the volume of first-time homebuyers to grow, "making them a very significant component of the housing market."

Gardner says he also expects new home prices to rise by 2.5% in 2020.



Why Should You Use a Realtor®?



6 Reasons You Should Never Buy or Sell a Home Without an Agent

Realtor.com | By Rachel Stults

1. They have loads of expertise

Want to check the MLS for a 4B/2B with an EIK and a W/D? Real estate has its own language, full of acronyms and semi-arcane jargon, and your Realtor is trained to speak that language fluently.

Plus, buying or selling a home usually requires dozens of forms, reports, disclosures, and other technical documents. Realtors have the expertise to help you prepare a killer deal—while avoiding delays or costly mistakes that can seriously mess you up.

2. They have turbocharged searching power

The Internet is awesome. You can find almost anything!

And with online real estate listing sites such as yours truly, you can find up-to-date home listings on your own, any time you want. But guess what? Realtors have access to even more listings. Sometimes properties are available but not actively advertised. A Realtor can help you find those hidden gems.

Find homes for sale on

Plus, a good local Realtor is going to know the search area way better than you ever could. Have your eye on a particular neighborhood, but it's just out of your price range? Your Realtor is equipped to know the ins and outs of every neighborhood, so she can direct you toward a home in your price range that you may have overlooked.

3. They have bullish negotiating chops

Any time you buy or sell a home, you're going to encounter negotiations—and as today's housing market heats up, those negotiations are more likely than ever to get a little heated.

You can expect lots of competition, cutthroat tactics, all-cash offers, and bidding wars. Don't you want a savvy and professional negotiator on your side to seal the best deal for you?

And it's not just about how much money you end up spending or netting. A Realtor will help draw up a purchase agreement that allows

enough time for inspections, contingencies, and anything else that's crucial to your particular needs.

4. They're connected to everyone

Realtors might not know everything, but they make it their mission to know just about everyone who can possibly help in the process of buying or selling a home. Mortgage brokers, real estate attorneys, home inspectors, home stagers, interior designers—the list goes on—and they're all in your Realtor's network. Use them.

5. They adhere to a strict code of ethics

Not every real estate agent is a Realtor, who is a licensed real estate salesperson who belongs to the National Association of Realtors®, the largest trade group in the country.

What difference does it make? Realtors are held to a higher ethical standard than licensed agents and must adhere to a Code of Ethics.

6. They're your sage parent/data analyst/therapist—all rolled into one

The thing about Realtors: They wear a lot of different hats. Sure, they're salespeople, but they actually do a whole heck of a lot to earn their commission. They're constantly driving around, checking out listings for you. They spend their own money on marketing your home (if you're selling). They're researching comps to make sure you're getting the best deal.



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2020 Might Be a Great Time to Sell Your Home

By HOUSING & MORTGAGE Rate.com

According to the Federal Reserve, the value of household equity in real estate has more than doubled since the 2012 housing bottom. CoreLogic, a real estate data firm, reports that among households with mortgages, equity is at a record high.

Not to be a killjoy, but there's a growing risk in that good news. Strong gains in home values throughout most of the country for more than seven years can give rise to a common psychological quirk that can undo a long-term financial plan. Recency bias is the human habit of presuming that whatever you've been experiencing recently will continue into the future.

For homeowners who have a soft plan of making a move in the next few years, chances are you're just assuming that when you are ready to sell the market will be as good as it is today.



Maybe so. Or maybe not. What you can count on is that right now there are key housing-market drivers that suggest 2020 could be a sweet spot for selling a home.

The expectation is that the economy will continue to grow in 2020. In a recent survey of more than four dozen economists, fewer than one in five expected a recession to start by mid-2020. But after that, the storm clouds thicken. By mid-2021, the same group puts at 70% the chance we will be in a recession. No one expects a reprise of the meltdown of a decade ago, but even a more benign recession is a headwind for trying to sell a home. Prices tend to soften, as does demand, because rising unemployment scares off buyers.

Even if we somehow skate by the next few years without a recession, mortgage interest rates are also in a seller's favor right now. Buyer demand is sensitive to mortgage rates. In October 2018, the average interest rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage had risen to nearly 5%. That made buying more expensive, causing demand to soften a bit. Today, the 30-year fixed rate is back down to 3.6%. That's a nice tailwind for the buyers you want clamoring for your home, and if you're aiming to borrow for your next home, it works in your favor as well.

The issue of timing a home sale can be especially important for people in retirement planning mode. Are you a few years from retirement? Right now your recency bias might be lulling you into a mindset that when you're ready to retire in a few years, you will be able to sell your home quickly and at a price that is higher than it is today. Could be.

But what if your timing is off, and right when you want to sell we're in the midst of a recession that sets off a housing slump? If your retirement strategy includes reinvesting the capital gain from a home sale, you need to be comfortable with that gain potentially being lower than it would be if you sold into today's strong housing market.

You could also find yourself challenged by another psychological quirk called anchoring. This is the habit of not being able to let go of what used to be true. In housing terms, let's say your home is worth \$350,000 today. But what if when you go to sell it two years from now, we're in the midst of a recession, and the market value is \$325,000? Chances are you're going to fight your real estate agent on setting the asking price below \$350,000. You're anchored to that \$350,000. Or, you are anchored to "needing to be able to walk away with X dollars in net gain."

Depending on how that conversation plays out, you could be setting yourself up for even more frustration. Placing a too-high asking price on a home in a soft market typically causes the home to languish, and often leads to a price reduction that then boosts the confidence of home buyers to make offers that are below your reduced list price.

If you have the flexibility to consider a sale sooner than later, accelerating a home sale into 2020, eight years into a strong rebound in home values in many parts of the country, could be a smart way to book your profit and move on.

<https://www.rate.com/research/news/2020-sell-home>

51 Home Sale Tips

People usually decide within two minutes whether or not they like your home. Your real estate representative will do all of the things necessary to bring in the prospects but your house is going to have to help sell itself. For a speedy sale at a great price it is smart to ask yourself...is your house as presentable as it can be? The best way to find out is to imagine yourself as the prospective buyer.

Here are 51 home sales tips to prepare your home for sale:



Clean up, fix up and paint up outside

1. Invest in landscaping where it can be seen at first sight. A well manicured lawn, neatly clipped shrubbery, cleanly swept walks create a good first impression.
2. An extra shot of fertilizer, in season, will make your grass look lush and green.
3. Cut back overgrown shrubbery that keeps light out of the house.
4. Paint your house if necessary. This can probably do more for sales appeal than any other factor. At least touch up front shutters and window frames.
5. In the winter walks should be free of snow/ice.
6. Inspect the roof and gutters. Check for any missing shingles and gutters and down spouts to replace.
7. Consider putting flowers outside the front door.
8. Repaint the front door.
9. Paint your mailbox a bright color.
10. Repair broken outdoor steps.

Kitchen

11. The kitchen is the most important room in the house. Make it bright and attractive. Paint cabinets and put up perky new curtains.
12. Clean the ventilating hood in the kitchen.
13. If the kitchen floor is badly worn, put down new flooring. Replace any loose tiles and regrout where needed.
14. Remove any appliances that you keep on your counters as clean counters can make the room look much larger.

Living Areas

15. Have all drywall in good shape. Repair cracks and touch up paint.
16. Check ceilings for leak stains. Repair any issues and repaint.
17. In painting and redecorating, avoid offbeat colors, stick to neutral and soft colors outside and easy-to-work-with neutrals inside.
18. Replace faded curtains or bedspreads.
19. If you have a fireplace, clean it out and place some logs in it.
20. Wash windows, inside and out.
21. Replace broken glass panes.
22. Replace torn screens.
23. Check that all windows open and close.
24. Replace dim or burned-out light bulbs.
25. Make sure every light switch works.
26. Make the floors shine; clean and polish them. Nail down any creaking boards or stair treads.
27. Straighten the closets and get rid of excess items. Use air freshener to eliminate odors.

28. For doors that stick slightly, rub a block of paraffin against the surface that shows signs of wear or lubricate squeaky hinges.
29. For sliding doors that stick in their tracks, rub tracks with paraffin or wax.

Bathroom

30. Repair dripping faucets.
31. Keep fresh towels in the bathroom.
32. Remove stains from toilets, bathtubs, and sinks.
33. If sinks and bathtubs drain slowly, unclog them.

Basement, Attic and Garage

34. Clean out attic, basement and garage and dispose of everything you aren't moving.
35. Make sure there's plenty of light on the stairs to the basement.
36. If your basement is dark and gloomy, paint ceilings and walls a light color.
37. Repair cracks in the basement floor.

When your house is being shown

38. Keep room draperies open to let in light. This makes rooms appear larger.
39. Have your home well-lit during showing.
40. At night, turn on porch and outdoor lighting.
41. Neatness makes a room look bigger.
42. If possible, leave your furniture and rugs in the house for showing it.
43. Remove dirty dishes in the sink.
44. Keep any toys in the children's rooms.
45. Keep radio, stereo, TV off or turned down.
46. Take your family away if your broker is holding an open house.
47. Take children on a drive or to play outside.
48. Refer inquiries about seeing your house to your Realtor.
49. Don't mention furniture or furnishings you wish to dispose of unless asked.
50. Take pets outdoors during a showing.
51. Let the real estate expert show your house, and don't tag along. Answer questions candidly when asked, but don't offer answers to unasked questions.





SO, YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT SELLING YOUR HOUSE - AND THEN YOU REALIZED THAT YOU HAVE KIDS! HOW IS THAT GOING TO WORK WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND?

POSTED BY PAUL & ANDREA KOHLMAN ON MONDAY, APRIL 23RD, 2018 AT 7:16AM.

Well, it has been done plenty of times before, so don't worry too much. If you plan out the selling process correctly, it is much easier. Take a deep breath and let's go through this together. The hardest part of selling a home with kids is that they tend to undo your efforts as soon as you get a room cleaned and ready. You move on to the next room while they follow behind you with a new mess. Kids don't feel the same sense of urgency that you feel as you are planning out this major life event. This can cause tensions to rise in the household. In this article, I'll explain some simple steps you can take to make the process much smoother and more predictable. Here are some tried and true tips:



1. Get Organized & Prepared

The very first step is always to organize your thoughts and implement a plan. This will help calm your nerves and give you a sense of control over the situation. Give yourself some time to organize for a week or so during nap time or while the kids are at school. Go through their closets, dressers, and toys. Find items that you may be able to donate or take to storage.

Clear the tops of dressers and nightstands, take down personalized items, and put away all but 25% of the toys and maybe 1-2 weeks worth of clothing. If your kids are old enough or excited about moving, have them help choose which toys and clothes they use most often and let them box up the rest (packing and marking the box/boxes in a special way can make them feel included).



2. Make a Family Contract

Make a contract with your kids - after all, you are signing lots of papers when you buy and sell your house.

For littles, maybe there is a special toy that they've wanted. Print out a picture of the toy and put it somewhere (back of the closet door, pantry door, etc) so they see it daily. A sticker chart can also help encourage them.

For older kids, if not a special outing, maybe it's a "paycheck" that you hand them after closing on your home! Whatever the reward, make sure it's something they are REALLY excited about and be very specific about their chores and when you need them completed. Remember to be age appropriate and realistic.

Put away all toys, gaming stuff, school stuff, clothes, shoes, and jackets. (It's great to have a laundry basket or tote that either fits under the bed or in the closet to toss toys in quickly.)



3. Make a Clean-Up Checklist for Kids

Making a checklist for all of the chores that your kids are capable of helping with will set their expectations on the right path.

Remind them to make their beds (or do their best to straighten it up), clean off the bathroom counter (toothbrush, toiletry items - find a special place for them to put everything and have cleaning wipes handy), close toilet seats, and hang up towels. Put the dirty dishes in the dishwasher or hand wash and put them away. Help turn on all lights in the home and open blinds before school. Your home shows better when it's brighter!



4. Prepare Showing Bags

Pre-made showing bags are a great way to take pressure off of you while you're frantically preparing for your next showing. These bags can hold your kid's favorite treats, drinks, a special toy/book, cozy clothes/blanket. Whatever you do, make these fun (something unique that they only get when there's a showing - it makes it exciting!)

Make sure there's a showing bag for you - include some personal items, just in case you have to run out of the home quickly and forgot to put on deodorant! Once you have them made, just keep them in your car or garage to grab as you leave your house.



5. Pre-Plan Your Routes

Gather some ideas of easy trips for when showings happen. The less planning you have to do in the moment, the easier the process. This may be a good time to go to the park, go on a hike, grab some food, or just walk around the mall.

If your kids are still in the napping stage, do you have friends or family who are willing to let you show up for nap time if needed? Build out a good list of options so that you can easily escape to somewhere pleasant when you are leaving your home for a showing.



6. Make a Personal Checklist

Determine a checklist for yourself. An empty laundry basket is a great help if you need to gather items quickly. You can even throw it in the car if needed!

Have something written down so you don't miss the important things, then, plan to do a final sweep of the home once the kids are buckled in the car.



7. Set Up Showing Delays

Now that you're ready to go on the market, ask your agent to give you a 2-hour showing notice for each requested showing of your home. You can ask for more or less time based on your needs. Just make sure you have plenty of time because it's awkward whenever sellers are trying to get out of the home when buyers are showing up.

You'll need enough time for your little one to finish a nap or for your older kiddos to accomplish their contract items. You'll also need time to do a final inspection while leaving your house before the buyers get there. Budget this time wisely so that you don't feel too pressed for time.



8. Try to minimize your workload:

The easier you can make the process, the better. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Cook your meals on the grill or in the oven in a single dish - less clean up if there isn't a cooktop to wipe down. Think about only using two bathrooms - less to clean! Have one place for homework and hide ALL kids craft materials - trust me, you'll thank me for this one!

Have toys/books/games/etc. in ONE room - whether it's each child's bedroom or a playroom - leave the main spaces a little less chaotic. Schedule lots of outside play - if weather permits - and have them take their shoes off at the door!



9. RELAX!

There is a good chance that the person thinking about buying your home has children - or at least has been around children enough to know that families have to live in their home.

Not everything will be perfect, and there will be times when you can't get to everything on your list! It's okay. Your kids are going to take their cues from you - remember to breathe!



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE

SHOWING YOUR HOME

HOUSE EXTERIOR

- o Recently painted siding and trim
- o Repair/repaint fences and gates
- o Clean and align gutters, shutters and down spouts
- o Wash all windows and screens
- o Healthy, weed free, neatly cut, trimmed lawn
- o Shrubs trimmed neatly and to not touch the house
- o Weed free driveway, front walk and shrub areas
- o Toys, garden tools, clutter removed from yard

FRONT DOOR-ENTRANCE AREA - EXTERIOR

- o Clean, wash and scrub front steps and porch
- o Check front doorbell and light
- o Replace welcome mat
- o Paint or wash storm door, lubricate hinges
- o Clean and wash front door tread

FRONT DOOR-ENTRANCE AREA - INTERIOR

- o Clear entry area or foyer of all clutter
- o Reduce volume and clutter in front closet
- o Clean and polish the front entry floor
- o Wash, polish and replace light bulbs
- o Remove fingerprints and scuff marks on walls
- o Paint to lighten and refresh entrance area

LIVING-FAMILY-DINING ROOMS

- o Repaint or touch up walls, ceiling and trim
- o Repair or replace damaged moulding and trim
- o Refinish, clean and wax hardwood and vinyl floors
- o Shampoo/steam clean carpet

BEDROOMS

- o Repaint, repaper, touch up trim on walls and ceiling
- o Replace or clean drapes, bedspread and accessories
- o Shampoo carpet or wax and polish floor
- o Organize and clean out closets
- o Clear off top surfaces of bedroom furniture
- o Put all clothing away and out of sight

KITCHEN

- o Paint walls, ceiling, trim a light cheery color
- o Wallpaper with small pattern and light colors
- o Remove wax, scrub and repolish floors
- o Wash, wipe down cabinets and appliances
- o Thoroughly clean range and ovens
- o Clean out refrigerator and wash interior
- o Empty dishwasher and clean around controls
- o Check operation of all appliances
- o Neatly arrange all food storage areas
- o Clear and clean all clutter from cabinets
- o Wash or replace curtains
- o Clean and put away all pet feeding/watering dishes

BATHS

- o Paint or wallpaper using light colors
- o Scrub tile, bleach and repair grout and clean and polish floor
- o Check to see that the drawers/doors open easily
- o Seal around tubs and showers
- o Clean out medicine cabinet
- o Check for evidence of water at toilet base
- o Replace old toilet seats and shower curtains
- o Buy a new set of color coordinated bath linens

GENERAL

- o Remove clutter, papers and all unnecessary items
- o Replace burned out bulbs throughout the house
- o Remove cobwebs from ceiling and corners
- o Remove paint splash on tile, floors and counters
- o Wash and polish all hardware and handrails
- o Replace switches, outlets that don't work
- o Add colorful plants and flowers to several rooms
- o Replace and rejuvenate pillows and accessories
- o Clean out and sweep garage and organize attic

PRIOR TO EVERY SHOWING...

- Open drapes and blinds
- Turn on lights
- Turn on soft music
- Put dog outside
- Cool in summer/warm in winter
- Do not speak to potential purchasers
- Stay out of the way (in one room or outside)

BEFORE THE INSPECTOR ARRIVES...

- Slope ground away from the foundation (out four (4) feet where possible).
- Allow for four (4) inches of foundation to show, including above flowerbeds.
- Cut tree limbs away from house.
- Wash stained siding and brick to remove discoloration or mildew.
- Install splash blocks at downspouts.
- Clean gutters and repair where necessary.
- Repair all rotted wood and paint to match.
- Remove any items stacked (firewood, etc.) against the house or garage.
- Repair or replace damaged screens.
- Cover exposed wiring with flexible conduit.
- Install blanks in circuit breaker box where any are missing.
- Check all electrical outlets for proper wiring.
- Check firebrick in the fireplace. Seal with fireplace mortar where necessary.
- Clean chimney.
- Clean and inspect heater and check for holes or cracks in the heat exchanger.
- Check A/C. It should cool to twenty (20°) degrees below outside temperature.
- Check condensing unit and clean away any debris, leaves, grass, etc.
- Test all smoke detectors. Add new batteries where necessary.
- Toilets should be secured (should not rock).
- Make sure tubs and/or showers do not leak.
- Have all cracks in masonry repaired by professional mason.
- Re-grout any cracks in ceramic tile.
- Repair dripping faucets.

SELLER SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO...

- Respond courteously and helpfully to realtors® requests to show property.
- Leave the property when a realtor® is showing it.
- Only discuss why you love this home with the other realtor®. Never talk about why, when or where you are moving.
- Remember that the other realtors® are representing the buyers so ask them to call your realtor® for additional information.
- Always ask for a card and proper identification before letting a realtor® into your home.
- Keep in close contact with your realtor®. Call them after every showing



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HOME DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2020

Amanda Lauren - Contributor, Forbes



If there is one way to describe the interior design trends we will see more of in 2020, it's anything goes. While signature, the looks of 2019 like accent walls and all-white kitchens won't be going away entirely, they will certainly evolve in the upcoming years.



When it comes to design in the next decade, individuality will be extremely important. Those into crafting, DIY design, or commissioning custom pieces, will likely have lots of projects to take on in the New Year.

1. OFF-TREND WILL BE ON TREND

Tired of seeing the same styles over and over again? So is everyone else. Los Angeles based interior designer Delta Wright says overall anything "uber-unique" will shine in the upcoming decade. "We will see highly crafted, unusual materials meticulously featured in furnishings and architecture."



But to be clear, this is not about having the most unique sofa or one-of-a-kind hand-blown glass bowl, so much as true authenticity. Christiana Coop, who is the co-founder of Hygge & West explains that uniqueness should reflect individuality. "People are designing their homes to reflect their personalities and creating spaces that tell their story. What makes you truly happy is more important than what you see in magazines or on social media."

2. TIMELESS LOOKS THAT CAN EVOLVE In recent years, there has been an emphasis on developing a personal style. So, whether it's a renovation or simply purchasing furniture that they really love, consumers are thinking more long-term than they have in the past. "This is also in line with being more aware of the ecological implications of purchases," says Coop.

She believes that people will be buying fewer, but more high-quality pieces. This could mean that fast furniture and decor may be on their way out.



3. SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS Along these lines, sustainability has become increasingly more important. As society gravitates towards more eco-friendly lifestyles, people are more ecologically conscious and knowledgeable than ever before. "There's an ethical component to their purchasing decisions," says Ben Marshall who is the creative director of Hudson Valley Lighting Group.

This is being reflected in an overall design sensibility as well as a desire to bring warm, earthy elements to a space. "We've answered this demand at HVLG by featuring sustainably harvested materials like acacia and rattan in many of our fixtures," he explains.

4. SWAGS AND EASY-TO-USE FIXTURES

"Portables are no longer limited to table and floor lamps. Now, even renters can tailor a space with swag fixtures," says Marshall.

Lighting fixtures do more than brighten up a room—they're a bold detail. This is exactly why wall sconces with optional wire guard will become increasingly more available. These accents are ideal for anyone who wants to invest in statement lighting without the commitment of hardwiring. "If you want great design but are restricted by your existing space, these fixtures hit a sweet spot. Its cultured form meets convenient functionality."

5. COUNTRYSIDE CHIC While the typical farmhouse look is becoming as tired as a Live, Laugh, Love sign, this style will lean towards a more sophisticated, European-inspired look, according to Rebecca Breslin of Wayfair Professional.

"A fresh take on British farmhouse without being stuffy or dusty will be popular in for 2020. Pulling from classic prints and materials while adding whimsy. This trend is all about mixing patterns, antique with new decor as well as paying homage to the countryside with botanicals and muted primary tones," she says.

6. COLORS WILL BECOME THE NEW NEUTRALS

Neutrals will be replaced by warm colors, saturated hues and jewel tones, according to Coop. "Tiles, cabinetry, and walls all serve as opportunities for more color," she says.

Dolley Levan Frearson who is the co-founder of High Fashion Home predicts shades of pink (which are a more sophisticated evolution of the millennial pinks we've seen in recent years), will be strong in 2020. "I also see a lot of soft peachy corals and terra cotta—colors that feel soft yet grounded in earth tones. I also love golden yellow tones in lush fabrics like velvets to buttery, caramel leathers or leather-look," she says.

7. PATTERNED EVERYTHING Pattern, especially layered patterns are becoming more prevalent for tabletop and textiles designs. The key to this trend is that there aren't any rules.

"We'll be seeing more pattern mixing with color tying together patterns of varying origin and scale," says Coop. "Pattern matching, e.g. where the same pattern flows from the wall to upholstered furniture or bedding, is also becoming more common."

8. BOLD TRIM AND CEILINGS Kelley Mason, stylist at Lulu & Georgia says high contrast design is making a big comeback. "It gives an otherwise more monochromatic room a crispness and a fresher take on neutrals," she says. "Bold black and white feels fresh yet timeless, especially in graphic or Art Deco inspired patterns."

Coop notes that this style is easily achieved through moldings and trim. "Make it colorful and contrasting, create a monotone space by matching it to the wall color, or high gloss paint that's usually reserved for trim to extend to the entire wall," she says.

Wallpapered ceilings are another way contrast can be incorporated into a room. "There is no better surface for wallpaper because it won't get damaged and the large expanse of space makes for a truly dramatic feature of any room. We've been seeing wallpapered ceilings in powder rooms and expect to see more in bedrooms and living spaces in the coming year."

9. NATURAL LUXURY "We'll be seeing more natural materials with a luxurious spin like marble finishes in bathrooms and kitchens and also marble accents such as vases, bowls and candleholders. Linen will also be big, but in beautiful jewel tones, with finished edges that feel more polished than the raw edge boho take we've seen in the past," says Coop.

Along the same lines, Justina Blakeney, who is the designer and founder of The Jungalow foresees old-world materials like plaster and lime wash making a resurgence. "We'll continue to see people look for ways to connect with nature in their homes through houseplants, natural materials like cane, raffia, grasscloths and raw/rustic woods."

10. HANDMADE GOODS While Etsy might have defined the early aughts, Coop believes that there will be a continued focus on handmade goods and having a connection with the maker. "People are seeking out companies and artists whose product has a story and a point of view rather than mass-made items," she says.

11. TWO-TONE KITCHENS According to John McDonald, who is the founder and CEO of Semihandmade, the iconic white kitchens we've been seeing so much of will be slowly phased out in favor of two-tone kitchens instead. "From clients, we're seeing a pretty even mix of two colors (black base and white uppers is common), along with blending wood with color to either lighten what otherwise might be a rustic feel, or to add a bit of pop (like on an island)," he says. Wright seconds this explaining that color and pattern mash-ups, including appliances, will continue to trend.

12. UNIQUE RUGS Samantha Gallacher of IG Workshop and custom carpet line, Art + Loom says interesting and unexpected materials in rugs will start to become more mainstream. "Last year we saw an explosion in the market for obscure shaped rugs, that trend is continuing with the addition of unexpected materials being woven into rugs. We (Art + Loom) just launched our own zipper collection of rugs which debuted at Casacor Miami during Art Basel Week.



10 Mistakes That Can Ruin Your Open House



Yes, it's true, it's a seller's market out there, but you can still ruin your chance at finding a willing buyer while mortgage rates remain low or landing the price you want if you mess up your open house.

Here are 10 open-house mistakes to avoid:

No. 1: Hovering

As a seller, your job is to get out of the way. Let your agent and their team interact with the buyers. Nothing scares off buyers faster than getting cornered by a desperate seller, says Elizabeth Weintraub, a Realtor with Lyon Real Estate in Sacramento, California. "Buyers don't like it when they are hovered over. Give the buyer some information and let them look through the home on their own."

No. 2: Half-baked staging

If you are going to professionally stage your home, stage the whole house, or at least one entire floor. Nothing is more jarring than two elegantly appointed rooms followed by an empty dining room or den, says Maureen Reddy, a professional stager and owner of DaVinci Designer Gallery in Winthrop, Massachusetts.

"Nothing done halfway is ever any good," she says. And unless your agent is a professionally trained stager or interior designer, hire someone who knows what they are doing to handle this sensitive job. Don't let your agent start bringing in his or her furniture for the open house -- it happens more than you would think and it can backfire badly, Reddy says.

No. 3: Rookie agent on duty

Your agent may not be the one to actually show your house. But make sure you are confident your Realtor has a capable and well-trained team, Weintraub says. While you don't want the agent at your open house to bombard potential buyers with information, you want to make sure whoever is there is available to answer any and all questions and is not more concerned with texting or reading a book.

No. 4: Music

You don't need music to sell a house. "At best it is distracting," says Rona Fischman, owner of 4 Buyers Real Estate in Somerville, Massachusetts. "At worst, buyers will get suspicious that there is more road

noise, or mechanical noise or neighbor noise that you are covering up.

No. 5: Failure to provide marketing materials

All buyers who walk through your house should be able to pick up an info packet to take with them, says Weintraub. There's no excuse for running out of copies. Otherwise it's out of sight, out of mind.

No. 6: Smells

Forget heavy air fresheners. Like other attempts to spice up the atmosphere, at best it's a distraction and at worst it may raise questions about what you are hiding.

And yes, while pristine cleaning is paramount, the night before your open house is not the time to plaster your abode with industrial cleaners. The stench of bleach -- and the immediate questions it will raise in a buyer's mind -- will do more damage to your chances than that tiny patch of mold in the corner of the shower.

Skip the cookies baking in the oven as well. Maybe it worked in the 90s, but buyers figured that one out a long time ago, says Fischman.

"You only get one opportunity to make a first impression and if the impression is an overwhelming smell, you lose," she says. "Whether it cookies or disinfectant, if it is noticeable -- and not merely background -- buyers will notice."

No. 7: Leaving jewelry, valuables about

From gawkers to serious buyers, quite a crowd will tramp through your house. Don't tempt anyone's honesty. Besides losing something precious, you could also poison the deal with needless suspicion when something goes missing and everyone is suddenly is a suspect, Fischman says.

No. 8: Pets

Letting your beloved pets hang around on open house day could prove costly. Not only should you put your dog or cat in a kennel for the open house, you need to remove all signs of your beloved animal friends. That means litter boxes as well -- a number one turnoff for sellers.

No. 9: The wrong temperature

This one's simple: Your house should be warm but not hot in the winter and cool but not cold in the summer. Don't blow it by playing games with the thermostat.

No. 10: Bad photos

If the online photos of your house are dim, blurry, taken at odd angles or of odd rooms, don't be surprised if no one shows up. Bad photos prevent potential buyers from ever showing up in the first place.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/>



7 Reasons You Need Title Insurance

Buying a home is an exciting and emotional time for many people. To help you buy your home with more confidence, make sure you get owner's title insurance. Here's why it's so important for you:

1. Protects Your Largest Investment

A home is probably the single largest investment you will make in your life. You insure everything else that's valuable to you—your life, car, health, pets, etc., so why not your largest investment? For a one-time fee, owner's title insurance protects your property rights for as long as you own your home.

2. Reduces Your Risk

If you're buying a home, there are many hidden issues that may pop up only after you purchase your home. Getting an owner's title insurance policy is the best way to protect yourself from unforeseen legal and financial title discrepancies. Don't think it will happen to you? Think again.

Unexpected title claims include:

- outstanding mortgages and judgments, or a lien against the property because the seller has not paid his taxes
- pending legal action against the property that could affect you
- an unknown heir of a previous owner who is claiming ownership of the property

3. You Can't Beat The Value

Owner's title insurance is a one-time fee that's very low relative to the value it provides. It typically costs around 0.5% of the home's purchase price.

4. Covers You

As long as you own your home, owner's title insurance protects your property rights.

5. Nothing Compares

Homeowners insurance and warranties protect only the structure and belongings of your home. Getting owner's title insurance ensures your family's property rights stay protected.

6. 8 in 10 Homebuyers Agree

Each year, more than 80% of America's home buyers choose to get owner's title insurance.

7. Peace of Mind

If you're buying a home, owner's title insurance lets you rest assured, knowing that you're protected from inheriting most existing debts or legal problems, once you've closed on your new home.

"Talking Title" With Homebuyers

Buying a home is an exciting and emotional time for homebuyers. As an important advisor to your clients, you are in a position to educate homebuyers on the value of owner's title insurance. Here are some helpful tips:

Who Do I Need To Communicate With?

The American Land Title Association (ALTA) created the Homeowner Outreach Program (HOP) to help ALTA members easily communicate the benefits of owner's title insurance with homebuyers, Realtors® and others.

In the journey of purchasing a home, homebuyers are confronted with overwhelming amounts of detail and new, complex processes. Keep it simple when explaining the value of title insurance. Remember, you sweat the details, so your home buyers don't have to.

Where Can I Find The Tools I Need?

ALTA is providing you with all the tools you need to help you effectively communicate the value of title insurance to your customers—from real estate professionals to homebuyers. Make sure you take advantage of all of the ALTA Homebuyer Guide tools, so you can continue to provide homebuyers with peace of mind.

What Do I Need To Say?

"As long as you own your home, owner's title insurance protects your property rights. Now that's peace of mind every homebuyer deserves. Getting owner's title insurance is one of the smartest and easiest decisions you'll make as a homeowner. It's a one-time purchase that protects your property rights for as long as you own your home."

Why Is This Important?

Homebuyers, builders, real estate professionals and lenders are all looking to you for the most effective and accurate information about owner's title insurance.

Educating homebuyers early in the home buying process has a quantifiable positive impact on their understanding, favorability and purchase of owner's title insurance.

When Should I Reach Out?

ALTA research shows that homebuyers want information about the title search process and title insurance as soon as they begin the process of buying a home.

In a recent ALTA study, the majority of homebuyers said they would prefer to receive this information when they start working with a lender.



Real Estate Definitions

WWW.AUSTINMARKETREALTY.COM



ABSTRACT – An abbreviation of the cardinal aspects of all recorded deeds, mortgages, leases and other instruments affecting the title to a particular piece of land.

AMORTIZATION – This term has developed through French and Old English from the Latin words “mors” or “mort” meaning death or dead. It is the killing off of an existing debt by regular partial payments. The word “mortgage” is also derived from the same Latin root.

APR – Annual Percentage Rate. The yearly interest percentage of a loan as expressed by the actual rate of interest paid.

APPRAISAL – An estimate of value of property from analysis of facts about the property; an opinion of value.

BROKER – One who acts as an agent for another in negotiating sales or purchases in return for a fee or commission.

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE – In areas where attorneys examine abstracts or chains of title, a written opinion, executed by the examining attorney stating that title is vested as stated in the abstract.

CHAIN OF TITLE – Beginning with a conveyance out of an original source of title such as a government, each succeeding deed, will or other medium which conveys and transfers the title to succeeding owners constitutes a link in the chain of title. The chain of title is the composite of all such links.

CLOSING – In some areas called a “settlement.” The process of completing a real estate transaction during which deeds, mortgages, leases and other required instruments are signed and/or delivered, an accounting between the parties is made, the money is disbursed, the papers are recorded, and all other details such as payment of outstanding liens and transfer of hazard insurance policies are attended to.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE – The five-page Closing Disclosure must be provided to the consumer three business days before they close on the loan. The Closing Disclosure details all of the costs associated with their mortgage transaction.

CLOSING STATEMENT – A summation, in the form of a balance sheet, made at a closing, showing the amounts of debits and credits to which each party to a real estate transaction is entitled.

CLOUD ON TITLE – An irregularity, possible claim, or encumbrance which, if valid, would affect or impair the title.

COMMISSION – The amount due a real estate broker, mortgage loan broker or real estate professional for services performed in such capacity.

CONSUMMATION – Consummation is not the same thing as closing or settlement. Consummation occurs when the consumer becomes

contractually obligated to the creditor on the loan, not, for example, when the consumer becomes contractually obligated to a seller on a real estate transaction.

CONTRACT – Same as “agreement,” but usually more formal.

COVENANT – A formal agreement or contract between two parties in which one party gives the other certain promises and assurances, such as covenants of warranty in a warranty deed.

DEED – A written document by which title to real estate is conveyed from one party to another.

DEFAULT – Failure to perform a promised task or to pay an obligation due.

DEFECT – A blemish, imperfection or deficiency. A defective title is one that is irregular and faulty.

DEPRECIATION – Loss in value occasioned by ordinary wear and tear, destructive action of the elements, or functional or economic obsolescence.

EARNEST MONEY – Down payment or a small part of the purchase price made by a purchaser as evidence of good faith.

EASEMENT – A right held by a person to enjoy or make limited use of another’s real property.

ENCROACHMENT – The extension of a structure from the real estate to which it belongs across a boundary line and onto adjoining property.

ENCUMBRANCE – A claim, right or lien upon the title to real estate, held by someone other than the real estate owner.

ENDORSEMENT – Addition to or modification of a title insurance policy that expands or changes coverage of the policy, fulfilling specific requirements of the insured.

ESCROW – Technically, this term strictly refers to a deed delivered to a third person to be held by him until the fulfillment or performance of some act or condition by the grantee. In the title industry, it means the depositing with an impartial third party (typically an escrow agent or title company) of anything pertaining to a real estate transaction including money and documents of all kinds. The money and documents are to be disbursed and delivered to the rightful parties by the escrow agent or title company when all conditions of the transaction have been met.

ESCROW AGREEMENT – A written agreement usually made between buyer, seller and escrow agent, but sometimes only between one person and the escrow agent. It sets forth the conditions to be performed incident to the object deposited in escrow, and gives the escrow agent instructions with respect to the disposition of the object so deposited.

EXAMINATION – In title industry terms, to peruse and study the instruments in a chain of title and to determine their effect and condition in order to reach a conclusion as to the status of the title.

EXAMINER – Usually referred to, in title industry terms, as title examiner. One who examines and determines the condition and status of real estate titles.

EXCEPTIONS – Insurance policies include a list of items excluded from coverage. Items excluded from coverage can be found in section two of Schedule B of the policy.

FIRST MORTGAGE – A mortgage having priority as a lien over any other mortgage or lien on the same property.

FORECLOSURE – A legal proceeding for the collection of real estate mortgages and other types of liens on real estate, which results in cutting off the right to redeem the mortgaged property and usually involves a judicial sale of the property to pay the mortgage debt.

GENERAL WARRANTY – A warranty provision in a deed or mortgage or other real estate instrument containing all of the common law items of warranty. Also known as a full warranty.

HAZARD INSURANCE – Real estate insurance protecting against fire, some natural causes, vandalism, etc., depending upon the policy. The buyer often adds liability insurance and extended coverage for personal property.

HEIR – A person who inherits or who is entitled to inherit real estate by provisions of law or under the provisions of a will.

LIEN – The liability of real estate as security for payment of a debt. Such liability may be created by contract, such as a mortgage, or by operation of law, such as a mechanics lien.

LOAN ESTIMATE – A three-page Loan Estimate must be provided to the consumers no later than three business days after they submit a loan application for most mortgages. The Loan Estimate provides information about key features, costs and risks of the mortgage loan for which the consumer is applying.

LOAN POLICY – A policy of title insurance issued to the mortgage lender insuring against loss by defects in, liens against, or unmarketability of title.

MARKET VALUE – An average between the highest price that a buyer, willing but not compelled to buy, would pay and the lowest price a seller, willing, but not compelled to sell, would accept.

MORTGAGE – A temporary conditional pledge of property to a creditor as security for the payment of a debt that may be cancelled by payment.

OWNER'S POLICY – This policy is purchased for a one-time fee and protects a homeowner's investment in a property for as long as they or their heirs have an interest in the property. Only an owner's policy protects the buyer should a covered title problem arise with the title that was not found during the title search. Possible hidden title problems can include errors or omissions in deeds, mistakes in examining records, forgery and undisclosed heirs.

POWER OF ATTORNEY – A legal instrument authorizing one to act as another's agent or attorney.

PRELIMINARY TITLE REPORT – A report prepared prior to issuing a title insurance policy that shows the ownership of a specific parcel of land. It includes information about liens and encumbrances that will not be covered under a title insurance policy.

PREMIUM – The amount payable for an insurance policy.

PROBATE – A legal procedure in which the validity and probity of a document, such as a will, is proven.

PROMISSORY NOTE – A written promise to pay or repay a specified sum of money at a stated time, or on demand, to a named person. In addition to the payment of principal, a promissory note usually provides for the payment of interest.

QUIT CLAIM DEED – A deed that does not imply the grantor holds title, but which surrenders and gives to the grantee any possible interest or rights that the grantor may have in the property.

RECORD TITLE – The aspects of a title that appear in the public records as distinguished from unrecorded title aspects and interests.

REFINANCE RATE – When referring to title insurance, the refinance rate is the reduced rate for a loan policy issued on the new loan in a refinance transaction, in which the original loan was previously insured within some period of years.

SEARCH – A careful exploration and inspection of the public records in an effort to find all recorded instruments relating to a particular chain of title.

SECOND MORTGAGE – A mortgage ranking in priority immediately below a first mortgage.

SETTLEMENT – In some areas called a "closing." The process of completing a real estate transaction during which deeds, mortgages, leases and other required instruments are signed and/or delivered, an accounting between the parties is made, the money is disbursed, the papers are recorded, and all other details such as payment of outstanding liens and transfer of hazard insurance policies are attended to.

SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED – A deed that warrants the title only with respect to acts of the seller and the interests of anyone claiming by, through, or under him.

SURVEY – (1) To determine the location, boundaries, area, or the elevations of land and structures upon the earth's surface by means of courses in relation to the North Star, and the measuring of angles and distances by using the techniques of geometry and trigonometry. (2) The map or plat drawn by a surveyor that represents the property surveyed and shows the results of a survey.

TAX LIEN – The lien that is imposed upon real estate by operation of law that secures the payment of real estate taxes

TITLE – (1) A combination of all the elements that constitute the highest legal right to own, possess, use, control, enjoy, and dispose of real estate or an inheritable right or interest therein. (2) The rights of ownership recognized and protected by the law.

TITLE COMMITMENT – An offer to issue a title insurance policy. The title commitment will describe the various conditions, exclusions and exceptions that will apply to that particular policy.

TITLE COVENANTS – Covenants ordinarily inserted in conveyances and in transfers of title to real estate for the purpose of giving protection to the purchaser against possible insufficiency of the title received. A group of such covenants known as "common law covenants" includes: (a) covenants against encumbrances; (b) covenant for further assurance (in other words, to do whatever is necessary to rectify title deficiencies); (c) covenant of good right and authority to convey; (d) covenant of quiet enjoyment; (e) covenant of seisin; (f) covenant of warranty.

TITLE DEFECT – (1) Any possible or patent claim or right outstanding in a chain of title that is adverse to the claim of ownership. (2) Any material irregularity in the execution or effect of an instrument in the chain of title.

TITLE EXAMINATION – To peruse and study the instruments in a chain of title and to determine their effect and condition in order to reach a conclusion as to the status of the title.

TITLE INSURANCE – Is insurance that protects purchasers of real estate and mortgages against loss from defective titles, liens and encumbrances.

TITLE PLANT – (1) In many areas, synonymous with abstract plant. (2) A geographically filed assemblage of title information which is to help in expediting title examinations, such as copies of previous attorneys' opinions, abstracts, tax searches, and copies or take-offs of the public records.

TITLE SEARCH – A search and perusal of the public records for recorded instruments that affect the title to a particular piece of land. (See also Abstract and Examination.)

UNDERWRITER – An insurance company that issues insurance policies either to the public or to another insurer.

WARRANTY DEED – A deed containing one or more title covenants. (See Title Covenants.)

PRE - CLOSING CHECKLISTS

In order to make sure your closing goes smoothly, we've outlined a few things that will help prepare you for the big day and beyond.

- If the parties to the contract have agreed to use a prior survey, present it to Austin Market Realty for review when the contract is receipted.
- Request HOA information. This helps us support you in meeting contract deadlines.
- It will be necessary to bring your spouse to closing, even if they are not on the loan. They will still have a few things to sign the day of closing. If there's been a divorce or remarriage during the ownership period, please inform your escrow officer.



- We will have to have a U.S. issued valid id. This includes driver's licenses, identification cards issued by the department of public safety, or a U.S. passport. It must be current, have a picture and signature.
- If you have special circumstances, ie: Foreign language, hearing impaired or unable to attend closing, we must be notified immediately.
- If using a power of attorney, your lender and title company must be notified immediately to obtain approval of use. We'll need the original document at closing and are legally required to contact the person granting the power of attorney on the day of closing.
- Inform your closer if the transaction is linked to another closing, e.g., if the Sellers need the proceeds quickly for a purchase, or if the Buyer's funds are coming from another closing.
- If you will be unable to attend the closing, we will make arrangements for a notary service to come to you. The fee for this service is generally around \$150 per signing depending on the state. WE MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL SIGNED DOCS BACK IN OUR OFFICE ALONG WITH ANY BUYER FUNDS AND LENDER FUNDS BEFORE FUNDING.
- When possible, avoid planning your closings for the last few days of the month. You will enjoy more options as to closing appointments and last minute changes or issues will be easier to take care of.
- Any money necessary for closings costs will need to be in the form of a wire or cashiers check.

POST - CLOSING REMINDERS

- File for your homestead exemption Jan. 1st thru April 30th. You will need to have your driver's license address match the property address.
- You will receive a letter in the mail stating pay them \$35.00 to file for your homestead. It is FREE to do this so please don't pay anyone to do it for you.
- You will receive a letter from the county that looks very official asking you to tell them what you paid for the house. Do not fill this form out and send it back to them. They can raise your taxes if you paid more than what they have it appraised for.
- You will get something in the mail asking you to pay to get a certified copy of your deed. Do not pay this. We will give you the original and if you ever need a certified copy it is \$24.00 at the county.
- Once you are settled remember if you know anyone buying or selling to refer them to your agent. They worked hard to get you into your dream home.
- **Enjoy your NEW HOME!!!**



If you have any questions about any of the items listed above, please contact Austin Market Realty. If you would like additional information pertaining to taxes, utilities, relocation resources or anything else please visit our website at www.austinmarketrealty.com.

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