

## Something To Write Home About

### “Make mine move-in ready, please!”

With double digit months supplies of homes in the area, we're definitely still in a buyer's market. Buyers have plenty of homes to choose from, and they don't want to fix **ANYTHING!**

#### To Fix Or Not To Fix?

First off, remember that no home is perfect. There are always some aspects of each and every home that need attention. These can range from removing clutter, cleaning, and sprucing up all the way through to staging, renovations, improvements, and upgrades which can cost thousands of dollars. Sometimes, these fixes are not in a seller's budget.

In a perfect world, it would be wonderful if all sellers had the money, time and energy to make their homes showcases before listing them for sale, but let's be realistic. Sellers need to work within their means, **while** understanding that there are trade-offs when issues that need attention are not addressed—namely price and the length of time it will take to sell.

There's no doubt that homes which have been constantly updated and maintained sell more quickly and for a higher dollar value.

Known maintenance repairs, major defects and safety issues should **always** be addressed prior to the property being listed for sale. Buyers simply are not willing to take on these problems, nor should they have to. Disclosure laws protect buyers by requiring that sellers reveal facts about the home that could influence a buyer's decision to purchase the home.

Aside from the seller's obligation to disclose, these issues **will** come up as part of the home inspection process. If a seller waits until that happens, chances are it will cost much more to fix when the buyer

demands that the repairs be completed to their specifications.

#### Where Can Sellers Draw The Line?

Renovations are very personal and have to make sense. First and foremost, ask a professional what improvements will increase the market value of your home. The least expensive investments you can make are in fresh paint and new carpet, but remember stick to soft, neutral colors. While renovated kitchens and bathrooms will increase the property's value, it will never be dollar for dollar. So, before you begin, make sure you understand what you **may** or **may not** recoup as a result of any renovations.

In addition to maintenance repairs, major defects and safety issues, inexpensive fixes sellers should make include removing clutter as part of a major cleaning, painting, trimming bushes, cutting and edging the lawn, painting walls and door (including exterior and garage doors), and removing old worn out carpets to exposing sought-after hardwood floors.

Depersonalization is extremely important, too. Pack up the pictures, knick-knacks and all non-essentials—including some of your children's toys. While buyers are touring your home, you want them to **focus on the home**. You want to give them the opportunity to envision their own family and belongings in your home.

It's tough for most sellers to pull this off because it's such an emotional process. That's where the services and expertise of a knowledgeable REALTOR® come in. If there's a move in your future, please call me! I'll be happy to guide you through the process—no matter what the obstacles and challenges!

*Whether buying or selling a home,  
you can be sure we will give your transaction our utmost attention  
and will provide you with exceptional service!*

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*Owning a home is still a great investment!*

### Speaking of home inspections...

...they can mean the difference between a sale and no sale, and right or wrong, have become another means for haggling over price.

During these tough times, buyers are much more likely to use an inspection report as leverage against paying too much for a home and assuming costly repairs. Now, the buyer's goal is to get the seller to pay for repairs before settlement or to cut the sale price of the home to avoid hefty repair costs after the purchase has been completed.

#### Why are home inspections important?

The focus of an inspection is to describe the home's condition and indicate which items and systems may need major repairs or replacement. The purpose is not to pass or fail a home or to determine if it is worthy of purchase. That decision is always left to the buyer. Nor is a home inspection intended to discover small defects, flaws, and cosmetic imperfections. It is to identify major defects and safety concerns.

A good inspector will point out the home's good features in addition to the items that need attention. Most often, they will also give an educated opinion as to the life expectancy of major systems and the roof. Home inspectors will not give a determination of the home's market value because they are not appraisers.

#### What a home inspection report covers.

The home inspection and resulting report should include the general condition of the heating and central air conditioning systems (if the external temperature allows for the air conditioning unit to be turned on), plumbing and electrical systems, structural components, roof, attic, garage, visible insulation, foundations, walls, windows, doors and ceilings.

Additional inspections often include radon gas, wood destroying insects, lead-based paint, well and septic, mold, and asbestos. However, should something suspicious show up in the inspection, the buyer may (at his or her expense) employ the services of additional experts such as licensed electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, roofer, etc.

You can find more information on home inspections through the National Association of Home Inspectors ([www.nahi.org](http://www.nahi.org)) and the American Society of Home Inspectors ([www.ashi.org](http://www.ashi.org)).

The professional services and expertise of a knowledgeable REALTOR® will guide you through the entire process no matter what obstacles and challenges arise! If there's a move in your future, please call me. I'll be happy to assist you!

#### Curious to know what your home could sell for?

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