

HOME BUYER RESOURCE

HOME SEARCH GUIDE

Define what matters before the search, then compare homes using the same priorities every time.

DEFINE

Priorities

SEPARATE

Must vs. want

TOUR

Purposefully

COMPARE

Consistently

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Turning Hope Into Homes

Where people come first and homes follow.



Use this worksheet to design the search before the listings start coming.

Preferred town, county or general area

Target purchase-price range

School-related considerations you want to research

Older home, newer home or no preference

Preferred number of stories / home style

Renovation tolerance: a lot, a little or none

Need to be close to public transportation?

Accessibility or physical needs

Pets or animals requiring special features

CANDID SEARCH RULE

Decide the hard-to-change priorities first. It is easy to get distracted by a beautifully staged house that does not actually meet the needs you said mattered.

A home can be pretty and still be the wrong fit.

BUYER REMINDER

For school, crime, commute and other location factors, use objective sources and decide for yourself what works for your household.

Must Have, Would Like or Dealbreaker?

Be specific enough that your search can actually help you.

MARK EACH ITEM: MUST HAVE | WOULD LIKE | DEALBREAKER | NOT IMPORTANT

LOT / EXTERIOR

	M / W / D / N
Large yard / acreage	
Small or low-maintenance yard	
Fenced yard	
Garage / carport	
Patio / deck / porch	
Pool or outdoor feature	
Extra parking	
Outbuilding / shed	
Special view	
Basement access / walkout	

INTERIOR / SIZE

	M / W / D / N
Minimum bedrooms	
Preferred bedrooms	
Minimum bathrooms	
Preferred bathrooms	
Minimum square footage	
Air conditioning	
Hardwood floors	
Eat-in kitchen	
Separate dining room	
Family / bonus room	
Home office / library	
Fireplace	
Separate laundry room	
No interior steps / one-level living	
Lots of windows / natural light	

COMMUNITY FEATURES

Consider whether HOA/condo living, community pool, golf, tennis, gated access, clubhouse or other shared amenities matter to you. Treat these as preferences, not assumptions about the quality of a community.

Some compromises are cosmetic. Others follow you for as long as you own the home.

A HOUSE CAN BE IMPROVED. THE LOT, LOCATION AND BASIC STRUCTURE ARE DIFFERENT.

Before compromising, know whether the issue is realistically changeable, expensive to change, or essentially fixed.

1. PRIORITIZE BEFORE YOU BUY

VERY HARD OR IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE

- Location / lot
- Major lot shape or topography
- Basic number of stories
- Proximity to roads, rail, commercial uses or other fixed surroundings
- Amount of land
- Having a basement at all
- Fundamental footprint / detached vs. attached

2. CHANGEABLE - BUT A MAJOR PROJECT

POSSIBLE WITH TIME, MONEY AND FEASIBILITY

- Adding a bathroom
- Finishing an existing basement
- Adding a garage or major addition
- Significant accessibility renovation
- Major wall / layout changes
- Large kitchen renovation
- Replacing major systems

3. DO NOT LET COSMETICS DISTRACT YOU

EASIER TO CHANGE

- Paint colors
- Light fixtures
- Window treatments
- Many appliances
- Flooring
- Cabinet hardware
- Decor and furniture
- Landscaping details

CANDICE'S TAKE

If a basement is truly important, buy a home with a basement. If land matters, buy the land now. You cannot renovate more property onto the lot later.

Enjoy the showing, but evaluate the property using the priorities you already set.

LOOK AT HOW IT FUNCTIONS

Listing photos cannot tell you this

- ☐ Room sizes and furniture placement
- ☐ Layout and daily flow
- ☐ Natural light
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Parking and access
- ☐ Outdoor-space usability
- ☐ Noise immediately around the property
- ☐ Whether the home supports your routines

NOTICE CONDITION - DO NOT DIAGNOSE

Observe now. Investigate professionally later.

- ☐ Visible moisture or water staining
- ☐ Roof and exterior condition
- ☐ Heating / cooling equipment
- ☐ Windows and doors
- ☐ Basement or crawl-space condition
- ☐ Obvious deferred maintenance
- ☐ Items that may need specialist follow-up
- ☐ Updates you would need to budget for

LOOK PAST COSMETICS

Paint, flooring, fixtures and staging can make a powerful first impression. Ask whether you dislike the house itself or simply the current owner's style.

Focus on what is expensive, difficult or impossible to change.

NO SURPRISES

A showing is not a home inspection. If the home becomes a serious contender, professional due diligence is where condition gets evaluated more deeply.



Compare Before You Commit

Use the same criteria for every serious contender so emotion does not rewrite the rules.

PROPERTY COMPARISON BOARD - BUILT INTO THIS GUIDE

For each serious contender, rate the same categories and write down the compromise you would actually be accepting.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Price / estimated monthly expense | ☐ Outdoor space |
| ☐ Location / commute / lot | ☐ HOA / condo considerations |
| ☐ Layout / functionality | ☐ Updates or repairs needed |
| ☐ Bedrooms / bathrooms | ☐ Must-haves met |
| ☐ Condition / major systems | ☐ Compromises required |
| ☐ Parking / garage | ☐ Overall fit |
| ☐ Basement / storage | |

SERIOUS CONTENDER NOTES

Property address

What I love most

Biggest compromise

Biggest concern

Would I still want it if no one else were competing?

OPEN HOUSES + NEW CONSTRUCTION

At an open house, let the hosting agent know you are represented and avoid sharing confidential negotiating information. For new construction, contact Candice before your first sales-office visit so representation and compensation can be addressed before registration.

WHEN THE SEARCH WORKS

The right home does not need to be perfect. It needs to meet the priorities that matter most at a price and level of compromise you can stand behind.