FALL 2026 EDITION

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN

Buying a Home

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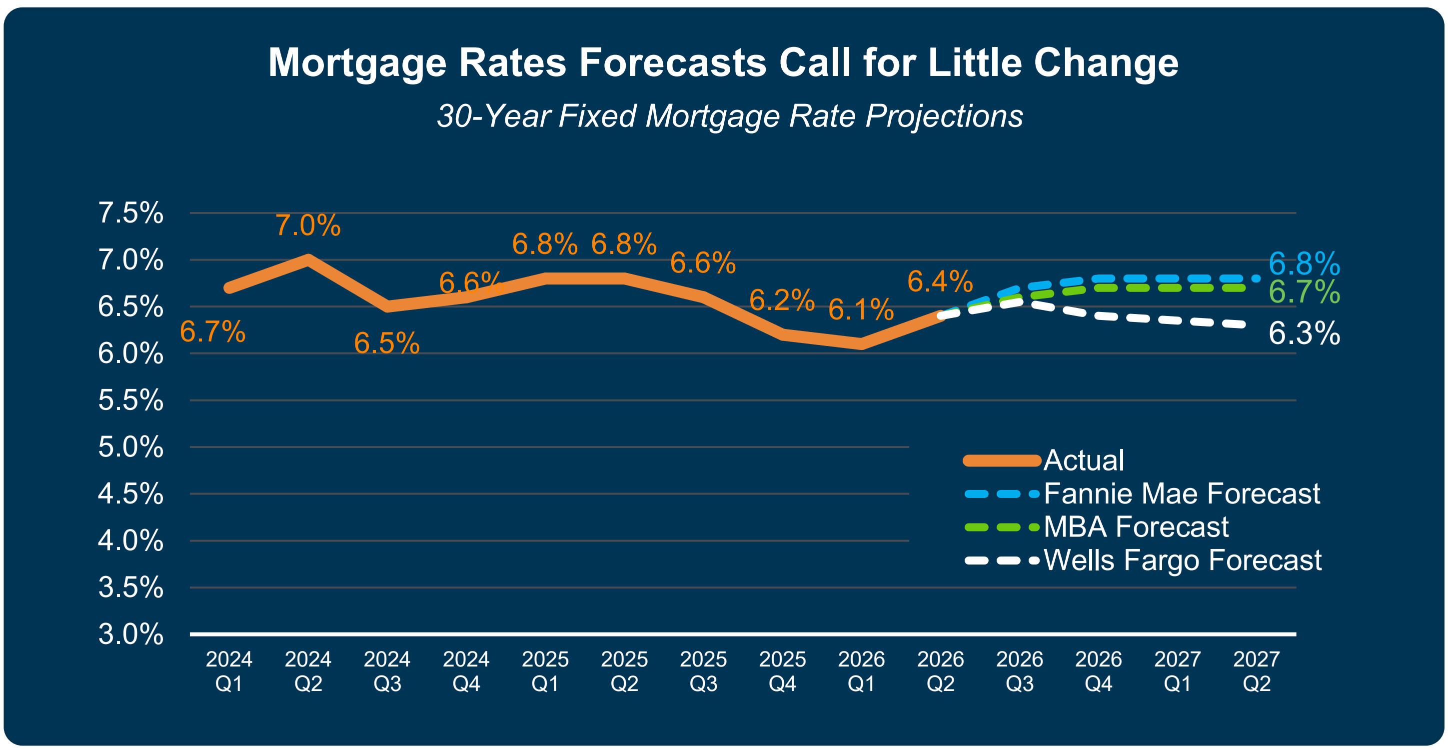
What To Expect from the Housing Market in the Second Half of 2026

If the first half of this year has left you feeling stuck, you may be asking yourself: will the second half of the year be any better for the housing market? While nobody has a crystal ball, here's what the experts say you can expect.

Mortgage Rates Aren't Expected To Fall Dramatically

If you're waiting for rates to fall, you're not alone. A survey from *Clever-Best Interest* found 42% of people believe mortgage rates will drop below 5% this year. The challenge is that's not what the experts who study mortgage rates every day say is going to happen.

Forecasts show mortgage rates staying relatively steady in the mid 6% range through at least mid-2027. That's in line with where they've been lately.



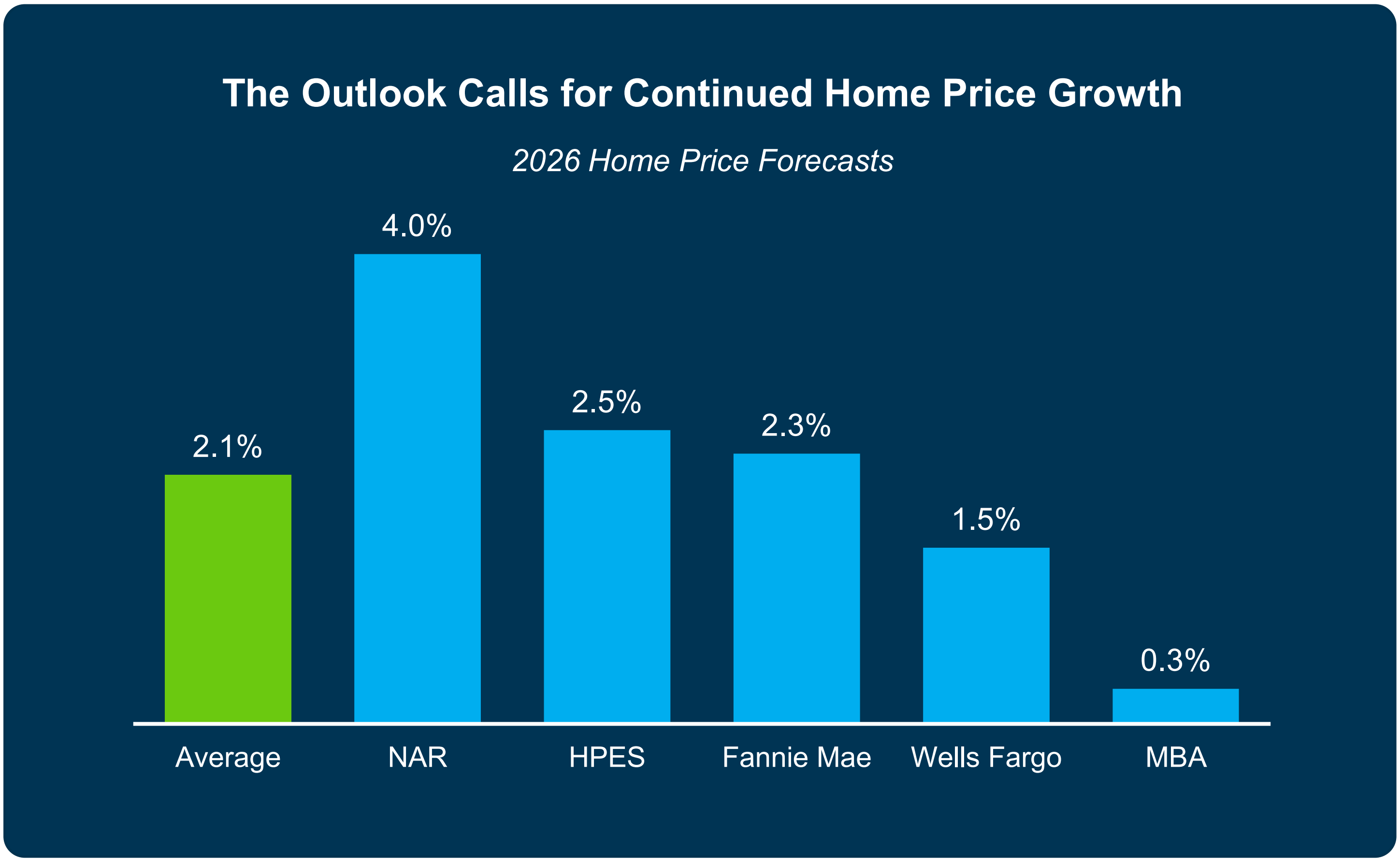
Why? Rates are influenced by inflation, the economy, global events, and a lot of other moving pieces. And those simply aren't pointing toward the kind of drop many buyers are waiting for.

Now, if there's a lasting resolution to the conflict abroad or if inflation starts to cool, that could create room for rates to come down more than expected. We'll have to wait and see. The good news is, there are things we can do to make your move more affordable even if rates don't really change: adjustable-rate mortgages, rate buydowns, and assumable mortgages. **So, don't assume waiting is your only option.**

Home Prices Will Grow at a Moderate Pace

A lot of buyers want home prices to fall, too. But that's not what most forecasts show either. While price trends are going to vary by area, and some places are seeing mild declines, experts still expect home prices to net positive this year at the national level.

In fact, they're projecting prices will rise by an average of 2.1% in 2026 (*see graph below*):



Right now, *Federal Housing Finance Agency* (FHFA) data shows prices are up about 2.13% nationally year-over-year. Based on the forecasts, here's what we can assume. They keep rising at almost the same pace they are now. Some experts even think they'll climb faster.

Now, price trends will continue to vary by local market, but that means, in most places, prices will still rise (albeit moderately) for the rest of the year.

That's why buyers shouldn't assume waiting will guarantee a lower price later.

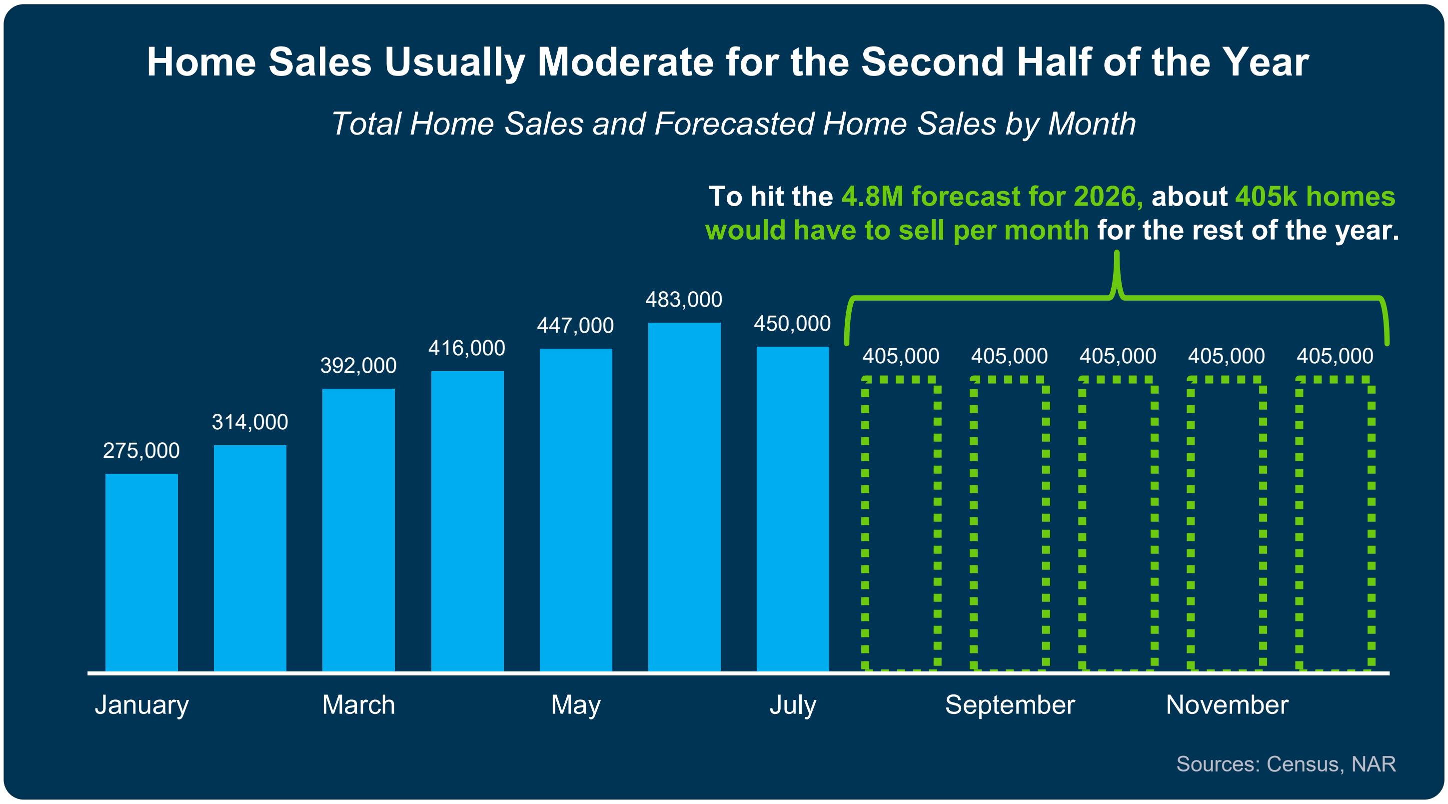
Home Sales Will Begin Their Seasonal Slowdown

If you've been wondering why the housing market has felt quieter lately, you're not imagining it. But that doesn't mean people have stopped wanting to move.

After a slow winter, sales climbed through the Spring and hit a high point in June – as is fairly typical for the market. Now, we're moving into what's usually a slower season: fall.

In the second half of the year, expect the people who move to be driven by big life changes. The need to move closer to family, the feeling of running out of space in their current home, relocating for a job… Maybe one of those is why moving is on your radar too.

Here's how that helps you. Since fewer sales will happen this fall than the summer peak, that gives the buyer who do choose to move more power. Expect inventory to climb (as fewer buyers buy), prices to ease as sellers meet the market where it is, and price cuts to become increasingly common as we inch closer to the holidays. It's a pattern that happens almost every year.



Bottom Line

Mortgage rates are unlikely to drop dramatically. And prices are expected to continue rising at a healthier, more sustainable pace. But that doesn't mean you have to wait. There are still opportunities this fall – if you know where to look. Want to understand what these forecasts mean for your plans and what's happening in our local market? Let's connect.

How Changing Mortgage Rates Affect Your Future Monthly Payment

Experts say rates will stay pretty much where they are now – but some volatility is to be expected. So, you shouldn't try to time the market. It's better to focus on how any change impacts your future mortgage payment.

Home Loan Amount	Fixed Mortgage Interest Rate	Monthly Mortgage P&I*	Monthly Savings Compared to 7.5%
$250,000	7.5%	$1,748	-
	7.0%	$1,663	**$85**
	6.5%	$1,580	**$168**
	6.0%	$1,499	**$249**
$450,000	7.5%	$3,146	-
	7.0%	$2,994	**$152**
	6.5%	$2,844	**$302**
	6.0%	$2,698	**$448**
$650,000	7.5%	$4,545	-
	7.0%	$4,324	**$221**
	6.5%	$4,108	**$437**
	6.0%	$3,897	**$648**
$850,000	7.5%	$5,943	-
	7.0%	$5,655	**$288**
	6.5%	$5,373	**$570**
	6.0%	$5,096	**$847**

**Principal and Interest Payment. Total monthly payment may vary based on loan specifications such as property taxes, insurance, HOA dues, and other fees. Interest rates used here are for marketing purposes only. Consult your licensed Mortgage Advisor for current rates.*

Source: MortgageCalculator.net

More Options for Your Search

Even though mortgage rates probably won't drop much and prices may inch up, there's still good news for your move. There are more homes for sale right now. And that gives you more options that fit your budget despite rates and prices, less competition, and more room to negotiate to make the numbers work.

Take a look at the graph below. It uses data from *Realtor.com* to prove inventory is making a slow and steady comeback. And this is honestly the biggest bright spot for buyers today.

Here's what the graph shows. Each year we've been inching closer to the inventory levels we had back in 2017-2019. And that's a good thing. That's what's considered normal for the market. And after hitting ultra-low levels during the pandemic, getting back to normal is a welcome sight.

Now, it's worth noting, nationally we're not totally there yet – and having more inventory won't suddenly "fix" everything. But the growth the market has seen lately is still enough to change how competitive it feels when you buy.

- **When there are more homes for sale**, buyers gain time, options, and leverage.
- **When there aren't**, the pressure ramps up quickly.

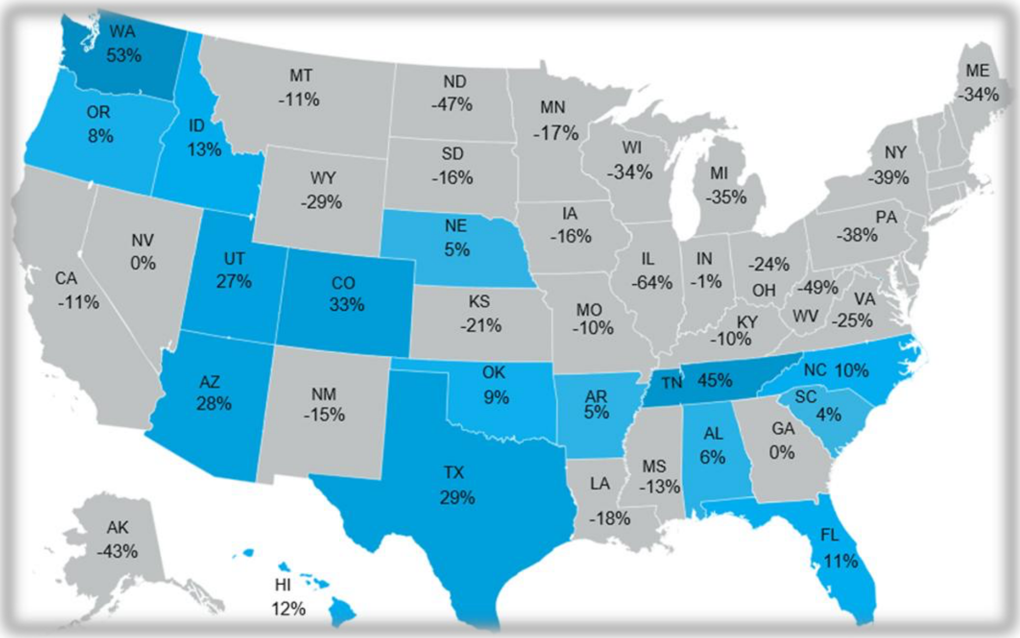
In the years since 2020, there haven't been enough homes for sale, and that's made the market feel rushed. Stressful. Intimidating. But now it's finally getting better.

Inventory is Back To Pre-Pandemic Norms in Some States

According to Realtor.com, 16 states and Washington, D.C. are now back above pre-pandemic inventory levels, and some by a wide margin (*see the blue in the map below)*:

16 States and D.C. Are Back Above 2019 Inventory Levels

Percent Change in Inventory Between Julio 2019 and Julio 2026



State	Rate
CT	-70%
DC	73%
DE	-27%
MA	-30%
MD	-25%
NH	-38%
RI	-51%
NJ	-55%
VT	-48%

Source: Realtor.com

So, some places have bounced back faster than others. That's why inventory growth is going to vary depending on where you live. You can get a rough idea of what to expect with the map above, but only an agent can break it down on the neighborhood level.

As a whole, though, you're getting more choices for your move. In other words, the market is starting to work *with* buyers again – not *against* them. And that should help in two big ways:

- More chances to find what you're looking for
- More homes for sale in your target price point

Bottom Line

Inventory isn't back to normal everywhere. But it's moving in the right direction.
If you've been waiting for a moment when you have options, and a little breathing room, this is the strongest setup buyers have seen in a long time.

More homes on the market give buyers greater choice and, combined with improved buying power, expand the range of homes they can realistically consider.

Odeta Kushi

Deputy Chief Economist at First American

The “Take It or Leave It” Attitude Is Fading From the Market

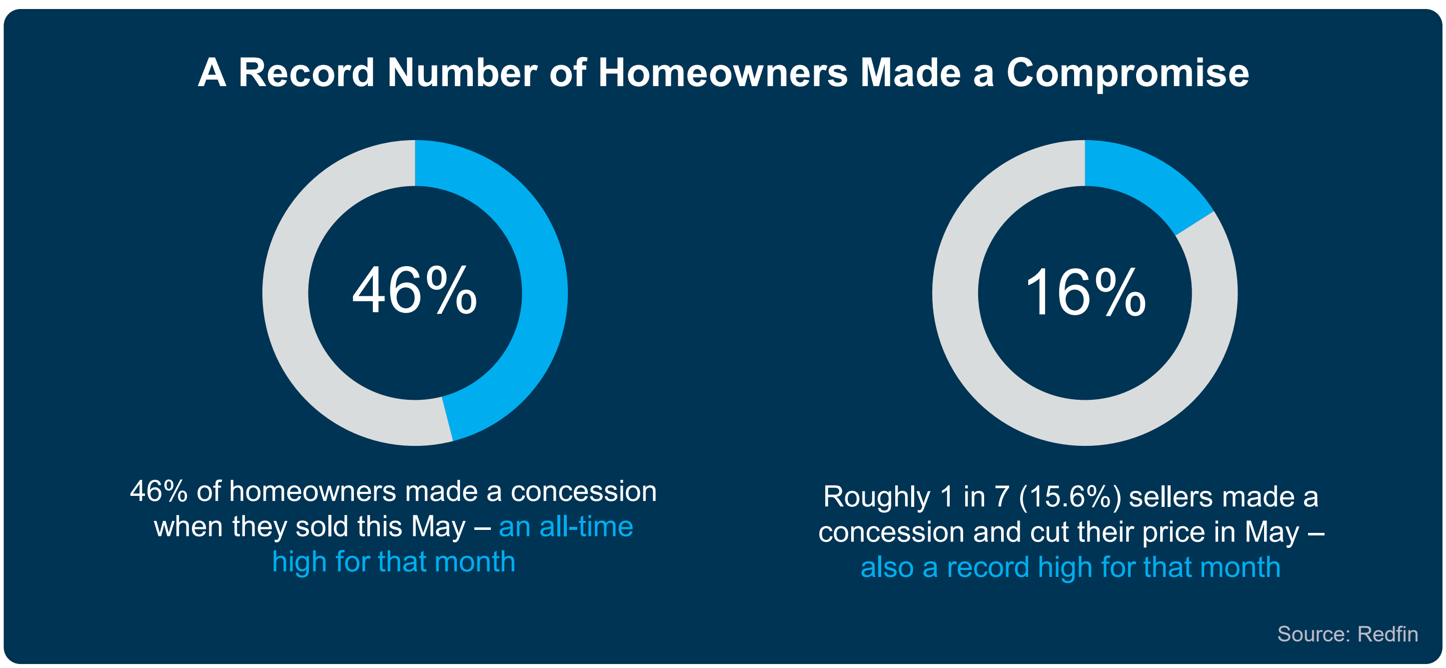
One of the biggest advantages for buyers in today’s market is this. Inventory has grown and that puts you in the driver’s seat again. More buyers are asking for better deals, and more sellers are giving them. Builders are throwing in extras, too. So, you have more power to get a deal on your own terms.

That’s why, if you haven’t already, you’ll probably start to hear these terms a lot: ***concession*** and ***incentive***. Here’s what you need to know:

- A **concession** is something a seller agrees to during negotiations to close a deal.
- An **incentive** is a perk a builder (or seller) advertises upfront to attract buyers.

More Sellers Are Agreeing to Concessions

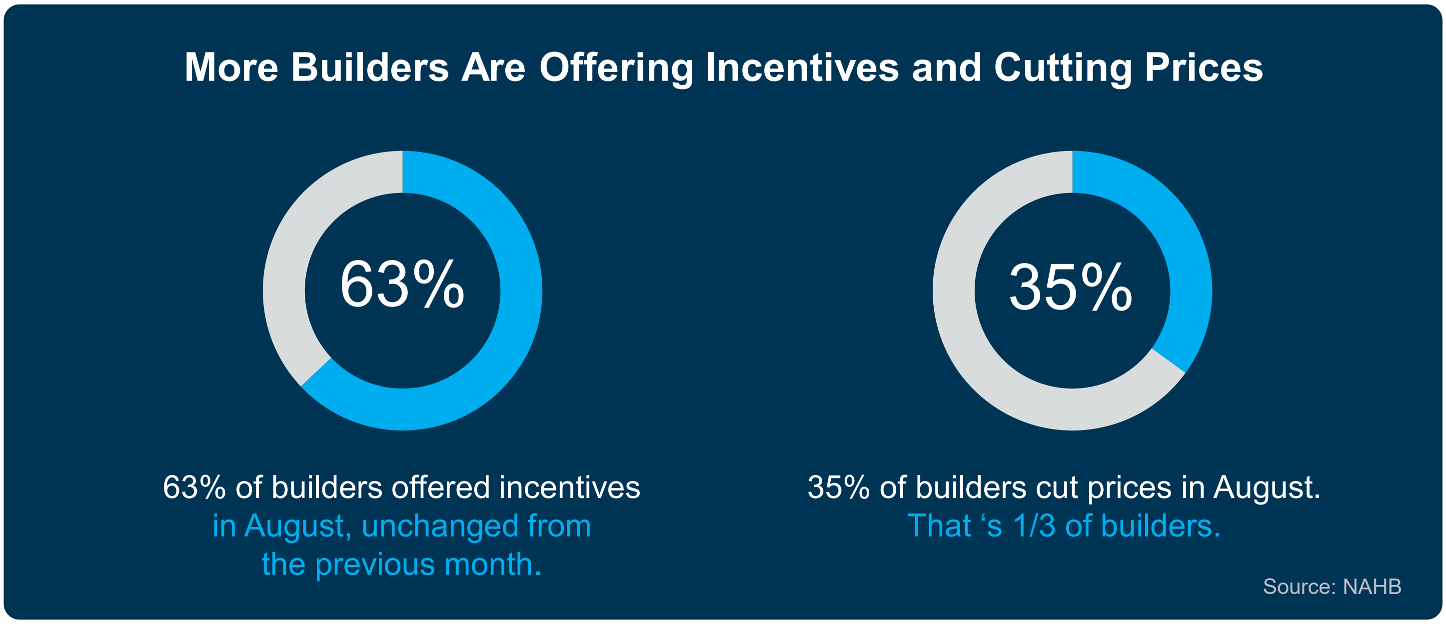
Almost half (46%) of homeowners who sold recently gave the buyer a concession, according to *Redfin*. **That’s the highest share on record for this time of year.** And roughly 1 in 7 (16%) sellers went a step further, cutting their asking price *and* offering a concession on top *(see chart below)*:



But a concession isn’t always a price cut. A seller might cover part of your closing costs, take care of a repair, or offer a credit that trims your upfront costs. And homeowners aren’t the only ones compromising…builders are, too.

Builders Negotiate More Than You'd Expect

Buyers who look at newly built homes are seeing that they've got the same leg up. According to the *National Association of Home Builders* (NAHB), 63% of builders are offering incentives right now. And about 35% are cutting prices outright *(see chart below)*:



Those incentives often look like price adjustments, mortgage rate buydowns, or free upgrades, like nicer finishes or appliances. Danielle Hale, Chief Economist at *Realtor.com* explains why:

"*New construction has been one of the steadiest parts of the housing market over the past few years, but **builders are clearly responding to today's affordability pressures and higher levels of existing-home inventory**.*"

Even builders, who many people think rarely negotiate, are competing on price and perks. They have been for over a year now. The same data shows this is the 17th straight month where more than 60% of builders have offered incentives to sweeten the deal. And that's significant.

What This Means for Your Move

This is a good time to ask for what you want. Whether you've had your eye on an existing house or a newly built home, there's a chance the seller or builder will meet you partway on price, terms, or both.

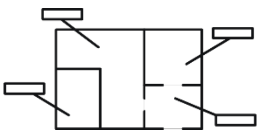
Bottom Line

Sellers and builders are both giving buyers more to work with this year. Want to know what's realistic to expect in concessions and incentives in our market? Let's connect.

Should You Buy an Existing Home or a Newly Built One?

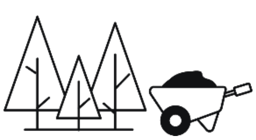
If you're torn on whether you want to focus your search on new construction homes or existing ones, here are some differences that could help you decide.

Benefits of an Existing Home



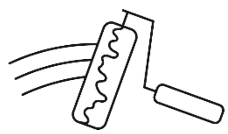
A wider variety of floor plans and styles

Details that add charm and character



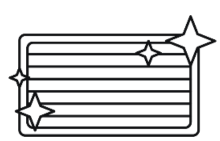
More mature landscaping and neighborhoods

Benefits of a Brand-New Home



Ability to customize certain features during the build

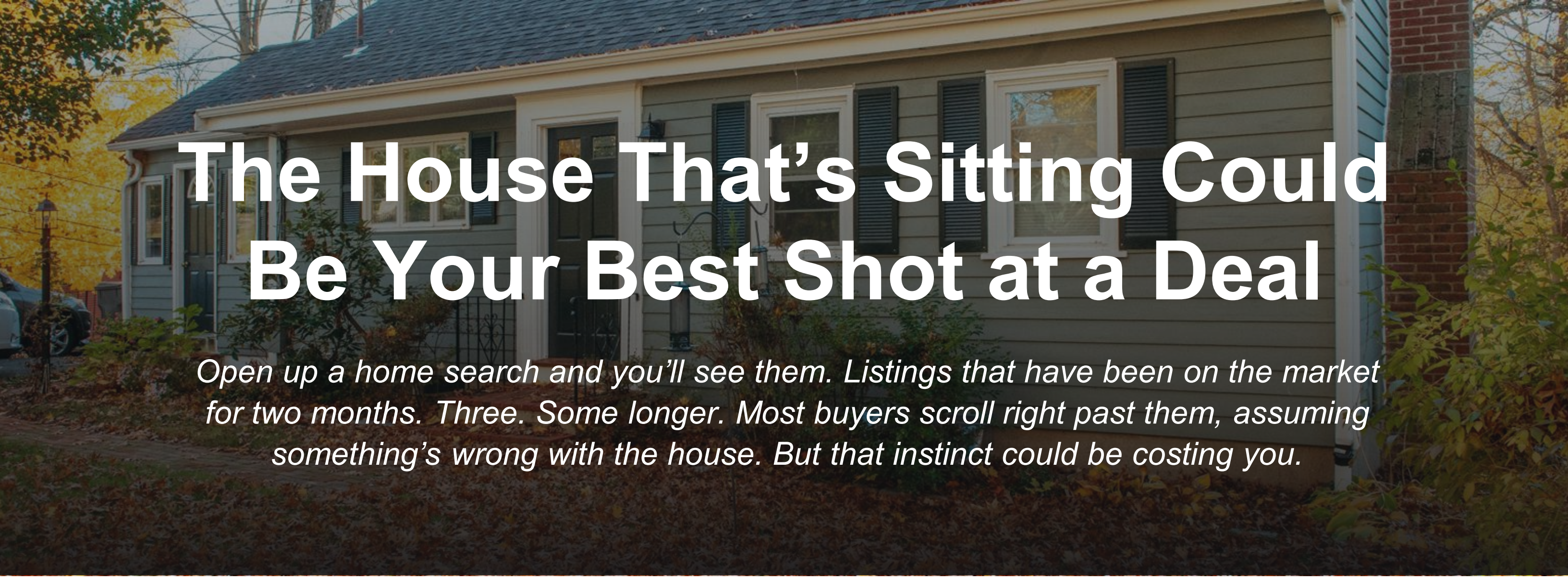
Won't need repairs or renovation work up front



Energy efficient features may be standard

Both options have their perks; it just depends on what matters most to you.

If you have questions about what's available in our area, let's connect.



The House That's Sitting Could Be Your Best Shot at a Deal

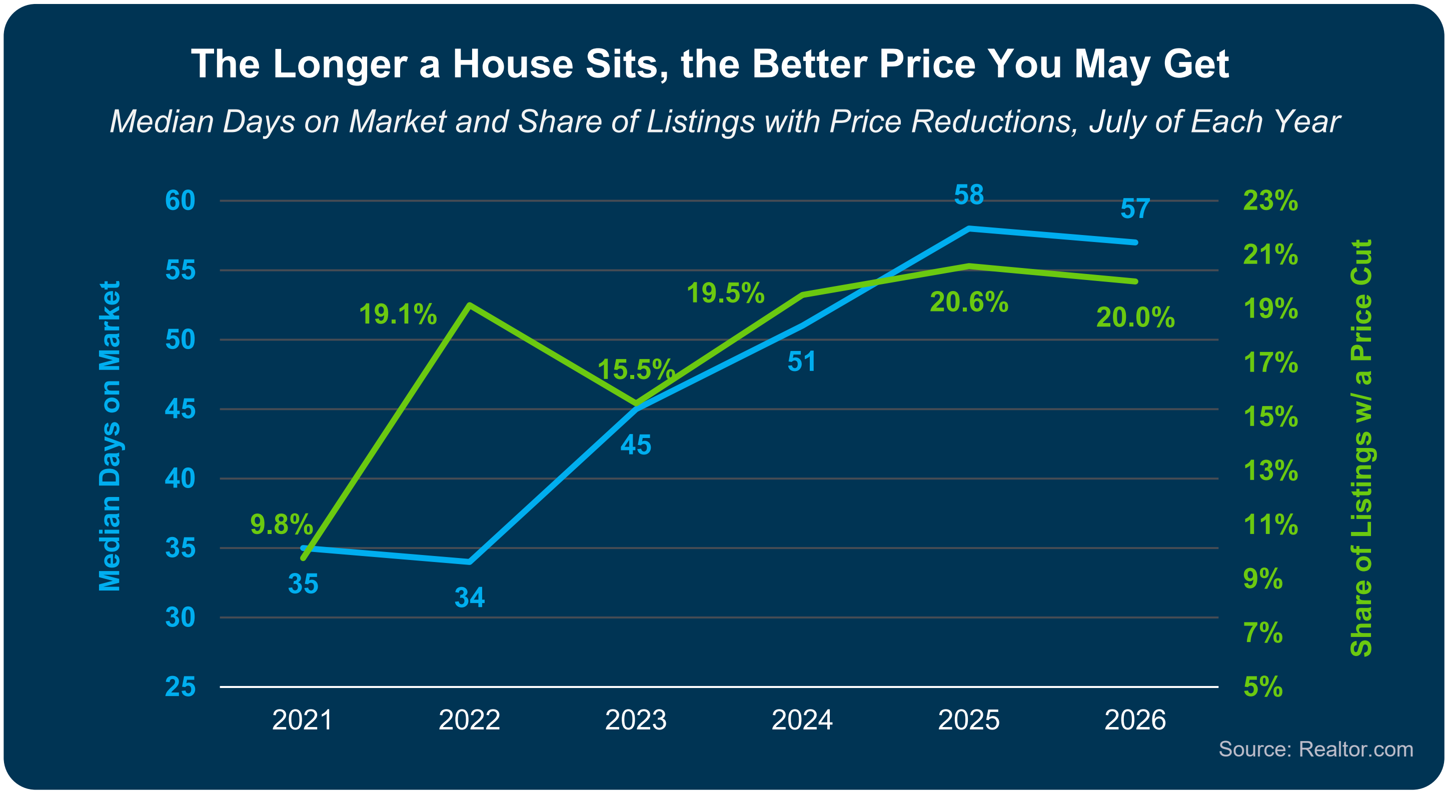
Open up a home search and you'll see them. Listings that have been on the market for two months. Three. Some longer. Most buyers scroll right past them, assuming something's wrong with the house. But that instinct could be costing you.

Where Some Buyers Are Finding Better Deals

If affordability has been your #1 hurdle, there's a surprisingly simple strategy that could help you finally get your foot in the door. Start with the homes that have been sitting the longest. That's often where the best deals are since the longer a home sits, the more motivated the seller usually gets.

Data from *Realtor.com* shows there's a connection between longer time on the market and lower sales prices. **Basically, the longer a house sits, the more likely it is that the seller will reduce the price to try to get it sold** *(see graph below).*

The blue line tracks how long homes stay on the market, while the green line tracks the share of homes getting a price reduction. As one climbs, so does the other:



And if you focus on these homes that are just sitting and waiting, the opportunity for you is bigger than you may think right now.

Redfin data shows there are $347 billion worth of stale listings on the market right now – more than ever before for this time of year. So, ask your agent to filter listings for you from oldest to newest. The home that fits your budget might already be there. Just further down the list than you thought.

Lingering Doesn't Always Mean Something's Wrong

Let's say you do that and something catches your eye. Still, you might be questioning why the home has been sitting in the first place. Just remember, sometimes it has nothing to do with the home itself. According to *Redfin*, common causes are:

- The asking price was set too high to start
- The home didn't show well online
- There are a lot of homes for sale in the area, so it just got buried

So, nothing that's necessarily a dealbreaker, or even anything that's wrong with the home itself. If there's a real issue, a thorough inspection will surface it. And that's information you can use to negotiate. Not a reason to assume it's a house worth skipping over.

How To Turn a Lingering Listing into a Win

According to *USA Today*, you have two main levers to pull on homes like this:

- **The first is price.** Work with your agent to study what comparable homes recently sold for, then build an offer around that. Coming in below asking price is fair game when a home has been sitting.

- **The second is concessions.** If a seller won't budge on price, they may still help in other ways, like covering closing costs, repair credits, or even a mortgage rate buydown that lowers your monthly payment. Your agent will know what other buyers in your area are asking for – and what they're getting. That'll help you know what's realistic to expect.

Bottom Line

A house sitting on the market isn't always a glaring red flag. In today's market, it may be your best opportunity yet. For help deciding which lingering listings are actually worth a second look, let's connect.

The Top Two Buyer Mistakes Today

In today's market, you'll want to be sure you get your advice from a team of professionals. Here are the top two mistakes other buyers are making right now, and how your agent or lender can help you avoid each one.

1. Putting Off Pre-Approval

As part of the homebuying process, a lender will look at your finances to figure out what they're willing to let you borrow for your mortgage. This will help you really wrap your head around the financial side of things before you start looking at homes.

While house hunting can be a lot more fun than talking about finances, you don't want to do this out of order.

Make sure you get your pre-approval first before you go house hunting. As CNET explains:

"If you wait to get preapproved until the last minute, you might be scrambling to contact a lender and miss the opportunity to put a bid on a home."

2. Buying More House Than You Can Afford

With today's mortgage rates and home prices, it's even more important to avoid stretching your budget too far. This is especially true because other housing expenses like home insurance and taxes are on the rise.

Be sure to factor these expenses into your budget so you don't overextend. *Bankrate* offers this advice:

"Focus on what monthly payment you can afford rather than fixating on the maximum loan amount you qualify for. ***Just because you can qualify for a $300,000 loan doesn't mean you can comfortably handle the monthly payments that come with it along with your other financial obligations."***

Bottom Line

The good news is, you don't have to deal with any of these headaches if you have the right partner by your side. Let's connect so you have a pro who can help you avoid these costly mistakes.

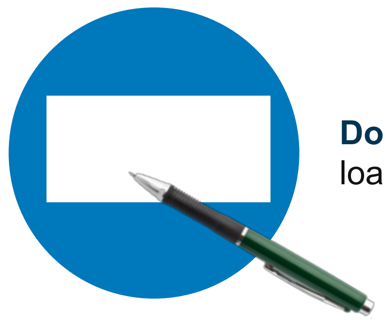
Things To Avoid After Applying for a Mortgage

As part of the homebuying process, once a lender has reviewed your finances, you want to be as consistent as possible.

Don't change bank accounts.

Don't apply for new credit or close any credit accounts.

Don't deposit cash into your accounts before speaking with your bank or lender.



Don't co-sign other loans for anyone.

Don't make any large purchases.

The best advice? Once you've submitted your mortgage application, always talk to your lender before doing anything financial in nature.

Why You Need To Work with a Real Estate Agent

Buying a home is exciting. But let's be honest, it can also feel overwhelming. And with today's housing market constantly changing, it's easy to feel like you're making one of the biggest financial decisions of your life while trying to keep up with moving goalposts.

That's exactly why having a trusted real estate agent matters.

A great agent does a lot more than unlock doors and schedule showings. They help you make sense of the process, avoid costly mistakes, and feel confident in your decisions along the way. And according to the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR), buyers are crystal clear about the support they value most from an agent today (*see visual below*):

What Buyers Want Most From Their Agent

Percentage Distribution, All Buyers

50%	Help finding the right home
13%	Help negotiating contract terms
12%	Help getting the best price
7%	Help with all of the paperwork
6%	Determining what similar homes sold for
5%	Talking through how much the buyer can afford
3%	Help finding and arranging financing
4%	Other

Source: NAR

The takeaway? Buyers don't just want access to listings. They want someone they can trust who can guide them through the entire experience. Here are the biggest ways an agent delivers all that and more:

They Help You Find the Right Home, Not Just a Home

Finding a house online is easy. Finding the right one for your lifestyle, budget, and long-term goals? That's a different story. A good agent helps you narrow the list, spot opportunities you may miss on your own, and avoid homes that aren't the right fit, even if they look good online. Because buying the wrong home can cost you more than waiting another week for the right one.

They Help You Avoid Overpaying

A local agent helps you understand what a home is really worth based on what similar homes are actually selling for in that area, not just the list price. They also help you craft a strong offer strategy that gives you the best shot without stretching beyond what makes sense financially.

They Know How To Negotiate Through the Tough Moments

In many places, buyers have more leverage than they've had in years. That means more room to ask for repairs, closing cost help, or a better price – but it varies based on your local market and the home you're buying. Knowing *when* to push, *what* to ask for, and *how far* to go is where a great agent shines. Because having someone in your corner who knows the market and how to negotiate can make a huge difference in the outcome.

They Help You Understand What You're Signing

Disclosures, contingencies, timelines… there's a lot packed into a real estate contract, and missing something important can create major issues later. An agent helps you understand what everything means before you sign, so you can move forward with confidence.

They Bring Clarity to a Market That Can Feel Confusing

Headlines change constantly – and that can breed uncertainty. A great agent helps cut through all that noise. They can explain what's happening in your local market, how quickly homes are selling, where buyers have leverage, and what trends really matter for your search.

> ## Bottom Line
>
> The right agent doesn't just help you buy a house. They help you make smarter decisions, avoid costly mistakes, and feel more confident through every step of the process. And in today's market, that expertise is a must.

> The housing market—like so many other markets—is almost impossible to time. **The best time for prospective buyers is when they find a home that they like, that meets their family’s current and foreseeable needs, and that they can afford.**
>
> Orphe Divounguy
> Senior Macroeconomist, Zillow Home Loans

Let's Chat.

Do you have questions about something you read here or about buying a home in general? Don't hesitate to reach out.

Whether it's housing market related, or something about your specific situation, I've helped other buyers find success - and I can help you too.

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