FREE GUIDE

PLAIN ENGLISH · STEP BY STEP

The Seller's Guide

What your home is really worth, which prep pays, and what to know before you list.

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The real numbers, the real process, and the real timeline for selling your home, explained in plain English.

How to use this guide: Skim the bold "Bottom line" under each heading first. Then go back and read the sections that actually apply to where you are right now.

About Jonathan: Jonathan Lopez is a Realtor with the Jim Sandoval Group at Park Regency Realty, serving Woodland Hills and the San Fernando Valley. Jonathan has 700+ homes sold with the Jim Sandoval Group.

1 What Your Home Is Really Worth (vs. a Zillow Estimate)

Bottom line: An online estimate is a computer's guess. A real price comes from what actually sold on your street.

Automated estimates pull from tax records, square footage, and public data. They don't know that your kitchen was redone last year, that your lot backs up to a busy street, or that the house two doors down sold fast because it had a pool and yours doesn't.

Zillow publishes its own accuracy data. By Zillow's own published figures, the typical error on an estimate for an off-market home runs around 7 percent. On a home worth over a million dollars, that's a swing of tens of thousands of dollars, before anyone has even walked through the door.

A real price comes from actual comparable sales: homes similar to yours that recently closed nearby, adjusted for the real differences between your home and theirs. That's not a model guessing. It's a person looking at what buyers actually paid, street by street.

DO THIS

Ask for a price built from recent closed sales on your specific street or sub-neighborhood.

SKIP THIS

Anchoring your expectations to a Zillow, Redfin, or any other automated estimate.

Want this for your home? Call or text (818) 934-7576.

2 Prep That Pays, and Prep That Doesn't

Bottom line: Buyers pay for what they can see working. They don't pay extra for

what you personally like.

DO THIS

- Declutter every room, closet, and counter so buyers can picture their own belongings there, not yours.
- Fix the small stuff: leaky faucets, loose handles, burnt-out bulbs, squeaky doors. These are the things buyers notice and remember.
- Get a second opinion on staging. Sometimes rearranging what you already own is enough. Sometimes a room needs more help.
- Clean up the exterior. The front of the house is the first photo a buyer sees online, before they ever decide to look at the rest.

SKIP THIS

- Big remodels you won't get to enjoy, and that may not match what buyers in your price range actually want.
- Highly personal or trendy finishes right before you sell. Neutral choices appeal to more buyers, faster.
- Guessing. Walk the house with someone who sells in your neighborhood before you spend a weekend or a dollar on anything.

Not sure which fixes are worth it in your house? Call or text (818) 934-7576 and we'll walk it room by room.

3 Pricing Strategy: Why Day One Matters

Bottom line: The price you set the day you list sets the tone for the entire sale.

The first few weeks on the market get the most attention from buyers and agents. That's when your home is new, it shows up at the top of saved searches, and the most motivated buyers are watching closely. Price it right and you capture that attention. Price it too high and you can miss that window, then end up chasing the market down later. Price it too low and you leave money on the table before a single showing happens.

To show what real numbers look like, here is one example market, Woodland Hills, heading into November. Your area will differ:

Example market: Woodland Hills single-family homes, October 2026	
Closed sales	**30**
Median sale price	**$1,341,000**
Median price per square foot	**$596.05**
Median days on market	**56**
Median sale-to-list ratio	**97.1%**
Months of supply	**About 3.75 (balanced, leaning toward buyers)**

Source: CRMLS Matrix, City of Woodland Hills closed sales, snapshot as of Nov 5, 2026. Deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

For comparison, October 2025 saw 54 closings at a median of $1,435,000. Over the past 12 months, the monthly median sale price has ranged from $1,197,500 to $1,535,000, and monthly median days on market has ranged from 18 to 62. That's the point: a single average hides a wide range, so your street and your home matter more than any headline number.

> **These numbers age fast.** By the time you're reading this, they may already have shifted. I pull current numbers for your specific street when you're ready to talk pricing.

> **Want to know where your home would price today? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

4 The California Disclosures You'll Sign

> **Bottom line: California requires sellers to disclose a lot, in writing. Knowing the list up front keeps surprises out of escrow.**

In general terms, here's what you'll typically complete:

- **Transfer Disclosure Statement (TDS):** your written disclosure of the home's condition, known issues, and systems.
- **Natural Hazard Disclosure (NHD):** a report showing whether the property sits in designated flood, fire, earthquake, or other hazard zones.
- **Seller Property Questionnaire (SPQ):** additional questions about the property beyond what the TDS covers.
- **Lead-Based Paint Disclosure:** required for any home built before 1978.
- Other disclosures may apply depending on your specific property and situation.

I'm a licensed real estate agent, not an attorney. For questions about what a specific disclosure means for your situation, talk to a real estate attorney.

Questions about the disclosures for your property? Call or text (818) 934-7576.

5 Your Timeline: From Decision to Keys

Bottom line: Every sale moves through the same phases. Knowing them removes most of the guesswork.

1. **Decide and plan.** A real conversation about your motivation and timeline, followed by a written Plan of Action before you commit to anything.
2. **Prepare.** Decluttering, minor repairs, staging decisions.
3. **List and launch.** Photography completed, marketing goes live.
4. **Active marketing.** Showings, buyer feedback, outreach to agents with buyers.
5. **Offers and negotiation.** Reviewing, countering, accepting.
6. **Escrow.** Inspections, appraisal, disclosures, loan contingencies.
7. **Closing.** Signing, recording, keys handed over.

Timelines vary by contract and by your specific situation. We'll map yours out in the written Plan of Action.

Want your timeline mapped out? Call or text (818) 934-7576.

6 What It Costs, and Your Net Sheet

Bottom line: Your net is what's actually left after every cost is paid. Know every line before you list, not after.

Here are the categories that typically show up:

- Agent commission (negotiable, agreed to in your listing agreement)
- Title and escrow fees
- County and any applicable transfer taxes (rates vary, your escrow officer confirms the exact amount)
- Prorated property taxes and any HOA dues
- Loan payoff, including your existing mortgage balance
- Any repair credits or concessions negotiated with the buyer

- Possible capital gains tax considerations, depending on your situation

Here's the net sheet, blank on purpose. Fees and rates change from sale to sale, so I'm not going to print numbers that look like facts. Fill in yours as you get them, or let's run it together.

Net Sheet (blank: fill in your own numbers)

Line item	Where the number comes from	Your number
Expected sale price	Your pricing strategy (section 3)	**$** _____
Loan payoff	Payoff statement from your lender	**− $** _____
Agent commission	Set in your listing agreement (negotiable)	**− $** _____
Escrow and title fees	Quoted by the escrow and title company	**− $** _____
Transfer taxes	County and city rules, confirmed by escrow	**− $** _____
Repairs and credits	Negotiated with the buyer	**− $** _____
Prorated property taxes, HOA, other	Escrow's closing estimate	**− $** _____
Estimated net to you	Sale price minus every line above	**$** _____

Example only, no figures shown. Your numbers depend on your price and loan, let's run yours.

> I'm a licensed real estate agent, not an attorney or CPA. For tax questions specific to your sale, talk to a CPA before you decide anything.

> **Want a net sheet built for your home? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

7 How Your Home Gets Marketed

> **Bottom line: A strong launch gets the most buyers looking in the first few weeks, when a new listing gets the most attention.**

A real launch includes:

- **Professional photography.** Buyers decide whether to click on your listing based on the first photo.

- **Targeted online exposure.** Getting the listing in front of buyers actively searching in your area and price range.
- **Direct outreach to agents working with buyers.** Not every buyer is scrolling online. Some are already working with an agent who's been told exactly what they're looking for.

> **Curious what a launch plan would look like for your home? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

8 Offers and Negotiation

> **Bottom line: Price is one term in the offer. It's not the only one.**

Every offer gets reviewed for two things: how qualified the buyer actually is, and what terms they're proposing. Terms include price, but also timeline, contingencies, and how the buyer is financing (or not).

A higher price with a shaky buyer or a timeline that doesn't work for you isn't automatically the better offer. Contingencies, meaning the conditions a buyer can back out under, vary by contract, and they're negotiated right alongside price and timing, not as an afterthought.

> **Have an offer in hand and want a second set of eyes? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

9 From Accepted Offer to Closing

> **Bottom line: Escrow is a checklist. Every step gets tracked and confirmed until the keys change hands.**

1. Escrow opened, buyer's deposit submitted.
2. Buyer's inspections completed.
3. Disclosures reviewed and signed by the buyer.
4. Appraisal completed, if the buyer is financing.
5. Buyer's loan contingency removed.
6. Title search and insurance finalized.
7. Final walkthrough.
8. Closing documents signed.
9. Sale recorded with the county.
10. Keys handed over.

Timing for each step varies by contract.

> **Want these steps walked through for your own sale? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

10 Your 10-Point Seller Checklist

1. Get a comp-based price, not an online estimate.
2. Walk the house with someone who sells in your neighborhood before spending on repairs.
3. Declutter and fix the small stuff. Skip the big remodel.
4. Review the current local market snapshot for your pricing window.
5. Understand the disclosures you'll be signing (TDS, NHD, SPQ, lead-based paint if applicable).
6. Map your timeline in phases, decision through closing.
7. Get a custom net sheet before you list.
8. Confirm the marketing plan includes professional photos, online exposure, and agent outreach.
9. Evaluate offers on terms and buyer qualification, not price alone.
10. Track every escrow step through to closing.

> **Want help working through this list for your home? Call or text (818) 934-7576.**

11 Worksheet: What's My Home Worth?

Bottom line: Your answers change your price. Fill this in and I'll turn it into a real number.

PROPERTY ADDRESS

YOUR NAME

EMAIL

UPGRADES

☐ Kitchen ☐ Bathrooms ☐ Flooring

☐ Windows ☐ Paint ☐ Solar

☐ Other: _____

ROOF AND HVAC

Roof age: _____ yrs ☐ Not sure

HVAC age: _____ yrs ☐ Not sure

☐ Roof or HVAC replaced recently

KITCHEN AND BATH REMODELS

☐ Kitchen remodeled, year: _____

☐ Bath remodels: # _____ year: _____

☐ Original / never updated

POOL

☐ No pool ☐ Pool ☐ Pool and spa

Year built or resurfaced: _____

VIEW

☐ No view ☐ Partial view ☐ Full view

What you see: _____

LOT

Lot size: _____ sq ft

☐ Flat ☐ Sloped ☐ Cul-de-sac ☐ Busy street

Backs to: _____

OVERALL CONDITION (CIRCLE ONE)

1 2 3 4 5

1 = needs major work · 3 = average, lived in · 5 = move-in ready

RECENT REPAIRS (WHAT AND WHEN)

Your answers change your price. Send this to me and I'll turn it into a real number. Call or text (818) 934-7576.

Next Step

If you're thinking about selling sometime in the next six months to two years, you don't need to have it all figured out to have a real conversation.

A free home value consult starts with a conversation about your motivation and timeline. From there, I put together a written Plan of Action, covering pricing, prep, marketing, and negotiation strategy, before you commit to anything. No obligation, no pressure.

Call or text (818) 934-7576, or visit jonathanlopezrealestate.com.

This guide is general information, not legal, tax or financial advice. I'm a licensed real estate agent, not an attorney or CPA. Market figures are from CRMLS, deemed reliable but not guaranteed.