

# Inside the Mind of a Smart Homebuyer

- THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER -





# The Questions That Matter

Buying a home is a major life decision. Home buying may take 6 months or more, so you need to make sure this decision fits in with your personal plans and goals. You should be on the same page with your family - not just for buying a home, but also lifestyle changes and new responsibilities it brings. Take a look at your medium-to-long term goals - typically home buying makes better financial sense if you are going to stay put for 5-7 years.

*We have put together a list of questions, split into some key categories, to help you think about homeownership and home-buying holistically.*

# Finances & Budget

Setting a realistic home budget will ensure homeownership fits your finances today and over time - these questions will help you get a handle on the money side of things.

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1

How much can I comfortably afford each month beyond what a lender approves?

2

How much cash do I need upfront, including down payment, closing costs, and reserves?

3

What will my total monthly housing costs be, including taxes, insurance, HOA, and maintenance?

4

How do my credit score, debt, and interest rate affect my loan options and payment?

5

How stable is my income, and can I handle changes like job loss or unexpected expenses?

6

How long do I plan to stay in this home to make the purchase financially worthwhile?

# Mortgage & Lending

A mortgage is likely the largest financial commitment of your life - These questions will help you understand loan options, true costs, risks, and flexibility before committing to a long-term mortgage.

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1

What type of mortgage and loan term best fit my financial goals (fixed vs. adjustable, 15–30 years)?

2

What is the true cost of the loan, including APR, fees, PMI, and discount points?

3

How long will approval take, and what could delay or jeopardize my loan?

4

How do escrow, taxes, insurance, and PMI affect my monthly payment over time?

5

Can I remove PMI, make extra payments, or refinance if interest rates change?

6

What happens if the appraisal comes in lower than the purchase price?

# Home Search & Location

These questions will help you choosing the right location, as it means thinking beyond the house and focusing on how the area supports your life over time.

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1

Does this location support my long-term plans, lifestyle, and budget?

2

How safe is the area, and how strong are the schools and community resources?

3

What is daily life like here - commute times, amenities, and convenience?

4

How are home values trending, and what is the local market like?

5

Are there environmental risks or planned developments that could affect livability or value?

6

How does this home compare to recent sales, and how easy would it be to resell?

# Property & Condition

A thorough inspection and review of disclosures reveal hidden risks, potential repair costs, and the home's true condition. Make sure you consider the areas below.

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1

Are there signs of deferred maintenance, structural problems, or safety concerns?

2

How old and well-maintained are major systems (roof, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, windows)?

3

Have renovations or repairs been done properly, with permits when required?

4

Are there signs of water damage, foundation issues, or pest problems?

5

What immediate repairs or upgrades will be needed after closing?

6

How energy-efficient is the home, and what should I expect for utility costs

# HOAs, Taxes & Insurance

As a homebuyer, you'll face costs beyond the mortgage—these questions help you plan for non-mortgage expenses and avoid affordability surprises after closing.

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1

Is there an HOA, and what are the dues, rules, and restrictions?

2

What do the HOA fees cover, and is the HOA financially healthy?

3

Are there planned or possible special assessments?

4

How much are the current property taxes, and how likely are they to increase?

5

What homeowners insurance is required, and will I need additional coverage (flood, fire, earthquake)?

6

Could HOA fees, taxes, or insurance rise enough to strain my long-term budget?

# Inspections & Due Diligence

These questions will help you identify hidden risks, protect your deposit, and decide whether to renegotiate, proceed, or walk away.

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1

What issues would be deal-breakers for me, and what risks am I willing to accept?

2

What does the standard home inspection cover, and should I order specialized inspections?

3

Should I hire my own inspector to ensure an independent evaluation?

4

What happens if major issues are uncovered during inspections?

5

Can I negotiate repairs, credits, or price changes based on inspection findings?

6

How long is my inspection contingency, and can I exit the contract without losing my deposit?

# Offer, Negotiation & Closing

These are the key areas to review during the offer and closing phase to protect your finances, avoid last-minute surprises, and close confidently with your long-term goals in mind.

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1

How competitive should my offer be given the market and my budget?

2

What contingencies should I include to protect myself?

3

How much earnest money and cash will I need upfront and at closing?

4

What can I negotiate - price, repairs, credits, or closing costs?

5

What should I avoid doing before closing to prevent delays or denial?

6

What should I review during the final walkthrough and closing documents?



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