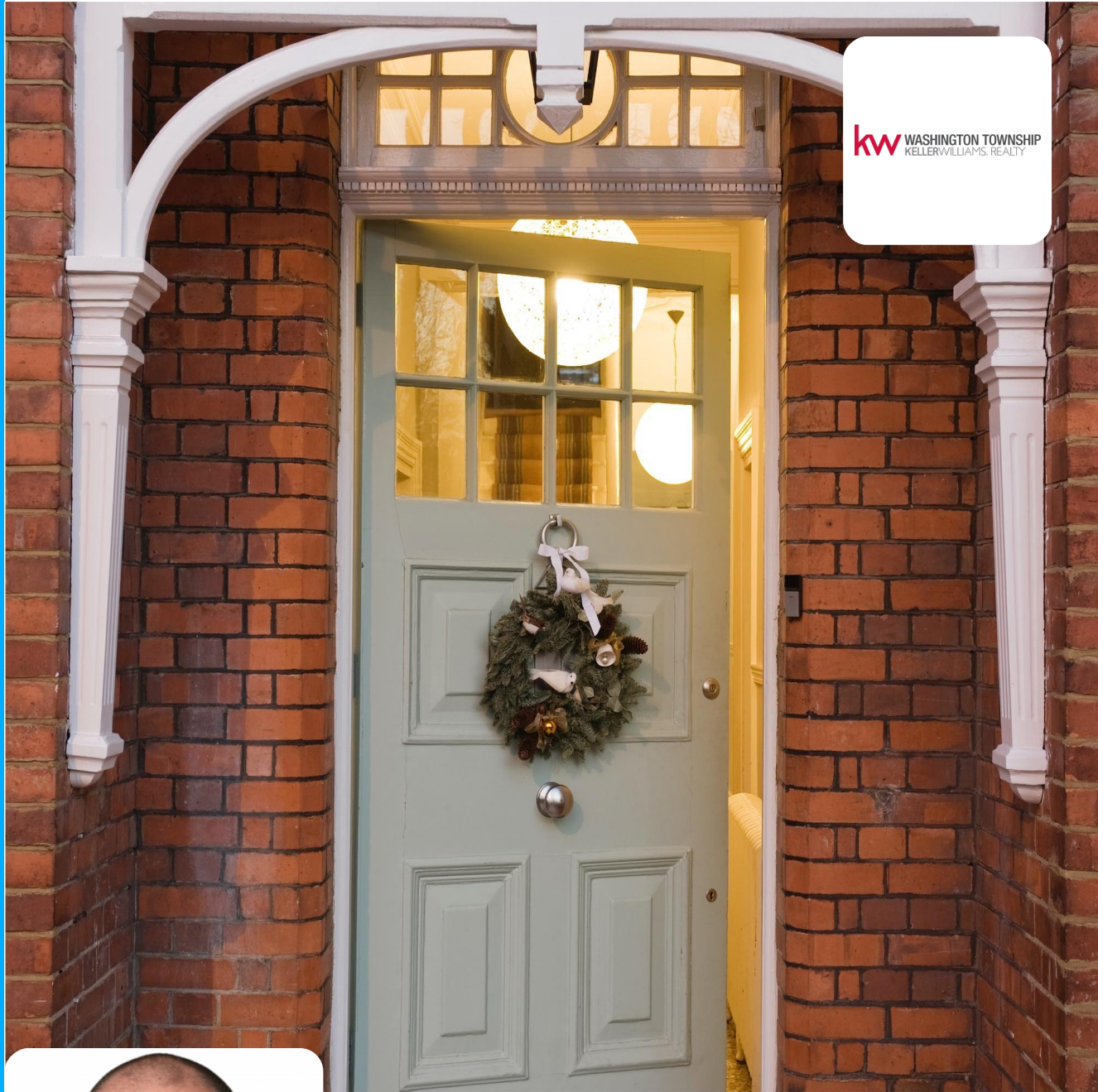


THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN  
**Selling Your House**

WINTER 2026 EDITION



**kw** WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP  
KELLERWILLIAMS REALTY



**Michael Lentz**

Keller Williams Realty  
Sewell, NJ  
Team@MikeSellsNJ.com  
www.MikeSellsNJ.com  
(856) 202-3154



# Table of Contents

- 3 Are You Asking Yourself These Questions About Selling Your House?**
- 5 What Every Homeowner Needs To Know in Today's Shifting Market**
- 8 Housing Market Forecasts for 2026**
- 11 Why More Homeowners Are Giving Up Their Low Mortgage Rate**
- 14 How Home Equity May Help You Buy Your Next Home in Cash**
- 16 A Checklist for Selling Your House**
- 17 Selling Without an Agent Can Cost More Than You Think**
- 19 Key Reasons To Hire an Agent When You Sell**

# Are You Asking Yourself These Questions About Selling Your House?

*If you're debating whether you want to sell right now, it might be because you have some unanswered questions. Here's some information that can help.*



## 1. Is It Even a Good Idea To Move Right Now?

If you own a home already, you may be tempted to wait because you don't want to sell and take on a higher mortgage rate on your next house. But your move may be a lot more feasible than you think, and that's because of how much your house has likely grown in value.

Think about it. Do you know a neighbor who's sold their house recently? If so, did you hear what it sold for? With how much home values have gone up in recent years, the number may surprise you.

According to Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist at the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR), **the typical homeowner has gained \$140,900 in housing wealth in the last five years alone.** That's significant. And when you sell, that increase in value can give you what you need to fund your next move.

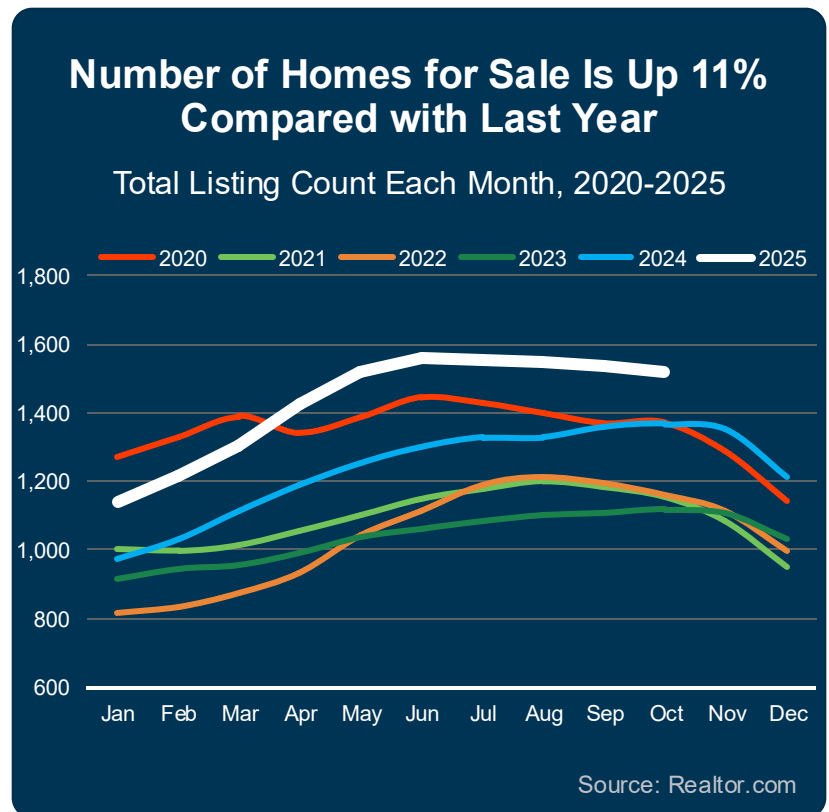
## 2. Will I Be Able To Find a Home I Like?

If this is on your mind, it's probably because you remember just how hard it was to find a home over the past few years. But in today's market, it isn't as challenging.

**Data from *Realtor.com* shows how much inventory has increased.**

The white line shows we have more homes for sale now than we did at any other time in the past five years.

That means you have more options for your move – and the best chance in years to find a home you love.



## 3. Are Buyers Still Buying?

And last, if you're worried no one's buying with rates and prices where they are right now, here's some perspective that can help. While homes are taking a bit longer to sell lately, that doesn't mean nothing's selling or the housing market is frozen. According to NAR, based on the current pace, we sold an estimated 4.1 million in 2025 (not including new construction). Here's what that number actually means when you break it down:

- 4.1 million homes ÷ 365 days in a year = **11,233 homes sell each day**
- 11,233 homes ÷ 24 hours in a day = **468 homes sell per hour**
- 468 homes ÷ 60 minutes = **roughly 8 homes sell every minute**

**Think about that. Just in the time it took you to read this, 8 homes sold.** Let that sink in. Every minute, buyers are making moves – and sellers are closing deals. If selling your house is part of your next chapter, we can make it happen. Roughly 11,000 homes are still selling every day – and yours could be next.

### Bottom Line

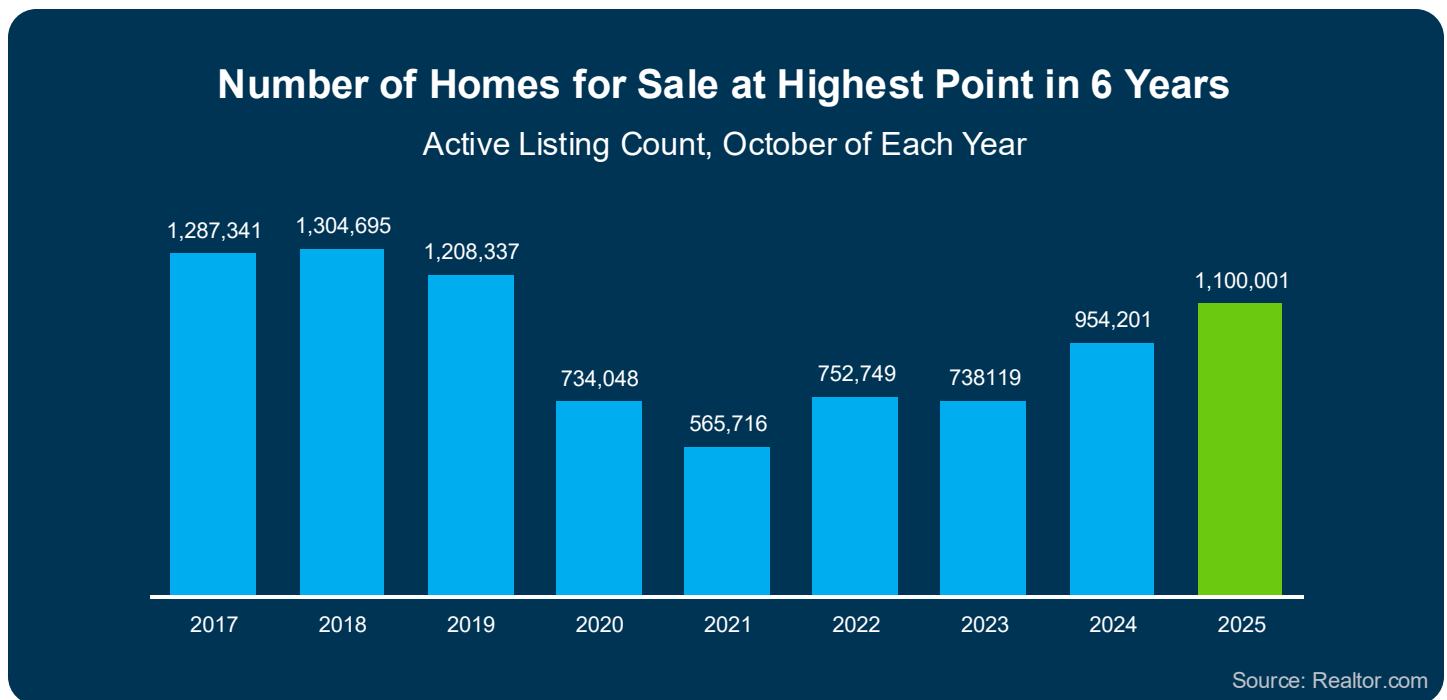
If you want to talk more about these questions or need more information about what's happening in our area, reach out.

# What Every Homeowner Needs To Know in Today's Shifting Market

*There are more homes for sale than there's been in years.. But what you need to remember is, even with that shift, there's still plenty of opportunity to be had if you're thinking about selling – whether that's next month or later this year. You just need to stay up to date on what's happening in the market, and have a strategy that matches the moment.*

## Inventory's Up. Buyer Power Is Coming Back.

According to the data, the number of homes for sale is rising back toward more normal levels nationally (see graph below):



**But inventory growth is going to vary a lot based on where you live.**

If you're in a market where the number of homes for sale is back to normal, buyers may have more sway than you'd expect. That doesn't mean buyers have all the power – it just means they have more choices, so your home has to stand out and you need to be ready to negotiate. But if you live where inventory is still pretty limited, you may see buyers competing for your house.

**No matter where you are, the key is to work with a pro who can help you adjust your game plan for your local market.**

## The Right Price Matters More Now Than Ever

With more homes to choose from, today's buyers are quick to skip over homes that feel overpriced. That's why pricing your house right is the secret to selling quickly and for top dollar. Miss the mark, though, and you may have to backtrack. Today, about **1 in 5 sellers** (20.2%) are reducing their asking price to attract buyers. Danielle Hale, Chief Economist at *Realtor.com*, says:

*"The rising share of price reductions suggests that a lot of sellers are anchored to prices that aren't realistic in today's housing market. Today's sellers would be wise to listen to feedback they are getting from the market."*

The best way to get make sure you're priced to sell? Lean on your local agent. **Because if your price isn't compelling, it's not selling.**

## Flexibility Wins Negotiations

Gone are the days of buyers waiving inspections and appraisals just to get a deal done. Now that buyers have more options, they're able to ask for things like repairs, credits, and help with closing costs. **Data from Redfin shows nearly 44.4% of sellers are offering concessions like that right now. That's the second highest level since 2019.**

The savviest sellers are the ones taking advantage of every opportunity to work with buyers. It'll help if you **think of concessions as tools, not losses**. Use them to bridge gaps, sweeten deals, and get across the finish line. And don't stress. Since prices went up roughly 54% over the past five years, you've got plenty of room to make a concession or two and still come out ahead. Just work with your agent to understand which concessions could be the key to sealing the deal.

## Bottom Line

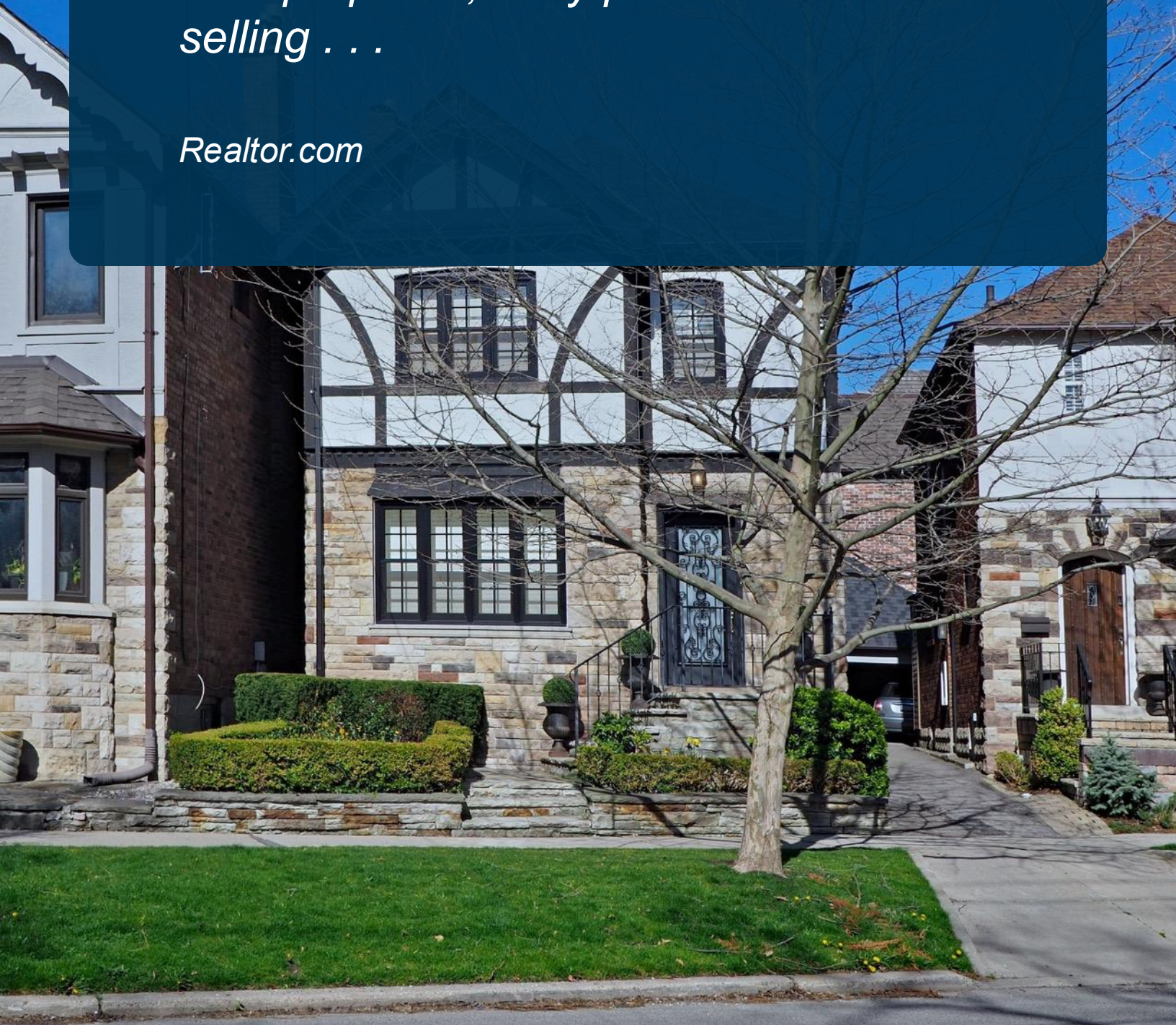
The takeaway? This isn't a bad market. It's just a different one. Sellers who are going to succeed in the months ahead are the ones who understand this shift and lean into it with the right expectations, the right agent, and the right strategy.





*A well-priced home will attract more attention and better offers upfront. . . . Well-prepared, fairly priced homes are still selling . . .*

*Realtor.com*

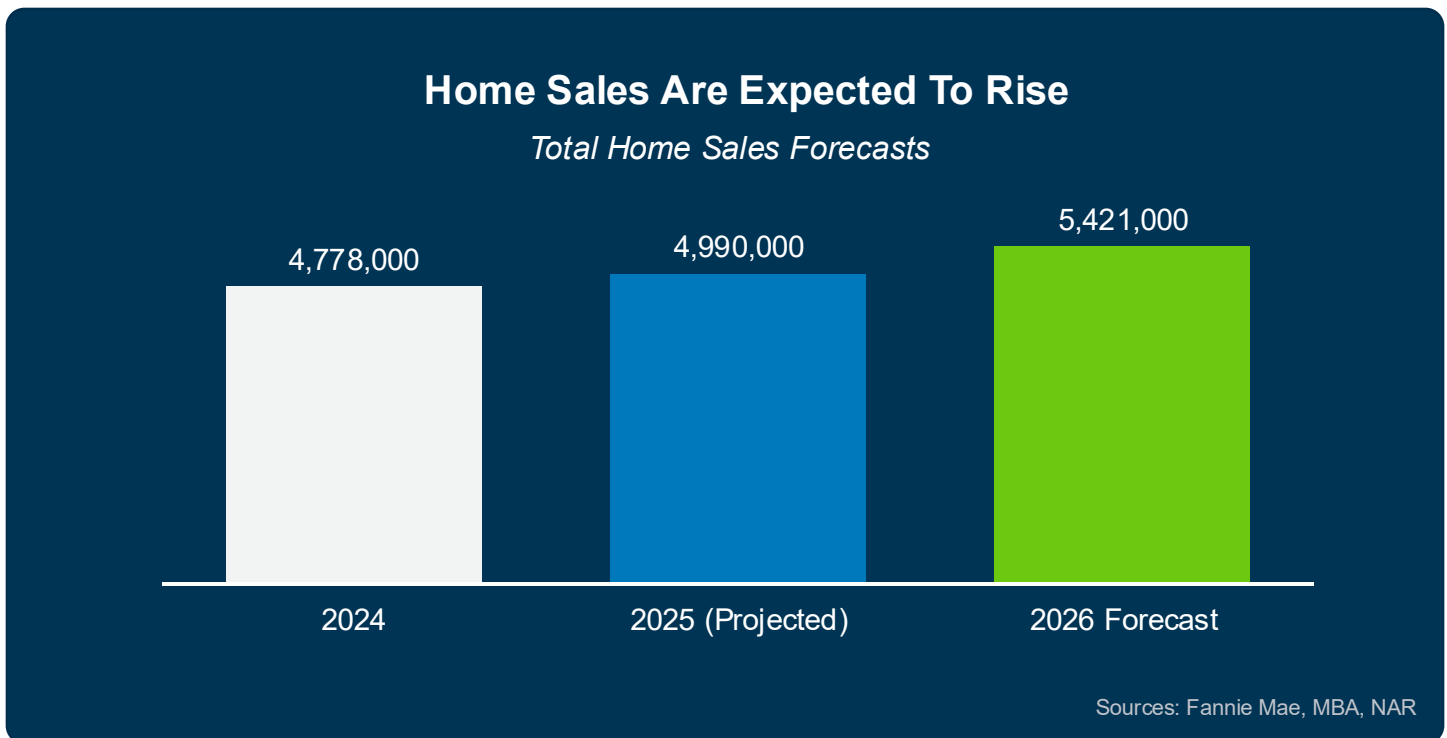


# Housing Market Forecasts for 2026

*After a couple of years where the housing market felt stuck in neutral, 2026 may be the year things shift back into gear. Expert forecasts show more people are expected to move – and that could open the door for you to do the same.*

## More Homes Will Sell

With all of the affordability challenges at play over the past few years, many would-be movers pressed pause. But that pause button isn't going to last forever. There are always people who need to move. And experts think more of them will start to act in 2026 (see *graph below*):



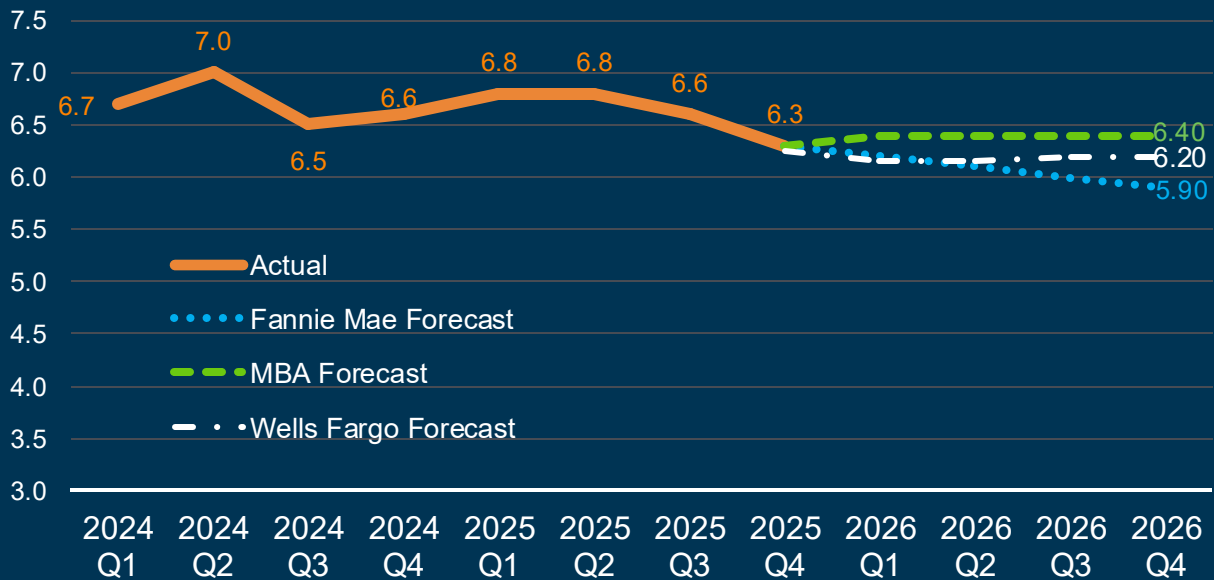
What's behind the change? Two key factors: mortgage rates and home prices. Let's dive into the latest expert forecasts for both, so you can see why more people are expected to move.

## Mortgage Rates Could Continue To Ease

The #1 thing just about everyone has been looking for is lower mortgage rates. And after peaking around 7% in early 2025, rates have been trending down overall. The latest forecasts show that could continue throughout 2026, but experts aren't expecting a big change (see *graph below*):

### Mortgage Rates Could Ease in the Year Ahead

*The 30-Year Fixed Rate and Rate Projections*



There's a saying: ***when rates go up, they take the escalator. But when they come down, they take the stairs.***

And that's an important thing to remember. It'll be a slow and bumpy process.

Expect modest improvement in rates over the next year but be ready for some volatility. There will be bumps along the way as new economic data comes out. Just don't let it distract you from the bigger picture: **the overall trend will be a slight decline.**

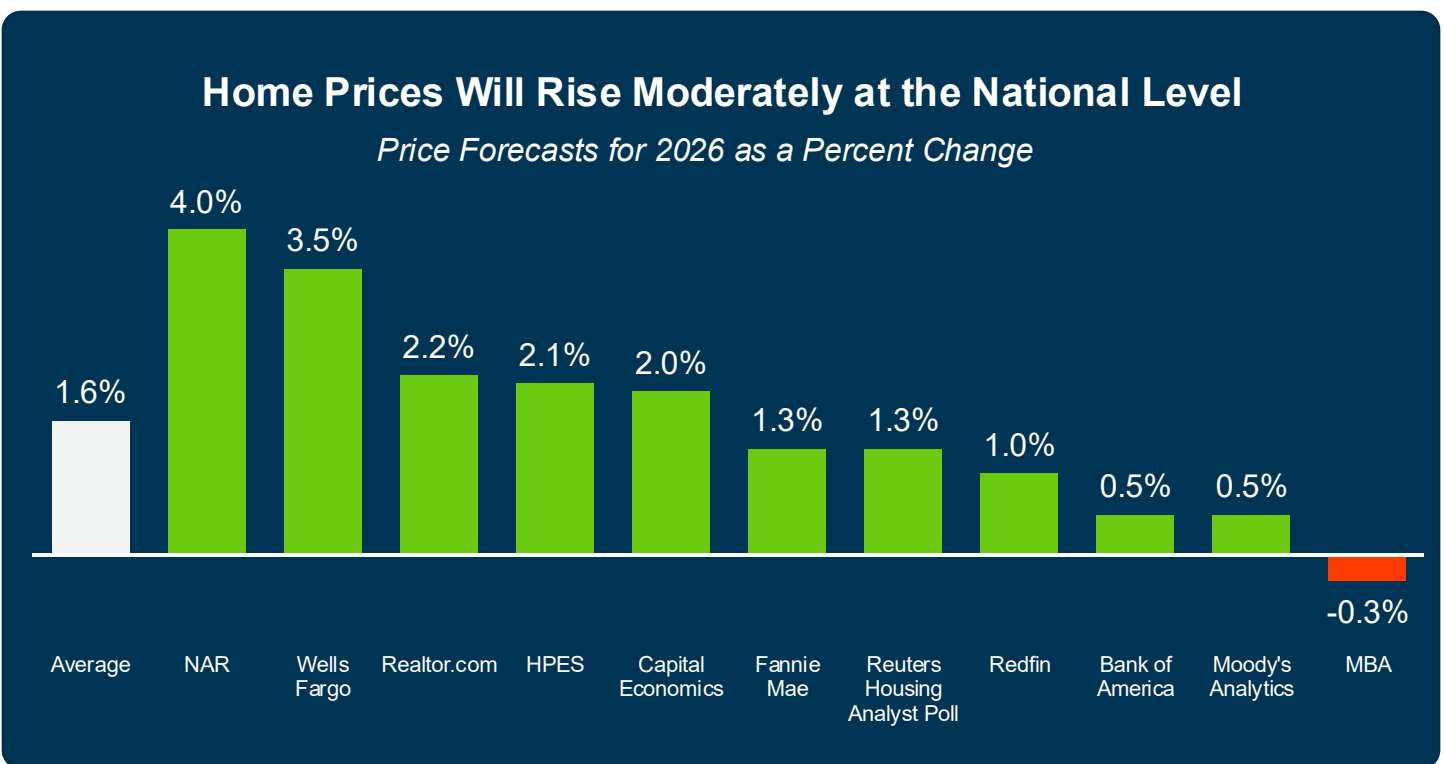
And remember, there doesn't have to be a big drop for you to feel a change. Even a smaller dip helps your bottom line. If you compare where rates are now to when they were at 7%, you're already saving hundreds on your future mortgage payment. And that's a really good thing. It's enough to make a real difference in affordability for some buyers.

## Home Price Growth Will Be Moderate

What about prices? On a national scale, forecasts say they're going to rise, just not by a lot. With rates down from their peak in early 2025, more buyers will re-enter the market. And that increased demand will keep some upward pressure on prices – and prevent prices from tumbling down.

So, even though some markets are already seeing slight price declines, you can rest easy that a big crash just isn't in the cards. Thanks to how much prices rose over the last 5 years, even the markets seeing declines right now are still up compared to just a few years ago.

Of course, price trends will depend on where you are and what's happening in your local market. Inventory is a big driver in why some places are going to see varying levels of appreciation going forward. But experts agree we'll see prices grow at the national level (see *graph below*):



This is yet another good sign for overall affordability. While prices will still go up nationally, it'll be at a much more sustainable pace. And that predictability makes it easier to plan your budget. It also gives you peace of mind that prices won't suddenly skyrocket overnight.

### Bottom Line

After a quieter couple of years, 2026 is expected to bring more movement – and more opportunity. With sales projected to rise, mortgage rates trending lower, and price growth slowing down, the stage is set for a healthier, more active market. So, the big question is:

**Will you be one of the movers making 2026 your year?** Let's connect if you want to get ready.

# Why More Homeowners Are Giving Up Their Low Mortgage Rate

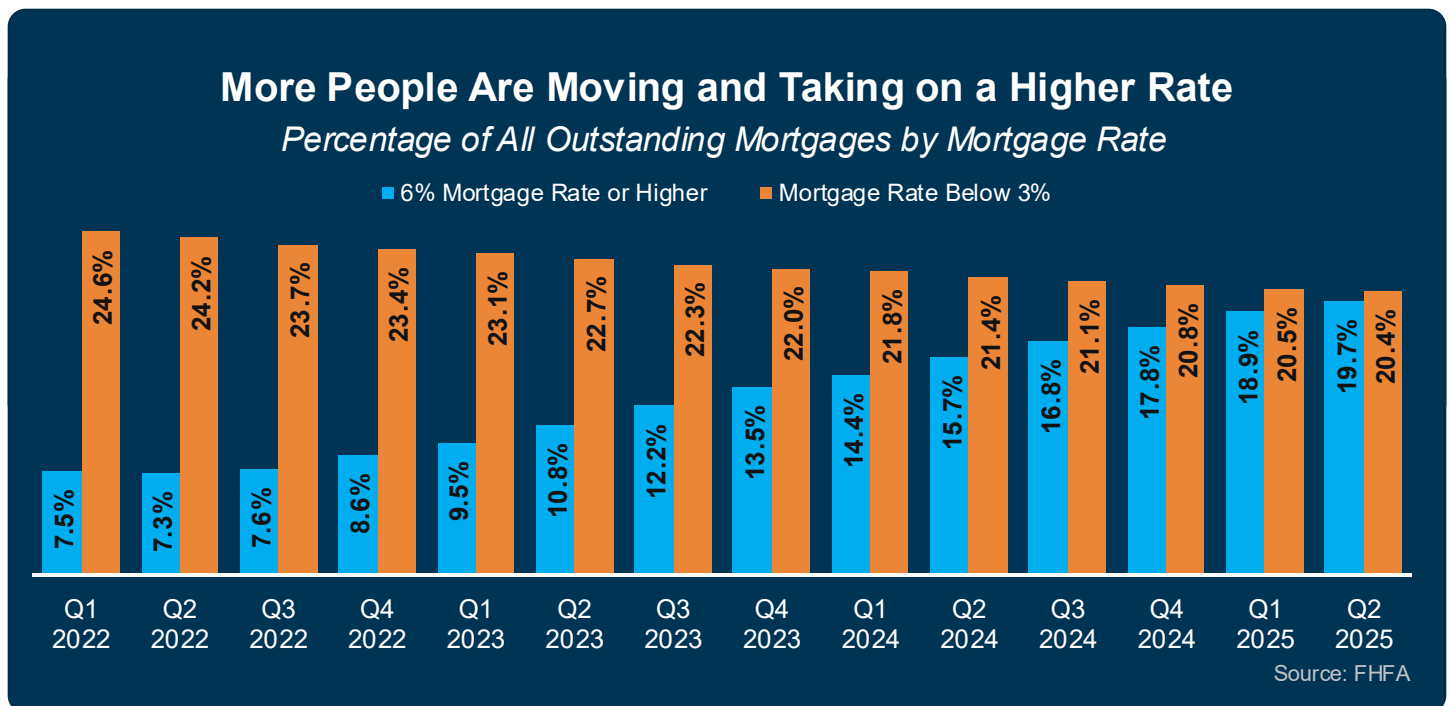
Maybe you've thought: "I'd like to move... but I don't want to give up my 3% mortgage rate." And that's fair. That rate has been one of your best financial wins – and it can be hard to let that go. But here's what you need to remember...

**A great rate won't necessarily make up for a home that no longer works for you. Life changes, and sometimes, your home needs to change with it.**

## The Lock-In Effect Is Starting To Ease

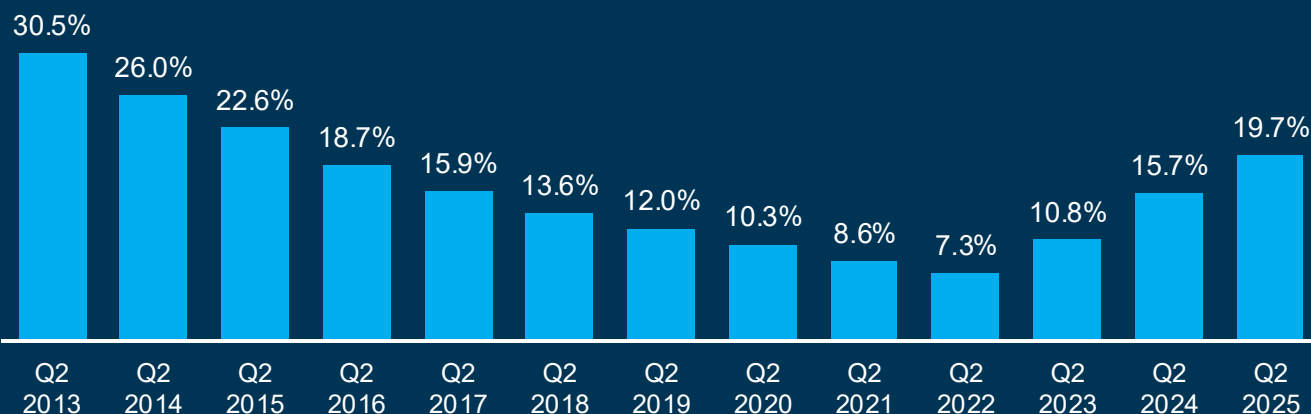
Many homeowners have been frozen in place by something experts call the lock-in effect. That's when you won't move because you don't want to take on a higher rate on your next home loan. But new data from *Federal Housing Finance Agency* (FHFA) shows the lock-in effect is beginning to ease for some people.

The **share of homeowners with a mortgage rate below 3% is slowly declining** as more people move. And that means **the share with a rate above 6% is rising**. Some of the people with rates above 6% are first-time buyers, but some are people like you choosing to move:



And while it may not seem dramatic, it's actually a pretty noteworthy shift. It shows more people are getting used to today's rates as the new normal. **The share of mortgages with a rate above 6% just hit a 10-year high.**

## Share of Mortgages with Rates Above 6% Climbs To 10-Year High



Source: FHFA

## Why Are More People Moving, if It Means Taking on a Higher Rate?

It's simple. Sometimes they can't put their life on pause anymore. Families grow, jobs change, priorities shift, and a house that once fit perfectly may not fit at all anymore – no matter how good their rate was. And that's okay. As Chen Zhao, Head of Economic Research at *Redfin*, explains:

*“More homeowners are deciding it's worth moving even if it means giving up a lower mortgage rate. Life doesn't standstill — people get new jobs, grow their families, downsize after retirement, or simply want to live in a different neighborhood. Those needs are starting to outweigh the financial benefit of clinging to a rock-bottom mortgage rate.”*

If you want or need to move, here's what you need to think about. Yes, your low rate is great. But staying put means your life may stay on hold. And maybe that's not working for you anymore. **Realtor.com** finds **nearly 2 in 3 potential sellers have already been thinking about moving for over a year**. That's a long time to press pause on your plans. On your needs. On your family's goals.

So, maybe the question isn't: **“Should I move?”** It's actually: **“How much longer am I willing to stay somewhere that no longer fits my life?”**

Because we've already seen rates come down from their peak earlier this year. And they're expected to ease a bit more in 2026. When you stack that on top of the very real reasons you may need a new home, it may be enough to finally move the needle for you.

### Bottom Line

Mortgage rates are part of the equation, for sure. But you may still want or need to move, and that's okay. Let's connect so you can see that's still possible, even at today's rates.



*The growth in home equity has been a big boost to many a family's bottom line, since residential real estate is usually the single largest asset people have. Growth in home equity means bigger profits when selling your home and more flexibility when purchasing a new one.*

*Bankrate*

# How Home Equity May Help You Buy Your Next Home in Cash

*Building equity in your house is one of the biggest financial advantages of homeownership. And right now, homeowners across the country are sitting on near record amounts of it.*

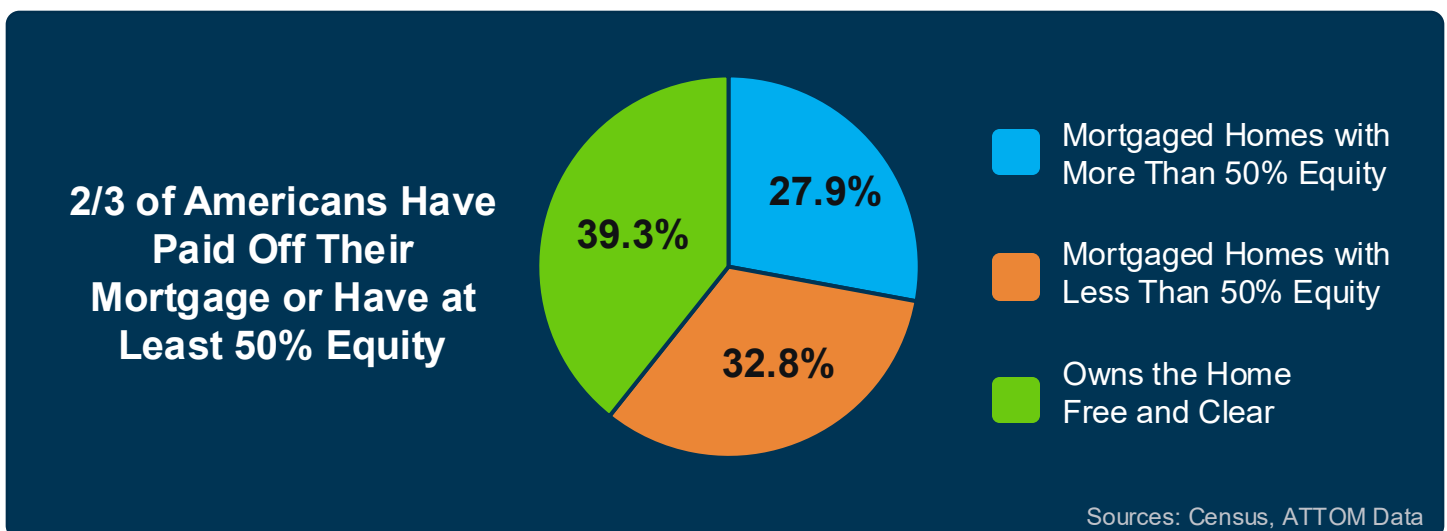
*Here's a look at how that equity could be a game changer for you, and why it'll flip your perspective from "Why would I move right now?" to "Why wouldn't I?"*

## Home Equity: What Is It?

Home equity is the difference between how much your house is worth and how much you still owe on your mortgage. For example, if your house is valued at \$400,000 and you only owe \$200,000 on your mortgage, your equity would be \$200,000.

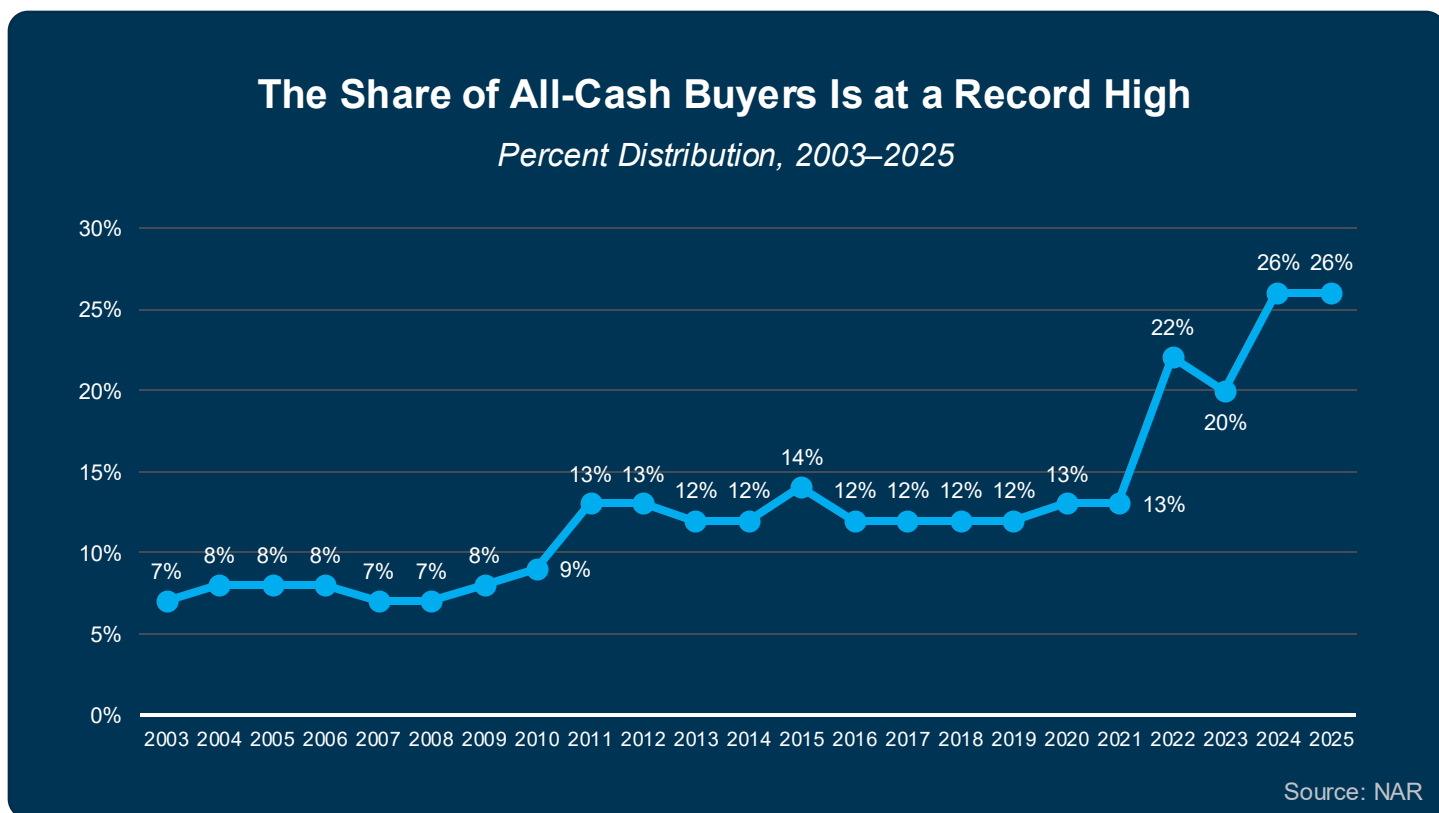
## Why Equity Is Such a Big Deal for Homeowners Looking To Sell

Recent data from the *Census* and *ATTOM* shows how significant today's home equity really is. In fact, two-thirds of homeowners have either completely paid off their mortgages (*shown in green in the chart below*) or have at least 50% equity in their homes (*shown in blue in the chart below*):



That's a big deal. Think about it: **2 out of every 3 homeowners have at least 50% equity in their homes.** To put a more tangible number on it, *Cotality* (formerly *CoreLogic*) says the average homeowner with a mortgage has about \$307,000 in equity. That kind of net worth can go a long way if you're trying to make a move.

That's part of the reason why the share of all-cash buyers recently reached a new high. According to an annual report from the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR), 26% of buyers were able to buy without a mortgage (see graph below):



Imagine buying your next house in cash. No mortgage. No monthly payment. No mortgage rate to mess with. If you want to find out how much equity you have to see if that's an option for you, connect with a real estate agent and ask for a professional equity assessment report (PEAR).

Who knows, you may find out you have enough equity to buy your next place outright – and with today's mortgage rates, not having to take out a home loan is pretty incredible. Even if you don't have enough equity to buy in all cash, you may still have enough to make a larger down payment, which has its own benefits, too.

## Bottom Line

Homeowners have an extraordinary amount of equity today – and that's why the share of all-cash buyers is on the rise. To see how much equity you have and talk through how it can help fuel your next move, let's connect.

# A Checklist for Selling Your House

As you get ready to sell your house, add these items to your to-do list. A real estate professional will also provide other helpful tips based on your specific situation.

## Make It Inviting



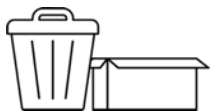
- Open blinds or curtains to let the light in



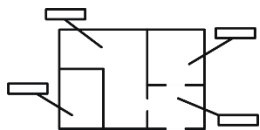
- Check lightbulbs and replace as needed



- Take down personal photos or items



- Declutter throughout



- Give every room a clear purpose

## Show It's Cared For



- Clean your vents and baseboards



- Vacuum, mop, or sweep floors



- Fix anything that's broken



- Organize countertops, cabinets, and closets

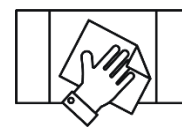


- Touch up any scuffs on the walls

## Boost Curb Appeal



- Power wash outdoor surfaces



- Wash the windows (inside and out)



- Tidy up the landscaping



- Freshen up your entry



- Sweep patios, decks, and walkways

# Selling Without an Agent Can Cost More Than You Think



*Cutting out the agent might seem like a smart way to save when you sell your house. But here's the hard truth.*

Last year, homes that sold *with* an agent went for almost 20% more than those that sold *without* one. That gap is pretty hard to ignore.

## Homes Sold With an Agent Went for Almost 20% More Than Homes Sold Without One

*Median Selling Price, For Sale by Owner vs. Agent-Assisted Sales (2025)*



*\* Studies have shown sellers are more likely to FSBO homes with lower price points.*

Source: NAR

And with more homes on the market to compete with right now, selling on your own is a mistake that's going to cost you.

## This Isn't the Market for DIY Selling

A few years ago, you might've gotten away with a "For Sale By Owner" (FSBO) sign in your yard, navigating the process on your own. That's because homes were flying off the market and buyers were pulling out all the stops. But that's just not the case anymore.

With more inventory than we've seen in years, we're not in a "list it and they will come" market anymore. You need professional expertise.

### **A yard sign and some photos you take on your own won't cut it.**

Selling today requires the latest pricing strategy, expert prep work, professional marketing, and strong negotiation skills. And if you're not bringing all of that to the table, chances are, your house will get skipped over. And that's something you're going to feel in your bottom line. If no one comes to look at it, it's harder to get offers, and without offers, how do you sell?

### **More Homeowners Are Turning To the Pros**

That's why even more home sellers are working with agents today. Data from the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR) shows a record-low percentage of homeowners sold without an agent last year. And the few sellers who tried to sell on their own realized their mistake pretty quickly.

According to *Zillow*, 21% of homeowners ended up hiring an agent anyway after struggling to sell on their own. So, why take the risk?

Now that inventory's rising across the country, **an agent's expertise isn't optional. It's essential.** Because homes that are priced and prepped right are still selling in today's market, sometimes faster than you'd think.

### **Bottom Line**

In a market with more listings and pickier buyers, many sellers who try to sell on their own end up working with an agent anyway. So why not start there?

Reach out if you want a professional assessment on what your house could sell for today.



# Key Reasons To Hire an Agent When You Sell



## Industry Experience

We're well-versed in the housing market and know the ins and outs of the entire process.



## Expert Insights

We simply and effectively explain today's market conditions and what they mean for you.



## Pricing and Market Value

We help you understand today's real estate values when setting the price of a listing or making an offer to purchase your next home.



## Contracts and Fine Print

We help with all the disclosures and documents necessary in today's heavily regulated environment.



## Marketing and Exposure

We have effective marketing tools and networks to attract more buyers.



## Negotiation Experience

We act as a buffer in negotiations with all parties throughout the entire transaction.



# Let's Chat.



Do you have questions about something you read here or about what to expect when you sell your house? Don't hesitate to reach out.

Whether it's housing market related, or something about your specific situation, I've helped other homeowners move with confidence - and I can help you too.

## Michael Lentz

Keller Williams Realty

Sewell, NJ  
Team@MikeSellsNJ.com  
www.MikeSellsNJ.com  
(856) 202-3154

**kw** WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP  
KELLERWILLIAMS. REALTY