



SANTA BARBARA · SELLER'S PLANNING GUIDE

Thinking about selling your home? Start with a plan—not pressure.

Selling a home can involve more than choosing a price and putting up a sign. Your timing, the property's condition, preparation, family decisions, marketing, offers, and the move itself can all shape the right plan. This guide gives you a simple place to begin.

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You do not need to be ready to list. A first conversation can simply help you understand your options and next steps.

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BEFORE THE SIGN GOES UP

A good sale begins before the home reaches the market.

The strongest first step is usually not choosing a listing date. It is getting clear about the property, your timing, the people involved, and what needs to happen before buyers ever walk through the door. You do not need every answer today—just a clear place to start.

01

YOUR REASON

What is making you consider a sale?

A move, a life transition, a change in finances, an inherited property, a new opportunity—or simply deciding that it may be time. Understanding the “why” helps shape everything that follows.

02

YOUR TIMING

When would you ideally like the next chapter to begin?

There is a big difference between “sometime this year,” “before school starts,” “after another property is secured,” and “as soon as practical.” Your timeline helps determine the preparation plan.

03

YOUR PROPERTY

What does the home need before buyers see it?

Some homes benefit from preparation. Others need very little. The goal is not to improve everything—it is to understand which work may actually help the sale, and which work may not be worth doing.

04

YOUR DECISION-MAKERS

Who needs to be part of the process?

Sometimes one person decides. Sometimes a spouse, family member, trustee, executor, attorney, CPA, or another adviser is involved. Knowing the communication structure early can make the process much smoother.

You may be closer to a plan than you think.

If you can begin answering these four questions, you already have enough information for a useful first conversation:

1. Why might I sell?
2. When would I ideally want to move?
3. What do I know about the property's current condition?
4. Who else needs to be part of the decision?

THE SELLING JOURNEY

Six steps from “maybe” to moving forward.

Every property is different, but the overall planning process becomes much easier when you can see the major steps ahead of you.

01 Understand the goal

Start with the property, your reason for considering a sale, your timing, and the outcome you are hoping to create.

- Why are you considering selling?
- Is there an ideal timeline?
- Is another move or purchase involved?
- Are other family members or professionals part of the decision?

Outcome: a clearer picture of what the sale needs to accomplish.

02 Understand the property

Walk through the home and identify the facts that may shape preparation and positioning.

- current condition · maintenance · presentation
- improvements already completed
- belongings and move logistics
- access and showing considerations

Outcome: a practical property picture before money or time is spent unnecessarily.

03 Build the preparation plan

Decide what is worth doing before launch. The goal is thoughtful preparation that supports the selling strategy—not perfection.

- cleaning · decluttering · repairs
- landscaping · paint or touch-ups
- staging · photography preparation
- vendor coordination

Outcome: a prioritized plan instead of an endless project list.

04 Position the home for the market

Pricing and presentation should tell one clear story. Cindy can explain the real-estate factors before you decide how to proceed.

- relevant market activity · competition
- property characteristics · presentation
- timing · launch strategy

Outcome: a clear market position and launch plan.

05 Launch, market, and communicate

Once the property is ready, buyers need to understand why it deserves their attention.

- photography · description · digital presentation
- listing distribution · showing strategy
- open houses when appropriate
- direct communication · online marketing · follow-up

Outcome: buyers receive a clear, professional presentation of the property.

06 Offers, escrow, and closing

When interest becomes an offer, the focus shifts to decision-making and transaction coordination. Legal, tax, estate, and financial questions remain with the appropriate adviser.

- organize the real-estate side of the process
- communicate next steps
- keep the transaction moving

Outcome: a clear path from accepted offer toward closing and the next chapter.

You do not have to solve all six steps before calling. The first conversation can simply be about where you are today.

What can you prepare before meeting with an agent?

You do not need everything below. This is simply a helpful checklist if you want to start organizing your thoughts.

THE PROPERTY

Home basics

- Approximate age of the home
- Bedrooms and bathrooms
- Major improvements you remember
- Repairs or maintenance you already know about
- Features you value about the property
- Anything that may affect access or showings

Do not worry about making the house “perfect” before talking with Cindy.

YOUR TIMING

Your next chapter

- Ideal moving timeframe
- Whether another purchase or move is involved
- Important dates you already know
- Whether the property is currently occupied
- How flexible the timing may be
- Who needs to participate in decisions

A rough timeline is enough for the first conversation.

YOUR QUESTIONS

What you want to understand

- What should I do before listing?
- What may not be worth fixing?
- How should the home be presented?
- What does the selling process look like?
- When should I start planning?
- What information should I gather?
- What happens after I receive an offer?

Bring questions—not certainty.

CINDY’S ROLE

A clear real-estate plan with a human on the other side.

Cindy’s role is to help make the property side of the decision feel clear, organized, and manageable. The work begins by listening. From there, Cindy helps organize the real-estate process around the property, your timing, and the decisions in front of you.

Listen first

Understand what is actually happening before recommending a path.

Organize the next steps

Turn a complicated situation into a smaller, clearer sequence of decisions.

Prepare the property thoughtfully

Focus preparation on what supports the selling plan rather than simply doing more.

Communicate through the transaction

Create shared expectations and keep the real-estate process moving from planning through closing.

“My role is to help make the property side feel clear, organized, and manageable—especially when life itself already feels complicated.”

Cindy Zavala, Realtor® · DRE #02057973 · Keller Williams Realty Group

The right plan depends on more than the house.

Sometimes selling begins with a straightforward move. Sometimes the property is only one part of a larger life situation.

01

A considered move

Planning ahead on timing, preparation, positioning, and the path from listing to closing.

02

An inherited property

Help for a family, trustee, executor, or out-of-area owner organizing the property side of an estate decision.

03

Financial pressure

Urgent property options when finances or deadlines change—while other advice stays with the right professionals.

04

Separation or divorce

Careful communication on the real-estate side while legal decisions remain with attorneys and other advisers.

Cindy provides real-estate services only and does not provide legal, tax, debt-relief, foreclosure-rescue, or financial advice.

SELLER QUESTIONS

Questions you may be asking right now.

When should I first talk with a Realtor if I am thinking about selling?

You do not need to wait until you are ready to list. An early conversation can clarify timing, preparation, and what may need to happen before a launch date.

Should I repair or update my home before selling?

Not necessarily. Review the property first to see which work may help the sale—and which may add cost without improving the plan.

Do I need to know exactly when I want to sell?

No. Even “sometime this year” is enough to begin. The goal is understanding what needs to happen between today and a possible sale.

How is an asking price determined?

Pricing considers the property, market activity, competition, presentation, timing, and launch strategy—not just an online number. Cindy can walk through those real-estate factors with you.

What if I am selling because of an inherited property, divorce, or financial pressure?

You can still begin with the property questions. Cindy organizes the real-estate side; legal, tax, estate, debt, and financial questions stay with the appropriate licensed adviser.

What happens if I contact Cindy?

Cindy reviews your request personally and follows up to understand the property, timing, and next useful discussion. A first conversation is not an agreement to list.

A PRIVATE FIRST STEP

Still in the “maybe” stage? That is a perfectly good place to start.

You do not need a finished plan, a value estimate, or a decision today. Tell Cindy where you are now—she will follow up personally.

Response standard: Personally acknowledged within one business day.

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