HOME BUYERS

A GUIDE FOR PURCHASING IN THE COMOX VALLEY



JOHNNY SUGRUE
COMOX VALLEY REALTOR®

WHAT'S INSIDE

We'll take this one stage at a time. Use these five chapters to find your place in the journey, and come back to them whenever you need a little clarity.

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A NOTE FROM JOHNNY

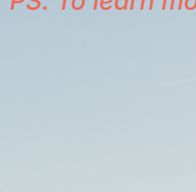
I got into real estate after buying and selling my own homes in both BC and Alberta and experiencing how much the person working beside you matters. I've felt the frustration of working with an agent who didn't seem to have my family's interests at heart—and the relief of working with agents who truly supported our family.

Those experiences shaped the kind of REALTOR® I want to be. Buying or selling a home is about more than property. It's about you, it's about your family, the challenges you're navigating, and helping you toward what you're hoping comes next.

As we explore homes, put together an offer, and work through the details, I'll keep you informed and make time to talk things through. From our first conversation to the day you get your keys, I want you to feel heard, supported, and confident that I'm looking out for you.

I look forward to supporting your next move!

PS. To learn more about me and what I bring to the table turn to page 17.



Tips and Takeaways

Look for these sections on most pages for an important note, a tip for the buying process, or a takeaway from the section you just read.

PLAN & PREPARE

Taking a little time to prepare can help you feel comfortable and confident as you start looking for a place to call home. I'll be there to support you from the very beginning.

Getting ready to buy

ARE YOU PRE-APPROVED FOR YOUR MORTGAGE?

Before we start looking at homes, getting pre-approved for a mortgage can help you feel more settled about what's ahead. You'll have a clearer sense of what you may be able to borrow and what the payments could look like, so we can plan a search around a budget that feels comfortable for you.

That clarity helps you focus your time and energy on homes that fit your life. When you're ready to make an offer, having your financing groundwork in place can also help you move confidently and strengthen your position in negotiations.

Talk to a Mortgage Specialist

Whether it's your bank mortgage specialist or an independent mortgage broker — talk to someone with expertise who can help you compare rates and terms as there are hundreds of options to choose from.

Complete an Application

Lenders assess your income, down payment, and financial obligations, using Gross Debt Service (GDS) and Total Debt Service (TDS) ratios to help determine how much you may qualify to borrow.

Gather Your Documents

Your bank or mortgage professional will require documentation to support your application such as income and down payment verification to finalize the pre-approval process.

A BUDGET THAT FEELS RIGHT FOR YOU

Your home should leave room for you to enjoy life. The amount you're approved to borrow is a starting point, but what feels comfortable each month matters just as much. Think about your everyday expenses, the things you love doing, and the savings you want to keep building. Setting aside money for buying costs and a few surprises can help you settle into your new home with more peace of mind.

Your Budget Checklist

- [ ] Choose a monthly mortgage payment you feel comfortable with.
- [ ] Allow for property taxes, home insurance, utilities, and strata fees where applicable.
- [ ] Confirm your down payment and the funds available for your deposit.
- [ ] Set aside money for inspections, legal fees, applicable taxes, and other closing costs.
- [ ] Include moving expenses and any furniture or repairs you'll need early on.
- [ ] Leave room for ongoing maintenance and unexpected expenses.
- [ ] Make sure your budget still supports your everyday life and savings goals.



PRO-TIP: Get a Copy of Your Pre-Approval

This is a powerful negotiating tool. A pre-approved buyer means sellers have one less thing to worry about. Even though many offers are conditional on financing, the seller of your dream home will see you as a more attractive buyer .

ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

You don't need to have every answer before buying a home. Having the right people beside you gives you someone to turn to as questions come up. Each professional brings a different area of expertise, so it's important to direct questions to the person qualified to answer them. That way, you can make informed decisions with the right guidance behind you. Look for people who listen, explain things clearly, and help you feel comfortable with your decisions. If you're unsure where to start, *I can help you connect with people suited to your needs.*

Your REALTOR®: I will help you find and compare homes, negotiate your offer, and navigate the purchase.	**Name:** Johnny Sugrue **Phone:** 250-218-8323 **Email:** johnny@comoxvalleyhome.ca
Mortgage broker or lender: Explores your financing options and guides you from pre-approval through final mortgage approval.	**Name:** **Phone:** **Email:**
Home inspector: Assesses the home's condition and helps you understand potential concerns and maintenance needs.	**Name:** **Phone:** **Email:**
Lawyer or notary: Handles the legal transfer, reviews relevant documents, and coordinates closing funds.	**Name:** **Phone:** **Email:**
Insurance professional: Helps you arrange suitable coverage and identify any property concerns that could affect insurance.	**Name:** **Phone:** **Email:**
Specialists as needed: Tradespeople, engineers, or other qualified professionals can investigate concerns that need a closer look.	**Name:** **Phone:** **Email:**



A LITTLE EXTRA HELP FOR YOUR FIRST HOME

Buying your first home in BC may open the door to programs that help your savings go further or reduce the tax you pay. They each have different eligibility rules, so it's worth exploring which ones apply to you before you purchase.

BC First Time Home Buyers' Program

Eligible buyers purchasing a qualifying property valued at $835,000 or less may receive a property transfer tax exemption on the first $500,000 of its value—a saving of up to $8,000. A reduced exemption is available above $835,000 and below $860,000. This doesn't necessarily eliminate the entire tax bill; buyer eligibility, property size, and occupancy requirements also apply.

First Home Savings Account (FHSA)

An FHSA combines tax-deductible contributions with tax-free withdrawals for a qualifying home purchase. You receive $8,000 of participation room when you open your first account, with additional room each year up to a $40,000 lifetime limit. Your room only starts accumulating once the account is open.

Other Details worth checking:

1. More potential programs include the Home Buyers' Plan (HBP), Home Buyers' Tax Credit.
2. "First-time buyer" means something different under each program. Have your legal, mortgage, or tax professional confirm your eligibility and the current requirements before relying on a benefit.

WHEN YOU'RE BOTH BUYING AND SELLING

Buying and selling at the same time takes a little extra planning. Selling first gives you more certainty about your proceeds, but may mean a temporary move. Buying first gives you time to find the right home, but could mean carrying two properties.

We'll talk through the order that suits you, involve your lender early, and work to coordinate dates. Knowing your net sale proceeds, understanding financing options, and having a backup plan for delays can help you move forward with confidence.

Your lender or broker can explain bridge financing, mortgage portability, and any payout penalties. We can also discuss whether a sale-of-home condition makes sense for your purchase, while leaving room for temporary accommodation or storage if possession dates don't quite line up.



PRO-TIP: Assemble your team early on

You never know when the right home will come along or how quickly the market will move on it. Having your team lined up early helps you act confidently when the opportunity comes, with trusted advice close at hand.

EXPLORE & COMPARE

Local market knowledge, a focused search, and a second set of eyes. I'll help you find a home that fits, feels right for your everyday life, and leaves room for your future.

A home starts with a dream

STEP ONE | DECIDING WHAT YOU WANT

The first step to finding the right home is to determine what you're actually looking for. There are a lot of homes on the market at any given time, and looking at them all is not the best way to spend your time. To make your home search more efficient, ask yourself these three focus questions:



Which Community?

This is your first decision. What communities or neighbourhoods do you want to consider?

Is it important to be near schools, shopping centres, recreation facilities, places of worship, hospitals, or other amenities?

Visit the community pages at **comoxvalleyhome.ca** and see what each community has to offer.



What Type of Home?

What style of home is best for you?

It could be a detached, a semi-detached, a bungalow, a split-level, a two-storey, a duplex, a townhouse — the options are endless!

You may also want to consider your ideal lot size and the age of the home.



Must-Haves?

What are the most important features for you in a home?

Do you need a basement? A garage? A pool or a fireplace? How many bathrooms and bedrooms?

Do you have family members with special needs?

What do you absolutely not want in a home?



PRO-TIP: Keep the search broad at first

Keep your search filters a little flexible, including homes just above or below your budget, so you don't miss a close fit— or a home whose price may come down tomorrow. The last thing we want is to lose sight of the big picture.

Some typical search parameters to consider.

Price	Location
Title	Year
Building	Services
Lot Size	Beds
Baths	Kitchens

STEP TWO | THE HOUSE HUNT

Now the fun begins. Once we've secured pre-approval, picked your team of professionals, and outlined your search criteria, it's time to actually see some properties.

I will start by creating a custom property searches that will monitor the MLS (Multiple Listings Service) for applicable properties and I'll send you personalized updates as soon as homes matching your criteria come on the market.

When we head out for showings, I'll bring a printout of each home with plenty of room for your notes—what you loved, what didn't work, and anything you want to revisit. After a few showings, the details can start to blur together. Having those notes makes it easier to compare homes, reflect on what matters most, and adjust our search as we learn more about what feels right for you.

If you'd like to search at your own pace and create your own saved searches, you can also use the powerful search tools at ComoxValleyHome.ca. You can explore homes by area, price range, and key features, or use the map to get a feel for where each property is located.

During our Showings.

Notice how the home functions
Walk your likely daily routine. Check storage, room layout, stairs, parking, outdoor space, and where furniture would fit. Consider accessibility and the cost of changes.

Observe without diagnosing
Look for staining, unusual odours, visible cracks, uneven floors, drainage concerns, or signs of recent repairs. Record observations and ask a qualified professional what they mean.

Ask about systems and history
What are the ages of the roof, heating equipment, and hot-water tank? What work has been done? Are permits, warranties, service records, or insurance claims available?

Check the whole property
Consider road access, slope, neighbouring uses, overhead lines, boundaries, and visible water flow. Fences and landscaping do not prove legal boundaries.

Compare consistently
Use a consistent checklist to compare homes and keep your priorities in view. Separate cosmetic dislikes from expensive or uncertain issues. Note what you need to verify before making a commitment.

OFFER & INVESTIGATE

Together, we'll shape your offer, look closely at the details, and move forward with confidence, keeping your needs and best interests at the heart of every decision.

Building the Right Offer

CHOOSE WITH YOUR HEART- OFFER WITH YOUR HEAD.

When a home feels right, we'll work together to create a compelling offer that reflects your needs and comfort level. I'll gather what I can about the sellers' priorities so we can look for ways to accommodate them while protecting your best interests. We'll talk through the subjects and terms I recommend, along with comparable sales and local market context to help you decide what price feels right.

Making an offer can bring a mix of excitement and nerves, especially when other buyers are interested. It's easy to feel pressure to move quickly, so I'll help you weigh the trade-offs and keep your goals in focus. The decisions are yours, and I'll be alongside you to answer questions, negotiate on your behalf, and help you feel confident about your next step.

SETTING YOUR BOUNDARIES: BASEMENT VS. CEILING PRICE

Before we put pen to paper, we establish your financial guardrails so you stay grounded, objective, and confident throughout negotiations. We'll call those your basement and ceiling prices, and they'll allow me to draw us back to your plan in the heat of the moment.

Estimated Seller Basement (The Offer Floor): The estimated lowest price an average seller will reasonably accept based on recent market comps and listing history—used as our benchmark for a strong, competitive starting offer that doesn't turn a seller cold.

Buyer's Ceiling Price (Your Hard Red Line): Your absolute maximum purchase limit, established in advance based on lender pre-approval, monthly comfort, and appraisal safety. This isn't just what the bank will lend, but the point where a purchase remains financially sound and stress-free—a boundary we never cross, no matter how intense negotiations get.

THE STAGES OF WRITING AN OFFER

Writing an offer follows an established legal process, with defined steps and checks along the way. As a REALTOR® I also have the support of the REMAX Ocean Pacific team, including managing brokers for guidance and proofing and a conveyancing department to help keep the paperwork and transaction details on track for a successful purchase.

Decide on Price, Terms & Conditions

I will provide you with comparables of recent sales and any other current listings that are similar.

This is extremely helpful when it comes to negotiating a fair price.

We will also need to decide on a closing date and if there will be any conditions of the offer such as a home inspection, appraisal, water tests etc. I will guide you in this process.

Prepare the Offer

I will prepare a legal document, known as a Contract of Purchase and Sale.

The offer will include your chosen price, deposit, key dates, and any subjects or additional terms suited to your situation.

I'll bring these details together into a clear offer designed to protect your interests and give us a strong starting point.

Review the Offer

I will walk you through the offer, explaining its terms and commitments in plain language.

We'll talk about how subjects, timelines, and specialty clauses apply to your situation.

You'll have room to ask questions, explore options, and request changes so you feel informed and comfortable with what you're agreeing to before you sign.

PRESENTING THE OFFER

I'll present your offer and negotiate on your behalf, working toward the best overall outcome for you. The seller may accept, decline, or come back with different terms. At each stage, I'll bring the conversation back to you for your input and direction, and have you initial any agreed changes before we send them back. We'll weigh each response with your goals and limits in focus, so you are involved and supported throughout any back-and-forth.



PRO-TIP: What if I regret my offer tomorrow?

BC's Home Buyer Rescission Period gives buyers three business days to rescind after acceptance. Exercising it carries a fee of 0.25% of the purchase price. Some exemptions apply so let's talk about your rights.

Three Potential Outcomes

PLANNING FOR EACH OUTCOME.

Waiting for a response can feel tense; use that time to think through the possible outcomes and what each could mean for you. Having a plan helps you respond calmly and thoughtfully when the answer comes, without feeling pressured to make a quick decision.

✕ REJECTED

This isn't common, but it can happen and I will work to find out why.

Not being able to come to an agreement on the offer or being outbid can be frustrating and even heartbreaking but I am a firm believer that when the house is meant for you to call it home, it will be yours.

NEXT STEP?

Our hunt continues.

⟳ COUNTERED

A counteroffer comes from the seller and replaces your original offer with new terms for you to consider.

It is an opportunity to keep the conversation going.

NEXT STEP?

We'll talk through the changes and decide whether to accept, counter again, or walk away.

✓ ACCEPTED

Congratulations! The seller has accepted your offer!

NEXT STEP?

Usually there is a window of 10 business days wherein a buyer and their team diligently work through the subject conditions in order to remove them if/when the buyer feels comfortable.

We'll walk through these together.



An Accepted Offer

NOW WE LOOK CLOSER- THIS IS WHERE YOUR TEAM COMES IN

An accepted offer is exciting. Now we investigate the unanswered questions, guided by your contract's subjects and deadlines—often over the 10–14 days following acceptance.

Your lender confirms financing and property approval, your insurer assesses coverage, and your chosen inspector and specialists assess the home. I'll help coordinate access, follow-up, and deadlines. We'll also address title, disclosures, permits, and your intended use, involving your legal professional where needed. Together, we'll consider the findings and your contractual options: proceeding, requesting changes, or not proceeding.

Removing subjects is your decision, supported by information and professional advice.

Subject Condition:	Professional Involved:	Investigation Completed?	Remove Condition?
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Unique Considerations

CONSIDERING A STRATA OR MANUFACTURED HOME?

The home is only part of the picture. With a strata property, you also take on shared responsibilities for the larger property. With a manufactured home in a typical park, you own the home and rent the land beneath it. We'll confirm the arrangement and look at what it means for you.

Know the Property | Strata

For a strata, we'll look at the Form B and attachments, bylaws, rules, financial statements, budget, minutes, insurance, depreciation report where applicable, and relevant repair or engineering reports.

Upcoming projects, reserve funding, special levies, repeated leaks, and deferred maintenance deserve attention—a low strata fee doesn't tell the whole story.

Know the Property | MFR Park

For a manufactured home in a park, we'll look at the pad tenancy agreement, rent, park rules, included services, and requirements for transferring the tenancy to you.

We'll also look into the home's registration and any registered liens, and ask about alterations, permits, and known plans that could affect the park.

Know the Rules | Making sure the arrangement works for you

Pets, age restrictions, parking, storage, renovations, and permitted uses can affect everyday life. We'll check what matters to you, including how parking and storage are allocated and who maintains the home, site, and shared areas.

Your insurer can help confirm suitable coverage, including any gaps or deductible risks under strata insurance. Your legal professional can advise on title, tenancy, and other legal questions. We want you to feel comfortable with the responsibilities and ongoing costs as well as the home itself.

CONSIDERING AN OLDER HOME OR RURAL PROPERTY?

An older home or rural property can offer character, space, and something special. It may also bring responsibilities that are less familiar. We'll explore how the home and land work together, so you can weigh what you love against the care and costs of ownership.

Know the Property | Older

Older plumbing, including Poly-B, electrical equipment, heating systems, oil tanks, and roofing may need assessment by qualified trades. We'll look at available records, past updates, and questions about maintenance or replacement.

Age gives us a reason to ask questions; it doesn't tell the whole story about condition. Your insurer should confirm any coverage requirements, and before renovating, we'll identify whether hazardous-material testing is needed.

Know the Property | Rural

If the property has a well or septic system, we'll identify appropriate specialists to assess water quality, water supply, and septic condition.

System locations, records, service history, ongoing maintenance, and potential replacement costs all deserve attention. Understanding these systems helps you picture what caring for the property will involve.

Know the Rules | Making sure the arrangement works for you

If you're imagining a suite, workshop, business, or subdivision, we'll need to verify what's permitted. Legal access, easements, boundaries, zoning, setbacks, and land-use restrictions can shape what's possible. Known flooding, drainage, slope, or contamination concerns also need appropriate investigation.



PRO-TIP: What if I regret my offer tomorrow?

BC's Home Buyer Rescission Period gives buyers three business days to rescind after acceptance. Exercising it carries a fee of 0.25% of the purchase price. Some exemptions apply so let's talk about your rights.

COMMIT & COMPLETE

Once you're ready to remove subjects, your purchase becomes a firm commitment. From there to possession day, I'll help you manage the steps so you're ready to get your keys and move in.



PRO-TIP: "Key" Dates to Remember

Completion Day : Ownership transfers to you, and the seller is paid.
Adjustment Day: Your share of property costs and income begins.
Possession Day: You get the keys and take over the property.

Making it Official... or Not?

FROM IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO A CONFIDENT NEXT STEP.

The subject period helps us build confidence in your purchase by checking the details that matter. Ideally, those answers give you the reassurance to move forward; if a condition can't be met, we'll work through what that means together. Either way, I'll help you understand your options and take the next step with clarity.

When a Purchase Fails

Sometimes, the answers we get during the subject period mean the purchase can't move forward as planned. Your lender may be unable to approve financing, or the inspection may reveal concerns that leave you unsatisfied with the home's condition under your inspection subject.

You're required to make reasonable efforts to meet your subjects, and we'll keep track of the steps and deadlines together. If a condition can't be met, we can explore whether an extension or a negotiated change might help—both require the seller's agreement. If the subject remains unmet and isn't waived by the deadline, the deal generally ends according to the contract's wording. I'll help you communicate the outcome and work through what comes next.

A Successful Purchase

When the questions have been answered and you feel ready to proceed with your purchase, we'll review each subject together and document whether it has been fulfilled or waived. We'll then deliver written notice as required by the contract.

With all subjects removed, your purchase becomes firm, and both you and the seller must fulfil the remaining contract obligations toward completion.

This is an exciting milestone: the focus shifts from investigating the home to getting ready for your move. I'll help you stay on top of the next steps and deadlines as we work toward completion and possession.

THE HOME STRETCH

Once you've decided to proceed, the move starts to feel real. Typically you will have anywhere from 30 to 90 days before closing day. This will give you time to make sure you are organized for the completion of your purchase and for that big exciting move-in day.

Legal Stuff and Paperwork

Together we will need to provide your lawyer with all the necessary documentation for your purchase. I usually take care of the agreement, waivers, survey and any other purchase documents. However, you may need to provide your lawyer with some additional information relating to insurance, down payment information, adjustment payments, and other signed documents your lawyer may request.

THINGS TO BUDGET FOR AS MOVING DAY GETS CLOSER

- ☐ **Down Payment and Closing Costs |** Make the necessary arrangements to have these funds available a week prior to closing or when the lawyer has requested funds.
- ☐ **Moving Arrangements & Change of Address |** Whether you are using professional movers, renting a truck, or getting a bunch of friends together, plan and organize it early.
- ☐ **Property Insurance |** Arrange for home insurance before closing and request a proof of insurance aka insurance binder for your financial institution in advance. Provide your insurance agent with the listing information and details such as age of the house, billing on closing, including: type and condition of the roof, condition of the furnace, electrical and type of exterior.
- ☐ **Utilities |** Contact the local utilities to coordinate the change of billing on closing. Including phone, internet, cable, gas, electricity, water, and any rental agreements. Don't forget to cancel the services at your old address!
- ☐ **Schools |** If you have children, inform your children's old and new schools about the move and arrange any necessary record transfers.

SETTLE IN & ENJOY

This is the part where a property starts becoming your home. We'll talk about the handover, those first few days, and the questions that can come up once you're living there.

The First Few Days

THE FIRST TIME YOU OPEN THE DOOR

Possession day is exciting, even with a lot going on. We'll confirm when and how you'll get the keys, and you can look around to check that everything included in the purchase is there and the home has been left as agreed. If something doesn't look right, take a few photos and let me know as soon as you can. We'll talk through what to do next and who can help.

Keep your important documents somewhere easy to find, and get familiar with the water shutoff, electrical panel, and other controls. If you're not sure how something works, have the right professional show you. Knowing the basics can help you feel more comfortable from the start.

GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR NEW PLACE

You don't have to do everything in the first week. Give yourself time to get to know the home. Your inspection report and service records can help you decide which maintenance jobs and repairs to tackle first. Between the boxes and to-do lists, don't forget to make room to enjoy it. Take a walk, meet a neighbour, or sit down for your first meal in your new place.



PRO-TIP: I'm Only a Phone Call or Email Away

If you have questions or concerns at any point- I'm here for you.
Phone: (250)218-8323 | Email: johnny@comoxvalleyhome.ca

A Little About Me

First and foremost, I'm a husband, a dad, and someone who genuinely enjoys helping people.

I've called the Comox Valley home for over a decade, and over that time, I've come to appreciate just how special this community really is. From raising a family to coaching youth lacrosse, some of my most meaningful experiences have come from the people I've met and the relationships I've built along the way.

My professional background is a bit of a mix. I've worked in marketing, web design, youth work, and personal development coaching, each of which has shaped the way I approach real estate today. I enjoy creative problem-solving, developing thoughtful strategies, and helping people make sense of decisions that can sometimes feel overwhelming.

I've also always believed in challenging myself. Over the years, that's meant everything from qualifying for the Spartan Race 20km Obstacle Course World Championships to taking on ultramarathons like the Canadian Death Race 100-miler and Sinister 7 50-miler (among many others). Those experiences taught me plenty about preparation, perseverance, and knowing when to ask for help.

But these days, the challenges I'm most passionate about are a little closer to home: being an active husband and dad, giving back to my community, and building a real estate business centred on genuinely taking care of people.

I believe people deserve more than someone who can help them buy or sell a house. They deserve someone who listens, cares about their goals, and takes the responsibility of guiding them seriously.

That's the kind of REALTOR® I'm working to be, and the kind of experience I want every client to have.

Because at the end of the day, it's not just about real estate. It's about helping people move forward with confidence.

Let's Talk About Your Next Move

Have a question about real estate or life in the Comox Valley? Reach out anytime. I'm always happy to have a conversation.

E: johnny@comoxvalleyhome.ca P: (250) 218-8323









IF YOU NEED ANYTHING



comoxvalleyhome.ca
johnny @comoxvalleyhome.ca
(250)218-8323

JOHNNY SUGRUE
COMOX VALLEY REALTOR®

REMAX Ocean Pacific
Each office independently owned and operated (250) 334-9900