YOUR PLAIN-ENGLISH SELLER'S GUIDE

Selling Your Home in the Tri-Cities

What it costs, what it's worth, and everything that happens between “let's list it” and handing over the keys — in order, with no jargon.

Free Guide · Coquitlam · Port Moody · Port Coquitlam

Sebastian Czarkowski, REALTOR®
Royal LePage Elite West · (604) 788-4355
sebastianrealestate.ca

START HERE

Most of the money is made before the sign goes up

Selling well isn't about being a sharp negotiator on the last day. It's about the decisions you make in the weeks *before* your home goes live — the price, the preparation, and the paperwork.

This guide walks through the whole thing in order, so nothing arrives as a surprise.

What's inside:

- **What you'll actually net** — the real arithmetic, including the fee people forget.
- **What moves your number** — pricing, timing and preparation.
- **A tick-box workbook** — everything to do before you list.
- **“I accepted an offer — now what?”** — the rest of it, stage by stage.
- **Who you'll need** — and what each one costs.

> **One thing to do today:** phone your lender and ask what it would cost to break your mortgage early. On a fixed term that penalty can run to **thousands** — and it's much better known now than discovered three days before completion.

Ready? Turn the page.

THE MONEY PART

What you'll actually walk away with

Sale price is not what you keep. Start from the price, subtract the list below, and you have your real number.

What comes off	Typical amount
Mortgage balance	**Your payout figure**
Real estate commission	**Negotiated (+ GST)**
Lawyer or notary	**$1,200–$1,800**
Mortgage discharge admin fee	**$200–$400**
Prepayment penalty (only if breaking a term early)	**$0–$15,000+**
Strata document fee (strata only)	**$100–$300**
Prep & staging	**$500–$5,000+**
Moving	**$1,000–$5,000+**
Property tax adjustment	**Credit or debit**

What sellers in BC do NOT pay: Property Transfer Tax (that's the buyer's), GST on a resale home (new construction only), the buyer's home inspection, or the buyer's title insurance. If someone tells you otherwise, they're describing the buying side.

The one that ambushes people: the prepayment penalty. Breaking a fixed-rate mortgage early is charged on an interest-rate-differential calculation and can reach **$15,000 or more**. Ask your lender for the exact figure **in writing before you list** — and ask whether **porting** the mortgage to your next home avoids it entirely.

Three things decide what you get

1 The price you launch at

The first two weeks bring the most motivated buyers you will ever see. Price too high and you spend that attention teaching the market what your home *isn't* worth — then reduce anyway, from a weaker position.

2 How it shows

Decluttering, a deep clean, small repairs and good photography cost very little and change the first impression completely. The expensive renovation is usually the one that doesn't pay you back — get a quote and check the return before starting.

3 How ready the paperwork is

Missing strata documents or an unpermitted addition rarely kill a sale outright. They stall it — at exactly the moment a buyer is deciding whether to trust you.

> **Days on market is a price signal.** Buyers see how long a home has been listed, and a listing that's been sitting invites lower offers no matter why. The cheapest price correction is the one you never have to make.

Words you'll hear

Subjects (conditions) — the buyer's safety checks: financing, inspection, strata documents. Until they're removed, the buyer can still walk.

Subject removal — the buyer signs to say they're satisfied. This is when the sale becomes firm.

Completion vs possession — completion is when title transfers and you get paid; possession is when the buyer gets the keys, usually a day or two later.

Before you list — steps 1 to 4

Print these pages and tick as you go. Work down in order — each step depends on the one above it.

1 · DECIDE WHETHER NOW IS YOUR MOMENT

- [ ] Work out my real equity: likely sale price − mortgage payout − selling costs
- [ ] Decide where I'm going next — and whether I buy first or sell first
- [ ] **Get my prepayment penalty from my lender in writing**
- [ ] Owned under 730 days? Check the BC home flipping tax
- [ ] Confirm this is my principal residence (if not, plan for capital gains)

2 · KNOW WHAT I'LL NET

- [ ] Start from a realistic sale price, not the BC Assessment
- [ ] Subtract mortgage payout + discharge admin ($200–$400)
- [ ] Subtract commission + GST, and lawyer or notary ($1,200–$1,800)
- [ ] Subtract any prepayment penalty, prep, staging and moving

3 · CHOOSE MY AGENT

- [ ] Interview at least two; ask for the **sold comparables** behind the price
- [ ] Ask: "what's the plan if it hasn't sold in 30 days?"
- [ ] Understand the listing agreement term and how I cancel
- [ ] Agree the commission in writing, and what marketing is included

4 · SET THE PRICE

- [ ] Review real SOLD comparables — asking prices are not achieving prices
- [ ] Check sale-to-list ratio and days on market in **my** neighbourhood
- [ ] Agree a review date up front — "if no offer by day 21, we revisit"
- [ ] Don't price off the assessment — it's a July-of-last-year snapshot

Before you list — steps 5 to 8

5 · GET THE HOME READY

- [ ] Declutter hard, then depersonalise
- [ ] Fix the small stuff: dripping taps, sticking doors, dead bulbs
- [ ] Deep clean — windows, grout, carpets
- [ ] **Deal with smells** (pets, smoke, damp) — buyers can't un-notice them
- [ ] Decide on staging; tidy the exterior for the first photo
- [ ] **Get quotes before any big project** and check it returns more than it costs

6 · GET THE PAPERWORK READY

- [ ] Find my title and property documents
- [ ] Strata: order Form B, minutes, budget, bylaws, depreciation report ($100–$300)
- [ ] Gather permits for past work; locate the survey certificate
- [ ] List what stays and what goes — appliances, blinds, shed, mounted TVs
- [ ] Note anything I must disclose (a material latent defect)

7 · LAUNCH THE LISTING

- [ ] Approve photos, floor plan and description before it goes live
- [ ] **View the listing on my own phone** — that's where buyers see it
- [ ] Agree the showing schedule, notice period and lockbox
- [ ] Plan for a strong first weekend

8 · SHOWINGS AND FEEDBACK

- [ ] Leave the home for every showing
- [ ] Secure valuables, medication, mail and documents
- [ ] Read the feedback honestly — a repeated comment is a fact
- [ ] No offers after 2–3 weeks? Change price or presentation

You accepted an offer. Now what?

An accepted offer feels like the end. It isn't — it usually starts the buyer's subject period, and until those conditions come off **they can still walk away and you can't**.

A · THE OFFER ISN'T THE FINISH LINE

- [ ] Calendar the buyer's subject removal deadline (usually 5–7 business days)
- [ ] Tell my lender and confirm my payout figure and penalty
- [ ] Ask whether to keep taking backup offers; keep the home show-ready
- [ ] **Don't firm up my next purchase or spend the proceeds yet**

B · THE BUYER'S DUE DILIGENCE

- [ ] Make the home accessible for the inspection (2–3 hours) and leave
- [ ] Clear access to the panel, furnace, hot water tank, attic and crawlspace
- [ ] Strata: get the documents to the buyer **immediately**
- [ ] Be ready for an appraisal visit if the buyer's lender orders one

C · WHEN THE BUYER COMES BACK ASKING

- [ ] **Get my own quote** before agreeing to any repair credit
- [ ] Choose: reduce the price, give a credit, fix it, or hold firm
- [ ] Weigh it against going back on market — buyers will ask why
- [ ] Get any agreed change in writing as an amendment

D · SUBJECTS REMOVED — NOW IT'S FIRM

- [ ] Get the subject removal **in writing**
- [ ] Confirm the deposit reached the brokerage trust account
- [ ] **Now** firm up my next move; request the formal payout statement

> **The asymmetry nobody explains:** BC's **Home Buyer** Rescission Period lets the *buyer* cancel within 3 clear business days for a fee of 0.25% of the price. **There is no seller equivalent.** Once you sign, you're bound.

From subject removal to handing over the keys

E · YOUR LAWYER AND YOUR LENDER

- [ ] Retain my lawyer or notary ($1,200–$1,800) and send them the contract
- [ ] Give them my mortgage details for the payout statement
- [ ] Confirm the prepayment penalty in writing; ask about porting
- [ ] Strata: arrange the **Form F** so title can transfer

F · THE FINAL WEEK

- [ ] Sign the transfer documents (bring photo ID)
- [ ] Book movers — and the elevator if I'm in a strata
- [ ] End or transfer utilities on possession day; take meter readings
- [ ] Redirect mail; update ICBC, CRA, bank; cancel pre-authorized payments
- [ ] **Keep home insurance until completion actually happens**

G · COMPLETION AND POSSESSION

- [ ] Leave the home clean and empty of anything not included
- [ ] Leave **all** keys, fobs, remotes, mailbox keys; manuals and warranties
- [ ] **Completion** — title transfers and my mortgage is paid out
- [ ] **Possession** — I must be fully out by the time in the contract

H · AFTER THE SALE

- [ ] Confirm the mortgage is discharged from title
- [ ] Keep the Statement of Adjustments for my accountant
- [ ] **Report the sale on my tax return** — required even when it's tax-free
- [ ] Not a principal residence, or owned under 730 days? Get tax advice

Who you'll need — and what it costs

Fewer people than a purchase, and most of it comes out of the proceeds at completion rather than your pocket up front.

Who	When	Typical cost
Your listing REALTOR®	Before you list	**Commission — negotiated, paid at completion**
Your lender	Before listing, and again at accepted offer	**Discharge admin $200–$400** **Penalty $0–$15,000+**
Lawyer or notary	Right after subjects are removed	**$1,200–$1,800**
Stager	Before photos	**$500–$5,000+**
Photographer / floor plan	Before launch	**Usually included in commission**
Trades	Pre-list, or if the inspection flags something	**Usually free to quote**
Strata management	Before listing, and again at completion	**$100–$300**
Movers	Book 2–3 weeks out	**$1,000–$5,000+**
Accountant	Tax time	**Only if not a principal residence**

Lawyer or notary? Both do the same core conveyancing in BC — clearing title, paying out your mortgage, the Statement of Adjustments, holding funds in trust. A lawyer can also advise you on the contract and represent you in a dispute; a notary can't. Either is fine for a straightforward sale.

Costs are typical Tri-Cities ranges as of July 2026 and vary with the property. Always get your own quote.

LEARN FROM OTHERS

Smart moves & seller mistakes

A few things sellers often wish they'd known — each one is easy to sidestep once you see it coming.

Don't list before you know your penalty. The mortgage prepayment charge is the single most common unpleasant surprise. One phone call prevents it.

Don't chase the highest suggested price. An agent who wins the listing on an unrealistic number often returns three weeks later asking for a reduction.

An accepted offer is not a sold home. Until subjects are removed the buyer can still walk. Don't remove your own conditions elsewhere on the strength of it.

Answer a repair request with a quote. "That seems high" is an opinion. A written trade quote is a number, and numbers settle negotiations.

Don't cancel your insurance early. You own the home, and carry the risk, right up to completion.

Get every inclusion in writing. Appliances, blinds, the shed, the mounted TV. Ambiguity surfaces on the final walkthrough, at the worst moment.

> **Report the sale even when it's tax-free.** If the home was your principal residence the gain is generally exempt — but the sale still has to be reported on your tax return. Skipping it can cost you the exemption.

THE NEXT STEP

Want your actual numbers?

Everything in this guide is general. Your number depends on your home, your mortgage and your timing — and those three take about twenty minutes to work through properly.

I'm a REALTOR® based in the Tri-Cities — Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam. If you're thinking about selling, even if it's a year away, the useful conversation is the early one: what your home would likely sell for, what you'd net after everything, and what (if anything) is worth doing first.

No pressure, no obligation

A straight answer on what your home is worth and what you'd walk away with.

Talk to Sebastian — it's free

Sebastian Czarkowski, REALTOR® · (604) 788-4355

hello@sebastianrealestate.ca · sebastianrealestate.ca

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This guide is general information for home sellers in British Columbia, current as of July 2026. Costs, taxes and eligibility vary with your situation and can change. Always confirm the details with your lender, your lawyer or notary, and your accountant before making decisions.