

PREPARING YOUR HOME

When selling a home the price and neighbourhood are not the only factors that draw the attention of potential buyers. Making your home look its best inside and out will make your home more desirable to those searching. Despite the condition of a buyer's current residence there is always an expectation that a home they are considering purchasing will be clean and tidy.

In most cases, major changes will not add value to a home greater than the cost to complete the renovations. Minor repairs and cosmetic enhancements, including painting or simple landscaping, will usually cost less than the added value. Major renovations such as adding patios, decks, new kitchens or replacing flooring generally cost more than what will be recouped. There are always exceptions to the rule when major renovations may make a difference in the selling price and whether or not a home sells. When buyers searching in your area have an expectation for specific features to be included, renovations may be worth the work and expense.

We can assist you with determining the specific improvements that will make your home more appealing and any renovations that would increase the value without adding excessive costs.

To get you started, the outline below will provide you with some ideas for improvements and maintenance to consider when preparing your home.

First impressions are important both inside and out.

The front entry is the first thing your buyers see as they stand and wait for the door to open. It is worth the extra effort to spruce it up. During warmer months consider putting flowers outside the entry door.

The Outside:

Clean windows, front door knob and exterior light fixtures.

Clean or replace a tired-looking mailbox, house numbers and door knockers.

Clean or repaint the front door, window frames, shutters and any trim.

Repair or replace broken steps or walkways.

Keep your lawn neatly trimmed and edged during the spring, summer and fall.

During winter months, ensure walks are free of snow and ice.

Cut back over-grown shrubbery that looks scraggly or keeps light out of the house.

Turn over or weed your flower beds and plant inexpensive annuals to add colour.

Inspect the roof and gutters. Check for any missing shingles that need to be replaced.

Keep your porch, driveway and front yard clutter-free.

Paint or fix any fencing and gates that have broken down.

Ensure any outdoor furniture looks good. If it's rusty or un-repairable consider disposing of the pieces.

The Living Areas:

Remove excess furniture and extra items to make rooms look more spacious.

Have all plaster in top shape. Fix any cracks, nail-pops or visible seams in dry walls.

Check ceilings for leak stains. Fix the cause of the damage, repair the ceiling and repaint.

Replace or remove old or outdated wallpaper.

If painting and re-decorating, stick to conventional white or easy-to-work-with neutrals.

Carpets and area rugs should be clean and in good repair. Have carpets shampooed.

If you have a fireplace, clean it out and lay some logs in it to make it look inviting.

Wash windows and replace any broken glass; make sure all windows will open and close.

Replace burned-out light bulbs and use the same bulbs throughout a fixture. Use bright bulbs throughout your home.

Be sure every light switch works.

Make the floors shine. Clean and/or wax floors.

Fix creaking boards or stair treads (drive long finishing nails at opposing angles through the floor and sub-floor into the joist).

Straighten up all closets, get rid of excess, store out of season clothes so closets look larger. Use room deodorant to eliminate musty odors.

Lubricate any sticky or squeaking doors. For sliding doors that stick in their tracks, rub the tracks with paraffin or candle wax.

Tighten door knobs and cupboard latches and oil any squeaky cupboard doors

Be sure pet areas are clean and odor free.

Clean out the furnace and humidifier.

The Kitchen:

The kitchen is the most important room in the house. Make it bright and attractive. If it is dull, paint the cabinets and put up new curtains.

Clean the ventilating hood, stove, microwave and refrigerator in the kitchen.

If the kitchen floor is badly worn consider new flooring. If a single tile is loose, apply heat to the tile with an iron covered with a soft cloth, soften the adhesive then replace the tile.

Clear counters of any clutter to make the room look larger. Remove any appliances that you keep on your counters, like a toaster, coffeemaker or can opener.

The Bathroom:

Repair dripping faucets.

Use special cleaning products to remove stains from toilets, bathtubs and sinks; keep sinks and mirrors shining.

If sink and bathtub drain too slowly, unclog them.

Replace old caulking around bathtubs.

Keep a solid deodorizer in the bathroom area.

The Basement, Attic and Garage:

Clean out the attic, basement and garage and dispose of everything you are not going to move. Package everything you won't need until you're settled in your new home.

Make sure there is plenty of light in the stairway to the basement.

If your basement is dark and gloomy, paint ceilings and walls a light colour.

Repair cracks in the basement floor with ready-mixed concrete.

Vacuum garage floors and rafters.

Stack items neatly against walls to make the room appear larger.