

YOUR GUIDE TO A
STRESS FREE HOME PURCHASE



JOY
SULLIVAN
REALTY

BYRON TAYLOR



BUYER GUIDE



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HELLO



I'M BYRON TAYLOR

When I relocated to the Alabama gulf coast from the hectic city life in New York, I knew I had found more than just a new place to live. I found my beach. The blue skies, gulf breeze, peaceful white sand shoreline, and taste of the gulf coast life were just what I needed.

Whether you're searching for a place to call home, a home away from home or that perfect investment property, I'm here to help you find your beach. My goal is to perfect the real estate experience for both buyers and sellers. Exceptional service is built on a foundation of insight, innovation, strategy and service designed to yield optimal results for you; my focus is on your needs. Spending the time to understand your individual goals,, desires and dreams will ensure that my efforts remain focused to deliver on target, every time.

With 30 years of marketing experience, a long successful record as a real estate investor, and a pure passion for understanding real estate markets, I am ready to put my experience and tenacity to work for you.

My real estate business is built on the concept of putting your needs first. an important part of that means that when you have a question or need support, I'm here for you. When you choose to work with me, you can count on open and honest communication – in the frequency and by the method you prefer.

LET'S CONNECT



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THE HOMEBUYING PROCESS AT A GLANCE

1

FINANCES

- ✓ Gather your documents
- ✓ Obtain pre-approval or proof of funds
- ✓ Locate down payment funds
- ✓ Budget for any additional costs

2

HOME SEARCH

- ✓ Preview potential properties online
- ✓ Schedule showings and view the properties you are most interested in

3

OFFER

- ✓ Write an offer to purchase on your favorite property
- ✓ Negotiate the terms of the offer

6

UNDER CONTRACT

- ✓ Deposit money, complete loan app, & insurance quotes
- ✓ Complete Loan Application within 7 days

5

DUE DILIGENCE

- ✓ Conduct inspections
- ✓ Resolve/negotiate any issues from inspection
- ✓ Obtain homeowners insurance

4

APPRAISAL

- ✓ Arrange for a professional appraiser to visit the home and determine a value
- ✓ Submit any necessary docs to lender in a timely manner

7

SCHEDULE MOVE

- ✓ Schedule your move date and arrange for movers

8

CLOSING

- ✓ Receive closing statement/clear to close
- ✓ Wire funds to closing company
- ✓ Conduct a final walk-through of property
- ✓ Closing day: Get your keys, it's all yours!

THE COSTS OF BUYING A HOME

DEPOSIT:

The initial amount you put to secure the home for our offer. This ranges from 1% to 3% and is deducted from your final down payment. This can be done in one deposit or split into two payments.

INSPECTIONS:

Home inspections are important when buying a home. We want to find out everything we can that could be wrong with the home. A general home inspection is a must, but you can also select the termite / pest inspection, radon inspection, water inspection (if well water), septic inspection (if on-site septic), stucco inspection, and lead paint inspection.

APPRAISAL:

All homes that have a mortgage will require an appraisal to ensure that the home is valued correctly. An appraisal is done strictly for the lender and costs between \$400 - \$575. This will be paid upfront but will be reduced from your total closing costs.

DOWN PAYMENT:

This is not due in full until closing day! Typically ranging from 3.5% (with an FHA loan) to 20%, and everywhere in between!

CLOSING COSTS:

Closing costs are the fees that are needed to close and get keys for your new home — such as lender fees, transfer tax, escrow (including your taxes), reimbursements, and homeowners insurance. Closing costs typically range from 3%-5% of the purchase price of the home.



THE MORTGAGE PROCESS

The very first step of the home buying process is to get a pre-approval letter from a lender stating how much you are qualified for.

A pre-approval is only valid for 30-90 days, so while you can start talking to lenders, you'll want to wait on getting that pre-approval letter when you're ready to buy.

QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL LENDERS:

1. What type of loan do you recommend for me? Why? There are multiple types of mortgage loans, and you should know which one is best for you and how it works.
2. Will my down payment vary based on the loan I choose? If you're tight on cash or don't want to be cash poor, let your lender know. Loans vary in their down payment requirements.
3. What is the interest rate and the annual percentage rate (APR)? Everyone talks about the interest rate, but the APR is just as important. It combines the interest rate with the fees a lender charges to originate your loan.
4. Can I lock in the interest rate? If so, for how long? If you think rates will be moving up, ask if you can lock it in for a set period of time.
5. What will my closing costs be? Are they a part of my loan, or will I pay them in cash at closing? Closing costs usually run 3-5% of your loan value so you need to know how they'll be covered.



MORTGAGE LOAN GUIDE

WHICH TYPE OF LOAN IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

CONVENTIONAL LOAN

The most common type of home loan, which is offered through private lenders

FHA LOAN

Loans designed for those with high debt-to-income ratios and low credit scores, and most commonly issued to first-time homebuyers. Offered by FHA-approved lenders only and backed by the Federal Housing Administration.

VA LOAN

Loans designated for veterans, spouses, and reservists, offered through private lenders and guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

USDA LOAN

Loans for homebuyers in designated rural areas, backed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

TYPE OF LOAN	DOWN PAYMENT	TERMS	MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MINIMUM CREDIT SCORE
CONVENTIONAL	3-20%	15-30 Years	On down payments under 20%	620
FHA	3.5-20%	15-30 Years	For 11 years or life of the loan	500
VA	None	15-30 Years	None	640
USDA	None	15-30 Years	None	640

THE DO'S & DON'T'S OF THE LOAN PROCESS



There are certain “Do’s and Don’ts” which may affect the outcome of your loan request. These remain in effect before, during, and after loan approval up until the time of settlement when your loan is funded and recorded. Many times credit, income, and assets are verified the hour before you have signed your final loan documents.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO NOT:

- Don’t buy a car
- Don’t get married or divorced
- Don’t change professions or start your own business
- Don’t change bank accounts
- Don’t buy ANYTHING! (appliances, furniture, etc.)
- Don’t throw away documents
- Don’t get lazy with monthly bills and incur any late payments
- Don’t let anyone run your credit or apply for any credit cards

MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO:

- Do keep all accounts current, including mortgage, car loans, credit cards, etc.
- Do contact both your lender anytime a question may arise
- Do make all payments on or before due dates on all accounts, even if the account is being paid off with your new loan
- Do have any lender-required money/funds to your loan officer within 72 hours after the home inspection is complete
- Do return phone calls from your agent, loan officer, Settlement Company, or anyone else involved in your transaction ASAP!

YOUR HOME SEARCH

Once you've got your finances in order, the fun of looking for the perfect home begins!

I will set you up on an automatic search through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which is the database that Realtors use to list and search for homes. The moment a home that fits your search criteria is listed for sale, it will be sent directly to your email inbox. If we ever need to adjust the search criteria, just let me know and I can make any changes you need.

SOME QUICK TIPS

- **Use the search filters but not too much.**

You don't want to narrow your search so much that you only have a handful of homes to view. Keeping your wants vs. needs list in mind, expand your geographic search.

- **If you find something that catches your eye, check out the Google street view (or do a drive-by)**

Online pictures can be deceiving so a virtual 'walk down the street will give you a better sense of the house and surrounding area.

- **Remember, you can't change the lot or the location so make sure you love both.**

You also don't want to be the priciest home on the block. I will help you assess whether or not that's the case.

- **Don't let yourself get distracted by decor or staging.**

These things will be gone by the time you move in, so try to stay focused on the things that cannot be changed as easily.

- **Take your time.**

If a home makes a good first impression, let me know you're interested and that you'd like to spend a bit more time looking around. This is one of the largest purchases you'll ever make so it's worth it to learn as much as you can while you're there.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SEARCHING FOR A HOME

1. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?
2. IS THERE A SPECIFIC SCHOOL DISTRICT YOU'D LIKE TO BE IN?
3. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN NEW CONSTRUCTION OR A RESALE HOME?
4. WHAT STYLE HOME WOULD YOU PREFER?
5. ARE STAIRS ACCEPTABLE?
6. DO YOU WANT A GARAGE?
7. WHAT SIZE LOT WOULD YOU PREFER?
8. DOES IT MATTER IF YOU ARE IN AN HOA?
9. DOES HAVING A BASEMENT MATTER?
10. WHAT 3 FEATURES OF A HOME ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

OFFER & NEGOTIATIONS

So you think you've found "the one" and you're ready to put in an offer—one that will be simply irresistible to sellers. Let's talk about making an offer that stands out.

IN ORDER TO WRITE AN OFFER, WE WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- **PRE-QUALIFICATION LETTER OR PROOF OF FUNDS.**

Include a pre-approval letter that shows that you're serious, qualified, and ready to purchase.

- **OFFER PRICE**

It will help you determine the property's fair market value. Put your best foot—and price—forward. You may only get one shot, so make it count. Use comps and trends as a guide, but go in with a strong number you know a seller would find favorable.

- **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT**

This is typically 1-3% of the purchase price.

- **FINANCING AMOUNT**

What percentage of the loan you ARE financing, and how much you are putting down

- **CLOSING DATE**

If getting a mortgage, this is typically 30-45 days from acceptance of the offer. This will be the day the keys are handed over. Ask the sellers what their preferred settlement date is.

- **INSPECTIONS**

The inspection contingency is usually anywhere from 7-10 days, to perform inspections & renegotiate or terminate the contract if the inspection comes back unacceptable.



INSPECTIONS

During the inspection period, the buyer has the right to hire a professional to inspect the condition of the home. The inspection will uncover any issues in the home that would have otherwise been unknown.

The standard home inspector's report will cover the condition of the home's heating system; central air conditioning system; interior plumbing and electrical systems; the roof, attic, and visible insulation; walls, ceilings, floors, windows, and doors; the foundation, basement and structural components. You will receive a written report of the inspection, *but I recommend you attend the inspection.*

ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS YOU MAY NEED:

- **RADON INSPECTION** - Radon gas is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer in the US- it is a naturally occurring gas that is colorless and odorless
- **TERMITE INSPECTION** - Ask your lender if your loan requires any certain inspections such as a Wood Destroying Organism (WDO) inspection.
- **LEAD-BASED PAINT INSPECTION** - If the home was built prior to 1978, a lead-based paint inspection is recommended
- **WELL WATER / SEPTIC INSPECTION** - if the home has a septic system or well water- to make sure the water is not contaminated and the septic system is working properly

AVERAGE COSTS

GENERAL HOME INSPECTION:
\$450-\$600 (DEPENDS ON SQUARE FEET)

RADON:
\$110-\$150

TERMITE:
\$110-\$150

WATER (IF APPLICABLE):
\$200-\$400

ON-SITE SEPTIC (IF APPLICABLE):
\$350-\$800

STUCCO (IF APPLICABLE):
\$500-\$1,000

***IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO ELECT PROPERTY & FLOOD INSURANCE TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE WERE NO MAJOR CLAIMS ON THE PROPERTY THAT WERE NOT DISCLOSED!

*COSTS MAY VARY DEPENDING ON THE INSPECTION COMPANY USED

HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

HOMEOWNERS The standard homeowners insurance covers financial protection against loss due to disasters, theft and accidents

HAZARD Hazard insurance protects against damage caused by fires, severe storms, hail/sleet, or other natural events

FLOOD Protects against damage caused by a flood

WINDSTORM Protects against damage caused by events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, or gales.



PREPARING TO CLOSE

TITLE SEARCH:

The title company will conduct a title search to ensure the property is legitimate and find if there are any outstanding mortgages, liens, judgments, restrictions, easements, leases, unpaid taxes, or any other restrictions that would impact your ownership associated with the Property. Once the title is found to be "clear", the title company will issue a title Insurance policy that protects lenders and owners against claims or legal fees that may rise over ownership of the property. This is required when obtaining a mortgage and is highly recommended even if you are paying cash. This will also be a part of your closing costs, and the fees are state-regulated, which means every title company will charge the same amount for title insurance, making it easier for you because you don't need to "shop around"!

"CLEAR TO CLOSE" IS EXCELLENT NEWS!

It means the mortgage underwriter has officially approved all documentation required to fund the loan. All that remains is the actual closing process.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH:

We will perform a final walkthrough the day of settlement to confirm that the seller made the repairs that were agreed upon and to make sure no issues have come up while under contract.

CLOSING CHECKLIST

- TRANSFER ALL UTILITIES INTO YOUR NAME (GAS, ELECTRIC, WATER, SEWER, ETC.)
- REVIEW THE CLOSING SETTLEMENT STATEMENT A FEW DAYS BEFORE CLOSING TO ENSURE YOU HAVE THE FUNDS FOR CLOSING COSTS
- FINAL WALK-THROUGH
- WIRE FUNDS TO THE CLOSING COMPANY OR GET A CERTIFIED CHECK FROM YOUR BANK
- BRING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT TO THE CLOSING TABLE
- TAKE YOUR KEYS, POP THE CHAMPAGNE, AND MOVE IN!

MOVING CHECKLIST

4-6 WEEKS BEFORE

- Declutter, discard & donate
- Collect quotes from moving companies
- Locate schools, healthcare providers in your new location
- Secure off-site storage if needed
- Choose a mover and sign contract
- Create a file of moving-related papers and receipts
- Contact homeowner's insurance agent about coverage for moving
- Contact insurance companies to arrange for coverage in new home

3-4 WEEKS BEFORE

Notify the following about your change of address:

- Banks + Post Office
- Credit Card Companies
- Insurance Companies
- Family + Friends

Notify utility companies of date to discontinue or transfer service

- Electric
- Gas
- Water
- Internet
- Trash
- TV

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Notify DMV of new address
- Discontinue additional home services (housekeeper, gardener/lawn service)
- Start using up things you can't move, such as perishables
- Close/open bank accounts
- Arrange for child and pet care on moving day
- Notify HOA about upcoming move, reserve elevator usage

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Confirm final arrangements
- Arrange transportation for your pets and plants
- Review your moving-day plan with moving company
- Take a picture in your home
- Pack an essentials box for quick access at new home
- Label moving boxes with the contents inside

GENERAL THINGS TO KNOW

REASONS WHY NOT TO CALL THE AGENT ON THE SIGN

The listing agent has a fiduciary duty to the seller by signing a contract with them first, you as a buyer are a **second interest**. If you went to court, would you use the other person's attorney? Of course not, you want an experienced agent working for you to get the best price and terms that is best suited for YOU, not all one-sided for the seller!

NEW CONSTRUCTION

I can negotiate better terms or upgrades in your new home that the builders often do not tell buyers because they have the builder's best interest and profit in mind, and not yours. I can also recommend which upgrades to do now with the builder, and what would make more sense to do after you move in. Not to mention, if anything were to go wrong during the process, you would definitely want someone representing YOU and your best interest, which is not the sales rep, as they work for the builder.

FORECLOSURE/BANK-OWNED PROPERTIES

Though many foreclosure homes are perceived as an excellent investment due to lower than average pricing, there are a few stipulations to consider. Many foreclosed homes are in a rough condition due to previous owners being forced out of their homes. With this in mind, the properties are rarely left in "move-in" condition and are always sold as-is with an extremely rare chance to have the home fixed prior to purchase. While typical escrows last 30-45 days, due to the complicated nature of the loans, these escrows take a minimum of 90-120 days to close and receive keys.

WHAT I AM HERE TO DO FOR YOU

- Aggressive offer strategies to ensure you get either the best deal or to have your offer accepted in a multiple-offer situation
- Showing you the most recent and most similar comparable homes that have settled in the area to help you make the most educated decision
- Perform a market evaluation and determine the best and most suitable homes for you
- I can connect you with lenders who have financing options for buyers, including down payment assistance and low down payment programs
- I conduct "reverse prospecting" to proactively go after sellers looking to sell the specific type of property you are looking for
- Updates on searches daily in the multiple listing service so that you get the most up-to-date homes and do not miss any
- I use e-signing for all contracts and offers in order to get an offer submitted in under 15 minutes
- A complete referral network to help give you the best deal and any discounts when it comes to the maintenance and long term care of your new home

REVIEWS



We are thankful for you, Byron!
You went above and beyond to assist us and prepare our home to sell, especially given my husband's crazy schedule. I don't know many realtors that would help us like you have. Thank you for doing more than you were required. Thank you for making time for us when we don't have the conventional 9-5 schedule to get things done. It is those things that go a long way and make all the difference. We will use you again in the future!
-Heather C.

His commitment to service and follow-through continued from first greet and meet to closing and beyond. Very professional and responsive.
-Judy G.

We used Byron to help sell our current home and find our dream home. He was amazing and found our dream home that checked every box and more! He was not pushy and made the process so easy!! Highly recommend Byron for ANY of your real estate needs!
-Heather P.

Byron was absolutely amazing. He went above and beyond what a realtor is required to do. On more than one occasion, he did extensive research to answer questions on properties that I simply could not answer on my own. He was very personable and loyal to us. When current owners would show up and start to question us or ask why we chose to get certain inspections done. Byron was quick to politely answer these questions and deescalate a situation prior to it possibly escalating. He never hovered over us while we looked at different houses and properties. However, he was always right there nearby in case we had any questions or concerns. Byron was genuine and honest when it came to what was going on with a house (good or bad). He was always quick in his response when I reached out to him, and if he didn't know the answer to something, he was always quick to figure it out. He made purchasing a house far less stressful than it could have been. He gave us constant updates throughout the entire process, and he did a wonderful job tailoring his property search to our needs. Byron was an absolute joy to work with, and I do recommend him to anyone looking for any kind of property or home in the area. Thanks Byron!
-Jaden P.



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