Let's Find *Home*

Your Complete
Step-By-Step Guide
to purchasing a
home.

Presented by Your Realtor
Max Ferguson
Broker + Owner at MAX Realty

Hi There!

Your home search starts here

Thanks for reaching out on maxrealtyco.com. Along with this guide, you're getting a short list of homes I picked by hand based on what you've been looking at. Not an automated feed. I read every listing myself before it goes to you.

This guide walks through the whole process, from pre-approval to closing day, including the Colorado specifics most guides skip: earnest money, inspection deadlines, radon, metro districts.

Questions? Text or call 719-749-3115. Need to sell your current place first? Say so and I'll send your equity range too.

MAX FERGUSON

Responsible Broker | MAX Realty

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max@maxrealtyco.com

Serving Castle Pines, Castle Rock, Parker, Highlands Ranch & the Front Range

@maxrealtyco **maxrealtyco.com**

Client Testimonials

What our clients say:

Max was amazing. He is extremely informative and patient throughout the process. I was looking for a particular setup/situation- a duplex to be exact- and he was on top of it for me. He never made me feel pressured and made sure we got the best deal possible. Today was a great day and I look forward to continue working with him.

JUSTIN AND FAMILY

Max was great to work with. He spent a lot of time making sure we understand the process completely and was also patient with us as we found the right house. I would recommend Max for any of your real estate needs.

DAWSON AND SAMANTHA

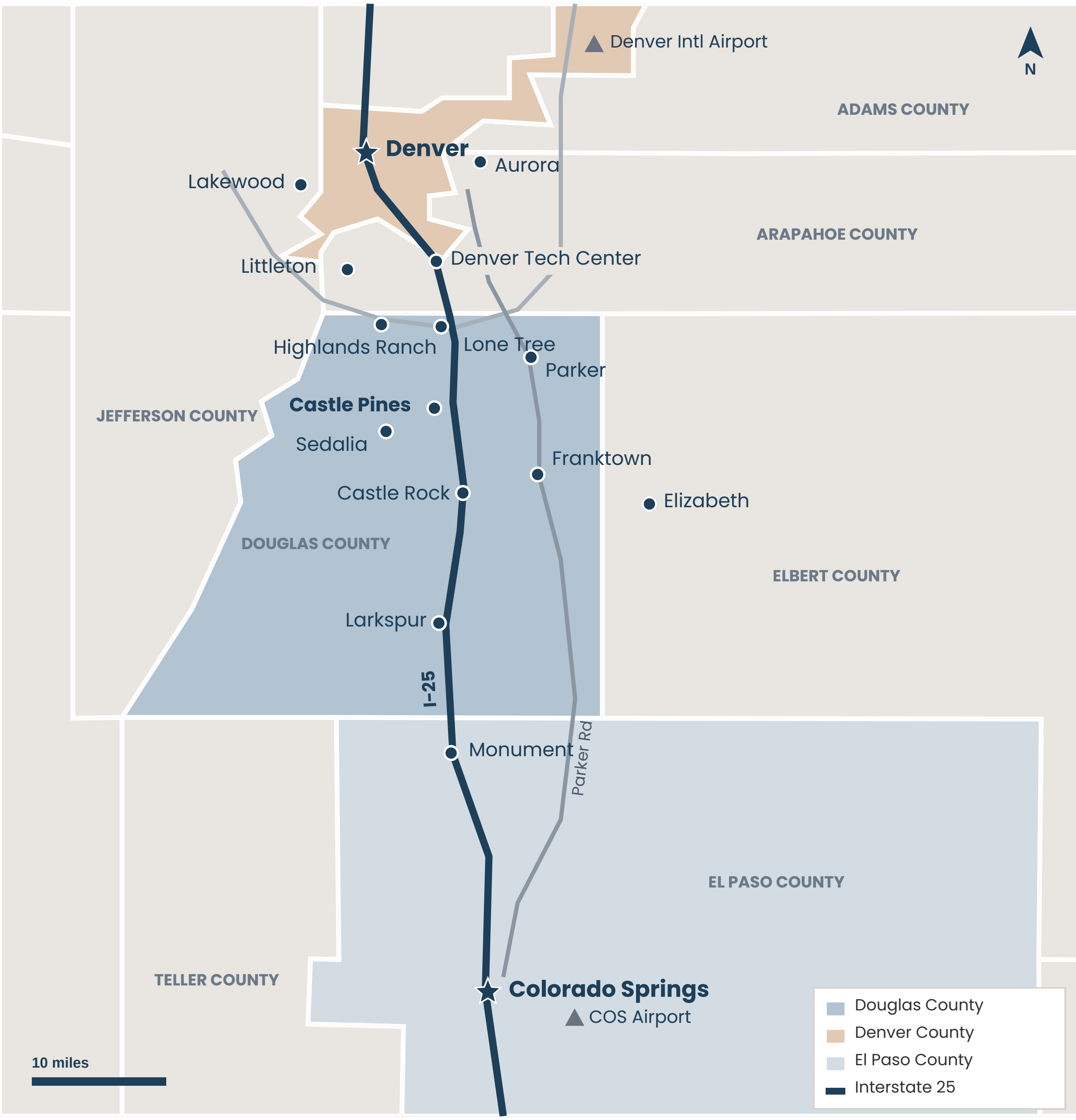
We had a great experience working with Max! He was approachable, knowledgeable, patient, and a lot of fun to work with during our house buying process! He made himself available to us for any and all questions and helped us find the perfect house in a great neighborhood!

DAPHNE AND NICK

Scan to read more of my Google reviews.

Where I Work

Douglas County, Denver, and Colorado Springs



TYPICAL DRIVE TIMES

Castle Rock → downtown Denver: 35–45 min
Castle Rock → Colorado Springs: 40–45 min
Castle Rock → Denver Intl Airport: 45–55 min (E-470)

Castle Pines or Parker → Denver Tech Center: 15–25 min
Highlands Ranch → downtown Denver: 25–35 min
Outside rush hour. I-25 at peak can add 15–30 minutes.

Home Buying

Step-by-Step Timeline

This page outlines **a high level overview** for the process of buying a home, offering a clear timeline to guide you through each phase. Each phase has a few key action items. Stick to the order and the whole thing stays organized and low-stress, even in a busy market.

Tip:
Phase 1-4 are best done as soon as possible but vary by situation!

Phase 1 (Asap)

Lender Pre-Approval

(skip if paying cash or by other means!)

Phase 2 (Asap)

Home Search: Needs and Wants

Phase 3 (Asap)

Home Search: Curated lists and touring

Phase 4 (Asap)

Make an Offer

Phase 5 (~30-45 days)

Under Contract

Phase 6

Closing

How Much Do You REALLY Need?

Tip:

- **Down payments come in all shapes and sizes. 3%, 5% and 20% all work.**
- **Gift funds from family are allowed on most loans.**

Example: $600,000 Home

~$30,000

*is the **least** amount you will generally need. Some cases such as VA loans can have **$0 out of pocket at closing! *ask me how!****

Key Points

DOWN PAYMENT

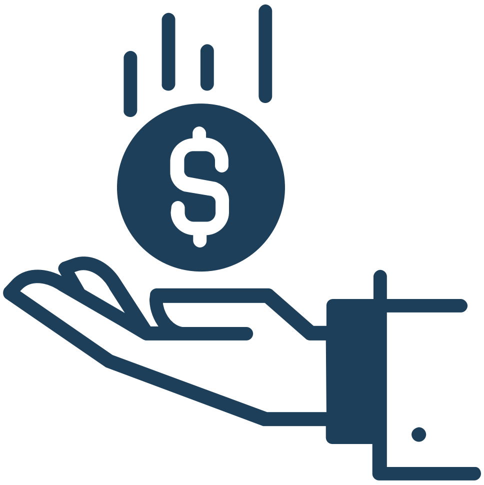
A typical down payment is **between 3% and 20%** of the home’s purchase price.

CLOSING COSTS

Lender, title and prepaid items usually run **2% to 5% of the purchase price.**

RESERVES

Lenders often prefer to see **at least 2 months** of mortgage payments in reserve for stability.



Other costs to plan for: earnest money (usually about 1% of the price, credited back to you at closing), the inspection, the appraisal, and your first year of homeowner's insurance.

Getting Pre-Approved

The very first step of the home buying process is to get pre-approved by a lender. You will give the lender your financial information and they will come up with your range of affordability. They look at credit, income, monthly debts, savings and job history. When an offer is made, they will send us an email/letter stating you are pre-approved to include with the offer.

Don't understand something your lender says? Stop and ask for clarification. This is your home buying journey, and you deserve to understand the process every step of the way.

Talking to a lender as soon as possible is one of the best ways to succeed. If you aren't qualified, they will guide you through steps to better prepare for a purchase in the future. (It took me, Max, five years from my first lender conversation to buying my first place. Their tips paved the way.)

Questions To Ask Your Lender

1. What type of loan do you recommend for me? Why? There's no one type of mortgage loan that's superior to another, it all depends on the situation. Whichever you choose, you need to know why it's best 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. Certain grants and loans help for low down payment situations.

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. What will my closing costs be? Are they part of my loan, or will I pay them in cash at closing? Remember, closing costs usually run 2-5% of the purchase price so you need to know how they'll be covered. Your lender will break down how your specific offer and loan affect what you will end up paying.

Home Search

Searching Strategically

Before we hop into the home search, I like to advise my clients to create a "Needs" list and a "Wants" list. This will help us to really focus on the things that are most important in your future home.

Needs are the non-negotiable features; the features you simply must have in your next home. Wants are the ones you'd like to have, but you can add or change down the road or live without.

Don't feel like your first draft has to be your final draft. As we tour homes needs and wants will change, keep communication with us open so we can best serve your needs on the search!

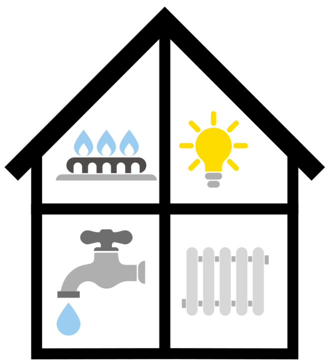
Wants and needs look different for everybody!

NEEDS MIGHT BE THINGS LIKE:

- Enough square footage
- Sufficient bedrooms and bathrooms
- First floor primary bedroom
- Close proximity to work and school
- Attached two-car garage
- Kitchen pantry

WANTS MAY LOOK MORE LIKE:

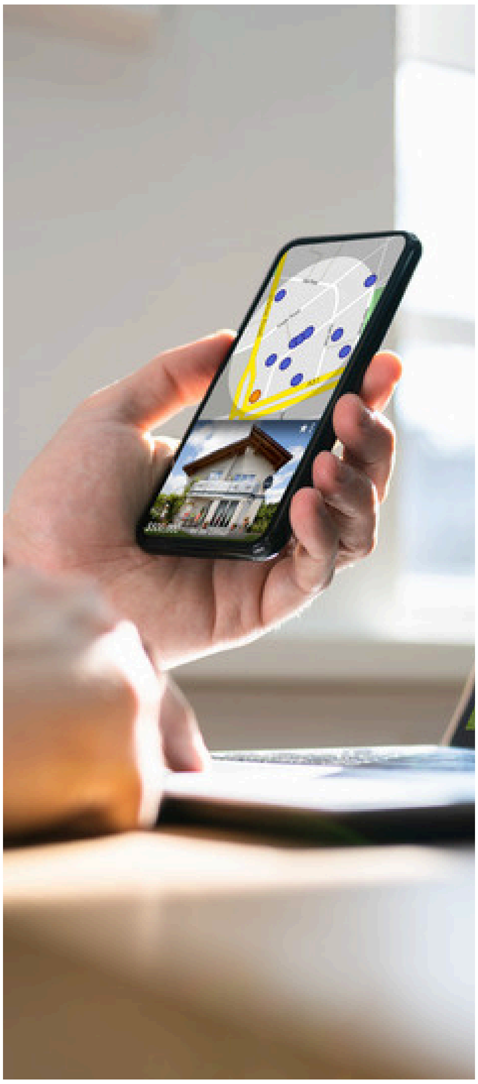
- Specific paint or exterior color
- Pool, jacuzzi, or other exterior water feature
- Fenced-in backyard
- Specific carpet, hardwood floors, or tile
- Kitchen amenities like countertops and appliances
- Walk-in shower or double vanity in the primary suite



Home Search

Searching Strategically Online

Now that you've got your wants vs. needs list in hand, the fun really begins! It's time to talk about narrowing down those listings and deciding which ones to see in person. I'll set you up with a saved search on maxrealtyco.com, labeled "first draft," so new listings that fit hit your inbox the day they list. We tighten the criteria as we go.



- **Start broad and narrow down as we go**

You don't want to restrict your search so tightly that you only have a handful of homes to view. Keeping your wants vs. needs list in mind, expand your geographic search, and add $25-50K to your max price since sellers may be willing to negotiate.

- **If you find something that catches your eye, check out the Google Street View.**

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

- **See a home that wasn't on our list? Let us know!**

Sometimes good homes don't show up in our search because of mistakes or missing information. If you find a home you like, just send me the address. We will look it up and get the details for you.

Check two things on every listing: HOA dues, and whether it sits in a metro district. Both change your monthly payment, and metro districts are common in Parker and Castle Rock.

Home Search

Making the most of your showings

You're SO READY to get inside those homes on your shortlist and see for yourself if one of them is soon-to-be your new address. I know you're excited, but you gotta go into those showings calm, cool, and with your thinking cap on. Here's a quick list of how to do just that:

Before a showing, read over your wants vs. needs list and revisit your budget.
Having this fresh on your mind will help you stay objective and focused. Take pictures and videos to jog your memory later and to help you process with friends and family.

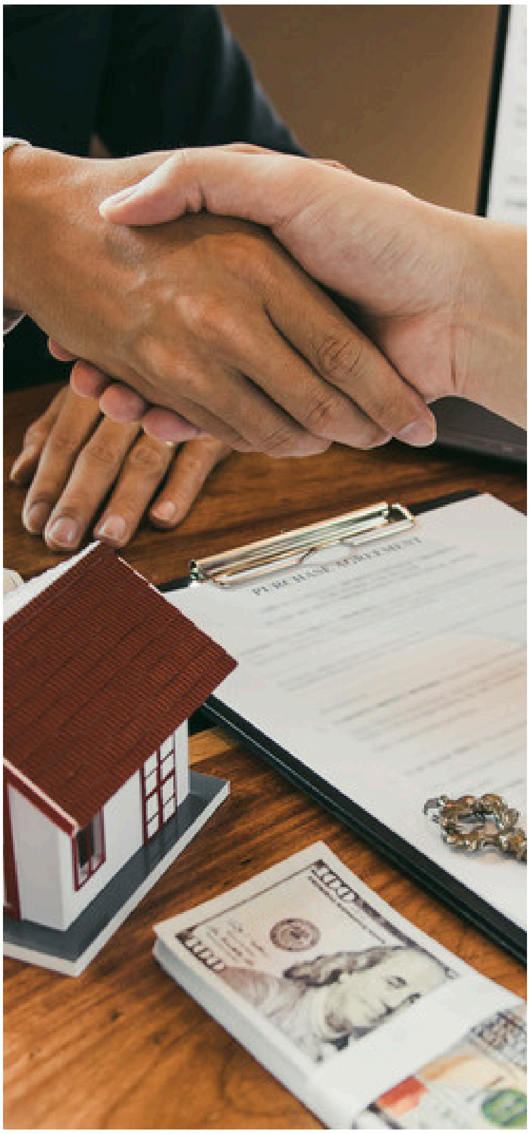
Don't let yourself get distracted by decor or staging.
These things will be gone by the time you move in, so try to stay focused on the things that cannot be changed as easily.

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.

Make an Offer

Tips for Making an Offer Stand Out

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.



- Include a pre-approval letter that shows that you're serious, qualified, and ready to purchase.
- Put your best foot, and price, forward. You may only get one shot, so make it count. We will guide you on what we think is fair based on an in-depth analysis.
- Use comparable sales (comps) and trends as a guide, but go in with a number that works for you and stick to it. If this offer doesn't work, we move on to the next.
- Earnest money, usually about 1% of the price, is due a few days after acceptance and counts toward your closing funds. You get it back if you terminate within your deadlines.
- Contingencies (inspection, appraisal, loan) protect you. We decide together which to keep and which deadlines to shorten to strengthen the offer. A fast close helps too, but some sellers want more time, so we always ask.

We're under contract... now what?

Your offer was accepted, great job!

This is often the hardest step. Before the contract, sellers have more negotiation power. After it's accepted and the home is "under contract," buyers usually have more.

Here's a quick look at what happens next now that the home is under contract.

- First, we will carefully review important dates and information you will need to know to ensure a successful closing. The key deadlines are laid out on the next page.

- You'll need to communicate with your mortgage lender to firm up financing details.

- Once the home inspection report comes in, we may need to negotiate any repairs with your seller.

- Towards the closing date, you'll hear from the title company to schedule your closing.

Key Contract Deadlines

What happens when, once you're under contract

Milestone	Timing	What it means
Earnest money due	1-3 days after acceptance	Wired to the title company, usually about 1% of the price. It counts toward your closing funds.
Title and HOA documents	About 1-2 weeks in	Title commitment plus HOA or metro district documents. We review them for surprises.
Inspection objection	About 7-10 days in	Inspections are done. By this date we ask for repairs or credits, or terminate.
Inspection resolution	A few days after objection	Seller responds. No agreement by this date and you can walk away with your earnest money.
Appraisal deadline	About 2-3 weeks in	The lender's appraisal is in. If it comes in low, we renegotiate or you can terminate.
Loan conditions deadline	About a week before closing	Your last day to terminate for financing reasons and keep your earnest money.
Closing	Usually 30-45 days	Final walk-through, sign at the title company, funds land, and you get the keys.

These dates come from Section 3 of the Colorado contract and vary for each deal depending on the needs of the buyer and seller.

Under Contract: Home Inspections & Insurance

WHAT IS A HOME INSPECTION?

The inspection will uncover any issues in the home that would have otherwise been unknown. You will receive a report of the inspection we will review and decide if we want to ask for repairs, credits, or exit the contract due to too much work being needed.

WHAT DOES "INSPECTION PERIOD" MEAN?

During the inspection period you hire a professional to inspect the home. If the report turns up issues, we can ask the seller to make repairs, give a credit, or reduce the price. If we can't agree by the resolution deadline, you can terminate and get your earnest money back.

THE HOME SEEMS FINE. DO I REALLY NEED AN INSPECTION?

Some of the costliest problems are hard to spot: leaks, sewer line damage, foundation issues, faulty wiring, a tired roof. In Colorado I also recommend a radon test (Douglas County is a high-radon area, and mitigation is routine) and a sewer scope on any resale home.

Homeowner's insurance

Get quotes during the inspection period, not the week of closing. Hail and wildfire drive Colorado premiums, so I quote the area before you fall for the house. Goosehead Insurance in Lakewood shops multiple carriers for my clients. Ask me for the intro.

Under Contract: Appraisal and Title

APPRAISAL

An appraisal is an estimate of the value of the property by a licensed professional appraiser. The lender orders it early in the contract period and you pay for it. The goal of the appraisal is to verify the value of the property for the lender and to protect you from overpaying. If you are using a loan, the contract is contingent upon whether the appraisal comes in at or above the purchase price.

FINALIZE YOUR MORTGAGE

Your lender will begin to finalize your mortgage once the appraisal and inspection are completed. We are looking for the "clear-to-close" from them after a final underwriting of your finances.

TITLE

The title company will conduct a title search to ensure the property is legitimate and find if there are any outstanding mortgage 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 valid, the title company will issue a title insurance policy which protects lenders or owners against claims or legal fees that may arise over ownership of the property. This will also be a part of your closing costs.

Closing Time!

You've gotten the "clear-to-close" and we've scheduled our closing date and time. Let's answer some questions you may have about closing day:

Q: When do we do the final walk-through?
A: One last look before closing to confirm the agreed repairs were done and nothing new has come up. We usually do it the day before or the morning of.

Q: Who will be at closing?
A: You, me, and the closer from the title company. Sometimes the seller and their agent, sometimes your lender. Remote closings are common now, so you can sign from almost anywhere.

Q: What will I do?
A: Stretch those fingers and get ready to sign, sign, sign!

Q: What should I bring?
A: Bring proper identification and get your wire transfer or cashier's check ready. One rule that protects you: never wire money off emailed instructions alone. Call the title company at a number you looked up yourself and confirm the wiring details by voice. Wire fraud is real and the money does not come back. Title, the agent, or the lender will request any other documents specific to your situation. The closing process is relatively simple but be prepared for A LOT of paperwork. The good news is once you've signed the last page, it's time to get a hold of those keys and celebrate!

Next steps

- [ ] Tell me what you're looking for: areas, price range, beds, must-haves.
- [ ] I send you the 3-5 best matches, hand-picked, plus a saved search so new listings hit your inbox the day they list.
- [ ] Need to sell your current place first? Say so and I'll send your current equity range, from real comps, no strings.

ONE MORE THING

Scan the code to read what my clients say about working with me. Then text me at 719-749-3115 with anything you're wondering about.

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