KEYS & CASTLES REALTY · FREE GUIDE

The 2026 East Bay Home Seller's Guide

How Hayward, Fremont, Union City and San Leandro sellers are netting more — with less stress — in this market.

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01 · PRICING

Price it like a launch, not a wish

The biggest mistake I see: pricing to 'test the market.' In the East Bay, the first 14 days decide everything. Homes priced within 3% of comparable sales get 2–4x the showings of homes priced 5%+ over.

- **The comp method:** I pull every comparable sale within half a mile from the last 90 days — then we walk through each one together, line by line.
- **The bracket trick:** Pricing at $899,000 instead of $905,000 puts you in every search filter up to $900k. One filter bracket can mean 30% more views.
- **The 7-day rule:** If we don't have strong activity in 7 days, we adjust fast. Hope is not a strategy.

> **Maya's take:** Last spring I listed a Harder Road home at $1,049,000 against advice to go $1.1M. Eleven offers. Sold at $1,132,000. Pricing under the top comp created the competition that beat it.

02 · PREP

The 14-day launch plan

You don't need a renovation. You need a plan:

- **Days 1–3 — Declutter & depersonalize.** Half the knickknacks, all the family photos. Buyers need to picture their life here.
- **Days 4–7 — Deep clean & small fixes.** Caulk, touch-up paint, new switch plates. A $400 handyman visit returns thousands in perceived value.
- **Days 8–10 — Staging consult & photography.** I include a staging consultation and professional twilight photography on every listing. Phone photos cost you 5 figures.
- **Days 11–14 — Pre-market & launch.** Coming-soon buzz to my buyer network, then a Thursday launch for weekend open houses.

03 · NUMBERS

What selling actually costs

No surprises — here's the honest math on a $1,000,000 sale:

- **Agent compensation:** negotiable, typically 4–5% total in our market — we agree on this in writing before we list.
- **Closing costs:** roughly 1–2% (title, escrow, transfer taxes, prorations).
- **Repairs/credits:** budget 0.5–1% for inspection findings.
- **Your walkaway:** sale price minus mortgage payoff minus the above. I run this sheet with you before you sign anything.

> **Remember:** the cheapest agent is rarely the cheapest outcome. A 1% better sale price on $1M is $10,000 — ten times a 0.5% commission difference.

NEXT STEP

Wondering what your home could sell for?

Get a real valuation built from recent comparable sales around your home — not an algorithm's guess. Free, no obligation, and I'll walk you through every comp.

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