



# **Divorce & Real Estate: A Compassionate Guide for Fraser Valley Homeowners**

# Message From the Author

If you're reading this guide, you're probably facing one of the most emotionally difficult periods of your life. Going through a divorce is painful enough without having to figure out what to do with the home you once shared.

I created this guide because I've seen too many people navigate this process feeling lost, pressured, and uncertain about their options. As a real estate agent serving the Fraser Valley, I've helped other families through divorce-related property decisions, and I understand that this isn't just a financial transaction, it's about closing one chapter and creating stability for the next.

What makes me different? Before real estate, I spent years in the construction industry, which means I can help you understand the true value and condition of your property when making decisions about buyouts, sales, or renovations. I also specialize in complex transactions that other agents often avoid; including divorce sales, where sensitivity, discretion, and problem-solving skills matter as much as market knowledge.

But here's what matters most during this transition: You deserve an agent who respects your privacy, understands the emotional weight of your situation, and focuses on protecting your interests rather than just closing a deal quickly. Someone who can coordinate with lawyers and mediators, explain your options clearly, and help you make decisions that support your financial fresh start. This guide covers everything from understanding your legal options to preparing your home for sale, managing the timeline, and protecting your equity. There's no pressure here—just clear, compassionate information to help you move forward.

Take your time with it. And when you're ready to talk through your specific situation, I'm here to help.

Welcome to your next chapter.



*Matt Paisley*

**RE/MAX**  
NYDA REALTY



Phone: 604-991-5028

Email: [Matt@TheWelcomeMatt.ca](mailto:Matt@TheWelcomeMatt.ca)

Web: <https://TheWelcomeMatt.ca>

# Navigating Property Decisions During Life Transitions

Divorce is one of life's most challenging transitions, and making decisions about your family home adds another layer of complexity. Whether you're in Langley, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Mission, Hope, or Agassiz, you're facing questions that feel overwhelming: Should we sell? Can one person buy out the other? What's our home actually worth?



**DECISION  
A**

**DECISION  
B**

# Common Real Estate Scenarios in Divorce

- **Selling the Property:** Both parties agree to sell and divide the proceeds. This is often the cleanest break and provides both individuals with funds to start fresh.
- **Buyout Arrangement:** One spouse purchases the other's equity stake and refinances the mortgage solely in their name. This allows one person to keep the family home.
- **Delayed Sale:** The couple agrees to postpone selling until a future date, often to minimize disruption for children or wait for better market conditions.
- **Co-ownership Post-Divorce:** In rare cases, former spouses maintain joint ownership as an investment or rental property. This requires clear legal agreements.

## Important Considerations for the Fraser Valley Market

The Fraser Valley real estate market has unique characteristics that impact divorce-related property decisions.

- **Market Timing:** Rural properties in areas like Hope and Agassiz may take longer to sell than suburban homes in Langley or Abbotsford. Understanding seasonal trends is crucial.
- **Property Values:** Getting an accurate, current valuation is essential for fair division. I can provide a comparative market analysis specific to your neighborhood.
- **Mortgage Considerations:** If one spouse wants to keep the home, they'll need to qualify for refinancing on their own income. I can connect you with mortgage professionals experienced in divorce situations.
- **Disclosure Requirements:** British Columbia has specific disclosure obligations for sellers.

Understanding these early prevents complications later.



# **The Real Estate Process During Divorce**

## **Step 1: Obtain a Professional Valuation**

Before making any decisions, you need to know what your property is worth in today's market. I provide a detailed comparative market analysis that examines recent sales of comparable properties in your area, current market conditions and trends specific to your Fraser Valley community, unique features of your property that impact value, and estimated net proceeds after selling costs. This information gives both parties a realistic foundation for negotiations and helps your legal team make informed recommendations.

## **Step 2: Review Your Legal Agreements**

Important: While I can guide you through the real estate process, all legal decisions must be made in consultation with your family law attorney. I work collaboratively with legal professionals to ensure smooth transactions. Your separation agreement should address property division, timing of sale, responsibility for ongoing costs, and how proceeds will be distributed. Having these details clarified before listing prevents disputes during an already stressful time.

## **Step 3: Prepare Your Property**

Even during divorce, presenting your home well matters for achieving the best possible price. I can help coordinate necessary repairs or improvements that provide return on investment, professional staging or decluttering guidance, photography and marketing materials, and inspection issues that should be addressed proactively.

## **Step 4: Navigate Offers and Negotiations**

I serve as a neutral professional advisor, ensuring both parties receive clear information about offer terms, conditions, and implications, fair market value assessment, negotiation strategies, and timeline considerations. I communicate with both parties (and their legal counsel, if requested) to maintain transparency and facilitate smooth decision-making.



# Financial Considerations & Understanding the Costs of Selling

When calculating net proceeds from a sale, consider these typical costs.

- **Real Estate Commission:** Typically 5–7% of first \$100,000 of sale price and 2.50% of the balance, split between listing and buyer agents.
- **Legal Fees:** \$1,500–\$2,500 for conveyancing services.
- **Property Transfer Tax:** May apply in buyout scenarios; typically not on arm's length sales
- **Mortgage Discharge:** Penalties for early mortgage payoff (if applicable), plus discharge fees.
- **Repairs/Staging:** Variable based on property condition and market strategy.

These items together determine your net, so it is essential to model scenarios before making commitments. I can prepare itemized estimates customized to your property and likely buyer profile so both parties share a common set of numbers.

## Tax Implications

Consult with a tax professional regarding your specific situation. The following is general information only. Key tax considerations in divorce real estate transactions include the **Principal Residence Exemption**, where capital gains may be exempt if the property was your principal residence; **Deemed Disposition Rules**, since transfers between spouses during marriage separation may have special tax treatment; and **Timing Considerations**, because the timing of your sale relative to separation date can impact tax obligations. Request your personalized net proceeds estimate today so we can align financial expectations with your legal and tax advice.

***"Request your personalized net proceeds estimate today."***

# PROCEEDS OF SALE WORKSHEET

EXPECTED SALE PRICE

CURRENT MORTGAGE BALANCE

REAL ESTATE FEES (5-7% OF FIRST  
\$100,000 + 2.5% OF BALANCE)

MORTGAGE DISCHARGE /  
PENALTIES

PROPERTY PREP COSTS (REPAIRS,  
PAINTING, CLEANING ETC.)

OUTSTANDING PROPERTY TAXES

STRATA FEES OWING

UTILITIES OWING

## CALCULATION

EXPECTED SALE PRICE

LESS: MORTGAGE BALANCE

LESS: REAL ESTATE FEES

LESS: DISCHARGE / PENALTIES

LESS: PROPERTY PREP

LESS: OUTSTANDING FEES & TAXES  
& UTILITIES

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NET PROCEEDS TO SPLIT

# BUYOUT SCENARIO WORKSHEET

CURRENT APPRAISED VALUE

MORTGAGE BALANCE:

LEGAL FEES

PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

MORTGAGE REFINANCING

## CALCULATION

CURRENT APPRAISED VALUE

LESS: MORTGAGE BALANCE

GROSS EQUITY (VALUE -  
MORTGAGE):

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GROSS EQUITY (VALUE -  
MORTGAGE):

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LESS: LEGAL FEES

LESS: PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

LESS: REFINANCING CHARGES

SUBTOTAL

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BUYOUT = (SUBTOTAL X 50%)



expenses	44.0	10%
tax	84.0	2%
	10.5	14%
	73.5	



# Fraser Valley Market Insights & Understanding Your Local Market

Each Fraser Valley community has distinct characteristics that affect selling strategy.

- **Langley and Abbotsford:** These larger communities typically offer quicker sale timelines and broader buyer pools. Suburban properties here appeal to families seeking good schools, amenities, and highway access.
- **Chilliwack and Mission:** These communities balance suburban convenience with rural charm. Properties here attract buyers seeking more land and a slower pace, with the trade-off of slightly longer commutes
- **Hope and Agassiz:** Rural properties in these eastern Fraser Valley communities require specialized marketing. Buyers here prioritize space, recreation access, and affordability. Sales may take longer but can attract motivated buyers seeking these specific qualities.

Tailoring pricing, staging, and marketing exposure to these nuances helps shorten time on market and supports stronger offers even during emotionally complex sales.

## Timing Your Sale

While divorce timelines don't always align with ideal market seasons, understanding patterns helps with planning.

- **Spring and Summer** are peak activity periods with the most buyers and typically the highest prices
- **Fall** remains active but with somewhat less competition from other sellers.
- **Winter** is a quieter market but serious buyers remain engaged; properties may take longer to sell, though negotiability can improve.



# Working With Me & What Makes Divorce Real Estate Different

Divorce-related property sales require a unique approach. I provide neutral, professional service; representing the property sale, not individual interests; ensuring fair treatment for both parties. Confidential communication means all discussions are handled with discretion and sensitivity to your privacy. Clear documentation records every agreement, communication, and decision to prevent misunderstandings. Coordination with legal teams ensures the real estate process aligns with your separation agreement, court orders, and timelines. While I am not a counselor, I understand the emotional weight of these decisions and approach every interaction with compassion, patience, and practical clarity.

## My Commitment to You

Throughout this process, you can expect transparent communication, with regular updates and prompt responses to questions from both parties. You will benefit from expert market knowledge, including a deep understanding of Fraser Valley neighborhoods and current market conditions. Strategic marketing will be deployed to attract qualified buyers and achieve optimal results, including high-caliber photography, targeted online exposure, and thoughtful positioning. I maintain a problem-solving focus, proactively identifying and resolving potential issues before they become obstacles, and I respect your timeline, understanding that legal and personal factors may impact your schedule. These commitments guide every step from valuation through closing.

# Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Do both spouses need to be present for meetings and showings?**  
Not necessarily. I can coordinate separate meetings if that's more comfortable, and showings can be scheduled around individual availability.
2. **What if we disagree on listing price or offer acceptance?** I provide objective market data to inform these decisions. If disagreement persists, your legal representatives can help facilitate resolution according to your separation agreement.
3. **How long does the typical divorce sale take in the Fraser Valley?**  
This varies significantly based on property location, condition, pricing strategy, and market conditions. I'll provide realistic timelines specific to your situation during our initial consultation.
4. **Can you work with our lawyers directly?** Absolutely. I regularly collaborate with legal professionals and am happy to communicate with attorneys to ensure alignment with your separation agreement.

***"Have more questions? Let's talk.  
I'm here to help."***

## Next Steps

Making decisions about your home during divorce is difficult, but you don't have to navigate this alone. I'm here to provide expert guidance, professional service, and compassionate support throughout the process. This guide has outlined options, market considerations, process steps, and financial factors so you can move forward with clarity and confidence, supported by objective data and empathetic service.

## Schedule Your Confidential Consultation

During our initial meeting, we'll discuss your specific situation and goals, the current market value of your property, realistic timelines and expectations, the steps ahead and how I can support you, and any questions or concerns you have. There's no pressure and no obligation.

Your fresh start deserves clarity and support. Let's navigate this transition together with compassion and expertise. Call me today; you don't have to do this alone.

*Matt Paisley*



Divorce Sale Specialist





# C H E C K L I S T

## **PHASE 1: INITIAL DECISIONS & PLANNING**

- Review separation agreement regarding property division
- Consult with family lawyer about property rights and obligations
- Discuss with spouse: sell vs. buyout options
- Determine timeline constraints (court deadlines, financial needs, etc.)
- Agree on decision-making process for property matters

## **PHASE 2: FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**

- Get current mortgage balance from lender
- Request mortgage penalty calculation (if breaking early)
- Obtain property appraisal (cost: typically \$300-500 Optional)
- Review property tax status and amounts owing
- Check for any liens or encumbrances on title (your realtor can do this)
- Calculate estimated net proceeds from sale

# C H E C K L I S T

- Consult with accountant re: tax implications
- If buyout: Get pre-approval for new mortgage amount
- If buyout: Calculate total cash required (buyout + costs)

## **PHASE 3: PROPERTY PREPARATION (IF SELLING)**

- Conduct walk-through to identify needed repairs
- Complete essential repairs and maintenance
- Address any safety or building code issues
- Deep clean entire property
- Declutter and depersonalize all spaces
- Touch up paint where needed
- Arrange for property disclosure statement
- Consider pre-listing home inspection (optional)

# C H E C K L I S T

## **PHASE 4: SELECTING YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT**

- Verify agent understands confidentiality requirements
- Review comparative market analysis (CMA)
- Confirm agent can coordinate with lawyers/mediators
- Review and sign listing agreement (both spouses typically required)
- Discuss showing procedures and access

## **PHASE 5: LISTING & MARKETING**

- Professional photography completed
- Listing description approved by both parties
- Property listed on MLS and marketing platforms
- Install lockbox and arrange showing instructions
- Establish communication protocol for offers
- Agree on offer review and decision process

# C H E C K L I S T

## **PHASE 6: REVIEWING OFFERS**

- Review all offers together or through representatives
- Compare offer prices, terms, and conditions
- Consider closing dates and possession timelines
- Review any special conditions or requests
- Both parties sign acceptance

## **PHASE 7: CLOSING PROCESS**

- Lawyer reviews contract and title
- Cancel or transfer home insurance
- Notify utility companies of closing date
- Return all keys, garage openers, security codes and complete final walkthrough
- Sign closing documents as scheduled
- Confirm receipt of proceeds with lawyer

# C H E C K L I S T

## **PHASE 8: POST-CLOSING MATTERS**

- Confirm mortgage discharge registered
- Receive final accounting from lawyer
- Distribute net proceeds as per agreement
- File any required tax documents
- Close or transfer joint accounts related to property
- Update addresses with CRA, banks, etc.
- Keep copies of all documentation for records

# BUYOUT ALTERNATIVE CHECKLIST

**(If one party is purchasing the other's share)**

- Obtain independent property appraisal
- Calculate buyout amount (typically 50% of equity)
- Get pre-approval for new/refinanced mortgage
- Consult with mortgage broker about best options
- Budget for Property Transfer Tax (may be exempt - consult accountant)
- Arrange for legal fees (transfer and refinancing)
- Coordinate with family lawyer and real estate lawyer
- Ensure buying party can qualify independently
- Confirm buying party can afford carrying costs alone
- Remove other party from mortgage and title
- Update home insurance to single owner
- Complete all documentation by agreed deadline