LANDMARK
ELITE HOMES

# Buyer handbook

A HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

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# Thank you!

As your trusted Landmark Elite Homes Real Estate Salesperson, my mission is to help you find the perfect home. I'm committed to searching tirelessly for properties that match your vision and negotiating the best possible terms on your behalf.

Throughout the entire process, you'll stay well-informed and confident in every decision you make. My goal is to make your home-buying journey smooth, stress-free, and successful because your satisfaction is my highest priority.


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preparing
to buy

# GETTING STARTED

We start every home-buying process with the proper research and preparation. Your checklist for this stage includes the following goals:

- ✓ Determine the type of home you want
- ✓ Determine where you want to live
- ✓ Find a Landmark Elite Homes real estate agent to help you

# HOME-BUYING PROCESS

1. MEET WITH YOUR LANDMARK ELITE HOMES AGENT
2. GET PRE-APPROVED
3. FIND YOUR HOME
4. OFFER & ACCEPTANCE
5. ORDER INSPECTION & APPRAISAL
6. PREPARE FOR CLOSING
7. GET YOUR KEYS

# HOME BUYER

## WORDS YOU SHOULD KNOW

### CLOSING COSTS

Taxes, insurance, and other lender expenses paid at the end of the transaction by the seller, buyer, or both.

### APPRAISAL

Property and/or land valuation completed by an appraiser who determines the market value - typically 1-4 weeks.

### INSPECTION

A visual and mechanical examination of a home to identify defects and assess the home's condition.

### DOWN PAYMENT

This is what you typically pay up front to close the sale on a house. Usually, 3-20% of the purchase price. Not the same as closing costs.

### EARNEST MONEY

A deposit made to a seller shows the buyer's good faith in a transaction. Typically, 1-3% of the purchase price.

### TITLE INSURANCE

Insurance to protect the lender or owner from any claims related to the title of the property. Usually paid for by the buyer.

### DEBT TO INCOME

DTI is the comparison of your monthly debt payments to your monthly income before taxes, expressed as a percentage.

### CLOSING

Usually, a meeting that includes documents, signatures, checks, and everything needed to buy or sell the house.

### ESCROW

Funds that are deposited with a third party and held until a specific date is reached and/or a specific condition is met.

# BUYER FAQ

## WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP OF THE HOME BUYING PROCESS?

You'll need to get a pre-approval unless you're paying cash for a house. To find out how much home you can afford, you need to get pre-approved for a loan first.

## HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED FOR A DOWN PAYMENT?

Usually, 3-5% of the purchase price of the house.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BUY A HOME?

Typically, around 30 to 60 days after acceptance.

## WHAT OTHER FEES ARE THERE, BESIDES THE DOWNPAYMENT?

Mainly, loan origination and closing costs are at about 2% to 4% of the loan amount. You'll also have to pay for a home inspector and a home warranty, HOA fees, insurance, home maintenance, and more.

## CAN I BUY AND SELL MY CURRENT ONE AT THE SAME TIME?

Absolutely! Depending on your situation, Landmark Elite Homes will recommend buying or selling first.

## WHAT KIND OF CREDIT SCORE DO I NEED TO BUY A HOME?

A score of 620 or higher may get you better lending terms. Please speak with a lender.

## WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE KEYS TO THE NEW HOUSE?

You'll get the keys to your new home on closing day once the transaction is complete and fully funded.

# financials

$$$

# GETTING PRE-APPROVED

A pre-approval letter in your hands can turn the home offers you make into irresistible invitations. So before you start looking for a home, getting your finances in order is crucial.

Like the first stage of the buying process, shopping for a loan and getting pre-approved are best done a month or two ahead of your home search. Most pre-approvals can be completed within a few days once all required documentation has been submitted.

# PRE-APPROVAL CHECKLIST

- [ ] **PROOF OF INCOME:**
  Provide documentation of your income, such as W-2 forms, tax returns, and pay stubs for the past two years.

- [ ] **EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION:**
  Provide evidence of stable employment for at least two years, such as a letter from your employer or a verification of employment form.

- [ ] **CREDIT HISTORY:**
  Your lender will check your credit report to evaluate your creditworthiness, so make sure you have a good credit score and a clean credit history.

- [ ] **ASSETS:**
  You may need to provide documentation of all your assets, such as bank statements, investment accounts, and retirement accounts.

- [ ] **DEBT OBLIGATIONS:**
  Provide documentation of all your current debt obligations, such as credit cards, car loans, and student loans.

- [ ] **DOWN PAYMENT:**
  Determine the amount of your down payment and provide documentation of the source of funds for the down payment, such as bank statements or gift letters.

- [ ] **PRE-APPROVAL APPLICATION:**
  Complete a pre-approval application with your lender, providing all the necessary information and documentation.

- [ ] **PROPERTY INFORMATION:**
  Provide information on the property you intend to purchase, including the address, purchase price, and any other relevant details.

# FINANCIAL MUST-HAVES

## DOWN PAYMENT

Although you'll pay this at closing, proof of this is also what will help you secure your mortgage.

## EARNEST MONEY

When you make an offer on a home, you will be expected to pay a deposit as a show of good faith. It will be applied to your down payment or closing costs.

## INSURANCE

You may need to pay for mortgage insurance depending on your down payment and loan. You are required to purchase both Title Insurance and Homeowners Insurance.

## CLOSING FEES

Be prepared to cover the cost of attorney fees, surveys, appraisals, and documentation.

# MORTGAGE LOAN TYPES

| LOAN TYPE | WHO QUALIFIES | DOWN PAYMENT | UPFRONT MORTGAGE INSURANCE | MONTHLY MORTGAGE INSURANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FHA LOANS FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION** | Anyone who meets the minimum credit and income levels | At least 3.5% of purchase price | 1.75% of loan amount | 0.07% of the principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was below 5% |
| **VA LOANS DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS** | Current service members<br>Veterans with honorable discharge<br>Some surviving spouses | NONE | 0 | 0 |
| **USDA LOANS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE** | Anyone who meets minimum credit and income levels who is buying a home in a USDA designated area | 0 | 2% of the loan amount; can be rolled into mortgage | 0.03% of the remaining principal balance for the life of the loan, if down payment was 0 |
| **CONVENTIONAL MORTGAGES** | Anyone who meets the lender's credit, income, and debt level requirements | Varies from 3% to 20%, but typically ranges from 5% to 20% | 0 | If the down payment is less than 20% mortgage insurance runs as much as 0.21% of the loan each month |

*PLEASE VERIFY ALL INFORMATION ABOVE WITH A LICENSED MORTGAGE LENDER, AS TERMS AND CONDITIONS MAY VARY BASED ON INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL QUALIFICATIONS.

finding
your home

# BUYER QUESTIONNAIRE

## CONTACT INFO

BUYER'S NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

CO-BUYER'S NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

HAVE YOU BEEN PRE-APPROVED?

☐ YES ☐ NO

WHAT'S YOUR PRICE RANGE?

ARE YOU SELLING YOUR CURRENT HOME?

☐ YES ☐ NO

## DETAILS

BATHROOMS:
BEDROOMS:
DATE YOU NEED TO MOVE BY:

AREA:

STYLE OF HOME:

☐ HOUSE ☐ TOWNHOUSE ☐ CONDO

MOST IMPORTANT IN A HOME:

DEAL BREAKERS IN A HOME:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

# PICKING THE PERFECT HOME

Before you look for a home, you should know the type of property you're after. Is it a condo that meets your needs and preferences? Or is it a single-family home that fits your long-term goals?

To help you decide, consider the following factors:

### HOW MUCH YOU CAN AFFORD

Take into consideration your annual income, monthly expenses, and debt-to-income ratio, all of which will affect the mortgage loan you can afford.

### AGE OF THE PROPERTY

Landmark Elite Homes offers both historic homes and new construction. A resale property might be exactly what you need with a few minor tweaks. But if you're after a brand-new, move-in property, consider buying new construction.

### NON-NEGOTIABLES

List features that you absolutely need to have in your new house. Consider your proximity to your work and community services, nearby schools, home size, and the number of rooms you desire. This will help you figure out which type of property you need. *Remember, no home will check every single box, but the right one will feel just right.*

# FINDING THE RIGHT LOCATION

## CONSIDER THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Research the community where you plan to purchase a home. Look for features such as nearby schools, public transportation, shopping centers, parks, and entertainment options.

## CHECK THE LOCAL MARKET

Study the local real estate market to understand the property values, trends, and market conditions. Check the price of homes in the area to ensure that you are getting a fair deal.

## EVALUATE SURROUNDINGS

Take into account the property's surroundings, such as traffic noise, air pollution, and potential hazards. Consider the climate and weather patterns in the area.

## CHECK THE CRIME RATE

Research the crime rate in the neighborhood to ensure the safety of your family and property.

## PROXIMITY TO WORK

Consider the distance and ease of transportation to your workplace. Check traffic patterns, parking options, and commuting times.

## CHECK PROPERTY CONDITION

Examine the condition of the house, including its age, construction quality, and necessary repairs. Have a home inspection to determine if there are any major defects or issues.

## CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY

Think about the accessibility of the property to other amenities, such as hospitals, police stations, fire stations, and airports.

## DETERMINE PROPERTY VALUE

Assess the potential future value of the property based on location, surrounding developments, and community growth trends.

# THE OFFER PROCESS

## ONCE YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

We'll meet and review your offer together. Once the details are thoroughly reviewed and understood, the seller will have three options:

## 1 - ACCEPT THE OFFER AS WRITTEN

## 2 - DECLINE THE OFFER

If you feel the offer isn't close enough to your expectations to further negotiate this offer.

## 3 - COUNTER OFFER

If they agree to most the offer but want to change a few details, they can counter our offer with the new terms.

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away.

**ONCE AN OFFER IS ACCEPTED BY BOTH PARTIES, YOU ARE OFFICIALLY UNDER CONTRACT.**

# final steps & *closing*

# THINGS TO AVOID AFTER APPLYING FOR A MORTGAGE

Don't change bank accounts.

Don't apply for new credit or close any credit accounts.

Don't co-sign other loans for anyone.

Don't make any large purchases

Don't deposit cash into your bank accounts before speaking with your Landmark Elite Homes broker or loan officer.

Consistency is the name of the game after applying for a mortgage. Be sure to discuss any changes in income, assets, or credit with your lender, so you don't jeopardize your application.

The best plan is to fully disclose and discuss your intentions with your lender before taking any financial action.

# SCHEDULING YOUR MOVE

## AFTER SIGNING

Start by decluttering and packing up your belongings and donate or throw away anything you don't need, create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move, and, finally, you'll want to get estimates from moving companies for your specific needs. Once you get a clear to close you can start with the items below.

### 4 WEEKS TO MOVE

- Schedule movers/moving truck
- Buy/find packing materials
- Start packing

### 3 WEEKS TO MOVE

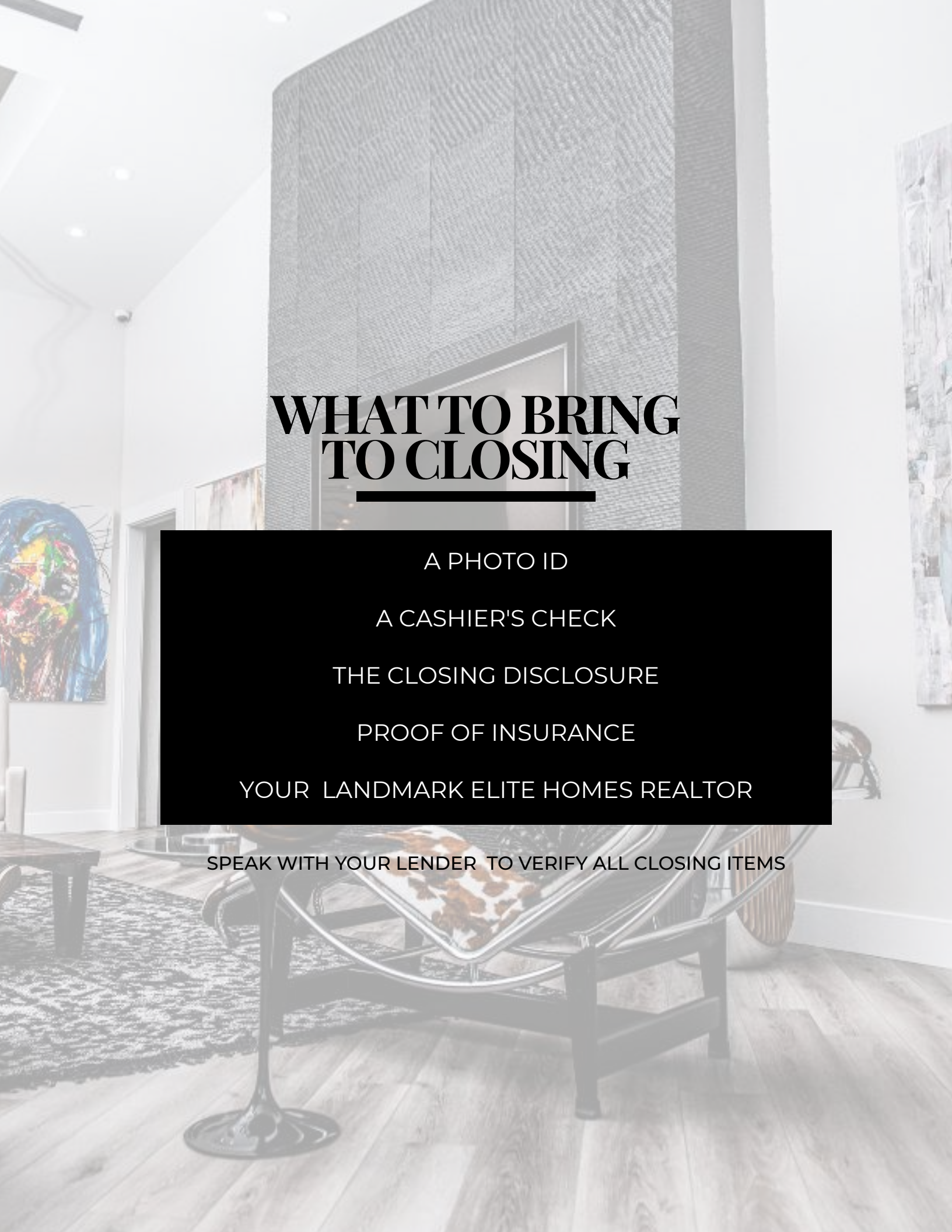
- Your lender will arrange an appraisal
- Title work will be completed
- Keep packing

### 2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- We will schedule a time to close and sign your documents
- Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)
- Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- Minimize grocery shopping
- Keep on packing

### 1 WEEK TO MOVE

- You will complete your final walkthrough
- Finish packing
- Clean
- Pack essentials for a few nights in the new home
- Confirm delivery date with the moving company



# WHAT TO BRING TO CLOSING

A PHOTO ID

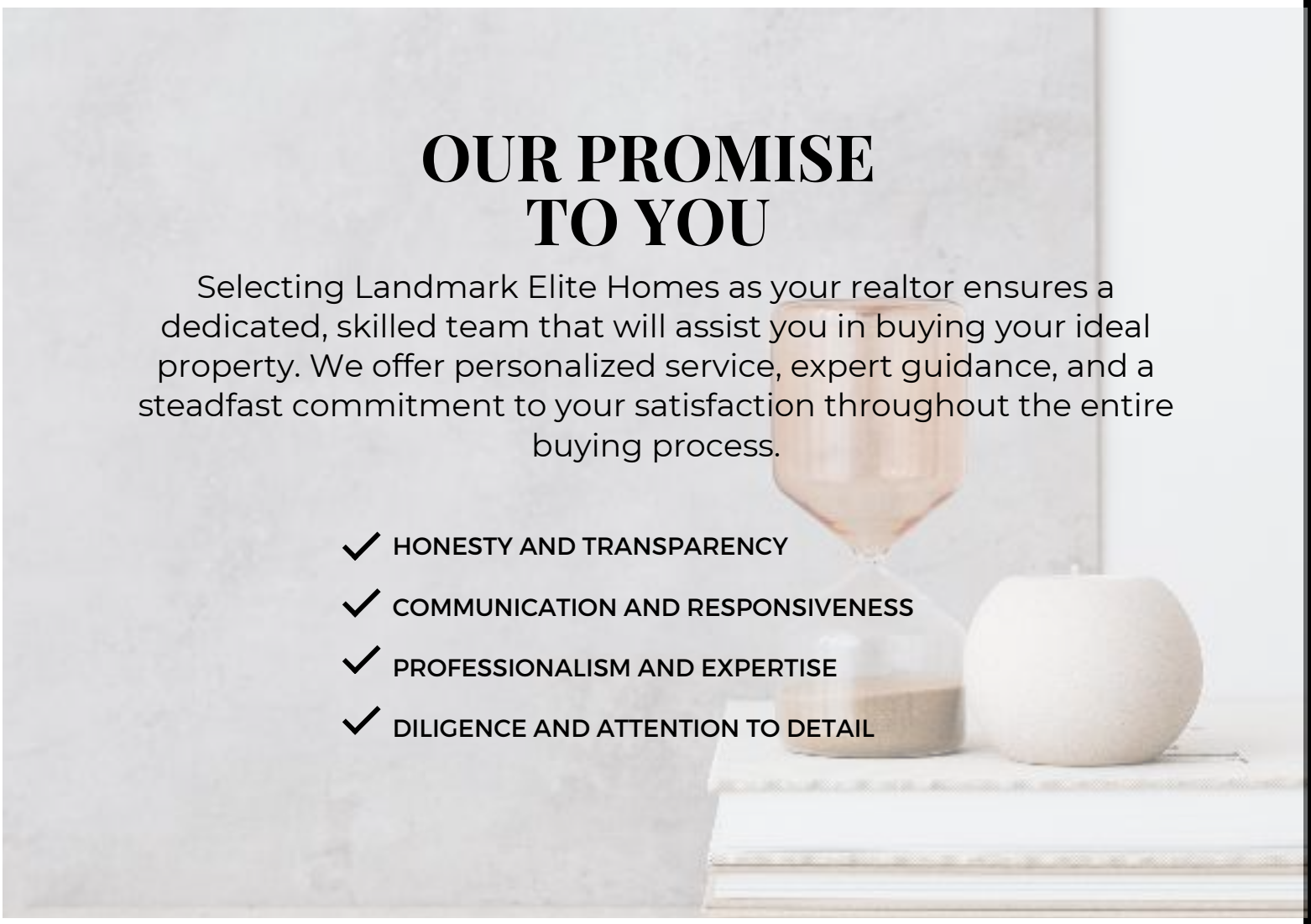
A CASHIER'S CHECK

THE CLOSING DISCLOSURE

PROOF OF INSURANCE

YOUR  LANDMARK ELITE HOMES REALTOR

SPEAK WITH YOUR LENDER  TO VERIFY ALL CLOSING ITEMS



# OUR PROMISE TO YOU

Selecting Landmark Elite Homes as your realtor ensures a dedicated, skilled team that will assist you in buying your ideal property. We offer personalized service, expert guidance, and a steadfast commitment to your satisfaction throughout the entire buying process.

- ✓ HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY
- ✓ COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIVENESS
- ✓ PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE
- ✓ DILIGENCE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

*We're excited to help you get into your new home!*

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