

# LIVING & LENDING

*Your monthly key to smart living and lending*



June has a way of arriving with a sense of possibility. The days are long, the gardens are finally in the ground, and there is something in the air that makes you feel like anything could happen. It is the season of fresh starts – and for many people, that includes thinking seriously about homeownership and what it might look like to turn a house with potential into exactly the home they want.

This month we are taking an honest look at what that journey involves – the financing that makes it possible and the realities that no listing photo will prepare you for.

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**MORTGAGE ARCHITECTS®**

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# 8 Easy Steps to a **PURCHASE PLUS IMPROVEMENTS MORTGAGE**



*Don't shy away from that fixer-upper! A Purchase Plus Improvements Mortgage, allows qualified purchasers to borrow between 10% and 20% of the initial property value for renovations.*

1. Find a home
2. Apply and get approved for a Purchase Plus Improvements mortgage
3. Get firm quotes on the improvements
4. Get an appraisal for the estimated as-is and as-improved value of the property.

This will be ordered by your lender or broker and quotes are typically reviewed by the appraiser.

**Note:** If you are putting less than 20% down payment on the purchase, often only a final inspection is required to confirm the work on the quotes has, in fact, been done.

5. Close the purchase

Depending on your down payment, the lender may provide up to:

80% of the as-improved value, less the cost of improvements (if on an uninsured mortgage) 95% of the as-improved value, less the cost of improvements (if on a default-insured mortgage)

6. Start the improvements

The initial advance of funds will be up to 95% of the approved value of the property minus the improvements. You will usually have to pay a portion of the improvements upfront via savings, credit card, personal line of credit, parental funds, etc.

7. Notify the lender when the project is complete

At this point, an inspector/appraiser will confirm the work has been completed to the specifications agreed by the lender

8. Once the lender verifies the inspection report, the balance of funds is advanced.

**Uninsurable:** \$40,000 or 10% of the “initial” value of the property, whichever is less

**CMHC Insurable:** Can exceed \$40,000 but not 10% of the “as improved” value of the property.

**Sagen/Canada Guaranty Insurable:** Can be 20% of the “initial” value of the property but the improvement amount cannot exceed \$40,000

Want to know more? Contact me today!

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# BEFORE YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH THE AFTER

*There is something about a property with potential that is hard to resist. The right bones, the right neighbourhood, the right price – and suddenly you are imagining what it could become. This month, we are getting honest about what that journey actually looks like.*

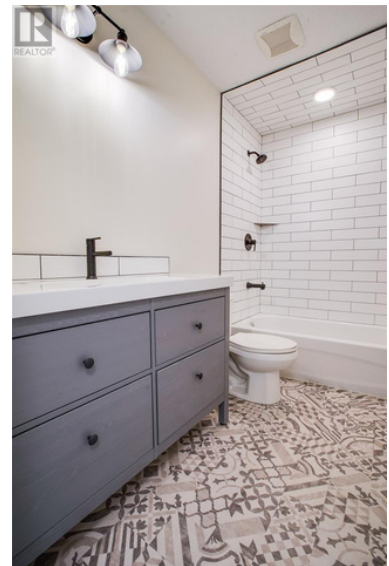
A Purchase Plus Improvements Mortgage exists precisely for moments like this: it allows qualified buyers to borrow between 10% and 20% of the initial property value to fund renovations, rolling the cost into the mortgage rather than scrambling to fund it separately. It is a genuinely useful product, and for the right buyer, it can be the key that makes an otherwise out-of-reach home work.

But before we talk financing, we want to talk about something the brochure rarely covers: what renovating actually looks like on the ground. Not the reveal. The middle.

## **What the Listing Photos Don't Show**

Six years ago, I moved into our home – a property that had been recently renovated and looked, by all appearances, completely move-in ready. The listing photos were lovely. The bathroom in particular was charming: subway tile, a patterned floor, good fixtures. We had a home inspection done before closing. Everything checked out.

Two months after we moved in, we noticed water on the basement floor. What followed was a discovery nobody wants to make: the plumbing behind the bathroom vanity and shower had been leaking, slowly and silently, into our unfinished basement. Because the water had been turned off for several months prior to our purchase, the inspector had no way of detecting what was happening. It was only once a family of four was running the taps the way a family of four does that the problem revealed itself – and by then, it had already travelled. The basement floor told the story: water staining spreading across the concrete, pooling near the furnace.



When we opened the wall, we found the corroded plumbing — and mold. Not a small amount. The kind that requires removal, treatment, and documentation. What had looked like a straightforward plumbing fix had become something considerably larger.



Walls came open. The floor came up. A fan ran for days. The removed subfloor material was visibly covered in black and grey mold growth — the kind of thing that, once you see it, you cannot unsee. We navigated the insurance process, which meant getting multiple contractor estimates before we were cleared to hire the person we actually trusted. And through all of it — about a month from discovery to fully functioning bathroom again — four people shared one bathroom in various states of managed chaos.

We want to be clear: we are not telling you this story to discourage anyone. We love our bathroom now and we would make the same choices again. But this is the part of renovation reality that does not make it onto Instagram, and it is worth understanding before you commit to a project — or a property.

### **Even "Simple" Fixes Can Open Bigger Doors**

Our situation was not a planned renovation. We were not trying to update a dated bathroom or add a feature. We were chasing a leak — and what started as what seemed like a contained plumbing issue revealed mold, structural moisture damage, and a floor that needed to come out entirely. That is the nature of renovation work: you quote and plan for what you can see, and you problem-solve the rest as it surfaces.

This is true whether you are doing planned improvements on a fixer-upper or dealing with something unexpected in a home you thought was ready. Old homes carry decades of decisions inside their walls. Plumbing ages. Moisture finds paths that are invisible until conditions are right. A home inspection is a valuable and necessary step — but it is a snapshot in time, conducted under the conditions present that day. It cannot see what is hidden, dormant, or only revealed under normal lived-in use.

None of this means you should walk away from a property that needs work. What it means is that you should go in with realistic expectations, a contingency in your budget, and a clear-eyed sense of your own tolerance for disruption.

### **Is It Worth It?**

For the right person, yes. Genuinely, yes.

Purchasing a property that needs work — and financing those improvements thoughtfully — can mean entering a neighbourhood or a home size that would otherwise be out of reach. It can mean building equity through the renovation itself. It can mean ending up with a home that is exactly what you wanted, shaped to your taste rather than whoever owned it before you.

What it requires is honest self-assessment. Can you live in a construction zone for weeks, possibly longer? Can you absorb a timeline that shifts? Do you have some financial cushion for the unexpected? Are you someone who handles disruption with patience, or does chaos wear you down in ways that linger?



There is no wrong answer. Some people thrive in the middle of a project. Others find that the stress is not worth the outcome, and that is a completely valid conclusion to reach — before you sign, not after.

The conversations we value most with our clients are the honest ones — where we talk through not just the numbers, but what the experience is actually going to look like. If you are considering a purchase that involves renovations, we would love to have that conversation with you. Reach out any time.

# LIVING WELL BEYOND THE DESK

## *The Summer Before Everything Changes*

June arrives on the prairies like a long exhale. After months of waiting — of watching the calendar and willing the frost to be done with it — the world finally opens up. Gardens that lived as seeds and seedlings on windowsills find their way into the ground. Patios that sat quiet through the cold months fill back up with evening light and easy conversation. The days stretch long and warm, and that particular prairie optimism — the kind that only comes when summer is finally, actually, undeniably here — settles in like it never left.



This is our favorite kind of June. The kind where you step outside after supper and realize you have nowhere to be, and that feels like a gift.

This year, though, June carries something a little extra for both of us — a quiet undercurrent of feeling that is hard to name but impossible to ignore. Our boys are turning seventeen.

Timothy turns seventeen this month. John turned seventeen in April. They are cousins, nearly the same age, and this summer they are doing something that once felt very far away: looking for their first jobs, making plans, stepping into a version of themselves that is unmistakably on the edge of something bigger. They will graduate in June 2027, and while that is still a year away, this summer has a different feeling to it. A last-of-its-kind feeling.

It is hard not to think about their first summers. We used to take the boys camping — long, unhurried days outside where the world was enormous and endlessly fascinating and a stick on the ground was the most interesting thing imaginable. Life was simpler in shape back then, even when it was full and busy. As our families grew and changed, those camping trips quietly gave way to new rhythms, new traditions, new versions of summer. You don't always notice the last time something happens until it is already behind you.

That is the thing about time with children. It does not announce itself. One summer they are toddlers pressing their palms into the dirt and looking up at you with total wonder, and the next they are figuring out how to write a resume.

We are proud of them. We are excited for them. And we are holding this summer just a little more carefully than the ones before it – soaking up the long evenings, the easy moments, the ordinary days that we know, from experience, have a way of becoming the ones you remember most.

Wherever this summer takes you and the people you love – we hope it is full of good light and slow evenings and the particular joy of being exactly where you are.



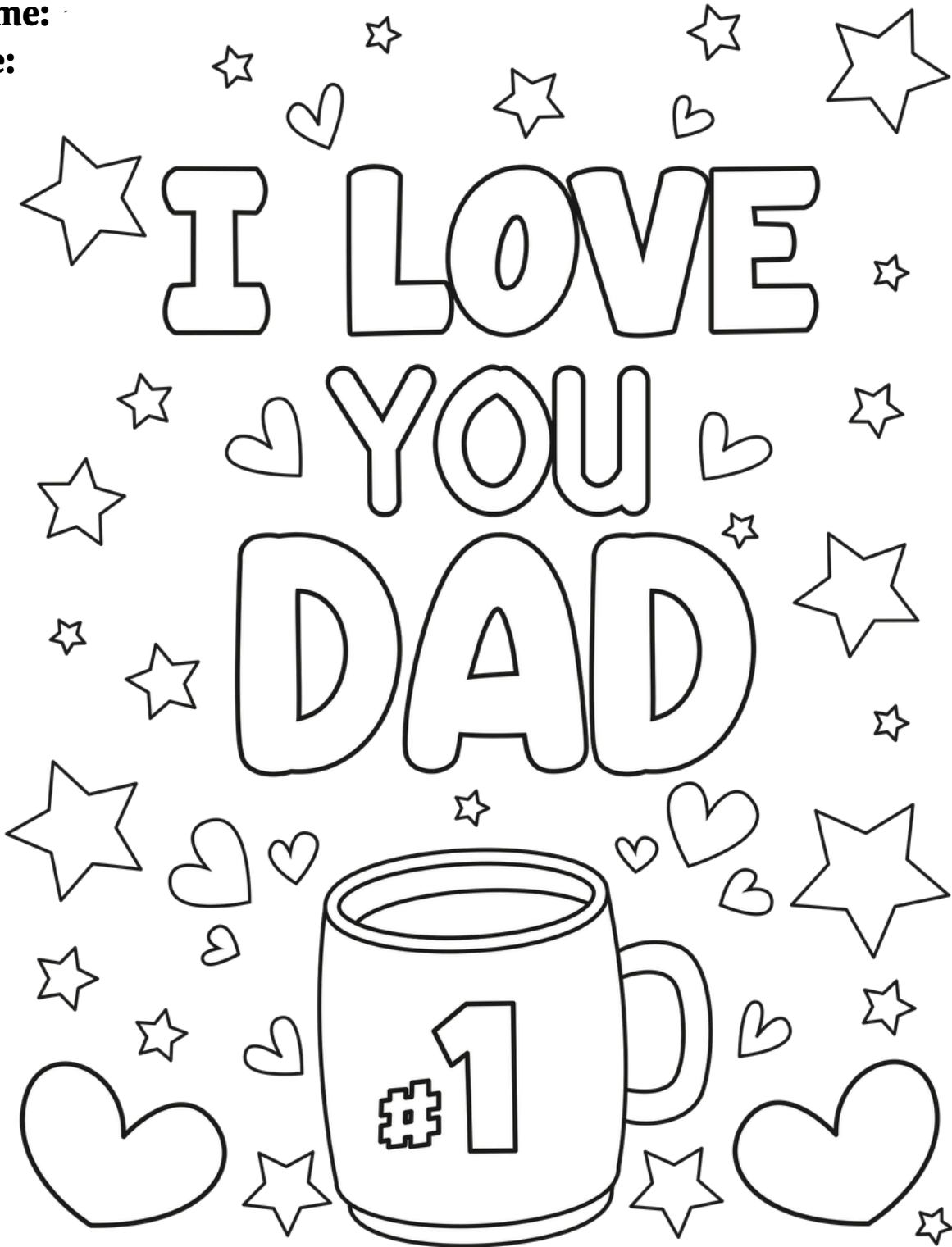
*Wherever this summer takes you and the people you love – we hope it is full of good light and slow evenings and the particular joy of being exactly where you are.*

# KID'S CORNER: COLOR & SHARE

Text Karen a photo at 306-221-7493 & we will feature it on Facebook!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_



[www.KarenReimer.org](http://www.KarenReimer.org)

# YOUR VOICE MATTERS

*I love hearing from you! Whether you have questions about mortgages, homeownership, or the market - or you've got a pre-approval story that could help someone else - reach out anytime. Your voice matters here.*



## **Submit Your Questions**

Got a question you've been pondering? Text or email me anytime! I love hearing from you, and your questions often inspire great topics for upcoming newsletters.



## **Share Your Story**

Recently gone through the mortgage pre-approval process? I'd love to hear about your experience! Text or email me anytime - your insights could help others navigating the same journey, and might inspire content in future newsletters.



## **Contact Me**

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*With useful tools and calculators to help you determine your affordability, monthly mortgage payments, closing costs and more, my app has everything you need at your fingertips. Click [here](#) to download the app or visit our website.*

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