



2026 EDITION

— THE PORTLAND RELOCATION GUIDE

Moving to Portland? Start Here.

—

The honest guide to how the Portland area is laid out, which neighborhoods fit the way you want to live, what it's really like here now, and how to buy well from a distance.

Written by a Portland broker who made the move himself.

For anyone moving to the Portland area from Seattle, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, San Diego, Phoenix, Denver, Chicago or anywhere else.

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FORIS
REAL ESTATE

Start Here: The Real Question Is Where



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brokered by eXp Realty

Hi, I'm Andy. Before you look at a single listing, here's the thing almost every person moving here asks me first:

“Which area is the right fit for me?”

It's the right question. In Portland the neighborhood shapes your day more than the house does: whether you walk to coffee, how long the drive is, what's out your front door on a Saturday. Pick the right area and a so-so house still feels like home. Pick the wrong one and a great house never quite does.

I know that feeling firsthand. My wife and I grew up outside Chicago, lived there for about a decade, then moved to Ashland, Oregon for her job, chasing more nature. It wasn't quite the fit. When we landed in Portland, she said it best: **“It's like Chicago and Ashland had a baby.”** A real city with food, culture and energy, right next to forests, rivers and mountains. That was 12 years ago, and we're still here.

This guide walks you through the same search, in order:

How Portland is laid out, and how the East Side and West Side really differ	p. 5
The walkable neighborhoods I know best, and what each one actually feels like	p. 7
What Portland is like now (the reputation, the rain, the honest parts)	p. 11
The mistakes I see relocating buyers make, and how to avoid them	p. 12
A month-by-month plan for buying here, even from out of state	p. 13



CHAPTER 02

Coming From Somewhere Else? What Changes

Most people I help are coming from Seattle, California (LA, the Bay Area and San Diego), Phoenix or Denver, plus a steady stream from the Midwest like we did. Here's what tends to change.

PORTLAND AT A GLANCE · CURRENT NUMBERS

\$540,000

**Portland metro median
sale price**

down 1.8% from a year ago

RMLS, August 2026

\$524,653

**City of Portland median
sale price**

with homes taking a median
of 19 days to sell

Redfin, 3 months ending August
2026

7.03%

**30-year fixed mortgage
rate**

Freddie Mac, September 24, 2026

What Changes

COMING FROM

California (LA, the Bay Area, San Diego)

- Your money usually goes noticeably further here, especially for a single-family home with a yard in a walkable neighborhood.
- **The trade:** real seasons. Gray, drizzly winters and spectacular dry summers (more on that on page 11).
- Oregon has no sales tax, but it does have a state income tax, so run your own numbers with a tax professional.

COMING FROM

Seattle

- The climate and Pacific Northwest culture will feel familiar. The pace is a notch slower, and the city feels more neighborhood-by-neighborhood.
- If you want to keep Washington's no-income-tax setup, SW Washington (Vancouver, Camas and more) is right across the river. More on that trade-off on page 5.

COMING FROM

Phoenix

- Green everywhere and a big break from the summer heat. You trade winter sunshine for a mild, gray, damp winter.
- **Older housing stock in the city:** lots of early-1900s homes, Craftsman and bungalows instead of newer construction.

COMING FROM

Denver

- A similar outdoors-first lifestyle, with the mountains, rivers and the coast all within a day trip.
- Less snow in the city, more rain, and a very different kind of winter.

COMING FROM

Chicago and the Midwest

- The city-neighborhood feel you're used to, with nature much closer.
- **Fair warning from a former Chicagoan:** the market here can surprise people who've bought and sold before. Some pockets still move fast (see page 12).

How Portland Is Laid Out: East Side vs. West Side

Portland is split into six sections, and locals use them constantly (“we live in SE”):

EAST SIDE VS. WEST SIDE, IN PLAIN TERMS

THE EAST SIDE

N · NE · SE

North (N), Northeast (NE) and Southeast (SE)

The East Side is flatter and laid out on more of a grid, with lots of older bungalows, Craftsmans and Old Portland homes. It's packed with neighborhood main streets full of restaurants, coffee shops and small shops you can walk or bike to. Most of my clients end up here.

THE WEST SIDE

S · SW · NW

South (S), Southwest (SW) and Northwest (NW)

The West Side is hillier, with the West Hills and Forest Park (one of the largest urban forests in the country) right there. It sits closer to the big westside employers in Beaverton and Hillsboro, and to downtown and the Pearl.

- The Willamette River runs through the middle, and the address tells you which side you're on.

The suburbs

- **Westside suburbs:** Lake Oswego, West Linn, Tigard, Tualatin, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Forest Grove and Sherwood
- **Eastside suburbs:** Milwaukie, Happy Valley, Clackamas, Damascus, Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview and Sandy

SW Washington, right across the Columbia River

- Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield and more
- The big draw is Washington's lack of a state income tax. I'm licensed in both Oregon and Washington, so I can walk you through both sides of the river.

A quick word on taxes, because it comes up a lot

1.5% + 1.5%

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL · MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Multnomah County (most of the City of Portland) has the Preschool for All income tax: 1.5% on income over \$125K single / \$200K joint, plus another 1.5% over \$250K / \$400K.

1%

METRO SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES

The Metro Supportive Housing Services tax adds 1% over \$125K / \$200K across Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties.

- Both run through December 31, 2030 unless reauthorized (Schwabe summary, researched September 2026).
- So suburbs like Milwaukie, Lake Oswego, West Linn (Clackamas County) and Beaverton (Washington County) avoid the Preschool for All tax. Talk to a tax professional about your situation.

A few current price points across the area

(Redfin, 3 months ending August 2026 unless noted)

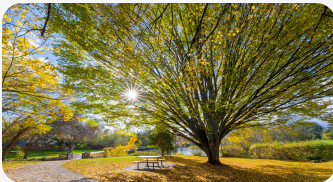
		MEDIAN	ON MARKET
Milwaukie		\$494,173	about 11 days
Beaverton		about \$591,900	about 36 days
Tigard		\$599,603	about 28 days
West Linn		\$842,442	about 33 days
Lake Oswego		\$1,049,306	about 27 days
Vancouver, WA		\$489,676	about 29 days



LAKE OSWEGO



WEST LINN



BEAVERTON



VANCOUVER, WA



ST. JOHNS BRIDGE

CHAPTER 04

The Walkable Neighborhoods I Know Best

Most people moving here tell me some version of “we want to walk to things and be close to nature.” These are the areas I work in most, and where that life is easiest to find.

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The Inner East Side

my bread and butter

p. 9

The Urban Core

condo and city living

p. 9

SW Portland

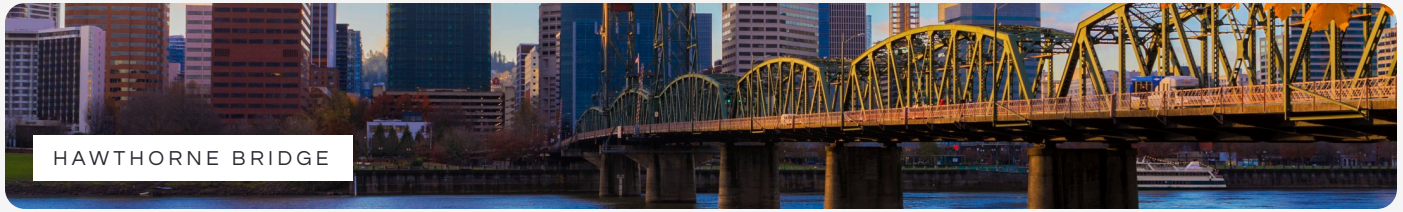
Multnomah Village

p. 10

Spotlight: Milwaukie

the small town next to the city

The Inner East Side (my bread and butter)



Sellwood-Moreland

SE

A village feel along SE 13th and Milwaukie Ave, with the Willamette riverfront, Oaks Bottom and the Springwater Corridor trail at your door. **Median \$549,735 with about 11 days on market** (Redfin, 3 months ending August 2026).

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Popular and small, so the right house doesn't come up often.

Woodstock

SE

A quieter, residential feel with its own main street along SE Woodstock Blvd, near Reed College.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

A bit farther from the busiest inner-Eastside strips.

Hawthorne

SE

The classic Portland picture: Hawthorne Blvd shops, restaurants and vintage stores, with Mt. Tabor (a park on an old volcano) nearby.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Older homes, so inspections matter.

Alberta Arts

NE

Alberta Street's galleries, murals and restaurants, plus the monthly Last Thursday street art walk.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Street events can bring crowds and noise on busy nights.

Irvington

NE

A historic district with large, older homes on tree-lined streets, close to the NE Broadway corridor.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Historic-district rules can affect exterior changes and renovations.

St. Johns

N

Its own small downtown, the St. Johns Bridge and Cathedral Park on the river.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

It's tucked up at the far north end, so plan on a longer trip to the rest of the city.



The Urban Core (condo and city living)

Pearl District

NW

Converted warehouses and lofts, galleries, Powell's Books and pocket parks. **Median \$429,850, down 9.51% from a year earlier, with about 94 days on market** (Redfin, 3 months ending June 2026).

HONEST TRADE-OFF, AND OPPORTUNITY

Condos are sitting longer, which usually means more room to negotiate.

Downtown Portland

High-rises and lofts in the middle of everything. The median downtown condo price is \$322,344 (Redfin, August 2026).

HONEST TRADE-OFF

It's a real "bargain or trap?" question, and it depends on the building.

South Waterfront

High-rise condos along the Willamette River, with the aerial tram up to OHSU and the riverfront greenway.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

It's a newer, more self-contained district than the older neighborhoods.

NW District

The NW 21st and 23rd Avenue main streets, older apartments and Victorian homes, and quick access to Forest Park.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Parking is tight.

SW Portland

Multnomah Village

A small-town main street of shops and cafes tucked into hilly SW Portland, with lots of green space nearby.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

Hills and fewer sidewalks once you leave the village.



CHAPTER 04 · NEIGHBORHOODS

Milwaukie

(the small town next to the city)

- Just south of my own neighborhood, and where my daughter goes to school. Historic downtown, a riverfront park, and the MAX Orange Line straight into downtown Portland.
- Median \$494,173, below Portland's median, yet homes are selling in about 11 days (Redfin, 3 months ending August 2026).
- It's in Clackamas County, so no Preschool for All tax.
- **Honest trade-off:** it moves fast, so you need to be ready to act when the right home comes up. If we ever left Portland, this is where we'd go.

\$494,173

median sale price

11 days

about how fast homes are selling

No Preschool for All tax

Clackamas County

Redfin, 3 months ending August 2026

What Portland Is Really Like Now

The reputation question

You've probably heard things about Portland. Here's my honest take.

The real challenges	Homelessness and crime are higher than they were in the recent past, and taxes in Multnomah County are a big reason some people leave. I won't pretend otherwise.
The other side	The food scene, the parks, the neighborhoods, the rivers, and being an hour or two from the mountains and the coast. That's why people keep moving here. Oregon led the country in inbound moves in 2025 (United Van Lines 2025 Movers Study).
My advice	Look at the city's public crime data for the specific areas you like, and spend time there yourself, morning and night. Decide for yourself, with real information.



The rain (how bad is it really?)

- It's more gray drizzle than downpour. Fall through spring is cloudy and damp, but you rarely get the huge storms people picture.
- Locals don't stop for it. A good rain jacket, decent shoes, and most people skip the umbrella.
- **And then summer arrives:** dry, sunny, warm and long evenings. Summers are so good that people forget about the winter.

What surprises people once they live here

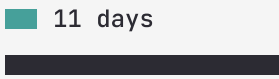
- How much of life happens in your own neighborhood. Most people don't "go downtown" much. Coffee, dinner, the park and the farmers market are all a short walk or bike ride away.
- **That's why choosing the right area matters so much.**

The Mistakes Relocating Buyers Make

01

Thinking Portland is one market.

It's not. Some pockets move fast and some sit. Milwaukie homes have been going in about 11 days (Redfin, 3 months ending August 2026) while Pearl District condos have averaged about 94 days (Redfin, 3 months ending June 2026). Your offer strategy has to match the pocket.

Milwaukie homes  11 days
Pearl condos 94 days

03

Assuming your experience back home transfers.

Even seasoned buyers get caught off guard here. The rules, timelines and what makes an offer strong can be different from where you're coming from.

05

Skipping a careful inspection on an older home.

A lot of Portland's charm is its older housing stock. Plan for a thorough inspection and know what to look for.

02

Choosing a neighborhood from photos.

Listing photos don't show the street noise, the hill, the commute or the feel on a Tuesday night. Tour the area before you tour houses, in person or on a live video walk.

04

Underestimating the true monthly cost.

With rates around 7% (Freddie Mac, September 2026), payment matters more than price. Add in property taxes, local income taxes and, for older homes, repairs.

06

Waiting to talk to a local lender.

Getting pre-approved with someone who knows the area makes your offer stronger and your budget real.

Your Moving Timeline: What to Do and When

6 to 12 months out

- Narrow your list to two or three areas from page 7.
- Talk to a local lender about what you can comfortably afford.
- Visit once if you can, and walk the neighborhoods.

3 to 6 months out

- Get pre-approved and set your real budget, including taxes and insurance.
- Line up the sale of your current home, if you have one.
- Start watching listings in your target areas to learn what things actually cost.

1 to 3 months out

- Tour homes in person or by live FaceTime walkthrough.
- Write your offer with a strategy that fits that pocket of the market.
- Get through the inspection and appraisal.

Moving month

- Close, get your keys, and set up utilities.
- Find your new coffee shop, your nearest park and your farmers market. **You live here now.**

What Good Looks Like

A couple from Wisconsin moved here in 2021 to be near their daughter and her family. They'd bought and sold their own properties back home and figured this would be easy.

Then they hit the 2021 Portland market: 8 to 12 offers on almost every home. They quickly realized they needed someone who knew this market.

We moved fast on showings, I walked them through what it would take to win, and we put together an offer that got them the home, near their family.

8-12

offers on almost every home

THE 2021 PORTLAND
MARKET

IN THEIR WORDS

//

We moved to the Portland area from the Midwest where we had some experience selling our own properties. We soon realized the market here required an experienced and knowledgeable realtor. Andy fit the bill. He was always very prompt in answering any questions and responded very quickly to homes we were interested in seeing. Andy was quick to schedule viewings which was crucial and was excellent at putting together an offer that was attractive in this crazy market."

Today's market is different (more pockets with room to negotiate), but the lesson is the same: **local knowledge and a clear strategy make the move a lot easier.**

Your Portland Move Checklist

6 to 12 months out

- ☐ Narrow your list to two or three areas (page 7).
- ☐ Talk to a local lender about what you can comfortably afford.
- ☐ Look at the city's public crime data for the specific areas you like.
- ☐ Visit once if you can, and walk the neighborhoods, morning and night.

3 to 6 months out

- ☐ Get pre-approved and set your real budget, including taxes and insurance.
- ☐ Talk to a tax professional about your situation.
- ☐ Line up the sale of your current home, if you have one.
- ☐ Start watching listings in your target areas.

1 to 3 months out

- ☐ Tour homes in person or by live FaceTime walkthrough.
- ☐ Write your offer with a strategy that fits that pocket of the market.
- ☐ Plan a thorough inspection, then get through the appraisal.

Moving month

- ☐ Close, get your keys, and set up utilities.
- ☐ Find your new coffee shop, your nearest park and your farmers market.



How Andy Helps Next

Wherever you are in your move, even if you're just starting to think about it, I'm happy to help.

Here's how I help people moving to Portland:

- Neighborhood orientation tours, in person, to find the right area and not just the right house.
- Live FaceTime walkthroughs and video tours, so you can shop from wherever you live now.
- A trusted network of local lenders, inspectors and contractors.
- Offer strategy built for the specific pocket of the market you're buying in. Since 2023, I've negotiated an average of **\$17,273 per buyer** in credits and price reductions (as of October 2026).
- Guidance through the inspection, especially on older homes.
- A weekly check-in at minimum, so you always know where things stand.
- And after closing, you're invited to my client events: pizza and beer nights, games, boat tours and more.



A Foris client night at a Winterhawks game

I've been in the business about 18 years, with roughly 180 homes sold since getting licensed in Portland in 2015. I'm a Five Star Real Estate Broker every year since 2020, a Best of Zillow agent (top 10% nationwide), and I have 42 five-star reviews on Zillow and over 50 five-star reviews on Google (as of October 2026). **And I've made the move myself.**

If you have questions,
I'd love to hear from you.
No pressure, no rush, no obligation.

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Find your Portland.

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Five Star Real Estate Broker · every year since 2020

Best of Zillow · top 10% nationwide

42 five-star Zillow reviews · as of October 2026

50+ five-star Google reviews · as of October 2026



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