

home seller

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Q2 2026

THE SELLER ADVANTAGE GUIDE

Current Trends, Insights and What to Expect

“It’s not about how many houses I sell. It’s about how many people I help.”



SCAN FOR A
LOCAL MARKET
UPDATE AND
SELLER TIPS



Q2 2026 Seller Snapshot

Orange County & Dana Point Strategic Overview

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Orange County & Dana Point Strategic Overview

INVENTORY & DEMAND PULSE



Buyer activity has seen a double-digit surge in recent weeks as market participation improves.



Inventory levels remain constrained and are still well below pre-pandemic norms.



A significant volume of the market is currently under contract, reflecting active transaction flow.



MARKET TIME:

67 DAYS vs. 125 DAYS
(OC) (DANA POINT)

Average market time for Orange County is significantly faster than the localized Dana Point average.



FOR LUXURY HOMES

Properties priced above \$2.5M require a longer marketing period due to a more exclusive buyer pool.

SELLER DYNAMICS



LOW INVENTORY

The scarcity of available homes remains a primary driver of current market behavior.



IMPROVING DEMAND

Momentum is building among prospective buyers, creating more opportunities for sellers to engage.



SELECTIVE PRICING

Success in the current market requires a strategic approach to initial list prices to avoid stagnation.



PRICING & EQUITY REALITIES

66%



ADJUSTED INITIAL PRICING

Two-thirds of sellers found it necessary to lower their original asking price to align with buyer expectations.

99.7%
EQUITY CLOSINGS



Virtually all sellers are walking away from the closing table with positive equity.

0.1%

DISTRESSED SALES

Foreclosures and short sales remain at a statistical minimum, indicating a very healthy market floor.

\$750K-\$1M
SEGMENT MOVES
IN 55 DAYS



This specific price bracket represents the most liquid and high-velocity portion of the market.

The Spring 2026 Seller Reality: Strategy Over Assumption

As we move into the Spring Market, it's important to step back from headlines and focus on what the data is actually showing in Orange County.

Two truths are shaping Q2 2026:

- Inventory remains historically constrained.
- Pricing precision has never mattered more.

1. Inventory is Still Structurally Low

According to the latest Orange County Housing Report, active inventory stands at 3,354 homes, which is 44% below the three-year pre-COVID average.

That matters.

While inventory has risen modestly compared to last year, we are nowhere near a surplus environment. Sellers are still largely “hunkering down” due to low locked-in mortgage rates, which keeps supply structurally tight.

In Dana Point specifically, the current inventory for single-family homes sits at just 36 active listings, with a Market Action Index of 38, indicating a slight seller's advantage. This is not an oversupplied market.

But it is a selective one.



The Spring 2026 Seller Reality: Strategy Over Assumption

2. 66% of Sellers Reduced Their Price in January

This is the number that defines the tone of 2026.

In January, 66% of all Orange County closed sales sold below their original asking price – the highest level since January 2023.

That does not signal weakness.

It signals misalignment.

When sellers overshoot market value, buyers simply wait. They have more tools, more data, and greater discipline than in previous cycles. The result is extended days on market and eventual price reductions.

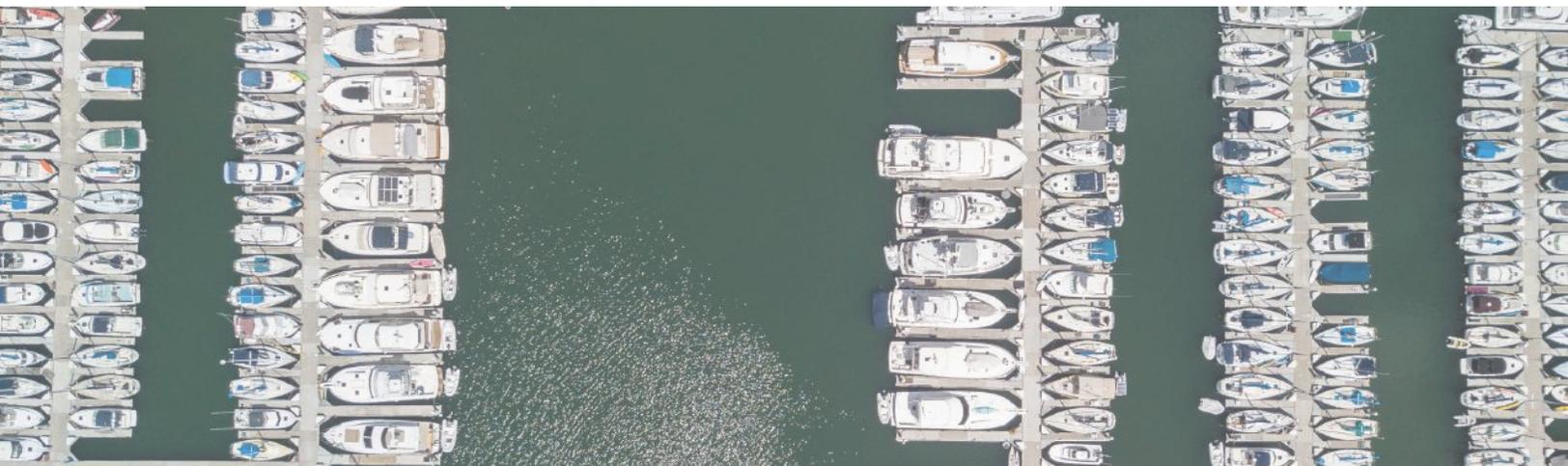
The data goes deeper:

- Sellers who closed below original asking price had a median 52 days on market and sold at 95% of their original price.
- Sellers who sold at or above asking price were on the market a median of just 8 days.

In other words:

The market is not punishing sellers.

It is rewarding precision.



The Spring 2026 Seller Reality: Strategy Over Assumption

3. Demand is Quietly Improving

Buyer demand surged 19% in mid-February. Mortgage rates have dropped to approximately 6.04%, about one full percentage point lower than a year ago. That translates to roughly a 10% increase in purchasing power.

As a result:

- Expected Market Time has dropped from 75 to 67 days
- Detached homes are moving at nearly the same pace as last year

This is not a frozen market.

It is a selective, performance-based market.

Homes that are:

- Properly positioned
- Turnkey or elevated in presentation
- Priced within the current demand window

-are still seeing multiple offers in certain pocket. Homes that miss that window are adjusting downward.

The Strategic Takeaway for Spring 2026

This is not a “wait and see” market.

It is a “price and present correctly” market.

With inventory still historically low and demand improving alongside rates, sellers who:

- Enter early in the Spring window
- Price at fair market value from day one
- Maximize presentation

...are positioned to outperform.

But those who test the market at aspirational pricing are increasingly becoming part of the 66%.

Why Timing in the Spring Market Matters More Than Price Alone

The Spring Market is Often Misunderstood.

Many sellers assume Spring equals higher prices.

In reality, Spring primarily means increased activity – not automatic appreciation. Understanding that distinction can change your outcome significantly.

The Seasonal Window Most Sellers Miss

The housing market follows a predictable rhythm:

- Mid-January to mid-March: Market speeds up rapidly
- March–April: Fastest pace of the year
- Late Spring–Summer: More competition, rising inventory
- Fall: Gradual slowing

According to the February 17 Orange County Housing Report, the Expected Market Time dropped from 75 to 67 days in just two weeks— one of the fastest winter accelerations in recent years.

That tells us something important:

The early Spring window rewards decisiveness.

By the time late April and May arrive, more sellers typically enter the market.

Increased inventory naturally creates more competition – even if demand remains steady.

Inventory: The Quiet Pressure Point

Current active inventory stands at 3,354 homes countywide— still well below pre-pandemic norms.

But inventory has been rising modestly week over week.

Here is what that means strategically:

Phase	Buyer Activity	Seller Competition	Negotiation Leverage
Early Spring	Rising	Moderate	Balanced to Seller
Late Spring	High	Higher	Balanced
Summer	Stable	Highest	Balanced to Buyer

Inventory does not need to explode to change leverage. It simply needs to grow enough to give buyers options.

In a market where buyers are analytical and patient, optionality reduces urgency.

What the 66% Really Signals

When 66% of sellers close below their original asking price, the takeaway isn't that prices are falling.

It's that the market is intolerant of guesswork.

Today's buyers are informed. They analyze comparable sales, watch days on market, and understand absorption rates. When a property is priced outside the active demand window, they simply move on.

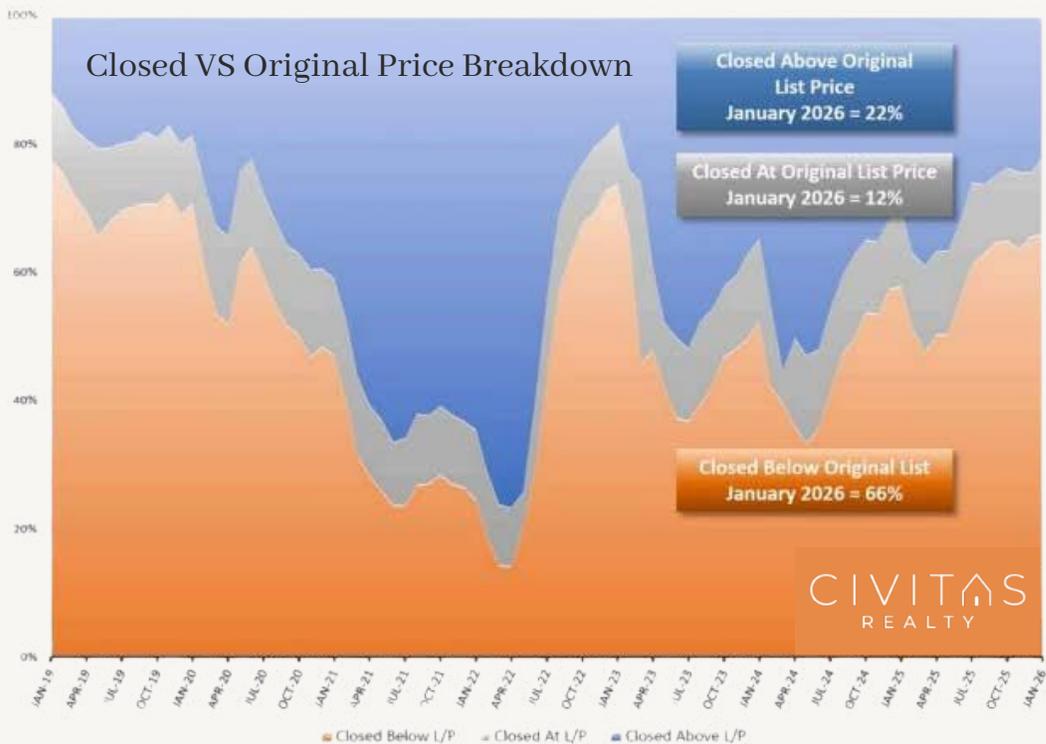
The result isn't dramatic price crashes.

It's slower momentum and negotiated corrections.

In a tightening early Spring window, strategic pricing isn't about underpricing.

It's about positioning within the most active buyer pool – where urgency exists.

That is where leverage lives.





Selling and Buying at the Same Time: The Strategy Behind Today's Most Complex Move

In Spring 2026, one pattern is consistent:

Most sellers are also buyers.

Inventory remains constrained because many homeowners are reluctant to give up low mortgage rates. That dynamic has created a market where movement requires planning — not impulse.

For homeowners considering a transition, the real question isn't whether it can be done.

It's how to structure it intelligently.

Why This Move Feels More Complicated Today

The hesitation usually centers around three concerns:

1. What if we sell quickly and can't find a replacement?
2. What if we buy first and carry two properties?
3. What if timing doesn't align and we feel rushed?

These concerns are valid. But they are manageable when the process is sequenced correctly.

This is no longer a market where you simply “list and see what happens.” It is a market that rewards coordinated planning.

Selling and Buying at the Same Time: The Strategy Behind Today's Most Complex Move

Understanding the Current Environment

Right now, market speed has improved as buyer demand rises alongside slightly lower mortgage rates.

That means:

- Well-presented homes are still moving.
- Detached properties are performing steadily.
- Buyers are active – but disciplined.

This is not a frantic seller's market.

It is a performance-based market.

Which means your sale must be positioned correctly – and your purchase must be structured with foresight.

The Four Primary Transition Strategies

Every sell-and-buy move falls into one of these categories:

Strategy	Best Used When	Risk Profile
Sale Contingent Purchase	Balanced market conditions	Low
Rent Back After Closing	Strong seller leverage	Low
Bridge Financing	High confidence in sale timing	Moderate
Buy First Using Liquidity or Equity	Significant financial flexibility	Moderate

The right approach depends on:

- Your equity position
- Current absorption rate in your price range
- Replacement inventory availability
- Your tolerance for overlap

This is why data matters.

Selling and Buying at the Same Time: The Strategy Behind Today's Most Complex Move

Equity: The Quiet Advantage

Many homeowners underestimate their position.

Years of appreciation have created meaningful equity for long-term owners — particularly in coastal and luxury segments.

Equity creates flexibility:

- Larger down payments
- Stronger purchase offers
- The ability to negotiate rent-backs
- Rate buydown options
- Strategic timing windows

When sellers recognize their leverage, the conversation shifts from fear of overlap to control of sequencing.

Timing the Transition — Not the Market

The objective isn't to perfectly "time" both transactions.

It's to align them within the same demand cycle.

Early Spring often provides the strongest overlap window:

- Rising buyer activity
- Still-manageable inventory
- Predictable seasonal speed

Waiting until late Spring or Summer can introduce more seller competition — which may reduce leverage on the sale side while not meaningfully improving options on the buy side.



Selling and Buying at the Same Time: The Strategy Behind Today's Most Complex Move

What Makes This Work

The transition succeeds when three things happen:

1. The home is priced precisely from day one.
2. The replacement search begins before the property hits the market.
3. The sale contract is structured with negotiation foresight.

Selling and buying simultaneously is not about rushing.
It is about orchestrating.

Strategic Takeaway

In 2026, transitions require intention.

But they are absolutely achievable.

When structured correctly, the move becomes less about risk — and more about controlled execution.

The goal isn't simply to sell.

It's to reposition your equity into the next chapter — intelligently.

The Luxury Market: Selective, Stable, and Timing-Sensitive

The luxury segment — defined as homes above \$2.5 million — operates on a different timeline.

While overall Orange County market time sits around 67 days, luxury properties are pacing closer to five months.

That does not indicate weakness.

It reflects:

- Smaller buyer pool
- More analytical decision-making
- Greater sensitivity to pricing alignment

Luxury inventory has risen modestly in recent weeks, while demand has improved slightly. That balance has stabilized market time — but not accelerated it.

What this means for luxury sellers:

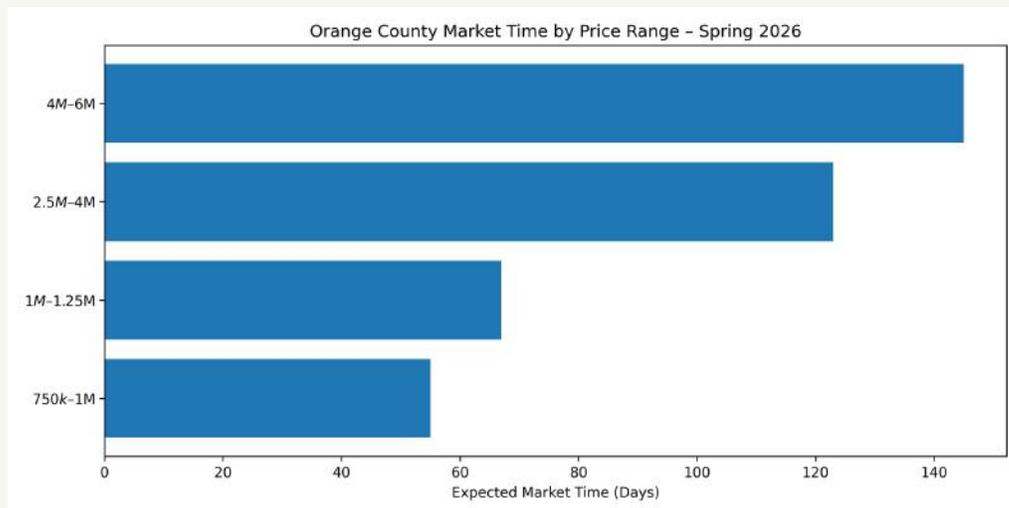
- Presentation must be exceptional
- Pricing must reflect real-time comps, not 2022 peaks
- Patience must be built into the strategy

Above \$6 million, absorption stretches toward eight months.

At this level, timing and pricing precision are not optional. They are structural requirements.

Luxury is not distressed.

It is deliberate.



Dana Point: A Micro-Market Within Orange County

Dana Point is not simply a reflection of the broader Orange County market. It is a higher-priced, inventory-constrained, segmented coastal market — and it behaves accordingly.

While Orange County overall is pacing around 67 days, Dana Point's Expected Market Time is approximately 125 days.

That difference is not a red flag.

It is structural.

Why Dana Point Moves Differently

Three factors are driving the extended pacing:

1. Median Price Point

With a median active price around \$2.6 million, Dana Point naturally falls into the luxury tier.

Luxury segments always:

- Have smaller buyer pools
- Require longer decision timelines
- Involve more comparative evaluation

The higher the price, the more deliberate the buyer.

2. Inventory Composition

Dana Point inventory is not uniform.

It includes:

- Coastal bluff properties
- Ocean-view homes
- Lantern District remodels
- Monarch Beach luxury estates
- Attached properties and townhomes.





The Opportunity in Q2

Here is the nuance:

Even with 125 days average market time, demand has improved across Orange County as rates softened and pending sales rose.

If that momentum continues into Spring, higher-end coastal markets often benefit disproportionately because:

- Luxury buyers are less rate-sensitive
- Equity-driven buyers are active
- Inventory remains below long-term averages

Dana Point does not require urgency.

It requires positioning.

The Strategic Takeaway

Dana Point sellers should not anchor to county-wide averages.

They should anchor to:

- Their exact price bracket
- Their direct competition
- Their property's uniqueness
- Seasonal demand cycles

In a segmented market, broad averages mislead.

Micro-positioning wins.

A Checklist for Selling Your House

As you get ready to sell your house, add these items to your to-do list. A real estate professional will also provide other helpful tips based on your specific situation.

MAKE IT INVITING



- Open blinds or curtains to let the light in



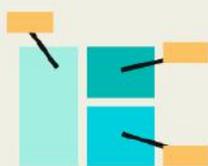
- Check lightbulbs and replace as needed



- Take down personal photos or items



- Fix anything that's broken



- Give every room a clear purpose

SHOW IT'S CARED FOR



- Clean your vents and baseboards



- Vacuum, mop, or sweep floors



- Declutter throughout



- Organize countertops, cabinets, and closets



- Touch up any scuffs on the walls

BOOST CURB APPEAL



- Power wash outdoor surfaces



- Wash the windows (inside and out)



- Tidy up the landscaping



- Freshen up your entry



- Sweep patios, decks and walkways

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about buying or selling
your home, contact us
today!

“It’s not about how many houses I sell. It’s about how many people I help.”



Leilani Serrao-Baker

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