How to Read a Comparative Market Analysis

When your real estate agent brings a Comparative Market Analysis to your first conversation, it can feel like a lot of numbers on a page. This guide breaks down exactly what you are looking at — so you can walk into any conversation about your home's value feeling informed and confident.

Active Listings

Active listings are homes currently for sale in your area. They tell you what sellers are asking for their homes right now, but not necessarily what buyers are actually paying. Do not use active listings as your primary benchmark for your home's value. They represent hope, not reality.

Pending Sales

Pending sales are homes that are under contract but have not yet closed. They reflect current buyer demand and give you a preview of where the market is heading in your specific area. A high number of pending sales relative to active listings signals strong demand.

Sold Listings

Sold listings are the most important number in a CMA. These are homes that closed in the last 60 to 90 days — meaning a real buyer agreed to pay that price and a lender confirmed the value. Sold listings are the closest thing to what your home would sell for if you listed it today.

Days on Market

Days on market tells you how long similar homes sat before going under contract. A low number indicates strong buyer demand in your area. A higher number may mean sellers in your neighborhood are pricing above what the market will bear, or that demand in that specific area is softer.

Price Per Square Foot

Price per square foot gives you a quick comparison tool across homes of different sizes. It is a useful starting point but should not be used in isolation — a renovated home and an outdated home on the same street will carry very different values per square foot even if they are the same size.

Why This Matters During a Divorce

When both spouses review the same CMA — whether together or separately with their respective attorneys — it creates a shared, neutral baseline for conversations about the home. Disagreements about value are one of the most common sources of conflict in divorce real estate situations. A well-prepared CMA from an experienced local agent takes much of the emotion out of that conversation and replaces it with facts.

In Northwest Arkansas, market conditions vary significantly by county and even by neighborhood. A CMA prepared by an agent who knows Washington, Benton, Carroll, and Madison County markets will give you numbers you can actually rely on.
