



A GUIDE TO THE TRIAD

The Insider's Guide to Buying, Selling, & Living in the Piedmont Triad Area



(336) 740-5535



www.guidetothetriad.com



kirby@kirbygraves.com



Written By

KIRBY GRAVES

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Introduction

Your New Go-To Guide for Triad Real Estate, Culture, and Lifestyle

You've probably picked up this book for one of a few reasons: you're curious about a new area, or you're planning to buy, sell, or invest in real estate in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina.

I wrote this guide to give you an inside look at everything you need to know about Triad real estate—from a little local history and the economic factors that shape the region, to a curated list of restaurants, activities, and neighborhoods. You'll also find practical advice on how to live well in the Triad, along with a Start-to-Finish guide on how to buy, sell, or invest in real estate here.

Think of this as your go-to reference whenever you're looking to explore the Triad, dive into real estate decisions, or simply refresh your list of favorite local eats and experiences. There's no pressure to read it cover to cover—just come back to the sections that interest you most.

So, Why Listen to Me?

Well, for starters—I've lived and breathed the Triad my entire life.

I grew up in Trinity, NC, a small town just south of High Point, and I've spent time living in all three of the Triad's major cities. After college, I moved to Greensboro and spent several years in the Gate City. Later, I moved to High Point, where I met my wife, and from there we spent a year living in Winston-Salem before settling back in Trinity to raise our family.

Because I've lived in every corner of the Triad, I bring a unique perspective to the table. I understand what makes each city special—the personalities of the neighborhoods, the pace of life, and the subtle differences that matter when you're choosing where to call home.

As a top-producing Triad Realtor, I've helped over 100 families buy and sell homes across Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem. I log over 30,000 miles a year serving my clients throughout the Piedmont Triad, and I've sold homes or done business in most of the neighborhoods across all three cities. I'm deeply familiar with local architecture, real estate law, business practices, and—most importantly—the people.

I've helped clients not only decide where to live, but also who to hire to mow the lawn, where to get their hair cut, and how to plug into their new community. I take the time to understand each person's lifestyle, work life, and family needs to help them find the part of the Triad that fits them best.

In addition to my work as a Realtor®, I'm also a real estate investor with a portfolio of single-family and commercial properties throughout the region. I've helped others build their own rental property portfolios and start their investment journeys right here in the Piedmont Triad.

Beyond real estate, I've been active in community events, charity efforts, and local campaigns, always looking for ways to better understand what makes this area so special to the people who live here. For some, it's the low taxes. For others, it's the job market, the family connections, or the access to nature.

But no matter the reason, one thing I hear again and again is:
"It just feels like home."



Calculate Your True Triad Level of Expertise

What brought you to the Triad? Work? Family? Or maybe there's something about the area you're still curious about? Do you know why the Triad ranks among the best places in the United States for real estate investing? Take this quick quiz to see just how well you really know the Triad.

1. How well do you know High Point?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

2. How well do you know Greensboro?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

3. How well do you know Winston-Salem?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

4. How Familiar are you with the Greensboro Shopping areas?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

5. How well do you know local real estate laws/regulations?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

6. Have you been to see all 3 Triad Baseball Teams Play?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

7. Are you familiar with the local highway system?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

8. How many local parks have you visited?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

9. How many local restaurants have you visited?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

10. How many local breweries or sweet shops have you visited?

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8 ☐9 ☐10

67–100

You're a Triad expert!

Still, I'm betting this guide will give you even more insider info about the Triad that will help you master the real estate landscape and beyond.

34–66

You could get to know the Triad a bit more.

This is the perfect way to do so. Don't worry - by the end of this guide, you'll be an expert on all things real estate and local knowledge.

0–33

You're new to the area!

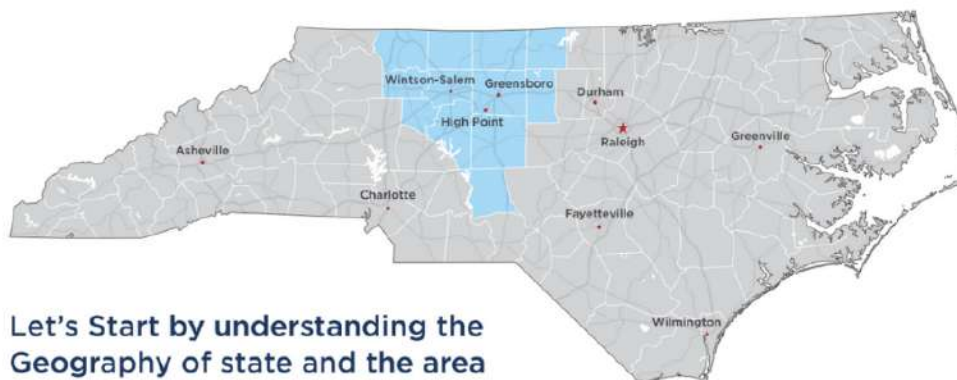
Welcome - you're in the right place. Keep this guide by your side at all times, because it has all you need to know about real estate and beyond in the area.



PART ONE

Understanding the Triad

Why settle for one downtown when you can have three? The Triad stands apart from other major metropolitan areas because it doesn't revolve around a single city center. Instead, it's made up of three distinct and vibrant cities: Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point. Each downtown offers its own unique character and energy. While everyone tends to have a favorite, I'll provide an honest look at the strengths and challenges of each city to help you decide which area suits you best. The truth is, I love the entire Triad—there's truly something here for everyone to enjoy.



Let's Start by understanding the Geography of state and the area

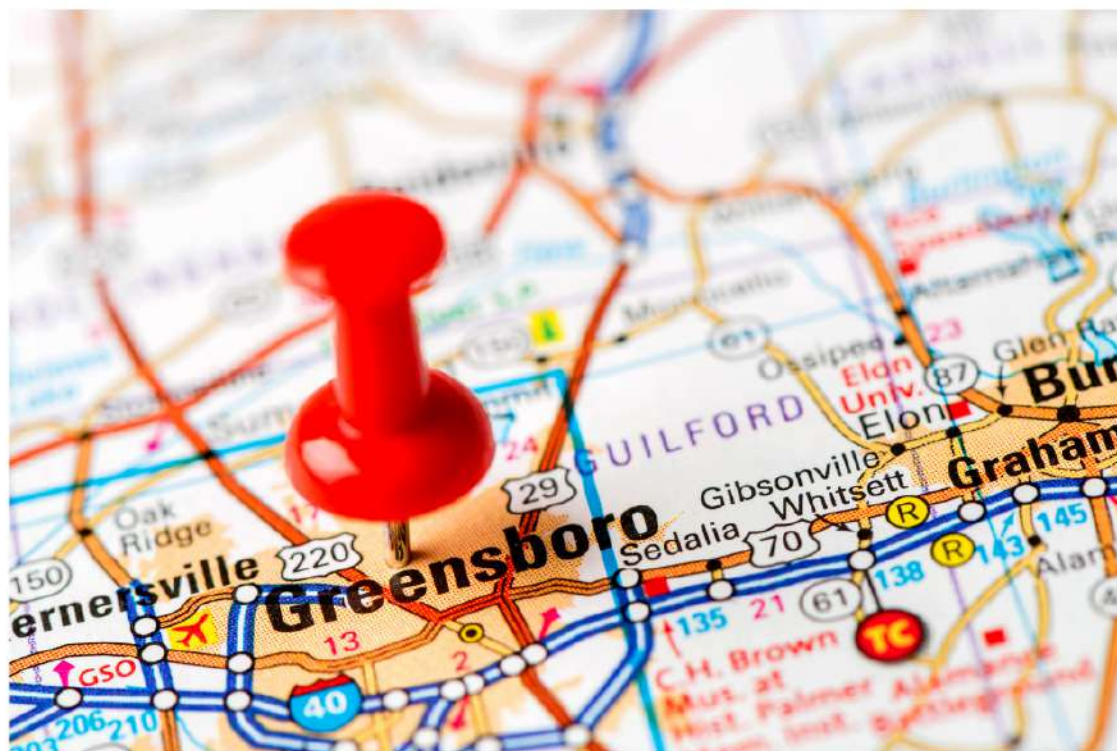
The Triad's central location in North Carolina makes it incredibly convenient to reach many other areas quickly. Interstate 40 runs west to east across the state and intersects with Interstate 85 in Greensboro, which runs north to south. When choosing a home, it's important to consider its proximity to these highways so you can minimize your commute and maximize your free time!

Asheville—with its famous Biltmore Estate and nearby Smoky Mountain National Park—is just about a 3-hour drive to the west. Raleigh and Charlotte, including their airports, can be reached in two hours or less depending on traffic. Both cities offer fantastic weekend getaways with a wide range of entertainment, from professional sports to big-name concerts. (I recently caught Weird Al Yankovic in Raleigh!) Beaches like Wilmington, Morehead City, and South Carolina's Myrtle Beach are all within a four-hour drive. One of the best perks of living in the Triad is that you can experience the mountains, the city, and the coast without traveling halfway across the country. I've even visited the mountains and the beach in the same week—always happy to return to my own couch in the Triad in between.

Closer to home, travel between Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point is stress-free. If you're used to the gridlock of Los Angeles or New York, you'll find the Triad's traffic refreshingly easy. Driving from Winston-Salem to Greensboro on I-40 takes about 30 minutes—even during rush hour. Plus, nature lovers are spoiled for choice within an hour's drive from any of the three cities. Hiking and waterfalls await at Hanging Rock, while High Rock Lake and Belews Creek offer water sports like skiing and wakeboarding. For a quieter day, Randleman Lake is great for kayaking and fishing (electric motors only).

A quick note on airports: Tickets out of Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI) can be a bit pricier than flying from Charlotte (CLT) or Raleigh-Durham (RDU), but the convenience is worth it. PTI is rarely crowded—you might even find yourself alone in the security line, no TSA PreCheck needed!

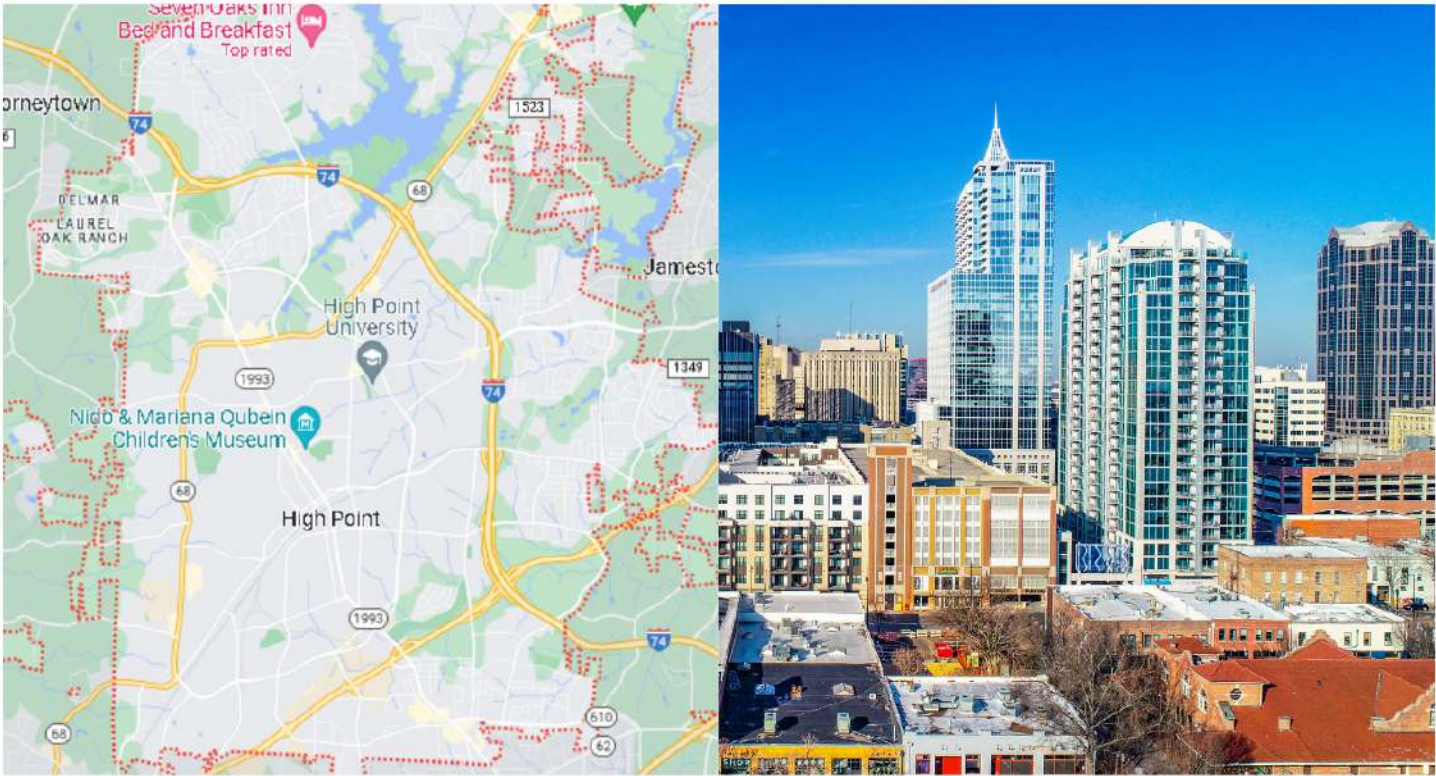
Now that we've covered geography, let's dive into 10 reasons why the Triad is one of the best and most unique places to call home.



10 Reasons Triad is a Great Place to Live:

- 1 3 major cities instead of 1 metropolis:** I love having our metropolitan area consist of 3 major cities instead of one huge metropolis. You can live near 3 cities with their own unique vibe and specialties. Often a city has a culture but in the triad, you'll see that each corner has its own flare and history.
- 2 Short commute times & more family time:** The population of the Triad is spread over a larger geographical area making commute times short giving you more time with family and friends.
- 3 Central to the state:** The Triad is a short drive to the mountains or the beach. It is also right between Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina's largest cities. You can be almost anywhere in the state within a 3-hour drive.
- 4 Job growth soars & taxes stay low:** Odds are you or your family originally decided to move here for a job. The low taxes and business-friendly nature of the Piedmont Triad area continue to attract new businesses from the aviation, manufacturing, technology, and distribution industries creating substantial job and wage growth.
- 5 Low cost of living:** According to Salary.com Greensboro is 4.2% cheaper to live in compared to the national average. Housing as an expense is 39.6% cheaper than the national average.
- 6 Country feel, city amenities:** Ever wondered if you could have the best of both worlds? To be able to see the stars every night from your private backyard? No neighbors in sight? Butttttt maybe you also feel like partying a bit from time to time. You deserve a night out. The triad can offer both a serene lifestyle and a life full of entertainment.
- 7 The perfect climate:** For all of you snowbirds, save yourself a trip to Florida and settle here in NC. The climate is relatively mild year-round compared to other states. The average low in January is around 30 degrees and the average high in July is 90 degrees. We're infamously known for our humid summers but you can escape to the mountains for a weekend to cool off.
- 8 Lower taxes:** Compared to most other states and other areas of NC the Triad has lower property taxes, between 0.8% and 1.39 %. If you're coming from out of state you may save on income taxes as well. North Carolina also has low corporate taxes for you business owners!
- 9 Near 5 major universities:** What do you want to study? Business, Law, Arts, Medicine, Tech? The Triad is home to several major universities and even more local and community colleges. Our state universities are lower cost than most other state's colleges. Wake Forest University, High Point University, Winston-Salem State University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and North Carolina A&T University are among the highest-regarded universities in the area.
- 10 Growing nightlife scene:** Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem all have fine dining, shopping, entertainment, breweries, and more. In the past few years, all three cities have made great efforts to build the entertainment center of the cities. High Point recently built a baseball stadium for the High Point Rockers. Greensboro just opened the Tanger Center of the Performing Arts. Winston-Salem is the home of Foothills Brewing, a fast-growing brewery. Try a "Hoppyum" or the "Jade" if you like an IPA.

High Point



High Point — The Furniture Capital of the World

High Point is famously known for its longstanding contributions to the furniture and textiles industries. Even today, thousands of local residents are employed by the furniture sector. Each year, the High Point Market, the world's largest furniture trade show, attracts visitors from across the globe and generates millions of dollars in revenue for local businesses.

Here's a fun fact: High Point was once home to one of the first Rolls-Royce dealerships in the United States, thanks to the wealth generated by the furniture industry and the city's strategic location on the East Coast.

While furniture remains a major economic force, much of High Point's recent growth has been fueled by High Point University and its visionary president, Nido Qubein. Under his leadership, the university has attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, transforming the campus into one of the most stunning in the region. Families will also appreciate the area's excellent elementary schools, offering a wide range of top-rated options for younger children.

Archdale-Trinity



www.archdale-trinitychamber.org/

Having been raised in Trinity, I might be a little biased—but I also know the area really well. It's known for being a quiet, close-knit community where everyone knows everyone. If you want your kids to grow up surrounded by lifelong friends, the Archdale-Trinity area offers a great chance for that kind of continuity.

This area is strongly influenced by the furniture industry centered in nearby High Point. Many residents work in furniture-related jobs, and companies like Trinity Furniture have deep roots here with a long-standing history in the business.

Now, here's some insider info on Trinity's real estate market:

Truth be told, homes here don't come on the market often, so inventory is low and competition can be tough. If you're serious about buying, you'll want to act quickly. This area is ideal for commuters—close to highways and with generally lower taxes in Randolph County compared to Guilford or Forsyth counties. Interstate 85 South runs right through Archdale and Trinity, leading down to Thomasville and Charlotte. The commute to Greensboro is about 20–30 minutes, while Winston-Salem is roughly 35–45 minutes away. The closest of the Triad's three major cities is High Point, just a quick 5–10 minute drive from most parts of Archdale and Trinity.

If you find yourself near the junction of Interstate 85 and Highway 311 in Archdale, that's where most local restaurants are. You'll find all the usual fast-food chains, but for something local, I recommend Archdale Subs or the Soda Shop for sandwiches and hot dogs. At Archdale Subs, I always get the steak and cheese—pro tip: ask them to grill the onions. In Trinity, Barbeque Joes is a must-visit. They serve great breakfast, lunch, and dinner—and don't miss the smoked turkey. It's absolutely delicious.

If nightlife with bars and music venues is your scene, Trinity and Archdale might not be the best fit.

Thomasville, Lexington and the Southern Triad Area



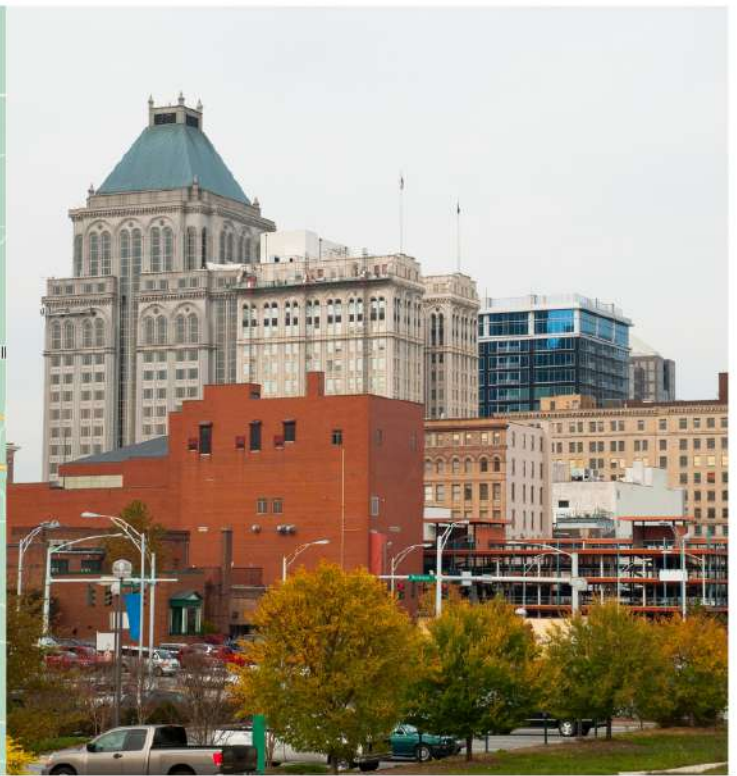
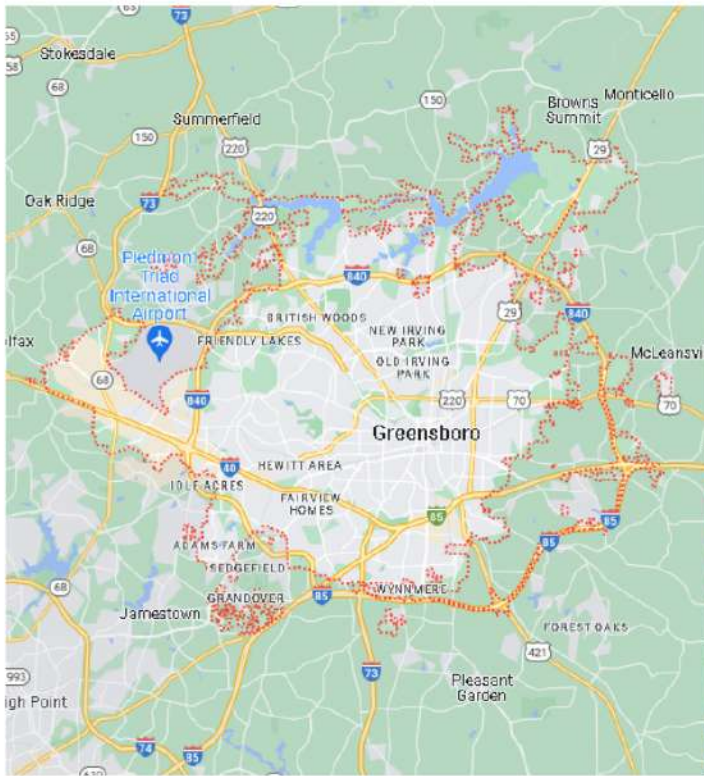
Drive through the downtown areas of these southern Triad cities, and you'll immediately get a sense of what makes each one unique. In downtown Thomasville, the famous giant chair stands as a proud symbol of the city's rich furniture industry history. Head to downtown Lexington, and you'll be greeted by the charming artist-designed pig statues lining the streets—an homage to Lexington's world-renowned barbecue.

Lexington-style barbecue, sometimes called Western North Carolina barbecue, features a tangy and spicy sauce made from a blend of vinegar, tomato sauce, red pepper flakes, and secret house spices. It's a must-try! I highly recommend visiting the annual Barbecue Festival held in early fall, a true celebration of this local culinary treasure. For the original recipe experience, stop by "Lexington Barbecue" just off Business 85—you'll thank me later!

Traveling south on I-85 toward Charlotte, you'll find the charming and growing town of Salisbury, which boasts a fantastic brewery in its downtown area.

This region is also an excellent choice for families, offering many top-rated elementary and high schools alongside high schools, making it a great place to live and grow.

Greensboro

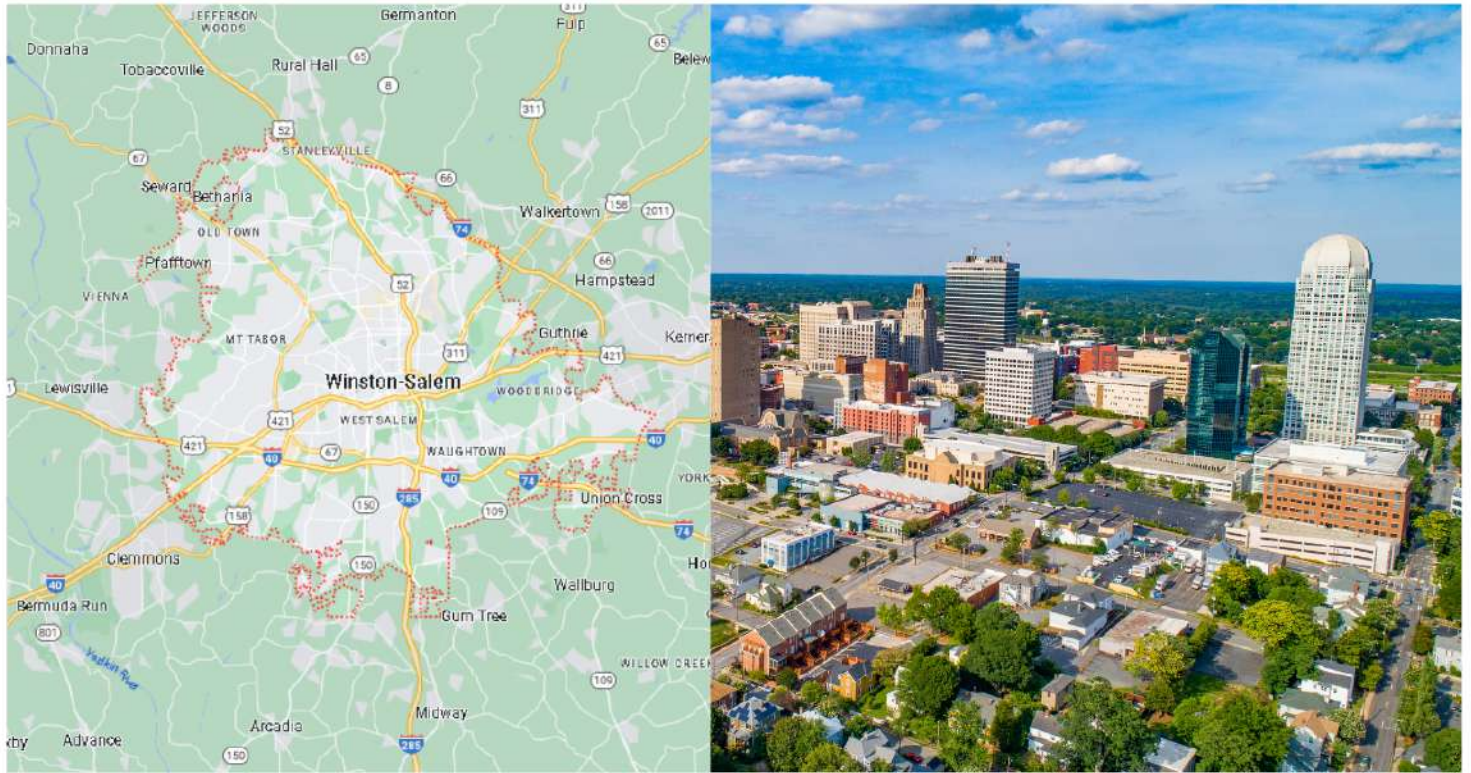


Greensboro, known as “The Gate City,” earned its nickname in the 1800s as North Carolina’s transportation capital during the golden age of railroads. Today, Greensboro remains a vital transportation hub, strategically located at the crossroads of Interstate 40 and Interstate 85. It features an Amtrak train station and is home to the region’s primary airport, Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI).

Beyond transportation, Greensboro has a rich industrial heritage rooted in the textile industry and proudly claims Wrangler Jeans as one of its iconic local brands. The city also holds a significant place in American history as a key site of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960, four courageous African American college students staged a historic “sit-in” at an all-white Woolworth’s lunch counter, sparking a wave of activism that helped propel civil rights forward nationwide. Today, Greensboro continues to be recognized as a progressive, forward-thinking city.

Greensboro’s modern growth is driven largely by its robust distribution infrastructure and freight-focused airport. PTI not only provides thousands of jobs but also attracts major freight and logistics companies like FedEx, UPS, and Amazon, making the city a national player in supply chain operations. The presence of the airport and manufacturing capabilities has also helped draw cutting-edge aerospace companies to the area. HondaJet, for example, operates a sprawling campus here and represents the region’s growing role in high-tech airplane manufacturing. It’s definitely worth a visit just to see the impressive HondaJet facility and witness firsthand how Greensboro blends history, industry, and innovation.

Winston-Salem



Winston-Salem, often paired with neighboring Greensboro as the "Twin City," boasts a rich history and a diverse economic landscape that continue to shape its unique identity. The nickname reflects the city's origins—the 1913 merger of two distinct towns: Winston, known for its industrial and manufacturing strength, and Salem, with roots as a Moravian religious settlement.

Strategically situated at the crossroads of major highways—including Interstate 40 and Interstate 74—Winston-Salem has long been a transportation hub, much like Greensboro. The city also offers convenient access via an Amtrak train station and Smith Reynolds Airport. Historically, Winston-Salem was a powerhouse in the tobacco and textile industries, famously home to the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. The iconic Reynolds Building, a stunning Art Deco skyscraper, still stands as a proud symbol of that legacy.

Beyond its industrial roots, Winston-Salem has earned a reputation as a vibrant cultural center. It is home to the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, which nurtures a thriving artistic community. Institutions like the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) and the Reynolda House Museum of American Art highlight the city's deep commitment to the arts.

Today, Winston-Salem's growth is fueled by a diversified economy that embraces modern industries. The city is a leading healthcare hub, anchored by Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center. It has also attracted innovative tech companies such as Inmar Intelligence, a leader in data and technology solutions. The Innovation Quarter, a rapidly growing research and development district, further cements Winston-Salem's role as a forward-thinking city.

Like Greensboro, Winston-Salem continues to thrive as a dynamic, evolving community. Its strategic location, economic diversification, and dedication to progress ensure that the "Twin City" remains an essential and vibrant part of North Carolina's landscape.



PART TWO

Buying a Triad Home

I've helped countless first-time buyers and families secure their dream homes in the Triad, so I know it's no easy task. Let's make the process a breeze by diving into some insider tips and recommendations to help you find your ideal home and close with confidence.

Six Steps to Home Buying in Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem

- 1 Explore the Area:** Discover the Triad by touring all three downtowns and visiting local parks, restaurants, and shopping centers to get a true feel for each community.
- 2 Get Pre-Approved:** Work with a local lender familiar with regional buyer incentives, like the Greensboro Down Payment Assistance Program, to strengthen your offer.
- 3 Hire Your Guide:** Choose a full-time realtor who knows the area inside and out, can skillfully negotiate and strategize, and has strong connections with other local agents.
- 4 Create Your Plan:** Consider your long-term needs—schools, retirement, family growth, career goals, and activities—to find a home that fits your lifestyle now and in the future.
- 5 Narrow Your Options:** Tour at least three homes before making an offer, so you understand how location and condition impact pricing.
- 6 Lean on Your Realtor:** Rely on your agent to recommend trusted local inspectors, attorneys, and contractors who will ensure your new home is thoroughly evaluated and help you close with confidence.



Top 10 Triad Buyer Team Recommendations

🔧 Trusted Service Categories for Buyers in the Triad

Before we dive into all the helpful people you may need along the way—let's start with the most important one: a real estate agent! 😊

Hopefully you choose Kirby Graves, the author of *A Guide to the Triad*, as your trusted agent to guide you through the journey with care, local expertise, and a whole lot of heart.

As you go through the homebuying process, you'll likely need to connect with several types of professionals. While we no longer list specific businesses (since vendors can change often), we're always happy to give you current recommendations—just ask!

Here are some of the most commonly requested service categories for homebuyers in the Triad:

- General Contractors & Handymen – For repairs, updates, or post-closing projects
- Home Inspectors – To ensure your future home is safe and structurally sound
- Lenders & Mortgage Brokers – For trusted financing support
- Real Estate Attorneys – For smooth closings and legal guidance
- Insurance Agents – To help protect your new investment
- HVAC, Plumbing & Electrical Services – Reliable contacts for inspections or upgrades
- Junk Removal & Cleaning Services – To help prepare your new space (or clean out the old one)
- Movers – Whether you're going across town or across the state
- Landscapers & Lawn Services – To help with curb appeal and maintenance
- Septic & Well Inspectors (if applicable) – For properties outside city limits

💬 Looking for a recommendation? We're happy to connect you with professionals we or our clients have had good experiences with—just let us know what you need!



PART THREE

Sell Your Triad Home for Top Dollar

Whether it's your first time selling or you're a seasoned investor, selling your home is a huge undertaking. Let's make it less overwhelming by identifying the right approach from the get-go so that we can maximize your ROI and ensure a smooth transaction. Selling in this region for top dollar begins with careful planning, strategy, and execution.

Don't let inexperience cost you - let's go over essential tips for first-time home sellers.

For those who have sold a few homes already, feel free to skip this next section and go to Part 4 on Page 29 if you don't need a refresher. In any case, everyone starts from a different knowledge base when it comes to real estate because we have all interacted with real estate in our lives. We all have hopefully lived in a building of some sort. Because of this, each person's level of experience is different. For this part of the book, we are going to start from ground zero. Even if you've never sold a home before, this part will give you all of the base of knowledge needed to sell your Greensboro, High Point, or Winston-Salem home. Many homeowners make huge mistakes when selling their homes because they feel like buying and being a homeowner qualifies them to know everything they need in order to sell a home. The fact is that selling a home and buying a home are two drastically different processes and it's incredibly important to understand the differences.

For example in North Carolina for a married couple, it only takes one of the spouse's signatures to buy a home but it is required to have both spouses' signatures to sell any real estate owned by a married couple. I know what you're thinking, yes this means your husband or wife could theoretically buy a home without you even knowing. But, guess what, they won't be able to sell it without you knowing. Gotcha! This is only one of many examples of why buying and selling a home are very different. Though this book will serve as a thorough guide, make sure you reach out to me or your local real estate expert if you're thinking about selling your home to ensure you stay up-to-date on changes in the industry and local laws.

Let's go over the 4 unexpected challenges you may face and how to get past them.

Overcoming the 4 Unexpected Challenges Faced by First Time Home Sellers

1 Don't Know Where to Start?

Many first-time home sellers delay listing their property for years simply because they feel overwhelmed or unsure about the selling process. Fear of making mistakes or facing legal issues often holds them back from moving on from their starter home or selling an inherited property. Unfortunately, this hesitation can cause them to miss out on prime market opportunities to sell at the best price or when the home is in its best condition. This book is designed to be your educational guide, helping you confidently sell your home at the right time.

2 Managing Deadlines

Selling your first home often means balancing the purchase of a new home while selling your current one simultaneously. Unlike when you bought your home, now you're juggling two transactions—two property inspections, potential repairs, and closing dates. Managing deadlines and expectations for multiple properties can be overwhelming, which is why having a skilled realtor is essential. A good agent will guide you through the process, ensuring nothing falls through the cracks, deadlines are met, and everything goes smoothly.

3 Marketing the Home

Many first-time sellers try to list their home “for sale by owner” to save money, but this approach often limits their ability to effectively market the property and attract the highest-paying buyers. To maximize your home's value, it's crucial to generate strong interest both online and in person. My team will help you prepare your home for the market, advertise it across every relevant platform, and attract the best offers possible.

4 Deciding on an Offer

For many first-time sellers, evaluating and responding to offers can be confusing. How do you know if an offer is serious? Can the buyer afford your home? What's the best way to make a counteroffer? Having sold over 100 homes, I've guided countless clients through these questions and negotiations—helping them make informed decisions, craft effective counteroffers, and ultimately secure the best price and terms.

Legal Know-How: Local Laws You Need to Know to Sell Your Home in the Piedmont Triad

Selling your home in High Point, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, or anywhere in the Piedmont Triad isn't just about putting up a “For Sale” sign and waiting for offers. It requires a deep understanding of the local laws, regulations, and market trends unique to this region. Knowing these details can make all the difference in successfully selling your home and maximizing its value. I'm here to guide you every step of the way—let's dive into the essential laws you need to know.



Disclosures:

In North Carolina, sellers of residential properties are required to complete two mandatory seller disclosures.

First, the Residential Property and Owners' Association Disclosure Statement requires the owner to disclose any known defects in the property, as well as all relevant information about any homeowners' association.

Second, the Mineral, Oil, and Gas Rights Mandatory Disclosure Statement asks sellers to disclose whether they—or any previous owners—have ever severed the mineral or oil rights from the property. This protects buyers from unknowingly purchasing a home where those rights have been sold to a separate party.

Additionally, if the property was built before 1978, a third disclosure applies: the Lead-Based Paint Addendum. This document requires the seller to disclose any knowledge of the potential presence of lead-based paint in the home.

These disclosures may differ from those in other states where you've previously sold property, and some requirements in North Carolina have changed over time. It's important to spend time familiarizing yourself with these disclosures to ensure a smooth and transparent transaction.

Due Diligence:

One key difference between selling a home in North Carolina and in other states is the due diligence process. NC is a "buyer beware" state, meaning it's the buyer's responsibility to conduct inspections and verify the condition and title status of the property. Sellers are not required to disclose every defect, which helps limit your liability as the seller.

A crucial part of this process is the Due Diligence Fee. Unlike in many other states, North Carolina buyers pay this fee to compensate you for taking your home temporarily off the market while they conduct inspections and decide whether to move forward with the purchase. During the due diligence period, the buyer has the right to enter the home for inspections and evaluations. The fee is non-refundable but will be credited toward the sale proceeds, so it becomes part of the funds you receive when the sale closes.

6 Keys to Top Dollar Offers On Your Home

First impressions are everything when it comes to selling your home. The single most important factor that influences your home's sale price—one that's within your control—is its condition. A well-maintained home creates a strong first impression, especially online, attracting more showings. More showings lead to more offers, often at higher prices. In my experience, I've helped clients achieve top dollar by following six simple steps:

1 Get Some Help:

Many sellers—especially first-timers—tell me how grateful they were to hire a professional to guide them through the selling process. Choosing a full-time, local realtor who actively markets your property, has a strong network of potential buyers and agents, and negotiates on your behalf can give you peace of mind while helping you achieve top dollar. An experienced agent will advise you on making the best first impression and will expertly market your home online, distributing the listing across multiple platforms. The more eyes on your property, the better the chance the highest-paying buyer will see it. Don't make the mistake of selling your home alone—after all, you wouldn't represent yourself in a court case, so why risk selling one of your biggest assets without a seasoned professional by your side?

2 Declutter and Depersonalize:

Buyers come from all over, with different cultures, tastes, and preferences. To sell your home for top dollar, it needs to appeal to as wide a range of buyers as possible. We want them to envision themselves living there—not be distracted by family photos, pet toys, or kids' homework. I always recommend staging your home to resemble an IKEA showroom: clean, simple, and inviting. Decluttering and depersonalizing not only makes your home more appealing but also creates a sense of spaciousness and openness. Since you're moving anyway, it's a great time to pack up and store personal items. Make sure to do this before professional photos are taken—because great photos are key to attracting buyers online.

6 Keys to Top Dollar Offers On Your Home

3 Increase Curb Appeal:

Believe me, the first impression starts right at the front of your home. Buyers want to picture themselves pulling into a driveway they can be proud of—especially when hosting family during the holidays. Boosting your home's curb appeal is one of the most cost-effective improvements you can make, and it's something many homeowners can do themselves. Here are some simple ways to enhance your home's exterior:

- Trim shrubs and trees, and clear away any yard debris
- Add fresh mulch to garden beds for a clean, polished look
- Pressure wash the house, driveway, and walkways
- Paint the front door, shutters, and any areas with peeling paint
- Schedule photos during spring when flowers are in bloom
- Store outdoor toys and keep the lawn mowed regularly

These small touches go a long way in creating an inviting first impression that draws buyers in.

4 Invest in Professional Cleaning:

Few investments yield a better return when preparing your home for sale than a thorough, top-to-bottom professional cleaning. I'm talking about getting into those hard-to-reach spots and corners that, let's be honest, don't get cleaned as often as they should. Buyers tend to notice these areas—even if they won't once they become homeowners. A spotless home photographs better, sells faster, and often commands a higher price. In fact, many of my buyer clients have ruled out properties simply because they weren't clean enough. Trust me, professional cleaning is a proven way to help you get top dollar—I've seen it work time and time again.

5 Run a Systems Check:

Have all major systems—HVAC, roof, foundation, electrical, plumbing—inspected and serviced before listing. Surprises during inspections can derail a sale, so it's better to address any known issues upfront, before the home is under contract. Ask the licensed professional to provide a written statement confirming the condition of the systems. This reassures buyers, especially when dealing with older systems, and can ease their concerns. If you replace any major components, we can use that as a powerful marketing point to boost your home's appeal.

6 Price to Sell:

One of the biggest mistakes sellers make is pricing their home too high. There's a clear inverse relationship between time on market and final sale price—the longer a home sits, the less it tends to sell for. Our goal is to price your home strategically to attract serious buyers and generate strong interest. This means setting a price justified by recent comparable sales. Overpriced homes that linger often end up selling for less than if they had been priced right from the start. Fair pricing encourages more showings, which often leads to better offers. Let's price your home to create the traffic and competition that will drive a great offer.

Top 10 Triad Seller Team Recommendations

Trusted Service Categories for Sellers in the Triad

Getting ready to sell your home? One of the best first steps is choosing a knowledgeable, reliable real estate agent—and we hope that's Kirby Graves, the author of *A Guide to the Triad*! With local expertise, market insight, and a personal touch, Kirby is here to make the selling process as smooth as possible.

As a seller, you may need a few professionals along the way to help prep, stage, and close the deal. While we don't list specific vendors (because things can change fast), we're always happy to recommend trusted local contacts when you need them.

Here are some of the most commonly requested service categories for home sellers:

- Pre-Listing Home Inspectors – To catch any surprises before buyers do
- Stagers & Interior Designers – To help your home look its absolute best
- Photographers & Videographers – For high-quality listing photos and virtual tours
- General Contractors & Handymen – For repairs, updates, or punch-list items
- Landscapers & Curb Appeal Pros – First impressions matter!
- Deep Cleaning Services – A sparkling clean home shows better
- Junk Removal & Donation Pick-Up – Clear out clutter to maximize space
- Painters & Pressure Washers – Quick updates that make a big impact
- Storage & Moving Companies – Especially helpful during transitions
- Real Estate Attorneys & Closing Coordinators – To ensure a smooth finish

 Need a referral? Kirby has a trusted network of professionals we're happy to share—just reach out!



PART FOUR

Investing in Triad Real Estate

Whether you've already invested in Triad real estate or are just getting started, I'm here to help you master the market. Let's explore my recommended strategies for smart investors—from calculating cash flow to securing peace of mind by finding the perfect property manager.

The name of the game is cash flow.

I say this partly as a nod to Robert Kiyosaki's investing board game Cash Flow, and partly because it's my core philosophy when it comes to real estate investing. Simply put, cash flow is the amount of money left over each month after you subtract all expenses from the rent you collect. Cash flow can be positive or negative—rarely does it ever “break even.” Your rental property is either paying you, or you're paying it.

Personally, I want my rental properties to pay me.

“But what about appreciation?” you might ask. Of course, I hope my properties appreciate over time, boosting my overall returns. But I would never buy a property solely for appreciation. Why? Because I only invest in properties that generate positive cash flow—meaning the rent comfortably covers all expenses. This rule is my safety net. By ensuring the rent covers every cost—including the mortgage—I can weather market downturns and recessions without panic. Short-term price dips don't faze me if my properties are consistently covering their expenses and producing cash flow.

All investments carry risk, but cash-flowing real estate is one of the strongest hedges against economic downturns. I wouldn't want to rely on my salary to pay for my properties because even the most secure jobs can have rough patches like layoffs or pay cuts.

To protect your family, your wealth, and your real estate portfolio, your rental property must not require you to dip into the funds your family needs to live each month. Appreciation is the icing on the cake—offering opportunities to refinance, pull out equity, and buy more properties. Think of cash flow as the gas and oil that keeps your car running, while appreciation is the nitrous oxide boost that gives you extra momentum. But remember, your car won't go anywhere on nitrous alone.

So how do we make sure your property generates strong cash flow? Let's dive into that next.

What if you already own a property that isn't cash-flowing?

Cut your losses and sell. Use whatever equity you have to invest in a property that generates positive cash flow. You'll sleep better at night knowing your investment covers its expenses—and you won't have to skip your Starbucks just to make the mortgage payment.

The Triad remains a great place to find cash-flowing properties. For example, I own a property in High Point that cost us \$95,000 after purchase and renovations. Its monthly expenses run about \$1,100, and we rent it for \$1,195—generating \$95 in positive cash flow each month. That may not sound like a lot, but it's \$95 I don't have to work for. Your real estate agent should be able to help you find properties that cash flow.

Insider Tip: The best rental deals are often found off-market. Make sure your agent works with investors regularly and can provide leads on off-market properties as well as MLS listings. Many investors use the "1% Rule" to quickly gauge potential cash flow.

The 1% Cash Flow Rule:

A property is likely to cash flow if the monthly rent is roughly 1% of the purchase price. For example, on a \$100,000 property, you'll want to confirm with your property manager that you can charge at least \$1,000 per month in rent. Keep in mind, this is a rule of thumb—not exact math.

Cash Flow Calculator

Use this helpful tool to estimate your rental property's cash flow and make informed investment decisions:
<https://www.360financialliteracy.org/Calculators/Cash-Flow-Calculator>

One common mistake is underestimating renovation costs. Always have your agent connect you with a qualified contractor to get accurate bids on repairs so you can budget realistically.

Thinking of DIY Property Management? Hiring a Pro Is the Smart Move.

If you're just starting out investing in rental property, you might be tempted to manage rent collection and tenants yourself. After all, it's just one property—how hard can it be? Trust me, things will go wrong, and usually at the worst possible moments: like while you're boarding a plane to Belize or just as you're about to sit down for Thanksgiving dinner. Stuff breaks. That's the reality of owning anything valuable. As my self-proclaimed redneck uncle says, "If you don't wanna worry about nothing, don't have nothing."

Having a property manager isn't just about convenience—it's about quality of life. You got into rental investing for a better life, right? Unless you're someone who enjoys fixing toilets at midnight, leave the headaches of property management to the pros. They'll screen tenants more thoroughly than you can, which means less turnover and fewer headaches. Plus, they stay on top of routine maintenance and tenant requests so you don't have to.

If you're investing in the Triad, you're in luck—there are several excellent property managers in the area. But not all offer the same level of service, so it's important to choose one that fits your needs.

Insider Tip: Look for a full-service property manager who performs routine maintenance inspections, has an in-house maintenance team dedicated solely to their managed properties, and staffs enough employees to handle tenant requests, court appearances, and all properties efficiently.

To truly vet a property manager you need to interview a few different property managers. Ask them the following questions:

- How many properties do you manage?
- What % of the properties managed are owned by people who work at or own your firm?
- Can you provide a few references of other owners that you manage property for?
- How quickly are you able to get a property rented?
- Do you have an in-house maintenance staff?
- How many people are on your team?
- What % of the rent do you charge to manage property?
- What additional fees do you charge?
- What do you charge to place a tenant?
- What do you charge if you have to go to court on my behalf?
- What do tenants say about the quality of your service?
- Will you be available by phone when I have a question?
- How often do you inspect the properties?



After asking these questions to two or three different property management companies, you'll quickly see how much they can vary from one another. For me, having a full-service property manager who handles every aspect of property management is essential. I prefer to be as hands-off as possible with my properties so I can focus on helping my clients and growing their investment portfolios.

Triad Investing Tips for Out-of-Town Investors

Investing from a distance comes with extra challenges compared to local investors. The key to success is building a reliable, bulletproof team of local professionals who know the Triad market inside and out. Your team should include a trusted real estate agent, a local mortgage lender, a real estate attorney, a professional property manager, contractors, a home inspector, an insurance expert, and more.

To assemble this team, you'll need to do some research online—or reach out to me. As your Triad real estate agent and local expert, I'm always happy to help connect you with the best professionals in the area through my network. Your agent should be able to introduce you to two or three vetted experts in each field for you to interview. Whenever possible, plan a trip to the Triad to meet these professionals in person and build strong relationships.

Insider Tip: You might be tempted to fly into Raleigh or Charlotte to save on airfare, but I encourage you to use Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI) instead. With virtually no security lines, you'll breeze through the airport and find easy access to Ubers and rental cars. There's a hotel right next to the airport, but you'll likely want to stay closer to the properties or professionals you'll be visiting. If you're staying in Greensboro and want a unique experience, check out the historic O'Henry Hotel. Otherwise, the area offers plenty of chain hotels and Airbnb options to suit your needs.

FaceTiming with your contractor is a great way to start building a relationship that will be invaluable when issues arise. I often see investors make the mistake of waiting until something goes wrong before reaching out, but it's much better to be proactive and connect with the professionals you'll need ahead of time. These local contractors and experts can also offer valuable insights into emerging Triad neighborhoods that are smart investment opportunities.

If you're planning a trip to the area, give me a call in advance—I'll arrange a full day of property tours, introductions to trusted local vendors, and we can wrap up by grabbing a beer or snack at one of my favorite neighborhood spots.

Conclusion



About the Author:

Kirby Graves is a top-producing licensed real estate agent, broker, Realtor, and investor with over four years of experience and more than 100 transactions serving clients throughout the Triad region. Kirby specializes in guiding families through the process of selling their first home, earning the trust of many Triad families who rely on his expert advice each year. Beyond assisting clients, Kirby and his investment partners have built a substantial rental portfolio, including over 50 residential rental units, a storage facility, and a vacation rental company.

A lifelong resident of the Piedmont Triad, Kirby was born and raised in Trinity, NC, just south of High Point. He attended Trinity High School, where he captained the soccer team. After graduating from East Carolina University, Kirby moved to Greensboro to grow the landscaping business he started in college. His early interest in real estate was inspired by his father's rental properties during his childhood, planting the seed for his future as a real estate investor.

After five successful years helping Triad residents through his landscaping business, Kirby realized his skills were better suited to residential real estate brokerage. Today, he lives in Trinity with his family and dedicates his professional career to helping clients buy, sell, and invest in Triad real estate.

Don't navigate the Triad's real estate market alone. Contact me today for expert guidance every step of the way.
336-740-5535 kirby@kirbygraves.com

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KIRBY GRAVES
www.guidetothetriad.com
kirby@kirbygraves.com
336-740-5535