

## Attentive home buyers can find "Good values and receptive sellers"

December brought few surprises for real estate brokers in Western Washington with holidays, fluctuating interest rates, and volatility in consumer confidence contributing to slower activity. Several leaders from Northwest Multiple Listing Service described 2018 as a transition year for residential real estate.

New data from the MLS show inventory in its 23-county market area dipped below two months of supply for the first time since July. A year-over-year comparison of the number of new listings, pending sales, and closed sales show drops overall, while prices rose from the same month a year ago.

Member-brokers added 3,631 new listings of single family homes and condominiums during December (10.4 percent fewer than a year ago), boosting total active listings to 12,275, up from the year-ago volume of 8,553. Pending sales were down about 8.4 percent from twelve months ago (5,677 versus 6,198), and the volume of closed sales dropped nearly 16.6 percent (6,374 versus 7,642).

For 2018, members of Northwest MLS reported completing 92,555 transactions, which compares with 99,345 closed sales during 2017 for a drop of about 6.8 percent. The median price on last year's closed sales of single family homes and condominiums combined was \$402,000, up \$32,000 (8.64 percent) from 2017.

The 12,275 active listings in the MLS database at year end was down from November when inventory totaled 15,830 properties, and down from 2018's peak of 19,526 listings at the end of September. Measured another way, there was 1.93 months of supply at the end of December, with four-to-six months typically considered to be a balanced market. A year ago there was only 1.12 months of supply.

"We're continuing to see a balancing of the market, yet it is still seller-leaning, driven by our region's continued job formation and a lack of inventory," observed Mike Grady, president and COO of Coldwell Banker Bain. "For all the talk of doom and gloom in real estate" he said his calculations show home values have increased at four times the rate of inflation since December 2014 when the "hot market" began.

J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate, said a favorable market is returning for home buyers in Seattle and the Eastside. "Improved affordability, with both lower interest rates and adjusted lower housing prices from the spring of 2018 will lead the way," he stated, adding "Although unsold inventory of homes for sale is still considered a shortage, the larger number of unsold homes, combined with new listings, will moderate the price increases in the year ahead."

Market Activity Summary for December 2018						
	Listings		Pending	Closing Sales		
	New Listings	Total Active		# of Closings	Average Price	Median Price
<b>King</b>	1,035	3,690	1,770	2,157	\$728,616	\$597,000
<b>Snohomish</b>	529	1,562	899	1,021	\$511,598	\$454,900
<b>Pierce</b>	680	1,728	1,056	1,134	\$379,457	\$339,838
<b>Total</b>	2,244	6,980	3,725	4,312	\$539,890	\$463,913

## Seattle ranked #4, one of the best college cities in the nation

There are plenty of colleges around the Seattle area, and those that attend school here do so in one of the best college cities in the nation, according to a new study. Seattle ranked No. 4 among large cities and No. 11 overall, says the study by WalletHub, which compared more than 400 U.S. cities based on 30 key indicators of academic, social and economic growth potential. The data set ranges from cost of living to

quality of higher education to crime rate. Seattle rated high on nightlife options (6th out of 208), 15th in least amount of "brain drain", 24th in city accessibility and 32nd in quality of higher education. Where Seattle rated not-so-great was in percentage of available rental units (154th), and cost of higher education (163rd). This indicates a great opportunity for investing in rental property in the Puget Sound area.

## Breakouts! – Residential SOLD Average

Area (Area Code)	Average \$	Average \$	2018 VS
	Dec. 2018	Dec. 2017	2017
Auburn-Federal Way (110-310)	\$ 419,495	\$ 395,155	6.16%
Kent-Maple Valley (320-340)	\$ 507,472	\$ 476,734	6.45%
West Seattle (140)	\$ 706,478	\$ 706,784	-0.04%
SODO-Beacon Hill (380-385)	\$ 625,398	\$ 628,702	-0.53%
E.lake-Madison-Capitol Hill (390)	\$ 1,234,469	\$ 1,216,882	1.45%
Queen Anne-Magnolia (700)	\$ 1,127,151	\$ 1,128,447	-0.11%
*Belltown-Downtown Seattle(701)	\$ 916,000	\$ 854,663	7.18%
Ballard-Greenlake (705)	\$ 786,922	\$ 816,839	-3.66%
North Seattle (710)	\$ 855,036	\$ 848,655	0.75%
Shoreline/Richmond Beach (715)	\$ 695,651	\$ 630,912	10.26%
Bellevue Downtown (520)	\$ 3,253,063	\$ 2,806,006	15.93%
Mercer Island (510)	\$ 2,994,470	\$ 2,012,359	48.80%
Bellevue South-Newcastle (500)	\$ 1,127,982	\$ 1,125,431	0.23%
Renton Highlands-Downtown (350)	\$ 629,167	\$ 612,660	2.69%
Microsoft-Bellevue East (530)	\$ 1,269,264	\$ 1,063,325	19.37%
Kirkland Downtown (560)	\$ 1,375,846	\$ 1,324,142	3.90%
Redmond (550)	\$ 985,448	\$ 889,720	10.76%
Issaquah-Sammamish (540)	\$ 953,776	\$ 943,592	1.08%
Juanita-Bothell-Woodinville (600)	\$ 929,903	\$ 813,853	14.26%
Bothell North-Mill Creek (610)	\$ 763,641	\$ 730,517	4.53%
Edmonds-Lynnwood (730)	\$ 598,138	\$ 580,646	3.01%
Everett-Mukilteo-Snohomish (740)	\$ 489,391	\$ 451,077	8.49%

\*Condominium SOLD Average

## Home maintenance tips

Many homeowners don't think about home maintenance until something breaks, but that's not the best way to take care of your home. Here are three tips to help you protect your investment and keep your property in good shape for years to come:

- Create and Follow a Home Maintenance Schedule.
- Have All of Your Home Systems Checked Regularly.
- Follow a Cleaning Schedule. Keeping home clean is just as important.

Weekly Primary Mortgage Market Survey® (PMMS®)				
January 10, 2019	30-Yr FNMA	30-Yr FHA	15-Yr FNMA	5/1 ARM
Regional Breakdown	4.25%	3.75%	3.625%	4.25%
Average Rates	4.25%	3.75%	3.625%	4.25%
Fees & Points	*All loans are with a one point origination fee.			
APR	4.387%	4.574%	3.862%	4.387%

\*\* Owner Occupied / Single Family Residence  
 740 credit score and 20% down payment for conventional  
 620 credit score and 3.50% down payment for FHA

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