

Northwest MLS housing report for April signals good news for home buyers

Housing activity during April signaled good news for buyers in Western Washington as inventory continued to grow, the rate of price increases was slowing in many areas (and even decreasing in a few counties), and mortgage rates remained low.

Northwest Multiple Listing Service statistics for last month show a 28.5 percent overall increase in active listings compared to the same month a year ago, a 5.8 percent gain in pending sales, and a 2.4 percent rise in median prices for sales of single family homes and condos that closed during April. The volume of closings dipped slightly (down 1.9 percent).

"Listings were popping up like April flowers and the bloom has produced a vibrant and healthy market," exclaimed MLS director John Deely, principal managing broker at Coldwell Banker Bain. "With an increased supply of listing inventory, low interest rates, and a positive economic climate, buyers are confident that this is a good time to buy," he reported, while noting a larger number of buyers are opting out of competing with other buyers.

"This year's buyers and sellers are approaching the market with more caution and a focus on an analytical, versus emotional approach that has ruled the last several years," Deely said.

Northwest MLS members added 11,697 new listings to inventory during April for a year-over-year gain of nearly 3.8 percent. During the same period, brokers reported 11,188 pending sales (509 fewer than the number of new listings), resulting in net gains in the number of active listings in many counties, but changes in inventory were wide ranging across the 23 counties the MLS serves.

Seven counties had double-digit growth in inventory from a year ago, led by King County (up 78.5 percent) and Snohomish County (up nearly 57 percent). Northwest MLS figures show both King County and its 23-county system have around 1.7 months of supply.

"We just experienced a strong spring market and are now heading into the pre-summer phase of the housing cycle where more inventory but also more buyer competition is commonplace," stated J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate. He expects momentum will continue "in line with positive job growth, lower interest rates and a strong U.S. economy," but believes price appreciation will start to level out heading into summer. "All eyes will be on each new listing this summer, a welcome sight for home buyers encountering multiple-offer situations in the more affordable and mid-price ranges," Scott added.

Market Activity Summary for April 2019						
Single Family Homes & Condos	Listings		Pending	Closing Sales		
	New Listings	Total Active		# of Closings	Average Price	Median Price
King	4,365	4,624	3,988	2,739	\$753,845	\$625,000
Snohomish	1,746	1,554	1,714	1,201	\$512,566	\$479,000
Pierce	1,711	1,502	1,847	1,286	\$386,988	\$355,000
Total	7,822	7,680	7,549	5,226	\$551,133	\$486,333

Sammamish, the safest city in Washington

Sammamish was named the safest city in Washington, based on a study by SafeHome.org. and reported by KOMO News. The agency used crime data from the FBI and thousands of police agencies who cover towns of at least 46,000 people. Categories included property crimes, violent crime trend, violent crimes, citizen to officer ratio and property crime trend, researchers wrote. Sammamish was named No. 1 in Washington and even made their national list at No. 78 - - the only city

to make the Top 100 list. Kirkland came in No. 2, while Pasco, Shoreline and Richland rounded out the top 5. Kennewick completed the Tri-Cities' impressive showing, coming in at No. 7.

Breakouts! – Residential SOLD Average

Area (Area Code)	Average \$		2019 VS 2018
	Apr. 2019	Apr. 2018	
Auburn-Federal Way (110-310)	\$ 431,040	\$ 407,053	5.89%
Kent-Maple Valley (320-340)	\$ 510,801	\$ 509,831	0.19%
West Seattle (140)	\$ 729,797	\$ 719,274	1.46%
SODO-Beacon Hill (380-385)	\$ 684,607	\$ 725,057	-5.58%
E.lake-Madison-Capital Hill (390)	\$ 1,146,072	\$ 1,270,565	-9.80%
Queen Anne-Magnolia (700)	\$ 1,230,592	\$ 1,150,016	7.01%
*Belltown-Downtown Seattle(701)	\$ 689,974	\$ 792,177	-12.90%
Ballard-Greenlake (705)	\$ 856,725	\$ 938,212	-8.69%
North Seattle (710)	\$ 1,030,633	\$ 1,055,824	-2.39%
Shoreline/Richmond Beach (715)	\$ 806,269	\$ 711,662	13.29%
Bellevue Downtown (520)	\$ 3,078,582	\$ 2,983,424	3.19%
Mercer Island (510)	\$ 1,788,183	\$ 2,175,031	-17.79%
Bellevue South-Newcastle (500)	\$ 1,091,274	\$ 1,124,528	-2.96%
Renton Highlands-Downtown (350)	\$ 646,993	\$ 649,726	-0.42%
Microsoft-Bellevue East (530)	\$ 1,116,189	\$ 1,090,433	2.36%
Kirkland Downtown (560)	\$ 1,530,097	\$ 1,395,958	9.61%
Redmond (550)	\$ 978,132	\$ 937,060	4.38%
Issaquah-Sammamish (540)	\$ 987,404	\$ 989,425	-0.20%
Juanita-Bothell-Woodinville (600)	\$ 843,032	\$ 890,718	-5.35%
Bothell North-Mill Creek (610)	\$ 713,129	\$ 738,154	-3.39%
Edmonds-Lynnwood (730)	\$ 604,079	\$ 653,290	-7.53%
Everett-Mukilteo-Snohomish (740)	\$ 523,046	\$ 527,409	-0.83%

*Condominium SOLD Average

Condo mortgage business - Poised for a Breakout

Condominium loans represent only about 8 % of total mortgages, a share that has remain fairly stable for several years. However, CoreLogic says they are poised to play a much larger role. Jacqueline Doty, writing in the company's Insights blog, says the loans, which are overwhelmingly (80 %) conventional, have enjoyed recent gains.

The changes have been especially notable in the jumbo sector where there has been a steady increase of condo sales in the over \$1 million price range since 2009.

Add to this the looming entry into the housing market of young Americans, those aged 25 to 27 and it appears that the demand for condos will only increase.

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Weekly Primary Mortgage Market Survey® (PMMS®)				
May 10, 2019	30-Yr	30-Yr	15-Yr	5/1
Regional Breakdown	FNMA	FHA	FNMA	ARM
Average Rates	3.875%	3.50%	3.375%	3.875%
Fees & Points	*All loans are with a one point origination fee.			
APR	4.010%	4.534%	3.613%	4.009%

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