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What's in Style?

Your Style Your Dream Your Home

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Home Buyers Seeking Affordability Are Expanding Search Outside Greater Seattle

Depleted inventory continues to frustrate would-be buyers in Western Washington. Many of these potential homeowners are expanding their search beyond the major job centers in King County, according to market watchers who commented on the latest statistics from Northwest Multiple Listing Service.

The MLS report summarizing August activity shows less than two months of supply system-wide, and only about 1.6 months of supply in the four-county Puget Sound region. The sparse selection is pushing up prices. For last month's sales of single family homes and condos across the 23 counties served by Northwest MLS, prices rose nearly 6.2% compared to a year ago.

Brokers reported 10,602 pending sales (mutually accepted offers) during August for a 4.9% increase from a year ago. Pending sales rose nearly 6.6% in the Puget Sound region, led by Snohomish County with a gain of 15.8%. Six counties had double-digit gains while an equal number had declines.

The volume of total active listings is down more than 10% from a year ago. Fourteen counties had double-digit drops. At month end there were 16,697 active listings in the MLS database, down from the year-ago total of 18,580.

OB Jacobi, president of Windermere Real Estate noted buyers are drawn to areas outside King County in search of affordability. "Pierce County is now experiencing what King County did 24 months ago where a surplus of buyers and lack of supply are pushing up home prices. Snohomish County also saw a big bump with a massive 16% increase in pending sales year-over-year. This tells us the secret is clearly out that housing in the counties to the north and south of Seattle is more affordable."

The median price for the single family homes and condos that sold last month in King County was $615,000, slightly higher than the year-ago figure of $610,000. In Snohomish County, last month's median sales price was $470,000, up about 1.8% from the year-ago price of $461,832. The Pierce County price of $369,000 is $246,000 lower than King County. It's up 6.1% from a year ago.

"As we enter the fall housing market, both interest rates and job growth in Puget Sound are extremely positive," stated J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate. Saying these are both key indicators of a strong housing market, Scott noted September and October are "historically the best for selection and availability out of the next six months," adding, "With kids back in school and summer vacations over, homeowners who wish to sell their house before the winter season will look to put their home on the market soon. Similarly, buyers can take advantage of the market timing and low interest rates in the next two months to come."

Market Activity Summary for August 2019

	Listings		Pending	Closing Sales		
Single Family Homes & Condos	New Listings	Total Active		# of Closings	Average Price	Median Price
King	3,333	5,472	3,298	3,152	$748,436	$615,000
Snohomish	1,651	2,181	1,664	1,486	$515,407	$470,000
Pierce	1,763	2,146	1,862	1,606	$405,295	$369,000
Total	6,747	9,799	6,824	6,244	$556,379	$484,667

Best community college system in the nation

Washington state's community college system is the best in the nation, according to a new study released in August. The new report, by personal finance website WalletHub, ranked hundreds of U.S. schools in the American Association of Community Colleges based on 19 different criteria, including costs, efficiency, retention rates, graduation rates and career outcomes. When all of the criteria were counted up, Washington state's community college system had the highest average score of any state. Within Washington itself, Pierce College in Puyallup had the highest score, followed by Shoreline Community College, South Puget Sound Community College, Big Bend Community College, Lower Columbia College, Everett Community College and Bates Technical School.

Breakouts! – Residential SOLD Average

August 2019 (King/Snohomish/Pierce County) SOLD Average

Area (Area Code)	Average $ July 2019	Average $ July 2018	2019 VS 2018
Auburn-Federal Way (110-310)	$ 446,140	$ 410,344	8.72%
Kent-Maple Valley (320-340)	$ 518,986	$ 495,111	4.82%
West Seattle (140)	$ 721,973	$ 678,974	6.33%
SODO-Beacon Hill (380-385)	$ 695,831	$ 668,570	4.08%
E.lake-Madison-Capital Hill (390)	$ 1,271,401	$ 1,225,323	3.76%
Queen Anne-Magnolia (700)	$ 1,285,147	$ 1,190,585	7.94%
*Belltown-Downtown Seattle(701)	$ 932,347	$ 767,267	21.52%
Ballard-Greenlake (705)	$ 825,388	$ 838,156	-1.52%
North Seattle (710)	$ 819,652	$ 873,012	-6.11%
Shoreline/Richmond Beach (715)	$ 664,089	$ 686,613	-3.28%
Bellevue Downtown (520)	$ 3,077,850	$ 2,735,953	12.50%
Mercer Island (510)	$ 1,940,813	$ 1,870,386	3.77%
Bellevue South-Newcastle (500)	$ 1,169,209	$ 1,179,007	-0.83%
Renton Highlands-Downtown (350)	$ 665,444	$ 640,586	3.88%
Microsoft-Bellevue East (530)	$ 1,110,452	$ 1,087,958	2.07%
Kirkland Downtown (560)	$ 1,376,267	$ 1,121,650	22.70%
Redmond (550)	$ 926,161	$ 1,013,789	-8.64%
Issaquah-Sammamish (540)	$ 993,948	$ 956,731	3.89%
Juanita-Bothell-Woodinville (600)	$ 859,807	$ 903,431	-4.83%
Bothell North-Mill Creek (610)	$ 724,766	$ 722,199	0.36%
Edmonds-Lynnwood (730)	$ 625,217	$ 616,180	1.47%
Everett-Mukilteo-Snohomish (740)	$ 531,489	$ 518,877	2.43%

*Condominium SOLD Average

Mortgage application overview

Total mortgage application volume rose 2% last week compared with the previous week, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association's seasonally adjusted index. Volume was 69% higher than the same week one year ago, when interest rates were much higher.

Mortgage applications to purchase a home increased 5% for the week and were 9% higher than the same week one year ago.

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Weekly Primary Mortgage Market Survey® (PMMS®)				
September 13, 2019 Regional Breakdown	30-Yr FNMA	30-Yr FHA	15-Yr FNMA	5/1 ARM
Average Rates	3.625%	3.125%	3.125%	3.625%
Fees & Points	*All loans are with a one point origination fee.			
APR	3.524%	4.625%	3.371%	3.899%

** 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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