

Home buyer frustration continues due to limited selection and ongoing increases in prices, interest rates

KIRKLAND, Washington (Jan. 5, 2017) – Like many other months of 2016, December was frustrating for buyers across Washington state as they encountered depleted inventory and rising prices. Post-election hikes in interest rates – with more on the horizon -- added to would-be homeowners' worries.

Northwest Multiple Listing Service statistics for December show year-over-year drops in new listings, but gains in pending sales, closed sales and prices. Pending sales (mutually accepted offers) in the four-county Puget Sound region reached their highest level since 2005.

“The data just keep telling the same story – low inventory and increasing prices,” remarked Mike Grady, president and COO of Coldwell Banker Bain. “As one of our brokers put it, ‘Sellers received an awesome Christmas gift in December, but buyers, only a lump of coal.’”

Brokers added 4,217 new listings to the inventory during December to bring the supply up to 10,571 listings. The volume of new listings surpassed the year-ago figure of 4,041, but supply still fell, dropping to only 1.4 months for the Northwest MLS market area covering 23 counties. Both King and Snohomish counties reported less than a month of inventory.

Robert Wasser, owner/broker at Prospera Real Estate in Seattle, said his analysis of the MLS data indicates the supply of single family homes for sale in King County just hit a post-recession low. “The only other time supply fell below one month was around this same time a year ago,” noted Wasser, a member of the Northwest MLS board of directors.

At month end, MLS figures show inventory (10,571 listings) was nearly 15.6 percent below year-ago levels (12,522 listings), with about 90 percent of the selection being single family homes.

Seventeen of the 23 counties in the MLS report had double-digit drops in active listings at the end of last month compared to December 2015.

Northwest MLS members reported 6,401 pending sales during December, up from 5,970 for the same month a year ago for a year-over-year gain of 7.2 percent.

“The housing market remains frenzy hot on a seasonal basis,” exclaimed J. Lennox Scott. Noting sales activity was substantially higher than the number of new listings, he said such conditions “continue to foster a competitive market where homebuyers are just waiting for the next new listing to come on the market.”

Commenting on strong sales in the Central Puget Sound region, Scott noted King County recorded the biggest year-over-year jump in pending sales of single family homes, surging nearly 11.3

percent, well ahead of Kitsap (up 4.5 percent), Pierce (up 4 percent) and Snohomish (up 3.2 percent).

“Buyers pursued homes aggressively all through November and December with little to no slowdown amid fears of rising interest rates and worsening inventory levels,” said MLS director George Moorhead. “Inventory levels have dropped to their lowest level, which makes buyer frenzy even more intense as prices approach double-digit appreciation,” he added. Moorhead, the designated broker at Bentley Properties, calculates buyers have lost \$37,000 in buying power due to interest rate increases. He likens the situation to having two cars, “one going forward, and one going in reverse. The gap is widening too fast for some buyers.”

Closed sales also finished on a strong note with brokers reporting 7,575 completed transactions during December. That’s up more than 6.8 percent from a year ago when members notched 7,091 closed sales.

Prices area-wide also continued trending upward, rising nearly 9.2 percent from a year ago. The overall median price for single family homes and condominiums that sold during December was \$343,950; a year ago it was \$315,000.

King County prices jumped 12.2 percent, from \$450,000 in December 2015 to \$505,000 for last month’s sales. For single family homes (excluding condominiums) the median price for December’s sales was \$550,000, unchanged from October and November. Prices peaked this year in King County in June, reaching \$573,522.

Condo sales slowed compared to a year ago, due at least in part to a sharp drop in inventory (down more than 19 percent). Pending sales were essentially flat (up 0.73 percent). Closed sales for December slipped nearly 6 percent, while prices on last month’s completed sales of condos rose 9.8 percent. The median price on last month’s closed sales of condos was \$280,000. Condo prices in King County jumped more than 12 percent, from \$279,975 a year ago to last month’s sales price of \$314,000.

“Looking ahead to 2017, the Seattle market will continue to perform well, even with the expected interest rate increase,” stated OB Jacobi, president of Windermere Real Estate. The regional economy is in full stride, he noted, adding, “This will continue to create increased demand for housing across the board. Price growth should start to cool a little as inventory levels rise modestly, but overall, 2017 should be another banner year for the housing market.”

Consumers should expect prices to continue edging upward, suggested Moorhead. “NAR indicates we are 70,000 units short of meeting the housing needs in the Puget Sound area. Builders are just flat out running out of urban land to work with,” he said. Moorhead believes rising costs for construction labor are the driving force for price increases. Builder confidence continues to grow,

reaching its highest levels since 2005, he noted, but added, “Naturally, some trepidation is heard as some feel this level of growth in the market is completely unsustainable.”

Grady believes the pattern of low inventory and increasing prices will continue. “We believe it is a predictor for what to expect throughout 2017,” he commented. “There’s simply not enough new construction to fill the needs of new employees being hired both locally and new to the state. The key is employment,” Grady continued, saying “There’s no reason to think that a new administration will cause employment to slow down; rather, it’s more likely we’ll see it increase in the Puget Sound region so we’re off to another strong start in 2017,” he stated.

Scott, the chairman and CEO of John L. Scott, expects a higher number of new listings will start to show up in mid-February -- “just in time for the spring housing market rush.”

Northwest Multiple Listing Service, owned by its member real estate firms, is the largest full-service MLS in the Northwest. Its membership of nearly 2,100 member offices includes more than 25,000 real estate professionals. The organization, based in Kirkland, Wash., currently serves 23 counties in the state.

Statistical tables follow on next pages.

Statistical Summary by Counties: Market Activity Summary – December 2016

Single Fam. Homes + Condos	LISTINGS		PENDING SALES	CLOSED SALES			*Months of Inventory	
	New Listings	Total Active	# Pending Sales	# Closings	Avg. Price	Median Price	This month	Same mo., year ago
King	1,329	1,985	2,092	2,701	\$600,324	\$505,000	0.73	0.84
Snohomish	658	1,020	1,104	1,147	\$414,466	\$379,350	0.89	1.13
Pierce	807	1,763	1,201	1,326	\$311,436	\$280,500	1.33	1.76
Kitsap	249	659	330	459	\$335,079	\$279,500	1.44	1.81
Mason	52	320	89	98	\$237,903	\$221,000	3.27	4.33
Skagit	105	343	187	174	\$310,885	\$282,500	1.97	2.69
Grays Harbor	79	429	88	75	\$185,545	\$179,900	5.72	7.26
Lewis	52	262	81	81	\$200,019	\$175,000	3.23	4.96
Cowlitz	75	186	91	115	\$218,191	\$199,000	1.62	2.26
Grant	44	296	59	61	\$197,370	\$175,000	4.85	5.58
Thurston	242	695	339	430	\$296,645	\$275,450	1.62	2.42
San Juan	13	199	26	30	\$717,722	\$390,000	6.63	10.92
Island	78	340	123	137	\$350,647	\$300,000	2.48	2.41
Kittitas	39	194	54	73	\$376,090	\$259,950	2.66	3.27
Jefferson	30	204	36	47	\$311,343	\$295,000	4.34	3.75
Okanogan	26	251	29	31	\$194,329	\$147,000	8.10	16.16
Whatcom	172	564	240	275	\$348,160	\$316,645	2.05	2.67
Clark	24	48	34	53	\$285,670	\$260,000	0.91	2.08
Pacific	28	189	33	52	\$182,150	\$165,000	3.63	7.15
Ferry	2	57	6	2	\$76,250	\$76,250	28.50	12.75
Clallam	43	211	84	88	\$276,801	\$247,750	2.40	4.09
Chelan	38	184	38	72	\$372,257	\$309,500	2.56	4.29
Douglas	19	60	20	25	\$346,785	\$315,000	2.40	2.39
Others	13	112	17	23	\$215,475	\$158,299	4.87	6.70
Total	4,217	10,571	6,401	7,575	\$427,568	\$343,950	1.40	1.77

(Tables continue on next page)

4-county Puget Sound Region Pending Sales (SFH + Condo combined)

(totals include King, Snohomish, Pierce & Kitsap counties)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2000	3706	4778	5903	5116	5490	5079	4928	5432	4569	4675	4126	3166
2001	4334	5056	5722	5399	5631	5568	5434	5544	4040	4387	4155	3430
2002	4293	4735	5569	5436	6131	5212	5525	6215	5394	5777	4966	4153
2003	4746	5290	6889	6837	7148	7202	7673	7135	6698	6552	4904	4454
2004	4521	6284	8073	7910	7888	8186	7583	7464	6984	6761	6228	5195
2005	5426	6833	8801	8420	8610	8896	8207	8784	7561	7157	6188	4837
2006	5275	6032	8174	7651	8411	8094	7121	7692	6216	6403	5292	4346
2007	4869	6239	7192	6974	7311	6876	6371	5580	4153	4447	3896	2975
2008	3291	4167	4520	4624	4526	4765	4580	4584	4445	3346	2841	2432
2009	3250	3407	4262	5372	5498	5963	5551	5764	5825	5702	3829	3440
2010	4381	5211	6821	7368	4058	4239	4306	4520	4350	4376	3938	3474
2011	4272	4767	6049	5732	5963	5868	5657	5944	5299	5384	4814	4197
2012	4921	6069	7386	7015	7295	6733	6489	6341	5871	6453	5188	4181
2013	5548	6095	7400	7462	7743	7374	7264	6916	5951	6222	5083	3957
2014	5406	5587	7099	7325	8055	7546	7169	6959	6661	6469	5220	4410
15	5791	6541	8648	8671	8620	8608	8248	7792	7179	6977	5703	4475
2016	5420	6703	8130	8332	9153	8869	8545	8628	7729	7487	6115	4727


Aging boomers underscore a need for innovative approaches, and improved policies for more affordable, accessible housing

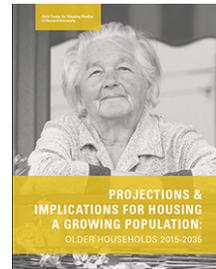
Innovative approaches for accommodating the housing needs of an exponential growth in the population of people age 65-plus are essential, according to a new report from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

The implications of the aging population on the US housing industry “are unambiguous,” said Lisa Marsh Ryerson, president of AARP Foundation, which provided funding for the report.

By 2035, more than twenty percent of the US population will be 65 and older and about a third of all households will be headed by someone in that age group, the report states. This cohort is projected to grow from 48 million to 79 million. Nearly 50 million households will be headed by someone older than 65, an increase of 66 percent.

Such growth, coupled with this group's expressed desire to live in their homes for as long as possible, means an increased demand for homes with universal design elements such as zero-step entrances, single-floor living, and wide halls and doorways. Currently, only 3.5 percent of homes offer all three of these age-in-place features.

Titled [*Projections and Implications for Housing a Growing Population: Older Adults 2015-2035*](#), the report notes there are many housing implications associated with the surge.



In the next few decades, many older adults will have sufficient assets to pay for appropriate housing and supportive services that allow them to live longer in their own homes.

Researchers said millions of others will lack those financial means. Many others whose incomes will decline in retirement will face financial hardships. Low-income renters are particularly vulnerable, the report notes.

Nearly 6.4 million low-income renters will be paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing by 2035. An estimated 8.6 million people will be paying more than half their incomes for housing by that time.

The report's authors also expect 7.6 million older adults will have incomes that would qualify them for federal rent subsidies within the next two decades, an increase of 90 percent from 2013.

"Today, we only serve one-third of those who qualify for assistance," noted Jennifer Molinsky, lead author of the report. "Just continuing at this rate – which would be a stretch – would leave 4.9 million people to find affordable housing in the private market," added Molinsky, a senior research associate at the Joint Center.

Researchers concluded both public and private action "will be needed to support modifications to existing homes, take steps to address the affordability challenges facing both owners and renters, and adapting the health care system to enhance service delivery in the home." They also believe there is a need to expand the range of housing options available to better meet the needs of an aging population and to improve options for older adults to remain in their community when their current home is no longer suitable.

The AARP Foundation president also emphasized the housing industry, policymakers, and individuals must take action in the coming years "to address the need for housing that will enable millions of older adults in this country to live with security, dignity, and independence."

Bellevue tapped by White House for “Smart Cities” initiative

Bellevue was selected to be one of four cities to support a White House initiative on using the Internet of Things to create technology-based solutions to tackle large-scale problems that reduce quality of life. The cities will collaborate with other communities and with technology partners to help reduce traffic congestion, deter crime, grow local economies, curb the effects of climate change, and provide more effective deliveries of services to residents.

Bellevue’s grant, awarded in September during Smart Cities Week, will be used to create dashboard-style internet interfaces for sharing data among city departments, and eventually, with the public. Bellevue’s initial interests will focus on using real-time data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services involving public safety, water, transportation, energy, connectivity, and buildings.

The grants are an outgrowth of a program started more than three years ago when the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) teamed with US Ignite to launch the Global City Teams Challenge (GCTC). Previously, GCTC focused on drawing attention to the challenges and potential of smart city technologies, and helping to create collaborations around the world.

NIST (formerly known as the National Bureau of Standards) also identified the city of Bellevue as one of seven lead cities that will work with public- and private-sector collaborators as so-called multi-team super-clusters.

Other Replicable Smart City Technologies grants will address air pollution and flood prediction. The shared goal is to create technology-based solutions that can be fine-tuned and replicated for implementation by other jurisdictions.

Portland, Oregon will use its grant to deploy and test low-cost air quality sensors to measure urban air pollution. The framework developed there is expected to help other cities implement similar monitored networks.

Montgomery County, Maryland will enhance its Safe Community Alert Network (SCALE) project, which aims to ensure a safer environment for residents by using Wi-Fi enabled sensors (instead of phones) to alert first responders to an emergency.

Newport News, Virginia, will develop computer models to predict urban flood events. Both water-level sensors and crowd-sourced data will be used to help increased situational awareness of storm events.

“We are honored to partner with NIST, our city of Bellevue client, and other cities in creating efficient, accessible communities that will provide long-term benefits for citizens and other stakeholders for Bellevue and potentially other cities around the world,” said Joseph Danko, global

managing director for CH2M's Urban Environments & Sports group and leader of the company's Great City Solutions program.

"Often cities install smart lighting, parking, water, and other systems in a vacuum that are costly to integrate together later on," added Ken Thompson, CH2M's deputy director of Intelligent Water Solutions. "Together, we're creating a citywide platform with a vision for the future that breaks down silos, improves efficiencies, and provides substantial benefits for residents."

Washington 3rd most innovative state in U.S.

Washington has the nation's third most innovative economy, according to a ranking by Bloomberg.

The Evergreen State is ranked behind Massachusetts and California in this year's [Bloomberg U.S. Innovation Index](#). Washington had the same No. 3 ranking in 2015.

Seattle also fared well among the nation's most innovative cities, earning 8th place among the top metro areas for total patents awarded since 2000.

The Bloomberg Index used six metrics for its rankings: R&D intensity; productivity; high-tech density; concentration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) employment; science and engineering degree holders; and patent activity.

Washington is ranked first in STEM concentration based on the percentage of the state's workers who are STEM professionals. The state is No. 2 in the nation with the most science and engineering degree holders, and placed third in patent activity.

New Jersey and Maryland round out the list of top five innovative states. Connecticut dropped from that list, falling two spots, from No. 5 to No. 7. Utah made the most impressive jump, moving six places to claim the No. 14 spot. A surge in R&D spending is credited for that gain.

Among innovative cities, Seattle ranked among the top 10, earning 8th place on the list of the top U.S. metro areas for total patents awarded since 2000.

The Bloomberg Index ranked each state based on six metrics: R&D intensity; productivity; high-tech density; concentration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) employment; science and engineering degree holders; and patent activity. States were scored on a 0-to-100 scale, with each metric weighted equally.

Massachusetts earned its first-place ranking in part with "a potent mix of tax incentives to draw in companies," according to Greg Sullivan, research director at Boston-based Pioneer Institute, a

public policy research shop. He also cited research partnerships between its big-name universities and local businesses, plus the transfer of much of that research into patentable products as other ingredients of the “secret sauce” for that state’s innovation.

E-Commuters creating demand for home offices

An explosion in e-commuting (formerly known as telecommuting) is creating demand for well-designed home office space, according to research by John Burns Real Estate Consulting.

Consultants with the Burns firm report nearly four of every 10 new home shoppers (39 percent) work at home at least one day per week. One-fourth of shoppers born in the 1960s and 1970s work at home at least three days per week.

Such shifts have created a huge opportunity for home builders since most resale homes were not designed with this demand in mind, stated Adam Artunian, senior manager at JBRE. He also noted e-commuting will increase with further technology advancements, worsening traffic, and the pronounced shift in general attitudes.

E-commuting allows workers to avoid long commute times, save gas, work in remote locations, and have more flexibility during the day,” according to Artunian. Some employers view e-commuting as a way to attract more talented people while also saving on overhead costs.

Researchers compared the habits of workers based on the decades when they were born.

A survey of more than 22,000 new home shoppers revealed a majority of buyers will pay a nice premium for an additional small office area. One-third of the respondents said they prefer a formal office.

Shifts in generational attitudes are discussed in a new book by John Burns titled [*Big Shifts Ahead: Demographic Clarity for Businesses*](#).

Seattle expecting 3,000 delegates for conference on tech-driven real estate development

Around 3,000 professionals involved in real estate research and education are expected to convene in Seattle in early May when the Urban Land Institute (ULI) holds its spring meeting.

The annual gathering of ULI’s full members will focus on how innovative, tech-driven real estate development is transforming U.S. cities, including Seattle, where several large commercial,

residential and mixed-use projects are being developed by both domestic and international investors. (Respondents to ULI's latest Emerging Trends in Real Estate survey recently ranked Seattle as the fourth-best city in the country for investment and development prospects for 2017, with current projects valued at billions of dollars.)

The annual conference, scheduled for May 2-4, draws world-class speakers along with support from several prominent developers and builders.

Seattle-based Amazon, a conference sponsor, will host a reception for all event attendees at the online giant's new Doppler high-rise office tower in downtown Seattle. Vulcan Real Estate and Vancouver-based Holland Partner Group, which builds and manages luxury apartments, are also sponsors of ULI's forthcoming conference.

The 2017 host committee is chaired by Pat Callahan, CEO at Urban Renaissance Group, and Greg Johnson, president of Wright Runstad & Co.

The [Urban Land Institute](#) is an independent global nonprofit whose members represent the entire spectrum of real estate development and land use disciplines. It provides education and research focused on the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities.

All Home aims to make homeless “rare, brief and one-time” in King County

Making homelessness in King County rare is an ambitious goal, but an achievable one, according to Mark Putnam, director of [All Home King County](#) (formerly the Committee to End Homelessness). In a recent meeting at the Seattle King County REALTORS® with members of its Governmental and Public Affairs Committee, Putnam discussed the scope of homelessness and outlined his organization's vision and strategic plans.

Every \$100 a month increase in average rents increases the homeless population by 15 percent, he noted, citing findings from a recent national study. “Homeless is a community problem,” Putnam stated. All Home emphasizes it's been proven in Seattle and across the nation that providing housing costs less than paying all the public costs associated with someone living on the street – “and we have a stronger community when all people have a place to call home.”



Director Mark Putnam met with SKCR GAC on December 6, 2016

Data from the annual Point in Time (PITI) Count indicate more than 10,000 people in King County experienced homelessness on any given day in 2015, with nearly 40 percent of them being unsheltered. Among the homeless, about 28 percent are families with children.

All Home's director said progress is being made in some areas of addressing the issue, but in other areas the crisis has worsened.

In 2015, an estimated 7,000 households exited homelessness to permanent housing, an average of nearly 600 per month. Putnam also noted the community has succeeded in ending homelessness for almost 40,000 people since the adoption of a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2005-2015).

Notably, Seattle/King County now has the third most housing for the homeless in the nation, surpassed only by New York and Los Angeles. Putnam credits this achievement to collective action to increase the available resources for those experiencing homelessness in the county.

"Our vision is that homelessness is rare in King County, racial disparities are eliminated, and if one becomes homeless, it is brief and only a one-time occurrence," Putnam told the Realtors.

All Home believes making homelessness rare will require addressing the causes of homelessness, which have myriad sources, including rent increases, the absence of strong safety nets, the economy, demographics, and an influx of people moving to a region.

Stopping homelessness before it starts is the smartest approach and is the new focus of All Home, Putnam told SKCR members. He noted some populations, such as youth exiting foster care, immigrants and refugees, and individuals exiting treatment programs experience homelessness at higher rates than the general population.

"We've learned that assisting these individuals before a crisis occurs prevents them from spiraling into homelessness," he remarked, adding "We must make the shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response to health and social problems to one that focuses on prevention, embraces recovery, and eliminates disparities."

All Home is also committed to expanding affordable and flexible housing options, particularly for very low-income households (those earning less than 30 percent of Area Median Income.) Toward that goal, it is pushing for federal, state and local policies and funding to increase housing, and it has launched the OneHome campaign, an alliance with landlords who agree to open up units in their buildings to prospective tenants "who might normally be passed over in the screening process in exchange for incentives to landlords and services to tenants that help tenants remain stably housed."

Making homelessness in King County rare is an ambitious goal, but an achievable one, according to Mark Putnam, director of All Home King County (formerly the Committee to End Homelessness).

In a recent meeting at the Seattle King County REALTORS® with members of its Governmental and Public Affairs Committee, Putnam discussed the scope of homelessness and outlined his organization's vision and strategic plans.

Every \$100 a month increase in average rents increases the homeless population by 15 percent, he noted, citing findings from a recent national study. "Homeless is a community problem," Putnam stated. All Home emphasizes it's been proven in Seattle and across the nation that providing housing costs less than paying all the public costs associated with someone living on the street – "and we have a stronger community when all people have a place to call home."

Data from the annual Point in Time (PITI) Count indicate more than 10,000 people in King County experienced homelessness on any given day in 2015, with nearly 40 percent of them being unsheltered. Among the homeless, about 28 percent are families with children.

All Home's director said progress is being made in some areas of addressing the issue, but in other areas the crisis has worsened.

In 2015, an estimated 7,000 households exited homelessness to permanent housing, an average of nearly 600 per month. Putnam also noted the community has succeeded in ending homelessness for almost 40,000 people since the adoption of a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2005-2015).

Notably, Seattle/King County now has the third most housing for the homeless in the nation, surpassed only by New York and Los Angeles. Putnam credits this achievement to collective action to increase the available resources for those experiencing homelessness in the county.

"Our vision is that homelessness is rare in King County, racial disparities are eliminated, and if one becomes homeless, it is brief and only a one-time occurrence," Putnam told the Realtors.

All Home believes making homelessness rare will require addressing the causes of homelessness, which have myriad sources, including rent increases, the absence of strong safety nets, the economy, demographics, and an influx of people moving to a region.

Stopping homelessness before it starts is the smartest approach and is the new focus of All Home, Putnam told SKCR members. He noted some populations, such as youth exiting foster care, immigrants and refugees, and individuals exiting treatment programs experience homelessness at higher rates than the general population.

"We've learned that assisting these individuals before a crisis occurs prevents them from spiraling into homelessness," he remarked, adding "We must make the shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response to health and social problems to one that focuses on prevention, embraces recovery, and eliminates disparities."

All Home is also committed to expanding affordable and flexible housing options, particularly for very low-income households (those earning less than 30 percent of Area Median Income.) Toward that goal, it is pushing for federal, state and local policies and funding to increase housing, and it has launched the [OneHome campaign](#), an alliance with landlords who agree to open up units in their buildings to prospective tenants “who might normally be passed over in the screening process in exchange for incentives to landlords and services to tenants that help tenants remain stably housed.”



All Home is also working with local jurisdictions to enhance and expand pre-adjudication programs and sentencing alternatives to help individuals avoid a criminal history while reducing criminal recidivism. That segment includes individuals leaving institutions such as jails, foster care, treatment programs and hospitals. Putnam noted one in five people who leave prison become homeless either immediately or soon thereafter.

Putnam invited Realtors to visit the All Home website and view the interactive King County Performance dashboard to check its progress on making homeless rare, brief and one-time.

New loan fund will support developers of affordable housing

Developers of affordable and mixed income housing may be able to tap into a new \$21 million revolving loan fund to build housing near transit lines around Puget Sound. Funds from the Regional Equitable Development Initiative (REDI) are available to both for-profit and nonprofit builders.

The fund will leverage the Sound Transit buildout that will add 672 miles of light rail, bus and heavy rail in metro areas around King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. Passage of the ST3 measure is expected to drive up real estate costs along the new routes as builders of both affordable and market-rate housing vie for land.

Backers of REDI include Enterprise Community Partners Inc., and a coalition of public, private and nonprofit investors. Other early funders include the city of Seattle, King County and A Regional Coalition for Housing, a partnership of 15 cities in King County.

The measure is intended to spur projects like the Mercy Othello Plaza near a South Seattle light rail stop where apartments in the 108-unit development will rent for \$450 to \$1,100 a month.

Georgia Wall named local ambassador to realtor.com®

Georgia Wall has been specially selected to serve as a local Ambassador for realtor.com®, a leading online real estate destination operated by News Corp [NASDAQ: NWS, NWSA]; [ASX: NWS, NWSLV] subsidiary Move, Inc.

Wall is part of an inaugural group of a fourteen other Realtors® around the country who have been hand-picked to contribute valuable insight toward enhancing the realtor.com® experience for consumers and professionals, and to serve as advocates in their local communities.

Ambassadors bring a combination of depth and breadth of experience, an active and robust real estate portfolio, and a demonstrated affinity for community engagement and advocacy. As an Ambassador, Wall receives exclusive benefits as well as a first look at new realtor.com® products, provides insight on realtor.com® initiatives, and will be empowered through training, customized content and materials to help share the benefits of realtor.com® with her local industry community and with buyers and sellers.



“These leaders contribute invaluable insight in helping us to deliver the best possible experience and facilitate the smoothest real estate processes for consumers and professionals alike,” said Suzanne Mueller, senior vice president of industry relations for realtor.com®. “This program helps provide our Ambassadors with the most up-to-date information and resources from realtor.com®, and empowers them to provide exceptional service to their peers and clients in the community.”

Ambassadors were honored during the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Orlando, Fla.

About realtor.com®

Realtor.com® is the trusted resource for home buyers, sellers and dreamers, offering the most comprehensive source of for-sale properties, among competing national sites, and the information, tools and professional expertise to help people move confidently through every step of their home journey. It pioneered the world of digital real estate 20 years ago, and today helps make all things home simple, efficient and enjoyable. Realtor.com® is operated by News Corp [NASDAQ: NWS, NWSA] [ASX: NWS, NWSLV] subsidiary Move, Inc. under a perpetual license from the National Association of REALTORS®. For more information, visit realtor.com®.

RE Store notches best year in 2016

The [RE Store](#), which promotes sustainable building practices by repurposing materials, reports 2016 was the best year in its history, thanks in part to volunteers and donations of reusable building materials. Among accomplishments the Bellingham-based nonprofit cited were:



- Diverting 700,000 pounds of materials from the waste stream;
- Salvaging reusable materials from 800 sites;
- Providing experience and training to 250 community service members, volunteers and job program trainees; and
- Expanding its Revision Division's reach to encourage reuse through DIY projects and furnishings crafted from reused materials.

According to the organization's website and data from Deconstruction Institute, 25 percent of the waste stream comes from the construction and demolition industry. The U.S. demolishes around 200,000 buildings each year – enough to generate a mountain of trash that would measure 30'x 30' and 5,000 miles long.

The RE Store is a program of [RE Sources for Sustainable Communities](#), a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Its mission is to promote sustainable communities through education, advocacy, recycling and the conservation of natural resources. Among its programs are a Green Demolition Deconstruction Program, a Green Jobs Training Program, and educational/inspiration events such as hands-on workshops.

REALTORS® in King County Honor 11 for Special Achievements During 2016

BELLEVUE, Wash. (Dec. 22, 2016) – Eleven individuals were singled out for special honors at the 2016 Installation & Awards Banquet of the Seattle King County REALTORS®. The event also featured the installation of the organization's 2017 leaders and a dessert auction to benefit a scholarship fund.

The annual event drew more than 220 participants, including members, affiliates, and representatives from the group's Young Professionals Network (YPN) and Women's Council of REALTORS®.

SKCR's highest honor, the Realtor of the Year award, went to **Tyler McKenzie** in recognition of his leadership and support of the local, state and national REALTOR® associations.

Another special honoree was **Evangeline "Van" Anderson**, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award, a Realtor Excellence award, and the Realtor Emeritus designation.

Other 2016 recipients of SKCR awards include *(listed alphabetically by award name)*

- Affiliate of the Year** Elizabeth Peterson
Chicago Title, Bellevue
- Community Service Award** Laura Roth
RE/MAX Choice Executives, Covington
- Government Affairs Volunteer of the Year**..... Bruce MacKintosh,
Centennial Home Inspection Services, Woodinville
- Instructor of the Year** Donald Fillius,
Coldwell Banker Danforth & Associates, Seattle/Burien
- Leader of the PAC**..... J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO
John L. Scott Real Estate, Bellevue
- REALTOR® Achievement** Rich Bergdahl
Bergdahl Real Property, Kirkland
- REALTOR® Excellence Awards** (3 recipients)
Rachel Adler, Windermere Real Estate/East, Inc., Bellevue
Evangeline “Van” Anderson, Windermere Real Estate, Mercer Island
Steven Wayne, Windermere Northwest, Inc., Seattle-Mount Baker
- Young Professionals Achievement Award** Dan Faulkner, Jr.
John L. Scott Real Estate, Issaquah

In honoring Tyler McKenzie as the association’s REALTOR® of the Year, 2016 president Patti Hill said his service spanning the past five years has “set the stage for our association’s success now and in the years to come.” In addition to serving on the board and as 2015 president, he has provided leadership on special projects and has chaired SKCR’s global real estate council, she noted. The graduate of the national association’s Leadership Academy serves on the state association’s executive committee and in 2017 will assume the new position of vice president of membership. Earlier this year he marked his 15th year in the profession by becoming the owner of a new John L. Scott office in West Seattle.



Elizabeth Peterson, the winner of the Affiliate of the Year Award, was recognized in part for her role as chair of the Education Committee for SKCR’s Affiliate Council for the past two years. As administrator for the Chicago Title School of Real Estate and senior account executive at the firm, she works with SKCR staff to develop educational materials and



programs to help association members succeed. She is also active with the Seattle Metro Chapter of the Women's Council of Realtors.

The association's Community Service award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the community through leadership, volunteer and charitable activities, went to **Laura Roth**. She is an ambassador and top fundraiser for Vine Maple Place, a nonprofit that serves homeless children and families, and families in crisis in the South King County region. She is also co-founder and current president of Mighty Miracles, which raises money for the Children's Miracle Network. Roth, a Realtor since 2000, is the designated broker/owner of RE/MAX Choice Executives in Covington and is serving a second term as president of the Covington Kiwanis Club.



SKCR honored **Bruce ("Mack") MacKintosh** of Woodinville as the Governmental Affairs Volunteer of the Year. His industry career dates to 1981 when he was a real estate agent on Whidbey Island. He founded Centennial Home Inspection Services in 1989 and became one of the first affiliate members to sit on SKCR's Governmental & Public Affairs Committee. Since then, he has served as a Realtor association "key contact" with various legislators. In 2009, Gov. Christine Gregoire appointed him to sit on the first Washington Home Inspector Advisory Licensing Board. He was voted chairman at the first meeting and served in that role for six years. As a reflection of his strong belief in the Realtor legislative mission, his company sponsors bus transportation for Realtors to attend the annual "Hill Day" in Olympia to meet with state senators and representatives and their key staff members.



Donald Fillius, managing broker at Coldwell Banker Danforth & Associates in Seattle, received Instructor of the Year recognition for his in-depth "Tools of the Trade" series of classes to promote understanding of myriad forms and contracts used by industry professionals. The popular clock-hour courses draw on his 25-plus years of experience as a broker, branch manager, trainer and avid musical performer to both engage and inform the program participants.



J. Lennox Scott was honored with a "Leader of the PAC" award for his 40 years of leadership and advocacy for issues and candidates that are important to the industry, the livelihood of Realtors and the organization's mission to help more Americans achieve the dream of homeownership. The nonpartisan Realtors' Political Action Committee (RPAC) and Realtor Party work to support candidates who understand industry concerns. In affirming his commitment and voluntary contributions to RPAC, Scott encouraged his colleagues to invest in the trade association's public awareness campaigns on issues affecting both residential and commercial real estate. "Supporting Realtor issues is good for business, good for our members, good for our clients, and good for housing, local communities, and the U.S. economy," stated Scott, the chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate. He also achieved Realtor Emeritus status this year, an honor conferred to those who



have been members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) for a minimum of 40 years, and fulfilled at least one year of service as a federal, state, or local association officer and or on a committee.

Kirkland resident **Rich Bergdahl** received the Realtor Achievement Award for outstanding contributions to the profession. His service encompasses numerous local, state, and national committees focused on protecting U.S. homeowner interests and the real estate industry. The licensed attorney has chaired the Washington Realtor Legal Affairs Committee and is starting his fifth year as a director on the board of the National Association of Realtors, representing SKCR. His background also includes experience as a real estate appraiser and title insurance claim administrator/litigator. Bergdahl, a 2003 graduate of the Realtors' Leadership Institute Northwest, and his wife Nanette, a top-producing Realtor, are partners at Bergdahl Real Property.



The Young Professional Achievement Award went to **Dan Faulkner, Jr.** of John L. Scott Issaquah where he was named "Rookie of the Year" in 2006. Formerly known as the "Ones to Watch" recognition, the "YP" award recognizes a Realtor who exemplifies growth and opportunity for the next generation of this profession's leaders. Faulkner, a 2006 University of Washington graduate, is active with SKCR's Young Professionals Network and serves on the board for Youth Eastside Services. *REALTOR Magazine* named him to its 2012 class of "30 under 30," a select list of successful real estate practitioners who have also demonstrated skill, creativity and leadership in their careers.



Rachel Adler, one of three recipients of a REALTOR Excellence Award, received special recognition for her leadership in guiding the remodel of the classroom at the SKCR building in Bellevue. She is a broker at Windermere Real Estate/East in Bellevue and a founding board member of the association's Young Professionals Network. **Van Anderson** and **Steven Wayne** also received Excellence Awards for their long service as Federal Political Coordinators. These individuals maintain regular contact with assigned members of Congress and perform other tasks as advocates for the nonpartisan Realtor party and all Realtors. Anderson served as FPC to Sen. Patty Murray and Wayne was FPC to Rep. Jim McDermott.



Anderson was also the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from SKCR and, like J. Lennox Scott, achieved Realtor Emeritus status this year, one of only two designees from King County in the 2016 class. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes special individuals who have shared their dedication, leadership, and knowledge with their peers, leaving a lasting mark on the industry and organization. Anderson, who is affiliated with Windermere's Mercer Island office, obtained her license in January 1974 and began a stellar career as a real estate professional and as an extraordinary volunteer, notably in the political arena. Now 90, she has served as a local president, national director, real estate commissioner, instructor and tireless mentor. "Our



organization has been the beneficiary of her guiding hand in many significant ways during the past 50 years,” stated Tyler McKenzie, SKCR president in 2015. “There is not a person in this room who has not been touched in some way by her kindness and friendship,” he added.

As part of the evening’s festivities, installing officer Margo Willis, 2017 Washington Realtors president, swore in next year’s leaders for SKCR’s Board of Directors, Women’s Council of Realtors (Seattle Metro and South King County chapters), and Young Professionals Network.

Banquet attendees also participated in a dessert auction to support the Seattle First Citizen Scholarship Foundation. The foundation awards annual scholarships to association members, affiliates and their family members based on good citizenship and involvement in community service.

About the Seattle King County REALTORS®

The [Seattle King County Realtors®](#) is a nonprofit professional trade association whose goals include promoting ethical business practices and supporting policies that preserve and expand real property rights and housing affordability. Based in Bellevue, SKCR has around 6,500 members and is a local board of the National Association of Realtors®. The term Realtor® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of Realtors® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

Several companies supported the 2016 awards and installation event:

Event Sponsors:

- **Platinum:** Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation
- **Gold:** US Bank, Old Republic Title, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage
- **Silver:** CW Title and Escrow, 1st Security Bank, Hellsell Fetterman, WIN Home Inspection
- **Bronze:** Banner Bank, Commission Express, PEMCO Insurance,

Annual Affiliate Partners:

- **Ruby:** WIN Home Inspection
- **Emerald:** imortgage
- **Sapphire:** Absolute Mortgage, Peoples Bank, Tehaleh, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

News In Brief

- **NAHB Economics recently released its [2016 “Priced Out” Estimates](#) showing that, nationally, a \$1,000 increase in the median new home price (triggered, for example, by additional regulation) will leave 152,903 households priced out of the market.** This means that 152,903 U.S. households could qualify for a mortgage on the median-priced new home before, but not after, the price increases. The number of priced-out households varies across both state and metropolitan area. The differences are largely driven by the size of the population and the affordability of new homes. Among all the states, California registers the largest priced out effect where a \$1,000 new home price increase pushes 15,328 households out of the market, followed by Texas (13,674), and Pennsylvania (9,374). The initial affordability of new homes is an important element in determining the size of the priced out effect. On a percentage basis, priced out effects are higher in areas where new homes are more affordable. For example, in Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, where 33% of households are capable of buying a median-priced new home, a \$1,000 price increase leads to 5,148 households priced out of the market. In New York-Newark-Jersey City, which has an even larger population, only 13% of households can afford the median-priced new home, and 4,054 of them are squeezed out of the market if the price increases by \$1,000. The NAHB estimates also show the number of households priced out of the new home market when interest rates rise. For example, in 2016, around 965,000 households nationwide would be priced out of the market for the median-priced new home if mortgage rates increased from 4.00% to 4.25%.

More details on the estimates, model and its methodology are available on the [NAHB website](#).

- **Washington state’s unemployment rate dipped to 5.3 percent in November and the state added 3,600 jobs.** November’s unemployment rate was the lowest since June 2008. According to numbers released mid-December by the Employment Security Department, the private sector added 4,700 jobs, while the public sector saw a decrease of 1,100. The national unemployment rate was 4.6 percent in November. The rate in the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett area dropped from 3.8 percent in October to 3.7 percent in November. The biggest job growth was seen in education and health services, with 3,200 new jobs created. Losses were seen in leisure and hospitality, with 3,100 positions lost.
- **Congratulations to Cheri Brennan of Alliance Communications who does public relations work for the Northwest MLS and Seattle King County REALTORS®.** She was honored as one of three 2016 Hall of Achievement recipients by WSU Murrow School of Communications.
- **Nineteen states, including New York and California, will ring in the new year with an increase in the minimum wage.** Massachusetts and Washington state will have the highest new minimum wages in the country, at \$11 per hour.

- **The Labor Department indicated that weekly requests for jobless aid fell 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 265,000 during the last week in December.** Claim tallies below 300,000 often point to healthy hiring levels. The low level of applications indicates that employers are holding onto workers and possibly looking to expand. Claims have stayed below 300,000 for 95 straight weeks, the longest streak since 1970.

Calendar of Events Through February 7, 2017

Dates	Event	Time	Location	Contact
SEATTLE—King County REALTORS®				
1/11/17	Board of Directors	9:30 am – 12:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
1/16/17	Holiday—Office Closed			
1/17/17	Affiliate Council	9:30 am – 10:30 am	SKCR	425-974-1011
1/18/17	WR Committees		Red Lion Olympia	425-943-3100
1/18/17	WR Installation Event	6:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Red Lion Olympia	425-943-3100
1/19/17	WR Hill Day	9:00 am – 8:00 pm	Red Lion Olympia	425-943-3100
2/7/17	Gov't Affairs Committee	10:30 am – 1:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1011
For updates visit: www.nwrealtor.com and click "events"				