

REALTORS® unveil online tool to help answer house-hunter questions

REALTORS® in King County are embarking on a multi-media education campaign to provide simple, straightforward answers to complex questions about the local housing market. Called “Housing Translator,” the initiative is centered on a new microsite.



“Our members cite a lack of housing supply as the number one issue in the King County market,” said Sam DeBord, a broker with Coldwell Banker Danforth and 2017 President of Seattle King County REALTORS®. “HousingTranslator.com is designed to elevate the discussion about housing priorities. REALTORS® are in a unique position to talk about solutions – we’re in the middle of the conversation with buyers and sellers – and our goal is to help more people become homeowners.”



Sam DeBord

Every day renters, newcomers, empty-nesters and others ask about renting versus buying, taxes, and a host of other questions about the current market, according to DeBord. “Housing Translator is a platform where people can find simple answers to help them navigate their concerns. This online tool is a starting place and an extension of the role Realtors play every day,” DeBord explained.

Citing statistics from Northwest Multiple Listing Service, DeBord noted prices since 2014 have jumped 22 percent in King County while the selection (including single family homes and condominiums) has dwindled by more than 33 percent in just two years:

King County snapshot (Single Family Homes & Condominiums)	2016	2014	Change (2016 vs. 2014)	% Change (2016 vs. 2014)
Median Price	\$489,000	\$399,750	\$89,250	22.3%
Active Listings (average for year)	3,293	4,943	-1,650	-33.4%

Source: Northwest Multiple Listing Service

Heightened competition for homes is a result of strong job growth and an unprecedented shortage of homes available for sale, DeBord explained, adding, “HousingTranslator.com uncovers the links between housing policy, housing inventory and affordability, while identifying options for achieving a more balanced housing market.”

“As people use Housing Translator, we think they’ll come to understand that housing opportunities can be expanded,” said DeBord. “Increased housing supply and affordability will create more

homeowners, which we know leads to stronger communities. Realtors will continue to push for solutions and policies that make our communities great places to live and work.”

Seattle King County REALTORS® is a trade association of 6,500 real estate brokers who serve clients throughout the Puget Sound area. The organization is a founding member of the National Association of REALTORS®, the largest professional trade association in the country, comprised of 1.2 million members.

Brokers report “high velocity” market, but with hope for homebuyers

KIRKLAND, Washington (Feb. 6, 2017) – Western Washington’s “high velocity” market continued during January with the number of pending sales (7,745) outgaining the number of new listings (6,507), according to new figures from Northwest Multiple Listing Service.

“Properties are moving through the market at an unusually fast pace,” remarked John Deely, chairman of the board at Northwest MLS and the principal managing broker at Coldwell Banker Bain. “Although we have a high number of new listings, they are moving into a pending or sold status within the typical 30-day reporting period. This phenomenon causes a low active listing count,” he added.

Brokers added 6,507 new listings to inventory last month (163 fewer than during the same period a year ago), while year-over-year pending sales jumped by 492 transactions for a gain of about 6.8 percent. New listing volume was the highest monthly total since October when members added 7,591 properties.

At month-end, there were 9,752 active listings in the MLS service area, which encompasses 23 counties. That total was 2,605 fewer than the year-ago volume of 12,357, a decline of 21 percent. Only three counties (Ferry, Jefferson and Kitsap) reported improvements in the number of active listings compared to the same month last year.

Measured by months of inventory, the selection is at historic lows in many counties. At month end, there was just under 1.7 months of supply system-wide, which compares to the year-ago figure of about 2.5 months of supply. Both King and Snohomish counties have less than one month of supply.

“If home buyers were hoping that January would start to bring more balance to the housing market, they’re going to be sorely disappointed. The number of homes for sale remains at record lows, and the growth in pending sales tells us that sellers are still firmly in the driver’s seat,” said OB Jacobi, president of Windermere Real Estate.

MLS director George Moorhead echoed Jacobi, pointing to five years ago when buyers could choose from 5,378 listings of single family homes in King County versus last month's selection of 1,569 listings. "The real question is whether there will be relief in the near future, and the unfortunate answer is no," said Moorhead, the designated broker at Bentley Properties, citing the combination of new jobs, a shortage of new homes, and a reluctance of sellers to list their home for fear of not being able to find their next one.

Commenting on "typical seasonal and beginning of the year adjustments," one company president said he is encouraged by new listing activity. "There is no indication that the annualized trend of shrinking active inventory will reverse itself anytime soon, but we're seeing momentary bubbles of increased inventory for buyers currently in the market" noted Mike Grady, president and COO of Coldwell Banker Bain.

"List it and they will come" is the new mantra as new listings come on the market, commented J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott. Despite having more sales than new listings over the past few months, Scott said there is hope for homebuyers. "As the days start getting longer the future will look brighter for the backlog of buyers waiting to find a home." Describing February as the bridge month between winter and spring markets, Scott expects to start seeing an increase in the number of new listings.

"Buyers who are properly positioned to make quick decisions, and who have the proper negotiation tactics and guidance are finding success in this high velocity market," Deely reported.

Not surprisingly given the imbalance in supply and demand, prices continue to rise. Last month's median price for the 5,874 completed sales of single family homes and condominiums was \$327,175, up 9 percent from the year ago figure of \$300,000. There were 889 more closed sales in January than for the same month a year ago for a 17.8 percent increase.

Single family home prices (excluding condos) increased 9 percent, rising from \$309,950 to \$338,000. The median price for single family homes that sold in King County last month was \$525,000, up more than 6.9 percent from the year-ago sales price of \$490,970. Several outlying counties reported double-digit gains.

"The softening of single family home prices in King County over the last few months, combined with the relatively large price increase in Snohomish County (8.2 percent) suggests buyers are migrating north in order to find more affordable housing," said Jacobi.

Brokers in Pierce and Kitsap counties also reported price hikes larger than King County's. The median price of a single family home in Pierce County jumped nearly 11.6 percent from a year ago while the year-over-year price in Kitsap was up 9.4 percent.

Condo prices rose 5.5 percent in January compared to a year ago, increasing from \$255,750 to \$289,900. King County condo prices surged more than 9.8 percent, from \$282,250 to \$310,000.

“For buyers, it is a good news/bad news scenario in Kitsap County,” reported MLS director Frank Wilson. “More houses came on the market last month than a year ago, but pending sales surpassed that number to keep the market tight. Brokers navigated these challenges and buyers endured, “but the tightness will likely be magnified during 2017,” said Wilson, the branch managing broker at John L. Scott in Poulsbo.

Wilson said open house traffic has “started off with a bang” as more buyers have decided now is the time to buy, believing that prices will only continue to rise.” He expects escalation clauses, multiple offer situations and backup offers to “be the norm during the first quarter. The hierarchy of purchasers: cash, conventional loan, VA loan, and FHA financing will continue to be the pecking order,” he stated.

“We’re seeing the frenzy change to a fanatical desire to own a home as buyers scramble to beat increasing interest rates,” reported Moorhead. He expects the Fed to increase rates two more times between now and April, “and that will only increase buyers’ aggressive tactics to secure a home,” he suggested.

Moorhead also noted sellers are able to “get away with putting homes on the market in conditions that historically would be rejected by buyers.” Now, however, Moorhead said buyers are willing to turn a blind eye to repairs and future maintenance.

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 – January 2017

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	2,272	1,887	2,488	2,010		\$475,000	0.94	1.41
Snohomish	999	888	1,238	938		\$380,000	0.95	1.56
Pierce	1,141	1,575	1,530	1,099		\$267,000	1.43	2.26
Kitsap	365	609	454	313		\$289,900	1.95	2.43
Mason	88	284	113	83		\$175,000	3.42	5.74
Skagit	144	329	166	139		\$294,000	2.37	4.04
Grays Harbor	139	413	139	76		\$162,450	5.43	5.56
Lewis	93	263	98	78		\$189,050	3.37	4.92
Cowlitz	72	156	114	92		\$225,500	1.70	2.62
Grant	54	298	44	52		\$182,403	5.73	10.15
Thurston	395	640	478	311		\$255,000	2.06	3.04
San Juan	19	177	24	24		\$437,000	7.38	11.95
Island	141	296	193	121		\$315,000	2.45	3.83
Kittitas	47	155	60	50		\$247,450	3.10	4.13
Jefferson	55	208	51	37		\$350,000	5.62	4.23
Okanogan	25	236	26	28		\$191,000	8.43	12.41
Whatcom	230	516	287	224		\$287,625	2.30	4.22
Clark	27	46	37	22		\$278,000	2.09	3.08
Pacific	53	187	52	32		\$128,500	5.84	6.61
Ferry	3	55	2	4		\$137,500	13.75	15.67
Clallam	67	192	76	54		\$247,500	3.56	6.24
Chelan	44	185	41	43		\$253,500	4.30	4.85
Douglas	12	56	12	21		\$245,900	2.67	3.13
Others	22	101	22	23		\$201,000	4.39	11.33
Total	6,507	9,752	7,745	5,874		\$327,175	1.66	2.48

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
2015	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
2017	5710											


Northwest MLS unveils new interactive tools for brokers to showcase market knowledge

Northwest Multiple Listing Service member brokers can now analyze residential market trends and generate easy-to-read, sharable statistical reports and graphs using a new tool by ShowingTime. The tool encompasses **InfoSparks** (an interactive market analytics product) and **FastStats** (a map-based tool containing ready-made trend reports).

“InfoSparks with FastStats enables our membership to quickly view local markets and analyze trends using a visual and interactive interface,” said Tom Hurdelbrink, president and CEO at Northwest MLS.

Lawrence Yun, chief economist at the National Association of REALTORS® called ShowingTime “the best in the country in showing statistics.”

The additional resources for Northwest MLS brokers follow the introduction early last year of ShowingTime's tool with the same name for scheduling showings, managing showing feedback and sharing activity reports with sellers. That time-saving tool – deployable from desktops, tablets and mobile phones -- is now used by more than 250 other multiple listing services.

The multifaceted, mobile-ready InfoSparks combines local geography with housing variables, timeframes and market metrics for fast and easy analysis and sharing of trend data in a clean, intuitive interface. FastStats generates one-page market reports for more than 500 unique geographic regions in the area as well as three 14-page market-wide reports covering the entire MLS, the four-county metro area of Central Puget Sound, and Central and Eastern Washington.

"InfoSparks with FastStats has been proven to offer the most current, three-dimensional look at residential real estate in the markets where it is in place," said ShowingTime president Michael Lane. It accesses current and historical market information by city, county, ZIP code and other variables, with output derived directly from MLS data, he explained, adding, "Real estate brokers can readily share their market knowledge with buyers and sellers quickly and accurately."

Shared InfoSparks reports can be branded to users and can offer multiple data-reporting combinations. Data points for complete months are updated daily, while live-data charts shared on blogs and websites will stay current for as long as the chart is visited and the user is active with Northwest MLS.

"Whether you search for an area already contained in the MLS system, draw your own area or view an area on an interactive map of Washington State, InfoSparks with FastStats has your residential real estate data ready to view in the time it takes to introduce yourself to someone," said Hurdelbrink.

About ShowingTime

ShowingTime is a privately-held, Chicago-based company. Since its launch in 1999 it has become a leading showing management technology provider to the residential real estate industry serving more than 900,000 agents and helping them schedule 3 million showings each month. It created an industry-first, patent-pending, web-based real estate lead capture, calendaring and notification engine.

InfoSparks with FastStats was formed in 2015 when 10K Research and Marketing was acquired by ShowingTime. RealEstate Business Intelligence (RBI) was acquired by ShowingTime in 2016 to round out its analytics offering.

Inventory shortages persist, but Northwest MLS brokers notch record-setting sales totaling \$40.3 billion during 2016

Members of Northwest Multiple Listing Service reported 95,500 closed sales during 2016, outgaining the prior year's volume of 88,331 transactions for an increase of more than 8.1 percent. Inventory was at record lows for much of the year.



Measured by dollars, last year's sales of single family homes and condominiums were valued at more than \$40.3 billion. Compared to 2015, that dollar volume represents a gain of nearly 18.2 percent.

The sales activity reflects the work of 25,888 brokers across 23 counties in the member-owned Northwest MLS.

Last year's completed sales included 81,872 single family homes (about 86 percent of the total) and 13,628 condominiums. Of these sales, about 11.3 percent were newly built residences.

The area-wide median price for last year's sales of single family homes and condominiums (combined) was \$337,500, a gain of 8.9 percent from the year-ago figure of \$310,000. A comparison by county shows median sales prices ranged from \$102,500 in Ferry County to \$489,000 in King County. With one exception (Ferry) all counties had year-over-year price gains.

Year-over-year prices for single family homes (excluding condominiums) increased 8.7 percent system-wide, rising from \$320,000 in 2015 to last year's median price of \$347,950. Condo prices jumped 12.6 percent from the 2015 figure of \$254,900 to last year's median selling price of \$287,000.

Only about 7 percent of the sales were for homes priced under \$150,000. About one-third of the sales were in the \$300,000 - \$500,000 range, with the largest share (34 percent) selling for \$150,000-\$300,000.

Inventory shortages challenged brokers and buyers throughout 2016. Member-brokers logged 121,468 pending sales (mutually accepted offers) during 2016, while adding 113,305 new listings to inventory. Brokers said depleted inventory often led to competitive bidding and multiple offers for homes in the most desirable areas.

During 2016, the average area-wide supply, as measured by months of inventory, averaged only 1.86 months, down from the previous year's figure of 2.4 months. King County had the lowest level, averaging only 1.1 months of supply. In general, industry analysts use a 4-to-6 month range as an indicator of a balanced market, favoring neither buyers nor sellers.

High-end sales also surged during 2016. Northwest MLS members reported 3,251 sales of single family homes priced at \$1 million or more, up more than 21 percent from the 2015 total of 2,676 “luxury” sales. Condos priced at \$1 million and up accounted for another 339 sales. A total of 1,711 condos sold for \$500,000 or more, outgaining 2015’s total of 1,459 half-million dollar-plus sales (up 21.4 percent).

The highest-priced single family home that sold during 2016 by a member of Northwest MLS was a property on Mercer Island that commanded more than \$9.75 million. Topping the chart of high-priced condominiums was one at Escala in downtown Seattle high-rise that sold for \$8 million.

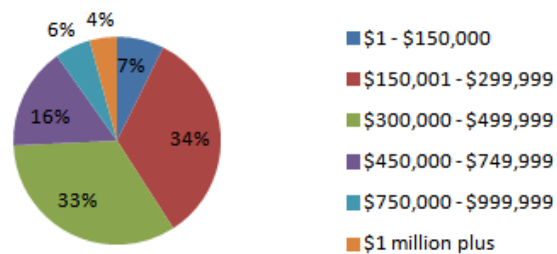
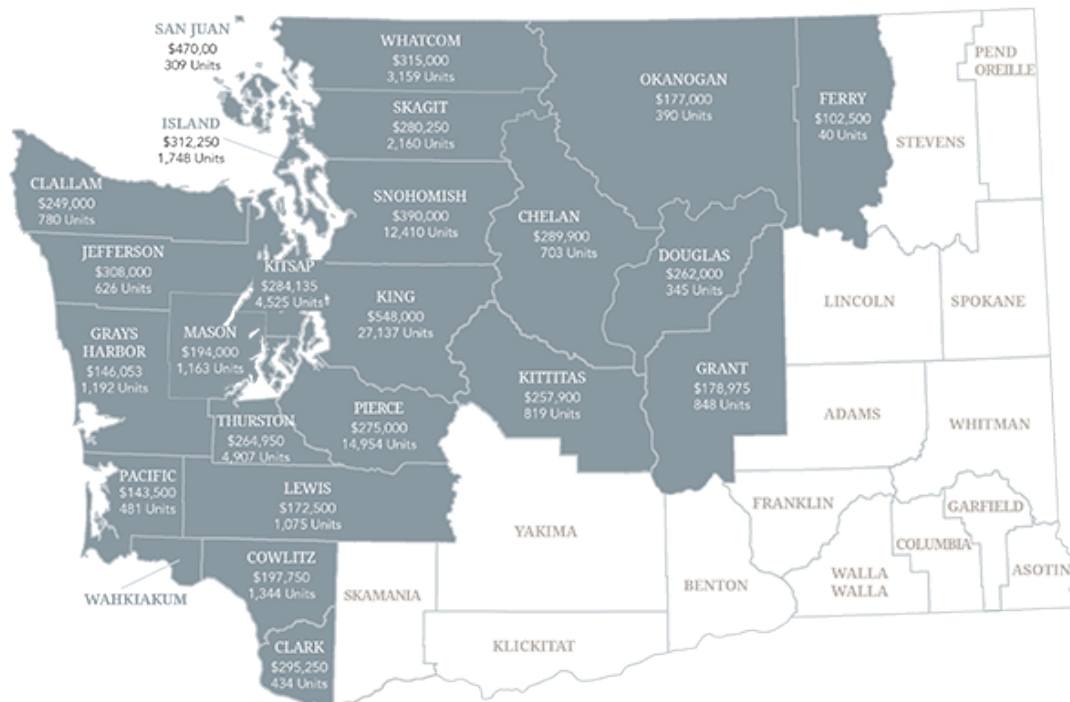
Among other highlights in its annual compilation of statistics, Northwest Multiple Listing Service reported:

- About 45 percent of last year’s single family home sales had three bedrooms, while the vast majority of condos (nearly 76 percent) had two bedrooms or fewer.
- The median price for a 3-bedroom home that sold in 2016 was \$311,000, about 9.8 percent higher than the previous year’s figure of \$283,250. A comparison by county shows the median price for a 3-bedroom home ranges from \$120,000 in Ferry County to \$485,000 in King County.
- Of the condo sales, about six of every 10 (61.7 percent) were located in King County, primarily in Seattle or on the Eastside. That ratio matched the figure for 2015.
- For the new construction component involving Northwest MLS brokers, newly built condos fetched higher prices than single family homes, just like 2015. Last year’s sales included 9,416 newly built single family homes that sold for a median price of \$455,000 (up 11.8 percent from 2015), and 1,375 condos that sold for a median price of \$552,900 (up 22.9 percent from 2015).
- A comparison of 2016 and 2015 median prices of single family homes shows all but one county reported year-over-year gains. Going back to 2007, most counties have rebounded.
- Prices vary widely among school districts. Homes that sold last year in 13 districts reported median prices of more than a half-million dollars, topped by Mercer Island at more than \$1.3 million.

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Graphics on next page.

Sales by Price Ranges (all areas, SFH+Condos combined)	#	%
\$150,000 or less	6,954	7.32%
\$150,001-\$299,999	31,880	33.57%
\$300,000-\$499,999	31,703	33.38%
\$450,000-\$749,999	15,065	15.86%
\$750,000-\$999,999	5,302	5.58%
\$1 million plus	4,062	4.28%
TOTALS	94,966	100%

2016 Sales by Price Ranges

2016 Median Prices by County
 Closed Sales, Single Family Homes Only


Is rent control the answer to escalating rents?

Recent news stories about increasing rents in the greater Seattle area have some housing advocates asking for solutions, including the use of rent control. But does rent control actually moderate prices for most consumers? The evidence and many economists suggest it does not.

Washington state law currently prohibits local governments from regulating rental rates on private property. In 1981, the Washington Legislature adopted RCW 35.21.830 and 36.01.130. Under this law, no Washington city can create laws limiting rent for a private rental property, and rent can increase any amount at any time, provided landlords give 30-days notice (60 days for an increase of 10 percent or more). This prohibition on rent control is consistent with those in most states.

In November 1980, Seattle voters had considered Initiative 24, which would have rolled rents back in the city to their July 1979 levels and then allowed an increase tied to inflation. The measure was resoundingly defeated by a margin of 2 to 1 (163,140 NO votes to 80,587 YES votes). The legislature acted the next year to prohibit similar rent control attempts by cities in future.

There is a growing consensus among economists that placing *“a ceiling on rents generally reduces the quantity and quality of housing available.”* (American Economic Review)

Under rent control, landlords and property owners have little if any incentive to create new housing units that fall under rent control because they won't be able to maximize their investment. Rent control actually drives up the price of most rents by restricting the supply of new units on the market. While some renters may get a bargain, most people never get access to rent-controlled flats.

In a 2015 survey of economists by Zillow, nearly two-thirds of respondents (62.9 percent) indicated that rent controls create more problems than they solve and only 2.1 percent of respondents indicated that rent controls are usually effective.

In 2012, the Initiative on Global Markets at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business surveyed a panel of academic economists. In that survey, 34.2 percent of respondents strongly disagreed and 55.3 percent of respondents disagreed with the following statement: *Local ordinances that limit rent increases have had a positive impact on the amount and quality of affordable rental housing.*

In 2016, the Washington Research Council identified some of the following consequences of rent control in a city:

- Discourages construction of new rental housing
- Discourages maintenance of existing rental housing
- Reduces the city's property tax base

- Shifts the burden of city property taxes away from rental housing and onto owner-occupied housing
- Shifts the burden of regional and state-wide property taxes onto property owners outside the city

Rent control can also reduce the value of nearby houses that are not subject to rent control. Because rent controls reduce the incentive for landlords to maintain and improve their properties, it reduces the attractiveness of neighborhoods with large numbers of rent controlled housing and the market values of uncontrolled houses in these neighborhoods.

A primary goal of the state's Growth Management Act is to concentrate growth in existing urban areas and to allow people to live close to where they work. Rent controls would discourage the construction of new rental housing, and thus work against this goal while also making the affordability problem worse in the longer term. Policies that make housing options more available and that meet the actual market demand for housing represent much more effective solutions than rent control.

New home permits highest in nearly a decade, but far from adequate

Permits for single family houses in the metro Puget Sound region totaled 10,259 in 2016, a nine-year high according to a report in the *Puget Sound Business Journal*. Although the number marked a 9.3 percent increase from 2015, it falls well-short of the need.

PSBJ reporter Marc Stiles cited U.S. Census data and comments from researcher Todd Britsch in his report, which noted last year's volume of permits was 36 percent below the figure for 2006 when 16,061 permits were issued.

Britsch, the regional director of Bothell-based Metrostudy, estimates the four-county metro area gained 25,000 new drivers during the third quarter of 2016. Based on average household size and homeownership rates, he estimates 28,000 new homes a year will be needed to satisfy demand.

Britsch, whose firm serves the homebuilding industry, expects housing prices will continue to skyrocket if growth management regulations continue to constrain the supply of building lots. The lack of land where homes can be built is "a big part of the problem," according to Britsch.

The PSBJ report noted "For now no county wants to expand the boundary." It referenced Puget Sound Regional Council reports and the counties' recent analysis of their capacity for growth. They generally conclude existing boundaries are adequate to support planned growth, but agency spokesman Rick Olson acknowledged the region "could very well not be building enough single-family houses, especially near job centers."

Britsch emphasized not everyone moving here will want to rent one of the thousands of new apartments that have been built, mostly in Seattle. Even if they do, he believes many – “even the millennials migrating here” — eventually will want to move to single-family homes “to escape chronic homelessness and other urban ills.” Ultimately, he thinks counties will consider the contentious idea of expanding their urban growth boundaries.

Labor costs, availability top list of builder concerns for 2017

More than eight in every 10 builders (82 percent) said the cost and availability of labor is their number one challenge this year, up from 78 percent who cited it is their primary concern in 2016.

Builders were asked to identify and rank the challenges they encountered in 2016 and expect to face in 2017 as part of a set of “special” questions for the monthly NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index.

Concern about cost/availability of labor has grown steadily since 2011 when only 13 percent of the builders who took part in the survey cited it as a significant issue.

The second biggest worry for builders is the cost/availability of developed lots. Sixty percent of respondents listed it as a “significant problem,” a decline from last year when two-thirds (67 percent) rated it as a big concern.

In reporting the findings, NAHB officials said both the availability of labor and lots highlight the expected constraints of a recovering housing market.

Rounding out the list of top 10 problems builders expect to face in 2017 are:

- #3. Impact/hook-up/inspection or other fees (60%)
- #4. Federal environmental regulations and policies (58%)
- #5. Regulation of banking/financial institutions (55%)
- #6. Local/state environmental regulations and policies (52%)
- #7. Inaccurate appraisals (49%)
- #8. Building material prices (48%)
- #9. Development standards (parking, setbacks, etc.)
- #10. Health insurance (52%)

Housing Center analyzes immigrants and homeownership

Immigrants are an important part of a recovering housing market, according to research by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

Using Census Bureau data, researchers report that foreign-born people accounted for about one-third of all net household formations over the past two decades, and nearly 30 percent of all gains in owner-occupied housing.

Commenting on the JCHS findings, Senior Research Fellow George Masnick noted homeownership rates for younger adult children of immigrants are substantially higher than rates for immigrants in the same age cohorts. “While homeownership rates for native-born residents with native-born parents under age 45 are higher than those for the children of immigrants, members of the latter group quickly make up this deficit after the age of 45.”

Masnick and his colleagues analyzed data used in a first-ever Census report on the characteristics of three generations of US residents by nativity. It was the first to use a unique question in the Current Population Survey’s Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS/ASEC) asking the birthplace of both the respondent and the respondent’s parents.

The Census Bureau report notes that incomes and homeownership rise sharply between the first and second generations (native-born children of at least one immigrant parent), and third-and-higher generations. Comparing the three generations broadly on any variable that varies with age, such as income or homeownership was deemed to be impossible because of differences in age structure, Masnick stated.

JCHS analysts were able to examine homeownership rates by age in 5-year increments for three generations for each year 1994-2015. They found trends for two broad age groups, 25-44 and 45+.

For households age 25-44, “second generation homeownerships rates are well above those of their parents’ generation but below those of later generations. Various factors may come in to play to explain the latter pattern, Masnick suggested. One factor is probably due to the greater concentration of immigrants and their children in locations with below-average homeownership rates such as the Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Boston, and Chicago metropolitan areas. Also, he said there might be a greater ability of third-and-higher generation parents to help their children financially in buying their first home.

Among older adults (45+) the researchers found the homeownership rates among second and third-and-higher generations have been “essentially equal” for the past two decades except for a few years at the height of the Great Recession. After age 45, the second generation has consistently closed the gap with the third-and-higher group. By 2015, when each five-year cohort is 20 years older, the homeownership gap between generations vanished.

In a report discussing the Center's findings, Masnick stressed the need to recognize important age differences between the three generations could lead to erroneous conclusions about levels and trends in income and homeownership. "Because the second generation age structure is so young, comparisons that lump adults of all ages together will result in unduly low incomes and homeownership for this group," he remarked. As the Census report noted, most second generation U.S. residents surpass their parents' generation in many measures, particularly education, income and homeownership. "Once proper age controls are introduced, they equal or surpass the third-and-higher generations in these dimensions as well," he stated.

Making a positive, life-altering impact — for 24 years

More than 400 residents' lives have been enhanced since 1993, thanks to volunteers from the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. By participating in the organization's Rampathon®, builders, specialty contractors, suppliers and other volunteers devote a day of service and materials to help people become more mobile and independent.



Applications for the 24th annual event scheduled for May 20 are due by March 1. The one-page form is available [online](#) on the MBA's website.

Last year's crews built 37 wheelchair ramps (a new record) to assist an array of individuals. Recipients ranged from a 6-year-old wheelchair-bound boy who suffered a traumatic brain injury at the hands of an abusive babysitter, to a WWII Army veteran with hemiparesis, a weakness of one side of his body, the result of a service-related gunshot wound and frostbite.

Another beneficiary of a custom ramp was Nickelsville Tiny House Village in Seattle's Central District, thanks in part to assistance from Sawhorse Revolution and Seattle-area high school students. The ramp provides access to bathroom and shower facilities for disabled individuals at the encampment for people experiencing homelessness.

Event coordinators note ramps provide relief not only to individuals with limited mobility, but also to caregivers. Along with peace of mind, the addition of a ramp offers a better means of escape in case of a fire or other home emergency, and easier access for emergency aid crews.

The gift of a ramp can be life-changing – and not just for the user, according to the Master Builders. Volunteering one day to make a truly positive change in another's life has been described as "an incredible

experience.” Project captains and other volunteers have maintained contact with some recipients, forging lifelong friendships, according to MBA staff. It’s all in keeping with the group’s mission to “make certain that everyone has a happy, healthy, and productive place to call home.”

News In Brief

- **Beginning January 28, 2017, it is recommended that all phone calls dialed from Western Washington include the area code.** As of July 29, 2017, 10-digit dialing will be required. Calls that are currently local will continue to be local. **New telephone lines using the 564 area code will begin to be assigned in the summer of 2017.** The 564 area code overlay will be introduced initially in the existing 360 area code region, then expanded to the 206, 253, and 425 area codes. Please be sure that any speed-dial or auto-dial features in your phones, faxes, call forwarding settings, voice mails services, etc. are updated. Additional information may be found at the [Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission website](#).
- **The *Daily Herald* reported that the leaders of the House and Senate transportation committees appear to be ready to keep the toll lanes open and won’t move on any bills to end tolling on I-405 between Bellevue and Lynnwood.** Head of the Senate transportation committee Curtis King says the state needs to wait for the results of the two-year pilot project. Next September would mark two years. Representative Judy Clibborn, who heads the House Transportation committee, is considering making the toll lanes permanent in 2018, the Associated Press reports.
- **According to the *Puget Sound Business Journal*, the number of cranes in Seattle increased to 62 in the latter part of 2016 and now leads the country in the crane race.** The Business Journal reported that the number of cranes is decreasing in some major cities, including New York, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. Meanwhile, almost 50 percent of tower cranes currently operating in North America are in Seattle, Chicago, and Toronto, according to the Journal.
- **Chris Sullivan at KIRO Radio recently reported that small bedroom communities are now developing downtowns and giving the big cities a run for their money. One such example is the city of Bothell. The city of Bothell’s population has grown by 12,000 in the past 10 years.** Bothell is nearly finished widening a road most people still call Highway 527. The city took it over from the state and renamed it “Bothell Way” so it could handle not only the commuters who commute through town but also the new residents. Not to mention the people coming to Bothell for new hotels and businesses, such as McMenamins. Bothell recently received a grant from the state to continue its downtown expansion to

join all the new private investment on the west side of Bothell Way with the historic downtown Main Street on the east side of town. The east side of town is an area that has also seen new development. The city is spending \$7 million to revitalize its Main Street and make it a place to enjoy. Construction on Main Street will begin later this year, about the time the widening on Bothell Way wraps up. The city is also about to get to work on additional sidewalks and other improvements throughout the entire city, funded by the successful ballot measure last November. Bothell is just an example of what we're seeing around the region. Smaller cities are growing up to handle all their new residents and looking to become destinations of their own.

- On Friday Jan. 20, 2017 the Trump Administration ordered a freeze on new and pending regulations. The recent 25 basis point reduction to the Federal Housing Administration Annual Mortgage Insurance Premiums was included under this freeze.** It has been suspended and is currently under review. NAR President William E. Brown released a statement in response to the announcement:

“According to our estimates, roughly 750,000 to 850,000 homebuyers will face higher costs, and 30,000 to 40,000 new homebuyers will be left on the sidelines in 2017 without the cut. We’re disappointed in the decision but will continue making the case to reinstate the cut in the months ahead.”

Calendar of Events Through February 23, 2017

Dates	Event	Time	Location	Contact
SEATTLE—King County REALTORS®				
2/7/17	Gov't Affairs Committee	10:30 am – 1:30 pm	SKCR	425-974-1013
2/ 15-17 /17	WR Leadership Academy			425-943-3100
2/2017	Holiday—Office Closed			
2/21/17	Affiliate Council	9:30 am – 10:30 am	SKCR	425-974-1011
2/ 21-23 /17	NAR Region 12		Hotel 1000 – Seattle	425-974-1011
For updates visit: www.nwrealtor.com and click “events”				