

Metro Denver home prices slightly down, condo prices up in August

Rush on appraisals dragging total numbers of home sales down around the state

Metro Denver's housing market continued to show signs of leveling off in August, with both median and average prices dropping for single-family homes, according to a report Wednesday from the Denver Metro Association of Realtors.

The time listings spent on the market also lengthened, from 25 days in July to 28 days in August, although outside forces are partly to blame.

Interest rates dropped after Britain's June 23 vote to leave the European Union, unleashing a big wave of mortgages refinancing and leaving appraisers stretched thin.

"Appraisals are taking longer than ever and, as a result, are causing widespread delays with closings," noted Anthony Rael, the report's author and a Denver area real estate agent.

Appraisals are not only taking long to complete, but are costing more, about \$600 on average before rush fees. Paying up doesn't always guarantee expedited service in time to meet closing deadlines, agents are complaining.

Metro Denver homebuyers closed on 5,378 homes last month, a 2 percent increase from July, but a 1.4 percent decrease from August 2015.

The average price of a single-family home was \$448,761, a 2 percent decrease from July, but 9.9 percent above the average a year earlier. The median price was \$380,250, a 2.2 percent drop from July and 9.6 percent above August 2015.

Condo prices, by contrast, continued to move higher. The average price of condo sold in August was \$288,744, up 1.2 percent from July and up 13.3 percent from a year earlier. The median was \$244,000, a 0.4 percent increase and 13.5 percent above the median a year ago.

There were 6,471 new listings last month, a drop of 5 percent from July, with 5,597 placed under contract. The inventory of homes available for sale at the end of August remained tight at 7,327, a 1.9 percent decrease from July and a 3.4 percent decrease from August 2015.

In the two decades before the housing boom and bust, the metro Denver market averaged an inventory of 17,644 listings in August, according to DMAR statistics.