



HOME DELIVERY

Residential Real Estate Trends, Issues and News for Consumers

The National Association of REALTORS® distributes *Home Delivery* every month to real estate, personal finance and consumer journalists as a resource for background or story ideas.

Fueling City Growth

Studies show rising fuel costs are driving many people to move to the city, where they can park their cars and rely on public transportation.

According to economist Joe Cortright's report, "Driven to the Brink: How the Gas Price Spike Popped the Housing Bubble and Devalued the Suburbs," pump prices have "redrawn the map of urban real estate values." Families are reevaluating financial priorities and cutting costs wherever they can.

Initially, buying a home in the city may have seemed too expensive for some would-be homeowners, but as gas budgets continue to swell with no signs of slowing, it's a move that could prove a worthy investment.

Story Springboard

- Less Road Travelled

How have gas prices affected the population in your community? Are more people moving closer to the city? Talk to Realtors® in your area about trends in suburban dwellers purchasing urban homes.

NAR's Smart Growth Action Grants program recently awarded \$48,262 to 13 local and state Realtor® associations. Smart Growth initiatives help Realtors® become more involved in creating housing options. For more information about NAR's Smart Growth activities, visit:

www.realtor.org/smart_growth.nsf.

Home Sweet Homes

As summer turns some people's thoughts to second homes, encouraging statistics about this market have been muffled under some of the negative news about the current housing market.

According to NAR's 2007 *Investment and Vacation Home Buyers Survey*, second-home sales accounted for one-third of all existing and new-home sales in 2007. A large portion of those purchases were vacation homes.

Why do families buy these "home away from homes?" The survey found that several factors go into the decision to buy a second home. Eighty-four percent of buyers wanted to use the home as a family retreat; 30 percent plan to use the home as a future primary residence; 26 percent want to diversify investments and 25 percent plan to rent to others.

Story Springboard

- I'll Second That

Talk to Realtors® in your community about local second-home sales. Ask Realtors® to identify clients who own vacation homes. Talk to these local second-home owners to learn about trends in vacation homeownership – where most people in your area own vacation property, how long they plan to keep the property, and how their lifestyle factored into the decision.

Wall to Wall or Buy it All?

Home buyers must consider a number of questions when shopping for a home, and one of the most fundamental is: house or condo? The answer really comes down to preference and lifestyle.

For those seeking a more urban way of life, a condo might be a good fit. Condos resemble apartments with several units in the same building or complex, sharing amenities. Another perk is that condo fees often cover some maintenance costs.

However, because condos are a shared community, ownership is often limited to a specific space.

For many, single-family homes offer more privacy and control. When purchasing a house, the buyer owns the entire building and usually the land on which it sits, and maintenance is owner's sole responsibility.

Story Springboard

- Decisions, Decisions...

Talk to Realtors® in your area about the differences between condo owners and homeowners in your community. How do buyer demographics differ? What factors led their clients to purchase one or the other? Have they seen trends in different preferences over time?

Please contact Michelle Wardlaw, 202/383-1042, or mwardlaw@realtors.org for additional ideas, sources, data, and resources.

