The tent is local real estate news DS MEDIA D

market

NORTH TEAM **Goodwin** Debbie Stevenson, Broker Associate REALTORS®

The Home Experience

Seller Solid

n the one hand, buyers are told the market is softening. Yet, when they venture out, prices remain stubbornly high, houses continue to move, builders still call the shots **Page 6**

arket manipulation? Before its Nov. 2 announcement, Zillow had been buying property through its IBuying product called Offers. The business platform had local agents puzzled. It seemed Zillow was willing to pay the moon for properties, stressed or otherwise. **Page 7**

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ZILLOW'S REAL ESTATE 'BIG SHORT?'

Stuck with properties, it cannot move, the online search engine has pulled its home flipping platform. Many saw this coming. Page 7

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The U.S. government's plans to raise the cap for mortgages backed by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to close to \$1 million in high-cost areas are meant to assist home buyers as prices continue to rise.

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Area Market Statistics Page 8

Sourced from residential listings in the governing Multiple Listing Services used by Realtors to market properties. Most of Central Texas falls under the Central Texas MLS. ACTRIS, the Austin Metro MLS, is used where stated. Counties listed are primary for each city. Some cities cross county lines. Listings used are from Jan. 1-Jan 28, 2021. Not all new construction sales are posted to MLS. Non-REALTOR licensed agents also cannot use MLS.

Editor and publisher Debbie Stevenson is a licensed real estate broker in the state of Texas. She and her husband, Dale, have made their home in Central Texas since 1988 after transferring with the military to Fort Hood. While on the move with the military, Stevenson spent two decades in journalism, covering the military, defense industry and business beats. She worked her way up from community newspapers to regionals and eventually an international wire ser-



vice. She also was called upon to comment on major news headlines for international news media, such as the BBC, CNN and Deutsche Presse-Agentur or DPA. Stevenson is broker associate for the JB Goodwin North Team in Salado. Designations include Accredited Luxury Staging Specialist, Corporate & Military Relocation, Luxury Home Specialist, Farm & Ranch, New Home Construction and Investor Staging Consultant.







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Volume shown in billions of dollars



Actual member statistics for LeadingRE and estimates for other networks using average sales units per agent and average sales price for firms in each respective network from published sources for 2016 production.

Sources: REAL *Trends* National Network 2016 Totals Final Report, REALTOR' Magazine 2015 Franchise Report, and various website research.

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We also recognize the power of network referrals and the importance of acknowledging the contributions of our friends and valued partners. Here are some of our real estate and design partners.



YOUR JB GOODWIN NORTH TEAM

Deborah Stevenson-Broker Associate, Team Leader

LEADING REAL ESTATE COMPANIES of THE WORLD

Debbie Stevenson is a longtime Central Texas resident. She was raised by her Canadian parents in Southern Africa and met her husband while completing her foreign language experience working for the U.S. Army in Germany. Debbie's studies are international, with a double major in foreign languages and economics. She spent two years in journalism before retiring to pursue her real estate career. Debbie's real estate designations and experience include, property investments, new construction, farm & ranch. She is an accredited luxury Realtor. Debbie also is a certified luxury staging professional and designer. In 2006, she was awarded the Rotary International public relations award.

"My goal is to provide our clients and customers with the most comprehensive, responsive and satisfying experience as they transition from one residence to another. We are ranked consistently at the top and earn repeat relationships because we are here to be your real estate advisors not sales agents. With a regional and global network of top real estate professionals, we ensure you have the best at your fingertips, no matter your destination."

Cody Stevenson-Relocation and Marketing Agent Regional, National

Cody Stevenson offers a friendly, professional real estate experience. A Salado High School and Liberty University graduate and Marine Corps veteran, Cody offers a unique local knowledge of Central Texas coupled with experiences from around the world. This local Texas Marine has seen the nation from coast to coast, been an audience to South African history, and served his time in the Middle East. He heavily believes in the value of building trust and friendship with every client and giving the best service possible. He also has an Interdisciplinary Bachelors degree in Aviation Science and Behavioral Studies. Cody firmly believes that education is continuous and strives to implement all that he learns to provide the best service possible.

Oshin Were-Relocation and Marketing Agent National, Global

Oshin Were offers an unrivaled real estate experience. She possesses a keen attention to detail acquired from her background in marketing, home decor and investment property management. As a Jamaican native, Oshin has been afforded the opportunity to work with discerning clientele from around the globe. Her work has taken her to Canada, New York and Las Vegas. She believes strongly in honesty and integrity as the framework for every client relationship and has created and operated several successful businesses on that foundation. Oshin and her husband strongly believe in creating generational wealth; they have six rental units and are working on building two more units. She also values the acquisition of knowledge and is pursuing several real estate designations.

Support Team

Backing our team are the resources of the JB Goodwin REALTORS, an Austin-based corporate brokerage in business since 1972. James B Goodwin is the owner/broker. Corporate resources include a fully-staffed marketing department, website design team, relocation division and legal team. In addition to your North Team headquarters in Salado and Belton, JB Goodwin has offices in Round Rock, Westlake, Northwest Austin, West Lake, San Antonio, New Braunfels and Boerne. Each office has a corporate vice president, assistant manager, office manager and receptionist to enable seller and buyers' agents perform to the highest expectations.

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This is the world's largest network of leading independent real estate brokerages. Membership is by qualifying invitation only. The goal is to provide top-level relocation services at the regional, national and global level. Each broker member operates a dedicated relocation department. Our JBG relocation department has a director with three dedicated team members to serve your relocation needs.

Interested in becoming part of our team. Call 512-468-8210 or email debbie-stevenson@jbgoodwin.com

Seller Solid

Central Texas stays strong despite headlines

The headlines are confusing.

On the one hand, buyers are told the market is softening. Yet, when they venture out, prices remain stubbornly high, houses continue to move, builders still call the shots.

So what is the real story?

Nationally, overall numbers show the U.S. housing market remaining robust, with CoreLogic reporting a median price for existing homes toping \$363,000 in June 2021. That is a whopping 23.4 percent year-over-year increase. Corelogic powers the majority of local multiple listing services platforms used by agents to market homes.

But what about the reported slowdown to the 16.2 percent year -over-year reported in August? Yes. It slowed, by 1.6 percent. The trouble is the prices remain far higher than the year before.

So what is a buyer to do? Conventional wisdom would say wait a strategy that would have worked 12 years ago. But this market is not playing by earlier rules.

Unlike the run up to the 2008 meltdown, today's housing bull run has been boom versus bubble driven. Factors fueling prices are real. The boom began with by an under supply of housing due to building and financing slowdowns in the wake of 2008. Fast forward to 2019, builders again put the brakes on building after buyers pulled back when the Federal Reserve started raising interest rates. Then the pandemic hit. The trend to urban, small-space living didn't seem quite so appealing when entire family units were working, learning and playing at home.

And just when buyers thought there may be room to breathe, 2021 dawned, bringing with it supply line and labor shortages. Contractors hired to put in critical infrastructure, such as roads and utilities, could not keep their heavy machinery up and running due to parts shortages. Builders had to contend with spiraling costs and even site theft as appliance inventories dwindled.

On the resale side, sellers had to weigh cashing in on newly acquired equity, while knowing they would have to face that same market as buyers. The result, bidding wars and upside down pric-

ing, with buyers finally throwing in the towel in some markets.

That's the national outlook. But with real estate, all things are local.

In September, the Austin metro's main counties, Williamson and Travis, saw 3,109 homes close for an average \$586,764 or 166.31 percent over list with 15 days on the market. The same period last year closed 3,536 sales at \$470,015 or 126.96 percent over list. That was a year-over-year price jump of 24.84 percent, according to ACTRIS, the governing multiple listing service.

Bell County's markets were the beneficiary of the Austin metro price storm to its south. Priced out of the market, metro buyers eyed longer commutes to better priced areas for larger homes and more bang for the buck.

While Bell County's pricing seemed to be a bargain to weary Austin buyers, Bell also experienced price boom gains.

Salado, the most southern community on Interstate-35, was the biggest beneficiary.

A review of close sales from the Central Texas Multiple Listing Service, found the sales price for homes in the Salado Independent School district in September averaged \$563,313 or \$229.00 per square foot. The platform listed 25 homes sold that month. That compared to 39 homes sold during the same month last year for \$401,133 or \$155.52 per square foot. That is a price hike of 40.53 percent. The average home spent 61 days on the market in September 2019 versus 31 days last year.

Countywide, the average price was \$258,439 with 29 days on the market versus \$224,535 with 52 days on the market in September 2019, a 15.10 percent year-over-year increase.

Going forward, corporate moves to Central Texas are expected to keep housing demand high. Samsung Electronics announced Taylor for its planned \$17 billion plant. Tesla's new 4-5 million square foot cybertruck plant off SH-130 on Austin's east side is attracting known suppliers. Tesla also filed expansion plans in Waco. Google, Amazon, Facebook, Canva and Oracle are among 91 companies to announce Austin moves this year.

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September Winners

Leander, with its proximity to Lake Travis, the Capital Metro rail system, commute arteries and breathtaking hill country topography, has become a metro favorite. The two most sought-after neighborhoods in the city's school district are Grand Mesa at Crystal Falls and Travisso, the adjacent master planned community. Grand Mesa's average sale was \$1.24 million at \$300.30/sq ft or 105.83% over list. Travisso sales averaged \$919,592 at \$278.94/sq. ft. or 111.10% over list.



Best Markets

Salado, Bell County's southern most community along Interstate-35 has become popular with Austin metro buyers forced to travel further afield to find a little bang for their buck. However, that trend has caused Salado prices to skyrocket.

At the end of the third quarter, the Salado School District had registered 269 homes on its governing Multiple Listing Service platform. Of those 198 were listed as sold. Surprisingly, 16 were withdrawn and 4 expired. The average sold home had 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and 2,555 square feet. The average sold price was \$504,709, or \$197.17 per square foot. That sale price was 101.75 percent of its original asking price.

Was Zillow Real Estate's 'Big Short?'

The Zillow scenario is not so much the housing bubble scenario featured in the movie "The Big Short." Based on the true story behind the 2008 real estate collapse, Michael Burry, the manager of hedge fund Scion Capital began to suspect in 2005 that the booming U.S. housing market was an asset

bubble inflated by high-risk loans. The measure become known as a credit default swap that allowed Burry to "short" the housing through sell positions, on the assumption that housing prices will drop. The big short – real estate style.



arket manipulation is the act of artificially inflating or deflating the price of a security or otherwise influencing the behavior of the market for personal gain.

The question is, have algorithim-based

home flippers such as Zillow and its industry competitors, OpenDoor, Sundae.com and Orchard, etc., found another form of market manipulation.

Market manipulation is primarily found in the stock market. It is, of course, illegal with stocks. Essentially, Investopedia explains stock manipulation best: "Market manipulation is the act of artificially inflating or deflating the price of a security or otherwise influencing the behavior of the market for personal gain. Manipulation is illegal in most cases, but it can be difficult for regulators and other authorities to detect, such as with omnibus accounts.

Before its Nov. 2 announcement, Zillow had been buying property through its IBuying product called Offers. The scheme began in December 2019 in Southern California markets. It expanded to top markets across the country. It was joined by other tech platforms such as OpenDoor and Orchard.

Their business platform had local agents puzzled. It seemed they were willing to pay the moon for properties, stressed or otherwise, with no apparent ability to recoup those prices and costs on the resale. In fact, many Zillow and OpenDoor properties would appear weeks later, in the same condition, for a price not sustainable by the neighborhood comparables.

So what was the plan? Why sellers enjoyed short-term, low headache sales processes, at least until they were socked with hefty closing fees, no apparent benefit appeared in place for the iBuyers, as they have become known.

Perhaps the long-term strategy was indeed market manipulation. Drive up prices, sit on properties until demand boosts the comparables. A risky proposition, as Zillow found out. As quickly as it began, the company folded its IBuying wing in October. It remains to be seen if OpenDoor will be forced to follow suit.

AUSTIN—WilCo. & Travis (AUSTIN MLS) 12,643 listings (1,231 active) Average days on market: 13 Properties sold: 12,741 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/3bath 2,008'/\$377.92/SQFT \$737,835 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,809' \$332.70/SQFT \$595,000

BELTON—Bell Co.

748 listings (48 active) Average days on market: 34 Properties sold: 533 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,162' \$157.50/SQFT \$347,176 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 2,082' \$155.20/SQFT \$301,000

CEDAR PARK-WilCo/Travis (AUSTIN MLS)

1,479 listings (72 active) Average days on market: 9 Properties sold: 1,226 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,393'/\$236.56/SQFT \$554,123 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,302' \$235.13/SQFT \$515,000

COPPERAS COVE—Coryell/Lampasas Co.

826 listings (37 Active) Average days on market: 29 Properties sold: 673 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,759' \$114.07/SQFT \$202,418 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,678' \$113.55/SQFT \$195,000

FLORENCE-Williamson (AUSTIN MLS)

57 listings (8 active) Average days on market: 36 Properties sold: 41 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,952' \$223.74/SQFT \$444,842 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,778' \$203.16/SQFT \$360,000

GATESVILLE—Coryell Co.

223 listings (32 active) Average days on market: 53 Properties sold: 158 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,843'/\$136.84/SQFT \$266,810 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,653' \$127.63/SQFT \$215.750

GEORGETOWN-Williamson(AUSTIN MLS)

3,521 listings (226 active) Average days on market: 15 Properties sold: 2,713 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/3bath 2,291' \$217.62/SQFT \$495,055 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/3bath 2,135' \$211.12/SQFT \$430,000

Your Market

Jan-Nov 2021

Austin & Central TX MLS 10 month snapshot

HARKER HEIGHTS-Bell Co.

691 listings (32 active) Average days on market: 29 Properties sold: 590 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,320' \$126.36/SQFT \$291,433 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,208' \$125.29/SQFT \$275,000

HUTTO, Williamson (AUSTIN MLS)

1,288 listings (96 active) Average days on market: 11 Properties sold: 854 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,048' \$195.68/SQFT \$390,322 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,956' \$178.77/SQFT \$349,948

JARRELL-Williamson (AUSTIN MLS)

768 listings (42 active) Average days on market: 7 Properties sold: 565 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,757' \$158.06/SQFT \$273,335 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,662' \$152.72/SQFT \$255,000

KEMPNER—Lampasas Co.

170 listings (15 active) Average days on market: 41 Properties sold: 121 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,047' \$160.88/SQFT \$322,977 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,936' \$158.07/SQFT \$320,000

KILLEEN-Bell Co.

3,162 listings (146 active) Average days on market: 28 Properties sold: 2,487 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,843' \$110.86/SQFT \$204,893 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 1,765' \$110.90/SQFT \$195,500

LEANDER-WilCo.&Travis (AUSTIN MLS)

2,766 listings (156 active) Average days on market: 13 Properties sold: 2,000 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,319' \$224.90/SQFT \$520,570 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,159' \$217.77/SQFT \$440,751

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LIBERTY HILL, Williamson (AUSTIN MLS)

1,083 listings (114 active) Average days on market: 18 Properties sold: 759 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,370' \$205.63/SQFT \$490,827 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,310 \$199.27/SQFT \$444,000

NOLANVILLE-Bell Co.

178 listings (8 active) Average days on market: 42 Properties sold: 123 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,122' \$140.72/SQFT \$306,839 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,076' \$141.05/SQFT \$309,900

MORGAN'S POINT-Bell Co.

28 listings (1 active) Average days on market: 51 Properties sold: 22 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,896' \$142.94/SQFT \$285,680 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,643' \$151.85/SQFT \$245,000

PFLUGERVILLE—Travis (AUSTIN MLS)

2,275 listings (160 active) Average days on market: 17 Properties sold: 1,621 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,181' \$207.93/SQFT \$437,190 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/3bath 2,068' \$206.49/SQFT \$423,000

ROUND ROCK, Williamson (AUSTIN MLS)

2,984 listings (187 active) Average days on market: 11 Properties sold: 2,421 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,341' \$217.40/SQFT \$477,644 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,208' \$215.85/SQFT \$460,000

SALADO-Bell Co.

257 listings (18 active) Average days on market: 43 Properties sold: 199 Average Home & Price: 4Bed/3bath 2,588' \$197.62/SQFT \$515,238 Median Home & Price: 4Bed/2bath 2,466' \$195.50/SQFT \$460,000

TEMPLE—Bell Co.

1,613 listings (86 active) Average days on market: 29 Properties sold: 1,345 Average Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,914' \$134.13/SQFT \$256,782 Median Home & Price: 3Bed/2bath 1,831' \$132.28/SQFT \$240,000

Backing Millions?

Fannie, Freddie poised to take on jumbo loans

By Mansion Global

The U.S. government's plans to raise the cap for mortgages backed by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to close to \$1 million in high-cost areas are meant to assist home buyers as prices continue to rise, but some warn that the move may not make much of a difference and could push prices even higher.

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The conforming loan limit—or the maximum

amount of a mortgage that Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae will guarantee or buy—is set to jump in 2022, The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday. For most areas, the limit is set to rise from \$548,250 to \$650,000, but in high-cost markets, such as New York City or the Bay Area in California, it would jump from \$822,375 to just under \$1 million. The exact loan limits are set to be announced Nov. 30 by the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which oversees Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae.

The median home price in the U.S. was \$380,000 in October, up 8.6 percent compared to last year and up 21.8% compared to 2019, according to a report released last week by Realtor.com. The increased limits mean more home buyers will have access to conventional loans, which typically have lower down payments and interest rates than the jumbo loans available for higher-priced properties. "By increasing the conforming loan limit, I think that it's going to open up more opportunities for buyers that have been shut out," said Taso Tsakos, a managing partner at The Agency who is based in the East Bay/Sonoma County office in California. "It's going to benefit home sellers, as well, because...if you have more buyers, then

you're going to create more demand, which benefits sellers and it stays a seller's market."

That increased demand will likely result in more competition and higher prices, according to Jonathan Miller, the CEO of the New York City-based appraisal firm Miller Samuel and the author of Douglas Elliman's market reports for a number of top markets in the United States.

The lower interest rates associated with conforming loans "may make asset prices higher by definition," he said.

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Y our secluded custom luxury home is nestled on the banks of the Lampasas River in South Bell County. Features include a well-appointed, chef-grade kitchen, home theater with wet bar and private facilities, two owner's suites, interior stone walls, porte-cochere, glass garage doors, custom built-ins, vaulted wood ceilings with floor-to-ceiling windows that maximize the stunning views and flood the home with natural light. A fully-equipped outdoor kitchen and stone fire-pit complete the pool and spa area. Riverside entertainment continues with covered outdoor seating, fireplace and grand stone patio high above the river bank. Here, a second outdoor grilling opportunity is positioned perfectly for maximum river views. The property is fully fenced along the interior boundaries and features 43 acres of river front and shaded trails. A separate guest barndominium offers two bathrooms, kitchen with breakfast bar and supersized foam-insulated area, currently used as a gymnasium.

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