



Quarterly Housing News

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Chairman's Corner



The price of single-family homes in the metropolitan Washington region continues to climb, with average sales

prices topping \$329,000 during the final quarter of 2003. Northern Virginia communities continue to attract most of the region's homebuyers, accounting for 57 percent of fourth quarter sales. The residential construction market continues to thrive with 3,658 single-family home construction permits issued throughout the region.

Local working families of all shapes and sizes continue to struggle to afford rental housing. During the 18 month period between December 2001 and June 2003, the number of families seeking rental assistance through the federal Housing Choice Voucher program increased 15.3 percent. Although the number of families on a waiting list to receive rental assistance decreased during this period, the average wait for assistance has grown with many families waiting three or more years for help.

Barbara Favola
Chair, Washington Area Housing Partnership

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More Than 27,000 Local Families Participating in Housing Choice Voucher Program

According to the "Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 2003 Assisted Housing Survey" report, 27,649 of the metropolitan region's families receive rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher program. This represents a 15.3 percent increase over December 2001 figures (the last time the survey was conducted). The majority of families receiving Voucher assistance reside in the District of Columbia and Montgomery and Prince George's counties (32.3%, 19.6% and 15.1% of total program participants respectively). The remaining families are distributed throughout the Northern Virginia region.

Between December 2001 and June 30, 2003 local jurisdictions saw a decrease in the number of applicants waiting to receive rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher program. However, an increase in the time applicants must wait to receive assistance (1,082 days or approximately 3 years as of June 30, 2003, a 52.3 percent increase since December 2001) suggests local families may be struggling with the region's high rental rates more than in the past.

Number of Families Receiving Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance

Jurisdiction	Total Vouchers Leased as of June 2003	Total Vouchers Leased as of December 2001	% Change
Alexandria	1,591	1,223	30.1%
Arlington County	1,181	883	33.7%
District of Columbia	8,921	7,891	13.1%
Fairfax County*	3,146	2,983	5.5%
Loudoun County	770	597	29.0%
City of Manassas**	197	186	5.9%
Montgomery County	5,413	4,005	35.2%
Prince George's County	4,186	4,042	3.6%
Prince William County	1,900	1,865	1.9%
Rockville	344	302	13.9%
Total	27,649	23,977	15.3%

* Fairfax County administers the Housing Choice Voucher program for the City of Falls Church.

** The City of Manassas administers the Housing Choice Voucher program for the City of Manassas Park.

Source: 2001 Assisted Housing Survey and 2003 Assisted Housing Survey, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting Lists and Average Wait for Assistance

Jurisdiction	# Applicants on Waiting List			Average # of Days on Waiting List		
	2003	2001	% Change	2003	2001	% Change
Alexandria	1,384	1,000	38.4%	913	365	150.1%
Arlington County	4,267	1,233	246.1%	913	240	280.4%
District of Columbia	27,904	31,423	-11.2%	1,270	1,038	22.4%
Fairfax County#	6,909	5,075	36.1%	1,825	1,095	66.7%
Loudoun County	1,060	948	11.8%	1,460	730	100.0%
City of Manassas**	282	173	63.0%	730	*	*
Montgomery County	4,200	9,250	-54.6%	730	365	100.0%
Prince George's County	2,801	1,082	158.9%	30	195	-84.6%
Prince William County	3,191	2,313	38.0%	760	540	40.7%
Rockville	544	642	-15.3%	2,190	1,825	20.0%
Region	52,542	53,139	-1.1%	1,082	710	52.3%

* Data not available.

Fairfax County administers the Housing Choice Voucher program for the City of Falls Church.

** The City of Manassas administers the Housing Choice Voucher program for the City of Manassas Park.

Source: 2001 Assisted Housing Survey and 2003 Assisted Housing Survey, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

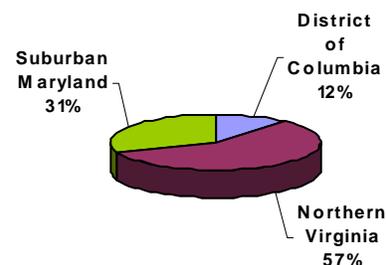
Homes Sales Increase 6.6% During Final Quarter of 2003

Fourth Quarter Home Sales by Jurisdiction, 2003 and 2002 (Adjusted)

Jurisdiction	1st Qtr 2003	2nd Qtr 2003	3rd Qtr 2003	4th Qtr 2003	4th Qtr 2002 (Adj)	Change, 2002 - 2003	
						#	%
Alexandria	669	856	926	750	747	3	0.4%
Arlington County	693	948	1,018	900	824	76	9.2%
District of Columbia	1,608	2,257	2,514	2,444	2,209	235	10.6%
City of Fairfax	80	116	113	90	85	5	5.9%
Fairfax County	4,097	6,422	7,280	5,565	5,033	532	10.6%
City of Falls Church	30	53	45	45	40	5	12.5%
Loudoun County	1,342	1,984	2,264	1,860	1,531	329	21.5%
City of Manassas	153	297	275	269	241	28	11.6%
City of Manassas Park	56	85	108	94	66	28	42.4%
Montgomery County	2,981	4,350	5,003	2,656	3,760	-1,104	-29.4%
Prince George's County	2,693	3,499	3,955	3,795	3,016	779	25.8%
Prince William County	1,646	2,359	2,793	2,362	1,997	365	18.3%
COG Region	16,048	23,226	26,294	20,830	19,549	1,281	6.6%

Source: Metropolitan Regional Information Systems, Inc.

Percentage of Regional Home Sales
Fourth Quarter 2003



The number of homes sold in the region during the fourth quarter 2003 was 6.6 percent higher than the number of homes sold during the same period in 2002. Fourth quarter home sales increased the most between 2002 and 2003 in the City of Manassas Park (42.4 percent), followed by Prince George's County (25.8 percent) and Loudoun County (21.5 percent). The City of Alexandria experienced the smallest growth in home sales between fourth quarter 2002 and 2003, recording less than a one (0.4) percent increase in sales. Montgomery County saw a 29.4 percent increase in home sales during the same period. Northern Virginia jurisdictions continue to lead the region in home sales, accounting for 57 percent of sales in the metropolitan region.

Average Sales Prices Top \$200,000 in all COG Jurisdictions

Average Home Sales Price, Fourth Quarter 2003 and 2002 (Adjusted)

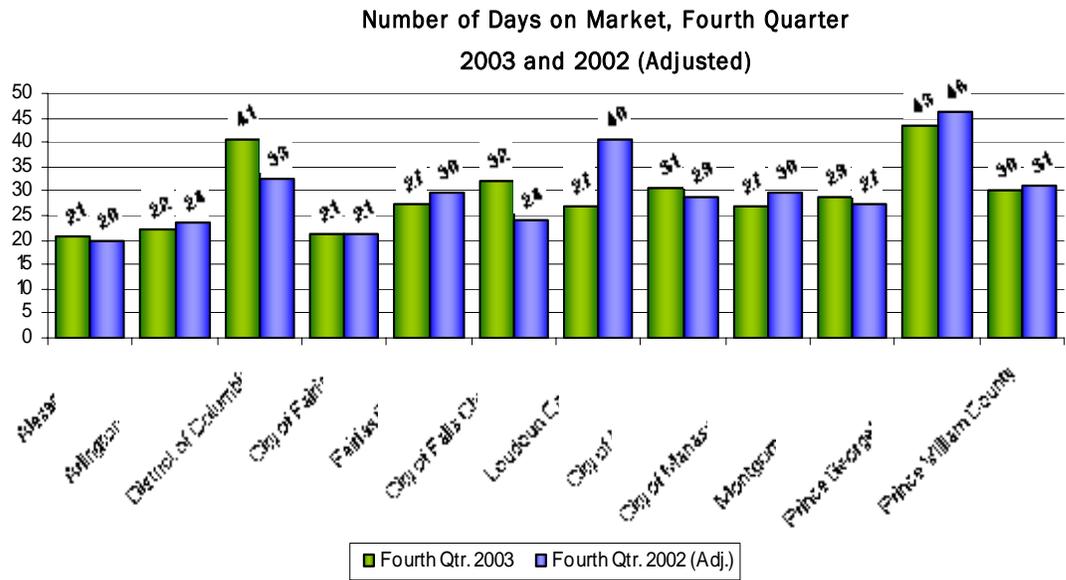
Jurisdiction	1st Qtr 2003	2nd Qtr 2003	3rd Qtr 2003	4th Qtr 2003	4th Qtr 2002 (Adj)	Change, 2002 - 2003	
						#	%
Alexandria	\$326,960	\$345,755	\$345,250	\$354,866	\$319,478	\$35,388	11.1%
Arlington County	\$356,986	\$368,916	\$391,037	\$397,856	\$341,317	\$56,539	16.6%
District of Columbia	\$334,821	\$384,553	\$394,905	\$389,532	\$371,511	\$18,021	4.9%
City of Fairfax	\$392,074	\$347,108	\$321,226	\$323,796	\$324,409	-\$613	-0.2%
Fairfax County	\$301,516	\$375,234	\$373,939	\$377,850	\$326,381	\$51,469	15.8%
City of Falls Church	\$325,507	\$356,761	\$459,029	\$442,071	\$336,550	\$105,521	31.4%
Loudoun County	\$307,814	\$330,077	\$348,801	\$371,158	\$319,305	\$51,853	16.2%
City of Manassas	\$196,790	\$209,336	\$228,908	\$226,925	\$184,895	\$42,030	22.7%
City of Manassas Park	\$219,273	\$217,109	\$237,841	\$241,919	\$197,599	\$44,320	22.4%
Montgomery County	\$328,645	\$357,827	\$375,615	\$360,598	\$328,688	\$31,910	9.7%
Prince George's County	\$175,241	\$190,182	\$202,071	\$200,593	\$175,562	\$25,031	14.3%
Prince William County	\$231,396	\$246,630	\$264,132	\$274,561	\$232,229	\$42,332	18.2%
COG Region	\$290,502	\$320,791	\$334,078	\$329,796	\$296,046	\$33,750	11.4%

Source: Metropolitan Regional Information Systems, Inc.

¹ Above figures include average prices of single-family detached/attached homes and condominium units sold.

The fourth quarter average home sales price increased 11.4 percent between 2002 and 2003, with average prices surpassing \$200,000 across the region. The largest gains in average sales price occurred in the Northern Virginia cities of Falls Church (31.4 percent), Manassas (22.7 percent) and Manassas Park (22.4 percent). Average prices were highest in the City of Falls Church (\$442,071) and Arlington County (\$397,856). Montgomery County experienced a slight decrease (-0.2 percent) in average fourth quarter sales price compared to the average price recorded during the same period in 2002. Prince George's County recorded the lowest average sales price of \$200,593; however this represents a 14.3 percent increase over the same period last year.

Homes in the region averaged 29 days to sale during the fourth quarter 2003, a decrease of 3.4 percent (or one day) from the same period last year. Homes moved fastest in the cities of Alexandria and Fairfax (21 days) and slowest in the District of Columbia and Prince George's County (41 days and 43 days, respectively).



Residential Construction Permitting Down 44.5 Percent from Second Quarter

During the fourth quarter 2003, local jurisdictions issued permits for the construction of nearly 5,000 (4,953) residential units. Single-family units accounted for 73.8 percent (3,658 units) of the total permits issued in the region. The number of multi-family units slated for construction rose 76.4 percent since the third quarter from 734 to 1,295. The majority (78.1 percent) of the region's single- and multi-family permits were issued in Northern Virginia, while the District of Columbia and jurisdictions in suburban Maryland issued the remaining 1.8 percent and 20.1 percent of permits respectively. All but 120 of the multi-family units approved for construction are located in Northern Virginia.

Residential Construction Permitting, Fourth Quarter 2003

Jurisdiction	First Qtr. 2003			Second Qtr. 2003			Third Qtr. 2003			Fourth Qtr. 2003		
	SF	MF	Total	SF	MF	Total	SF	MF	Total	SF	MF	Total
Alexandria ¹	11	52	63	1	0	1	1	0	1	6	0	6
Arlington County	3	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	2
District of Columbia	46	573	619	47	492	539	23	69	92	36	51	87
City of Fairfax ²	0	0	0	8	0	8	0	0	0	5	0	5
Fairfax County	0	0	0	983	28	1,011	792	125	917	694	308	1,002
City of Falls Church ³	684	354	1,038	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loudoun County	1,403	138	1,541	1,792	301	2,093	1,364	142	1,506	1,117	509	1,626
City of Manassas ⁴	8	8	16	20	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Manassas Park ⁵	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery County ⁶	251	284	535	328	37	365	142	0	142	599	120	719
Prince George's County	508	48	556	1,674	48	1,722	80	32	112	278	0	278
Prince William County	1,176	507	1,683	1,472	362	1,834	1,075	366	1,441	921	307	1,228
COG Region	4,090	1,964	6,054	6,326	1,268	7,594	3,478	734	4,212	3,658	1,295	4,953

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

¹Permitting data not available for June and September, 2003.

²Permitting data not available for September, 2003.

³Permitting data not available for April through December, 2003.

⁴Permitting data not available for June through December, 2003.

⁵Permitting data not available for January through December, 2003.

⁶Permitting data not available for April, July and September, 2003.



The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is the regional organization of the Washington area's local governments and officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the U.S. Congress. COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern such as housing policy, comprehensive transportation planning, economic development, and population growth and its implications for the region. COG is supported by contributions from participating local governments, federal and state government grants and contracts and through donations from local foundations and the private sector. If you would like to learn more about COG's involvement in the region's housing issues, please visit our website at www.mwcog.org or call Stacy Pethia, Housing Planner, at 202-962-3753.



The Washington Area Housing Partnership (WAHP) is a regional public-private partnership affiliated with, and located within, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The mission of WAHP is to expand affordable housing opportunities within the metropolitan Washington region. In its role as an information clearinghouse, the Partnership maintains and reports data on various aspects of the region's housing market. This includes the Annual Regional Housing Report, an assessment of the region's rental housing stock and analysis of the Decennial Census of the Population and Housing, the American Housing Survey and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. If you are interested in learning more about the Partnership, please contact Keith Fleury, Senior Housing Planner, at 202-962-3346.



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The "Quarterly Housing News" is a companion to the "Regional Housing Report," released by COG on an annual basis. The "Quarterly Housing News" provides quarterly updates on housing trends throughout the COG member jurisdictions.

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