

STEVE COMBS

STRATEGIC HOUSING & MORTGAGE INTELLIGENCE

Weekly Market Brief

Southern Maryland & the DMV

THIS WEEK'S KEY THEMES

- › Rates remain volatile — buyer leverage is improving
- › Inventory mixed: tightening in So. Maryland, rising in PG County
- › Strategic buyers gaining negotiation opportunities
- › Sellers prioritizing certainty over headline price



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What You Need to Know This Week

Mortgage rates remain in the mid-6% range with the national 30-year average at 6.65% — while the Freddie Mac weekly survey came in at 6.46%. Across Southern Maryland and the DMV, median home prices range from \$458,790 in Prince George's County to \$937,645 in Fairfax. St. Mary's County is forecasted to appreciate 22% over the next five years. Strategic preparation remains the decisive edge for buyers in this market.

6.65%

30-YR FIXED AVG

\$510K

ST. MARY'S MEDIAN

35 days

ST. MARY'S DOM

130

CHARLES AFFORD. INDEX

The broader picture developing beneath rate headlines is one of quiet transition. Well-qualified buyers who are prepared — with strong pre-approvals, realistic budgets, and strategic advisors — are entering a market that increasingly rewards preparation over speed.

Key takeaway this week: Charles County leads the region with an Affordability Index of 130 — meaning a median-income household can comfortably purchase at the median price with 20% down. Compare that to Washington DC at 82 and Fairfax at 89, and the Southern Maryland value story becomes clear. Sellers across the region are watching transaction certainty closely, and buyers with structured financing are winning deals that higher but weaker offers are losing.

"The market doesn't reward the fastest buyer anymore. It rewards the most prepared."



MORTGAGE & RATE INTELLIGENCE

What's Moving Markets Right Now

Many buyers focus heavily on headline interest rates — and miss the larger picture developing underneath the surface.

This week's OBMMI data — sourced from actual locked transactions representing over one-third of all U.S. mortgage activity — shows the 30-year conventional rate at 6.65%, with VA loans running approximately 30–50 basis points below that on locked transaction data. Buyers working with a strategist rather than simply shopping rates are identifying programs, structures, and timing windows that meaningfully reduce total loan cost.

30-Year Fixed	6.65% national avg · Freddie Mac weekly survey at 6.46%
VA Loan Rates	Running ~30–50bps below conventional on locked transaction data
USDA Rural	Competitive for eligible St. Mary's County properties
FHA 30-Year	Approximately 20–30bps below conventional · Watch MIP impact on APR
Rate Trend	Sideways with slight downward bias — watch Fed commentary
Lock Strategy	Short-term locks (15–21 days) favored in current environment

SOUTHERN MARYLAND & DMV HOUSING SNAPSHOT

St. Mary's County active listings sit at 201 — down 9% month-over-month and 11% year-over-year — reflecting a market where supply remains tight relative to demand. PAX River NAS continues to anchor the local economy, supporting both consistent buyer demand and a 73% homeownership rate. On the DMV side, Anne Arundel is showing the most meaningful supply improvement, with listings up 5% year-over-year and 103 new listings in the last five days alone.

St. Mary's County

- Median price: **\$510,011** · Median DOM: **35 days**
- Active listings: 201 county-wide · Down 9% M/M and 11% Y/Y
- Affordability Index: **119** — well above the national benchmark of 100
- 5-year forecasted appreciation: +22.12% — one of the strongest projections in the region
- Homeownership rate: 73% · Median household income: \$122,491

DMV Corridor

- Charles County median: **\$531,753** · DOM: 38 · Affordability Index: **130** (strongest in region)
- Prince George's median: \$458,790 · DOM: 40 · County listings up 11% Y/Y — inventory improving
- Anne Arundel median: \$588,014 · Listings up 3% M/M and 5% Y/Y — most active new supply
- Fairfax, VA median: \$937,645 · DOM: 25 days — fastest-moving market in the data set
- Washington DC affordability index: 82 — below benchmark; investor and high-income buyer driven

STRATEGIC BUYER INSIGHT

What Smart Buyers Are Doing Right Now

One of the most important exercises buyers can complete right now has nothing to do with interest rates. Strategic buyers define affordability and comfort first — then build the search around long-term sustainability instead of temporary emotion.

1 Define Your Comfort Zone First

Before comparing rates or browsing listings, run your numbers based on total monthly payment comfort — not maximum qualification. Your approval limit and your smart limit are not the same number.

2 Understand Total Cost, Not Just Rate

Interest rate is one variable. Loan structure, down payment deployment, PMI exposure, rate buydown options, and long-term equity trajectory are the full picture. A slightly higher rate with better structure often outperforms.

3 Prepare Your File for Certainty

Sellers and their agents are scrutinizing buyer preparation more than ever. Underwritten pre-approvals, clear income documentation, and a lender with a reputation for closing create negotiating power independent of price.

4 Think in Timelines, Not Snapshots

Buyers who model a 5–7 year ownership scenario consistently make better decisions than those optimizing for today's rate. Where will you be in 5 to 7 years? That question should shape your financing structure today.

PARTNER INTELLIGENCE

Listing agents and sellers are paying close attention to buyer preparation, underwriting strength, lender communication, and overall transaction certainty. The strongest offer is not always the highest offer. In today's market, agents are increasingly advising sellers to evaluate the probability of a clean close alongside — and sometimes above — the purchase price. A buyer with a fully underwritten file and a communicative lender carries real premium in competitive situations.



STEVE'S PERSPECTIVE

What I'm Seeing on the Ground This Week

Over the last several weeks, I've had multiple conversations with buyers who almost talked themselves out of planning entirely because of fear surrounding rates and affordability. I understand that hesitation. The housing market has become incredibly noisy. The headlines cycle between alarming and optimistic with very little practical guidance in between.

What I want to offer you this week is a simple reframe: buyers and homeowners don't necessarily need more information about the mortgage market. They need clearer interpretation and better strategy. That's the difference between noise and signal.

The buyers I work with who move forward with confidence aren't the ones who waited for rates to be perfect. They're the ones who understood their numbers, trusted their preparation, and made decisions rooted in their life plan — not the Fed calendar.



Steve Combs · Mortgage Strategist

WORK WITH STEVE COMBS

Strategic mortgage planning designed to create clarity, confidence, and long-term financial alignment.

Steve-Combs.com

Primary Website

AskSteve247.com

AI Advisor — 24/7

MeetSteveCombs.com

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Your AI mortgage advisor — available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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