Vol. 1 · Issue 8
Week of July 13, 2026

STEVE COMBS

STRATEGIC HOUSING & MORTGAGE INTELLIGENCE

THE MARKET *ISN'T* CONFUSED.

THE HEADLINES ARE.

Every week, I separate market signal from market noise so you can make better real estate decisions with confidence.

THIS WEEK'S SIGNAL

- Mortgage rates remain volatile
- Inflation concerns continue influencing markets
- Inventory remains healthier than last year
- Negotiation opportunities continue improving
- Five-year appreciation forecasts remain strong

Read online
steve-combs.com/weekly-market-brief

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Signal vs. Noise

The Noise

Financial headlines remain focused on mortgage rate volatility following renewed inflation concerns and geopolitical uncertainty affecting global energy markets. Those stories matter — but they are not the whole story.

The Signal

Across Southern Maryland, Washington DC, Northern Virginia, and surrounding markets, housing fundamentals remain surprisingly resilient. Inventory continues improving. Buyers have more negotiating leverage. Seller concessions remain available. Long-term appreciation forecasts continue projecting approximately 20–22% growth across much of the region.

While interest rates continue to fluctuate, today's market rewards preparation more than perfect timing.

> ***"Information creates anxiety. Interpretation creates confidence."***

REGIONAL MARKET SNAPSHOT

Southern Maryland & DMV — July 2026

Every local market tells a different story. National headlines rarely capture what matters most in your neighborhood.

County	Median Price	Days on Market	5-Year Forecast	Affordability
St. Mary's	$510,011	80	+22.12%	119
Calvert	$537,289	34	+21.32%	138
Charles	$531,753	30	+19.89%	130
Prince George's	$458,790	31	+19.46%	112

Source: MBS Highway · Data current as of July 13, 2026

MORTGAGE & RATE INTELLIGENCE

30-YR CONFORMING **6.463%**	30-YR JUMBO **6.469%**	30-YR FHA **6.317%**
30-YR VA **6.052%**	30-YR USDA **6.212%**	15-YR CONFORMING **5.795%**

Source: Optimal Blue OBMMI® · National averages are market context only. Not a rate quote, Loan Estimate, APR disclosure, approval, commitment to lend, or guarantee of terms.

BEYOND THE RATE

Instead of asking *"Where are rates?"* — ask *"What has changed for buyers?"*

- ✓ Inventory
- ✓ Seller concessions
- ✓ Days on market
- ✓ Appreciation outlook
- ✓ Affordability

Rates matter. They are simply one variable.

SIGNAL VS. NOISE

This Week's Market Interpretation

Every week this section separates what headlines are saying from what the data is actually showing.

NOISE What the headlines say	SIGNAL What the data shows
Rate volatility means buyers should wait	Volatility affects markets — not just housing
Inflation concerns make housing unaffordable	So. Maryland affordability index remains 119–138
The market is too uncertain to act	Prepared buyers are finding real opportunity
Higher rates always mean lower prices	Supply constraint continues supporting values
	5-yr forecasts remain 19–22% across region

"Good decisions come from understanding the entire picture — not just the loudest headline."

STRATEGIC CONCEPT

What Market Are You Watching?

Professional advisors evaluate all five dimensions. Most headlines cover only one.

WALL STREET
Market volatility & sentiment

MORTGAGE RATES
Rate environment & direction

HOUSING INVENTORY
Supply & days on market

NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE
Concessions & buyer power

LONG-TERM EQUITY
Appreciation & wealth building

Professional advisors evaluate all five. Most headlines talk about only one.

HOUSING MATH™

Short-Term Volatility vs. Long-Term Equity

Most market conversations focus on short-term rate movements. Housing Math asks a longer question: what does owning a home actually build over time?

PURCHASE PRICE	5-YR APPRECIATION	PROJECTED VALUE	EQUITY CREATED
$500,000	≈ 20%	≈ $600,000	≈ $100,000
Today	*+$100,000 projected*	*After five years*	*Projected gain*

Short-Term

A quarter-point rate movement changes the monthly payment on a $500,000 loan by approximately $75–$85 per month.

Long-Term

Five years of appreciation at 4% annually on a $500,000 home creates approximately $100,000 in projected equity — independent of rate movement.

A quarter-point rate movement affects monthly payment. Five years of appreciation can affect long-term wealth. Neither should be ignored. Both deserve context.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

INFORMATION IS EVERYWHERE. SIGNAL IS RARE.

Every week you will hear predictions. Bullish. Bearish. Optimistic. Pessimistic. My commitment is not to predict headlines. It is to interpret what the data actually means for buyers, homeowners, Realtors, builders, and financial professionals.

The best decisions are not made by reacting faster. They are made by seeing more clearly.

› Read the Weekly Brief

steve-combs.com/weekly-market-brief

› Schedule a Strategy Conversation

meetstevecombs.com

› Ask Steve 24/7

asksteve247.com

Steve Combs

Steve Combs · Mortgage Strategist

Ask Steve 24-7

WORK WITH STEVE COMBS

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

Steve-Combs.com

Housing & Mortgage Strategy

AskSteve247.com

AI Mortgage Advisor — 24/7

MeetSteveCombs.com

Schedule a Strategy Call

Ask Steve 24-7

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

Steve Combs

Mortgage Strategist · NMLS #381933 · Cornerstone Home Lending