

# Closings stretched out amid appraiser dearth

Metro Denver's home sales dropped in September, as did the number of new listings.

---

The Denver Post · 8 Oct 2016 · · By Aldo Svaldi Aldo Svaldi: 303-954-1410, [asvaldi@denverpost.com](mailto:asvaldi@denverpost.com) or [@aldosvaldi](https://twitter.com/aldosvaldi)

---

Metro Denver's home sales continued to cool in September, with prices leveling off and purchases taking longer to complete due to a chronic shortage of appraisers, according to a report from the Denver Metro Association of Realtors.



Buyers closed on 4,936 homes in September, down 11.1 percent from the number sold in August. Homes put under contract fell nearly 12 percent to 4,927 month over month and the number of new listings hitting the market was 5,994, down 7.4 percent from August.

Listings spent an average of 32 days on the market in September versus 28 in August.

Activity tends to drop once summer wraps up and school starts again, so the declines aren't a big surprise. But last month's sales were down 5.6 percent from the same month a year ago, and the time required to close on a home financed with a mortgage is way up.

Anthony Rael, chairman of the DMAR market trends committee and a local real estate agent, said in his report that the delays are "a direct result of an appraiser shortage we've been talking about the past several months."

More buyers are paying surcharges to get into the overbooked schedules of appraisers, which can push the cost of an appraisal to \$1,000. In Aurora, one buyer had to pay \$1,800 to get an appraisal in time to meet deadlines while another in Park County paid \$3,000, Rael noted in his report.

Homes purchased with conventional loans saw closing times rise to 43.2 days in September from 39.3 days a year earlier. Veteran Administration loans were the worst, with closing times rising from 39.9 days a year ago to 49.5 days on average in September. Cash transactions, by contrast took 28.2 days to close in September versus 28.9 days a year earlier.

There were 7,599 listings on the market at the end of September, an increase of 3.7 percent from August and around the record low inventory for a September reached a year earlier. The number of listings in metro Denver on average drops 2.3 percent between the two months, but last month it rose.

The median single-family home price stayed flat in September at \$380,000 and remains 11.8 percent above the median in September 2015. For condos, the median price fell 1.2 percent from August to \$241,000, but remains 14 percent higher than a year ago.