



THIS MONTH IN REAL ESTATE

U.S.

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Commentary

The U.S. housing market continues its gradual and uneven progress, despite the expiration of the home buyer tax credit. The remarkable rebound in housing activities from the initial drop following the end of the home buyer tax credit this past July adds to the belief that the risk of a double-dip downturn in housing may be disappearing.

As the housing market continues to work through the excess supply overhang, a result from the glut of foreclosed properties which is keeping home prices below their long-term trend growth, economists anticipate mortgage rates at or above 6% by the end of 2012 and expect buying activity to continue its upward momentum.

Supporting this view is the rising concern about inflationary pressures sparked by political unrest in the Middle East. While surging gas and food prices could prove transitory and pose no major threats, these price increases may weigh down consumer spending, which accounts for two thirds of the economy. While, the Federal Reserve is committed to making necessary policy changes to address such risks. Meanwhile, core price gains, excluding food and fuel, were modest in April, offering some relief to consumers.

As the economy improves, stimulus efforts by the government and the Fed is expected to gradually wind down, which typically spurs rising interest rates to keep inflation in check. Meanwhile, buyers continue to benefit from historically favorable buying conditions and sellers are encouraged by increased market stability.



The Numbers That Drive Real Estate

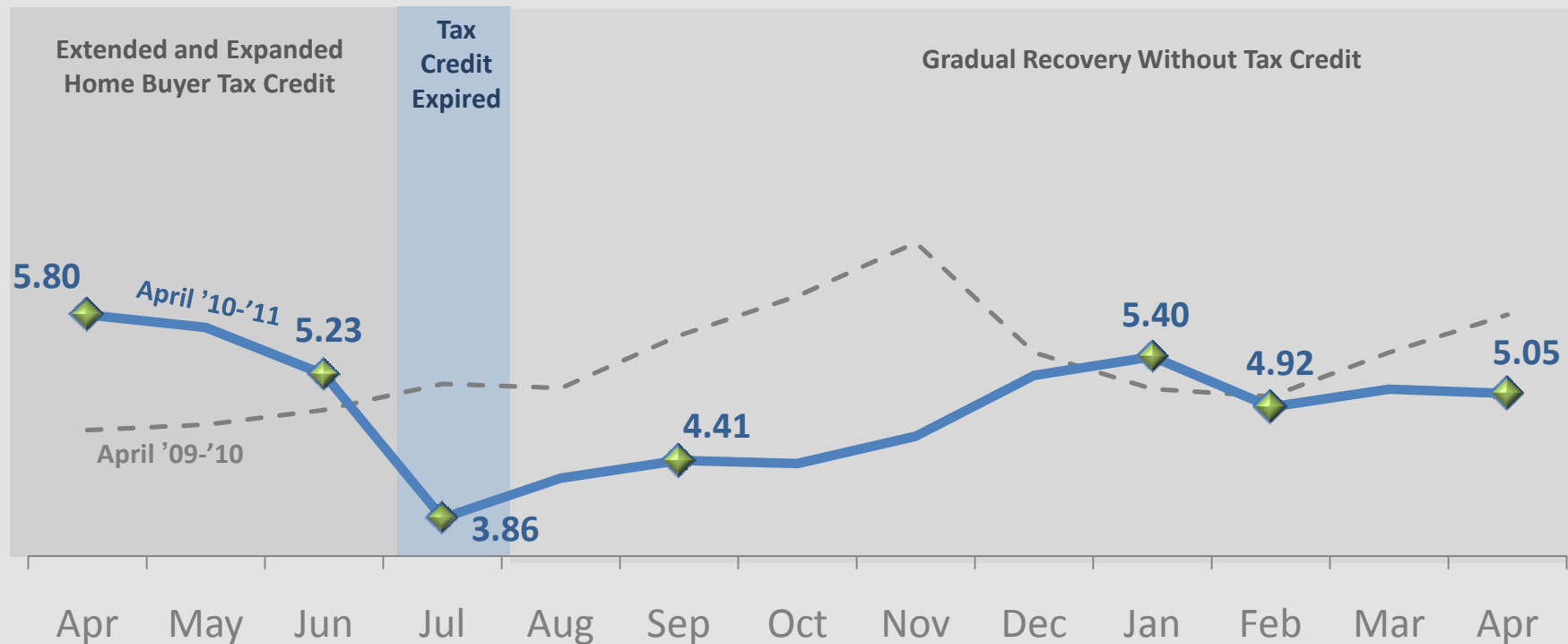
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Home Sales

In Millions

The number of home sales in April were down 12.9% compared to the same time last year when the impact of the tax credit was at its peak. Sales were relatively stable compared to the previous month: less than a 1% decline. NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun states that “given great affordability conditions and job creation, home sales should be stronger” and cites unnecessarily tight credit for limiting sales. Gradual but uneven improvement is expected to continue. In fact, home sales have increased six of the past nine months.

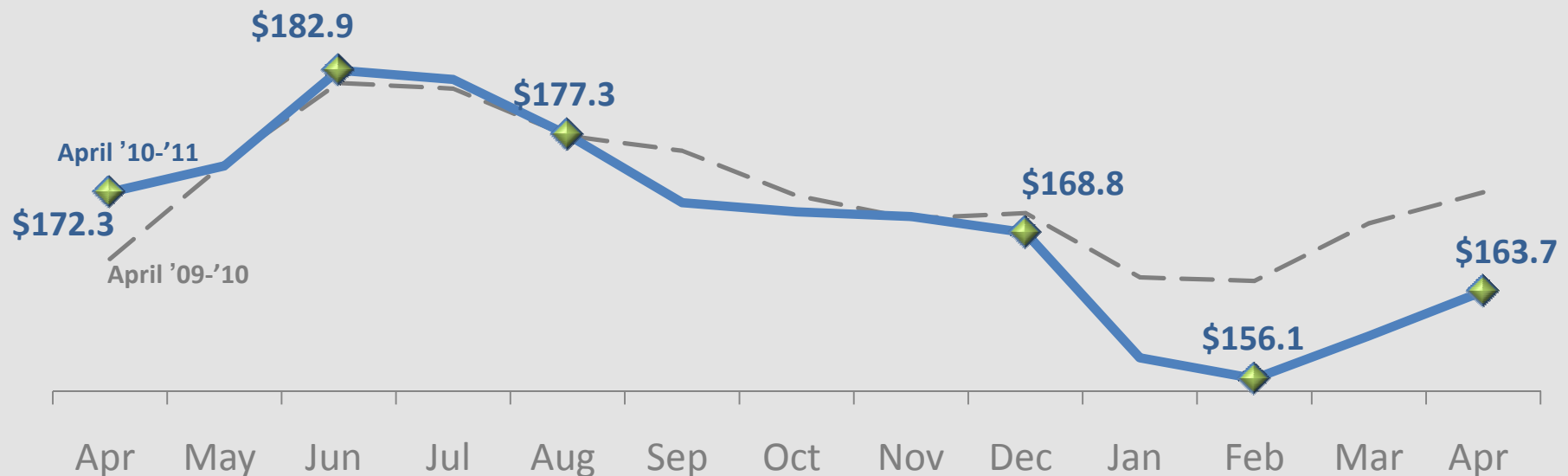


Home Price

In Thousands



Home prices rebounded 2.4% in April with median home prices rising to \$163,700. This is 5% below the year-ago level and continues to keep the median price close to 2002 levels. Three out of eight homes sold during April, or 37% of sales, were distressed properties, which typically sell at a 10%–20% discount. This is down 3% from March. Investors represented 20% of sales, and all-cash buyers were 31% of sales in April, down from a record high of 35% in March. Prices and mortgage rates remain favorable for buyers for the spring selling season.

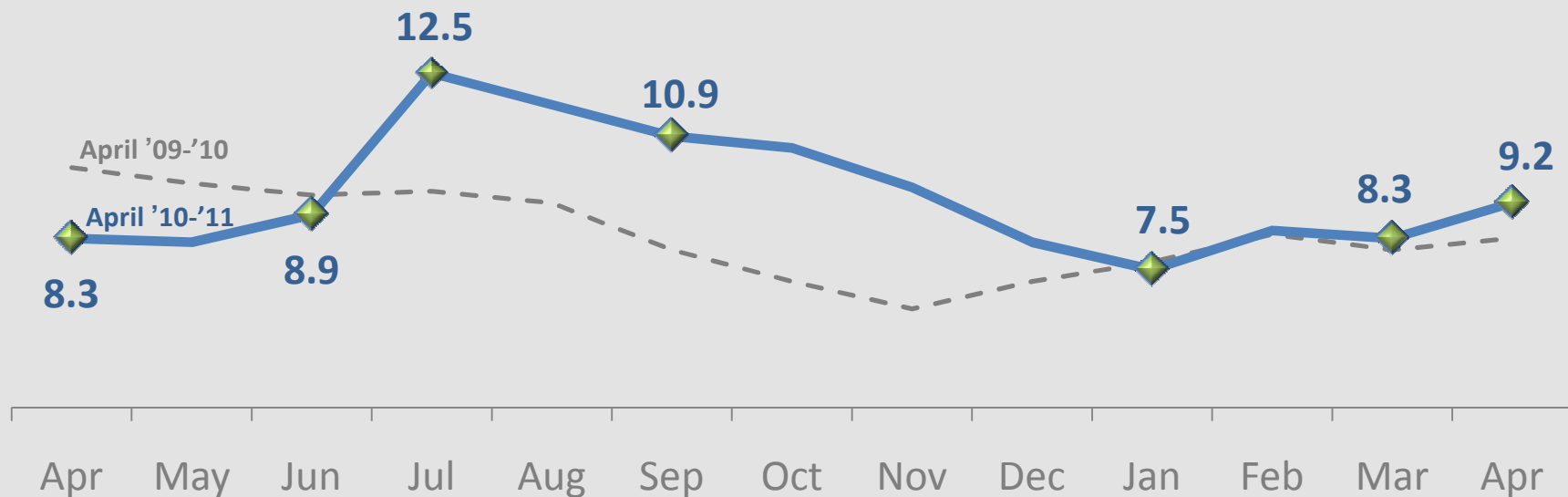


Supply of Inventory

In Months



The supply of homes measured in months on the market, if sales continue at their current pace, inched up during April compared to March. Inventory levels remained 26% below the peak of 12.5 months in July and only 11% above April of 2010 when the tax credit was in full swing.



Mortgage Rates

30-Year Fixed



Rates have reached a new record low after steadily declining throughout May primarily due to uncertainty in the global and domestic economies. Rates are still expected to follow an upward trend as the year progresses. As overall economic activity gets back on track, rates will likely rise to keep inflation in check. This window of opportunity for buyers to lock in these historically low interest rates may not remain open much longer.

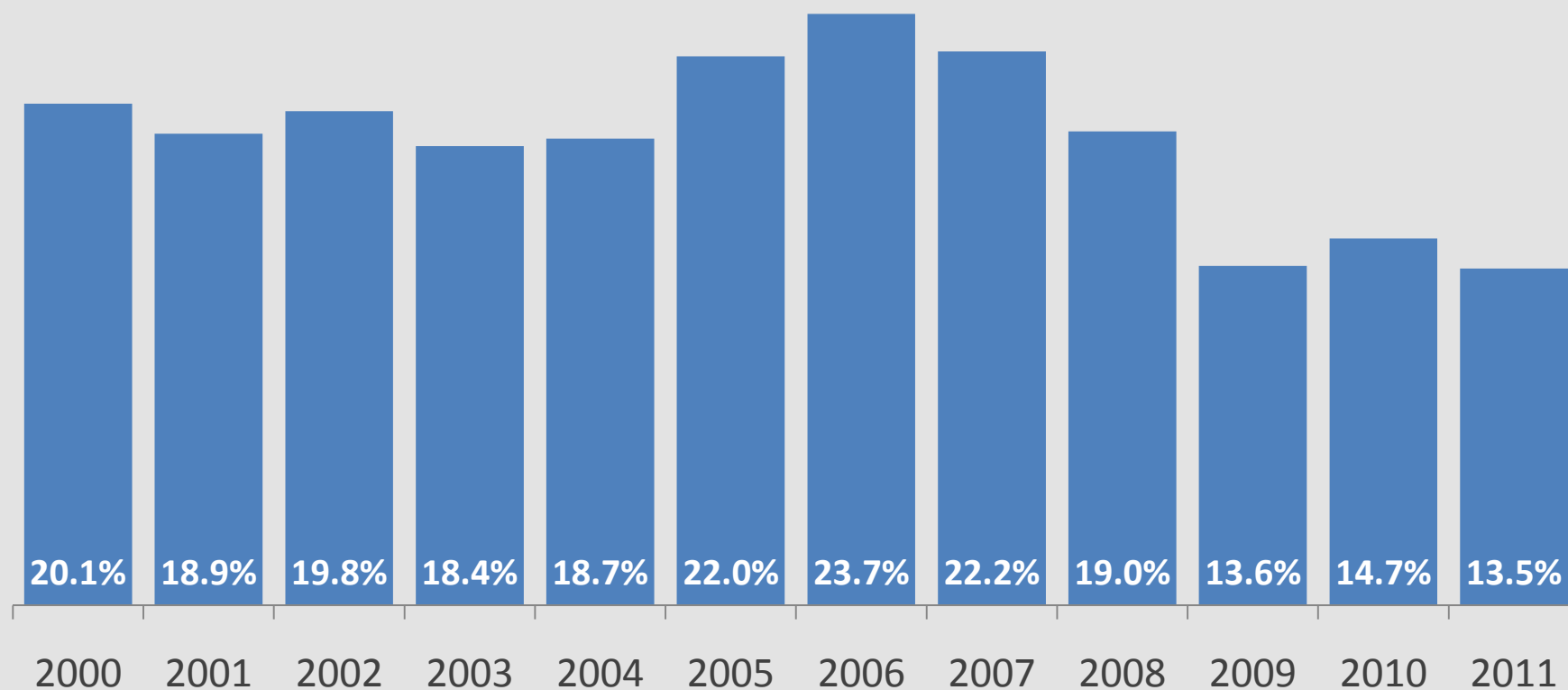
Type	Rate
30-Year Fixed	4.55%
15-Year Fixed	3.74%
5/1 ARM	3.41%
Historical Average	8.90%



Affordability - Percentage of Income

The percentage of a median family's income required to make mortgage payments on a median-priced home

Housing affordability continued at record levels in April. The relationship between mortgage rates, home prices, and family income is the most favorable on record for buying. The home price-to-income ratio continues to remain well below the historical standard. Stabilizing home prices and rising interest rates are expected to reverse the recent affordability trend.



Affordability as of April every year. Calculations assume a 20% down payment.

Source: National Association of Realtors



Recent Government Action

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KW Research

Incentives to Purchase Freddie Mac Foreclosures

Following in the footsteps of its counterpart Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac is offering a summer sales promotion for buyers who purchase a home from its inventory of foreclosures or HomeSteps properties. Since banks typically sell foreclosures “as-is” without incentives, warranties, or repairs, this incentive could help buyers view a HomePath property more like a traditional sale, and less like a distressed property, during their search process.

For offers received by July 31 that close by September 30, Freddie Mac is offering:

- 3.5% in closing costs to buyers
- \$1,200 bonus to buyer agents

This is on top of the incentives already being offered:

- A two year HomeProtect Home Warranty
- Up to 30% savings on new appliances

Note that this program comes with a few eligibility requirements, which includes the home must be a single-family, owner-occupied, financed dwelling used solely for residential purposes.



Topics for Home Buyers, Sellers, and Owners

Brought to you by:
KW Research

Prelisting Prep Works to Maximize Your ROI

Repeat buyers, especially move-up buyers, tend to want their next home to be in great condition. Usually, when homes are located in a neighborhood that attracts those buyers, homes need to be in pristine condition to stand out from the rest. This can be achieved by getting the home preinspected for the buyer. Research shows that 8% of sellers have a prelisting inspection before putting their home on the market.

47% of sellers enhance their front yard appearance by making changes up to five weeks in advance before listing the home for sale. Sellers tend to spend between \$150 and \$1,000 when improving their curb appeal.

49% of buyers end up purchasing a home in excellent condition while 40% purchase in good condition

It is fundamental for sellers to make essential repairs to their homes before listing, and curb is particularly important. This is often a first step to getting buyers in the door. Sellers who choose to make enhancements to their front yards tend to have good-to-excellent results in comparison to the 68% of homes without enhancements. By boosting the curb appeal, sellers tend to receive their first offer six days faster and sell seven days sooner than sellers who don't work to boost curb appeal.

Your Local Market

Although it is important to stay informed about what is going on in the national economy and housing market, many different factors impact the your real estate market.

Talk to your KW associate for assistance interpreting the conditions in your local market.



KW associates are equipped with the knowledge and information to help you navigate the home-buying or selling process in this challenging market.

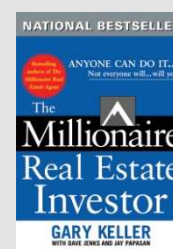
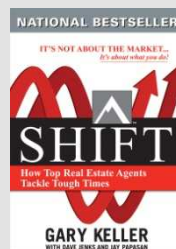
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