THE REAL ESTATE REVIEW

DENVER EVOLUTION | MODUS REAL ESTATE

"Ain't nobody got time for that." — Sweet Brown

AUGUST 2026

Boots on the Ground

I have a couple buyers under contract where the deals keep bringing me back to the same conclusion: buyers really don't want to inherit somebody else's projects right now.

What matters is the pattern. Questions about condition, prior work and what still needs attention are taking up more oxygen than they would have a few years ago. Every unanswered question chips away at confidence. Every item that needs another appointment, report or contractor gives them another reason to wonder whether they picked the wrong house.

A house can be perfectly livable and still feel like too much work. Buyers add paint, flooring, appliances, landscaping, fixtures and the small repairs that never sound expensive until five land at once — plus the time, how they will live through the work and the cash left after closing.

A repair the seller leaves behind does not keep the same price. By the time it reaches the buyer's offer, it has picked up an uncertainty premium.

More inventory, less patience

July left buyers more homes to choose from and a little more time to decide. That is enough room to walk away from a project house without the old FOMO writing the offer.

That has created a real split. Move-in-ready homes compete in one tier. Homes that need work compete in another, even when location, size and list price look similar on paper.

The monthly payment is only part of affordability. A dated kitchen may be tolerable. Add an aging roof, worn flooring, exterior work and three inspection items that need specialists, and the house starts to look like a money pit. That is a tough sales pitch when competition is as plentiful as it is today.

At today's mid-six national rate index, a known $10,000 price difference is roughly sixty-five dollars a month on a 30-year loan. An unknown $10,000 repair may need cash immediately — and it may not stay $10,000.

"The buyer can do it" is expensive

Sellers often say the buyer will want their own finishes, so leave it alone. Sometimes that is correct. Taste is personal.

Deferred maintenance is different. So is a half-finished repair, a system near the end of its life or work with no invoice, permit or warranty. Those items do not give creative freedom. They give a bill and a part-time job.

The seller may see a $5,000 project. The buyer sees the project, the chance the first estimate is wrong, the time required and the risk something else appears. They protect themselves with price, credit, caution — or by choosing the other house before the seller ever learns what turned them off.

What move-in-ready actually means

Gray floors, white cabinets and a bowl of fake lemons are not enough. Buyers have seen fresh finishes hide old systems.

The premium belongs to homes that feel cared for: serviced systems, invoices for repairs, coherent HOA documents, a clean functional house ready without assembling a contractor phone tree. Defined problems are negotiable. A pile of loose ends is harder.

Fix the right things

Address leaks, unsafe conditions, broken systems and visible deferred maintenance. Gather permits, receipts and warranties. If a repair is impractical before listing, get a real estimate and price accordingly.

Then clear the small friction — damaged paint, worn carpet, doors that do not close, a neglected yard. One item rarely kills an offer. A dozen says maintenance has been optional.

The market charges either way

Sellers can pay for the work before listing, disclose and price it honestly, or let the buyer calculate the cost. The third option is usually most expensive because buyers add a cushion for hassle and risk.

If you are thinking about selling, start this conversation before the photographer is scheduled. I can help separate the work that protects your sale from the work that burns cash.

The buyers have choices. Make sure the condition of your home gives them a reason to choose yours.

If you own too much real estate, or not enough, call me, I can fix that for you!

Chris Wedgwood
Broker Associate · MODUS Real Estate
(303) 815-6243 · chris@denverevolution.com · denverevolution.com

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MARKET SNAPSHOT & FINANCING — JULY 2026 (DMAR)

Median close price	▼ 1.54%	$605,000
Active listings	▲ 2.91%	13,115
New listings	▼ 5.32%	5,447
Months of inventory	▲ 10.15%	3.58
30-yr fixed (MND)	● Aug 6	6.77%

July felt like midsummer, not a freefall. Closings cooled from June and the metro median eased a bit month over month, but prices are still slightly ahead of last year and most sales are still landing near list. Under the hood, detached homes are still selling in a couple of weeks at a higher median, while attached inventory is slower and heavier. Mortgage rates remain stuck in the mid-to-high 6s on the national surveys — enough to matter for payment math, not enough to explain the whole month alone.

Sources: DMAR Market Trends (July 2026 Denver Metro); Mortgage News Daily 30-yr index 2026-08-06; Freddie Mac PMMS week of 2026-08-06. City of Denver Matrix counts are a different geography and are not mixed into these metro figures.

FEATURED LISTING

7936 Shoshone Street

Clear Lake Estates · Denver 80221 · 3 bd · 2 ba · 1,670 finished sf · built 2018 · single-level ranch

2018 ranch with daily living on one level — open kitchen with island seating, primary suite, two more bedrooms (one used as an office), laundry and an attached two-car garage. Covered porch, patio, fenced yard. Tour the Matterport and photos; schedule a showing.

Tour the Matterport and photos now →

ACTIVE

$575,000

MLS 2575084

Scan for the listing tour

MORE ON THE BLOG

Move-In-Ready Has Its Own Price Tier

The long version of this month's column — condition, uncertainty, and what sellers should fix first.

Denver apartment concessions window

Real rent relief right now — and why it may not last forever.

What Colorado's 2026 housing session actually changed

Last month's legislative map, still useful as August implementation dates land.

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