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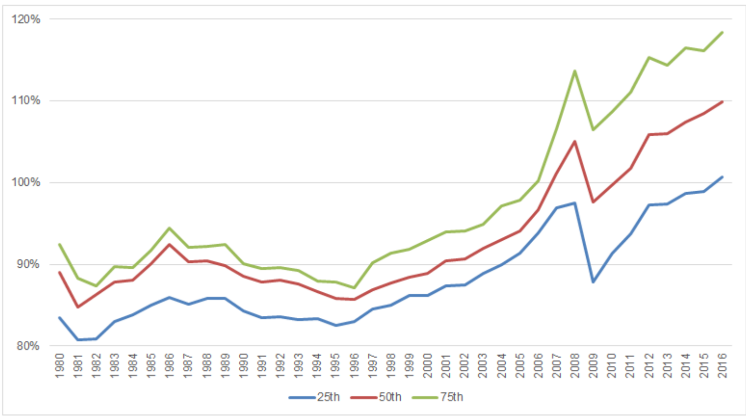
Lower FICO Buyers Head For The Hills

The return of Americans to urban living, while well documented, may be a **"head-fake"** as far as the mortgage industry is concerned. Sam Khater, CoreLogic's Deputy Chief Economist says that inbound migration is happening, but not precisely in the way many think. This return to the cities has been driven by educated and affluent households, he says, which is leading to a **concentration of wealth** in cities and inner suburbs and that is driving home prices higher.

CoreLogic looked at the 20 largest MSA's, dividing the suburban areas in each into three **equally weighted rings** based on the percent of residential properties. This allowed an analysis where rings could be "fluid and expansive" in sprawling areas like Houston but small and compact in smaller, denser markets.

During the last two decades of the 20th Century middle ring suburban home prices were between **10 and 20 percent lower** than those in the city itself and in its inner suburb ring. However, since the early 2000s, when the urban rebound first started, prices in the inner suburb have soared compared to what was happening in the middle ones.

Figure 1: Rising Inner Suburban Prices
Inner Suburb to Middle Suburb Price Ratios by Price Tier



Source: CoreLogic Public Records

National Average Mortgage Rates

	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.89%	0.00	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.05%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	6.58%	0.00	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.77%	-0.09	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.05%	-0.11	0.00
Mortgage Bankers Assoc.			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.00%	-0.03	0.60
15 Yr. Fixed	6.63%	+0.07	0.61
30 Yr. FHA	6.87%	-0.03	0.92
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.13%	+0.02	0.38
5/1 ARM	6.22%	-0.16	0.60

Rates as of: 7/22

Recent Housing Data

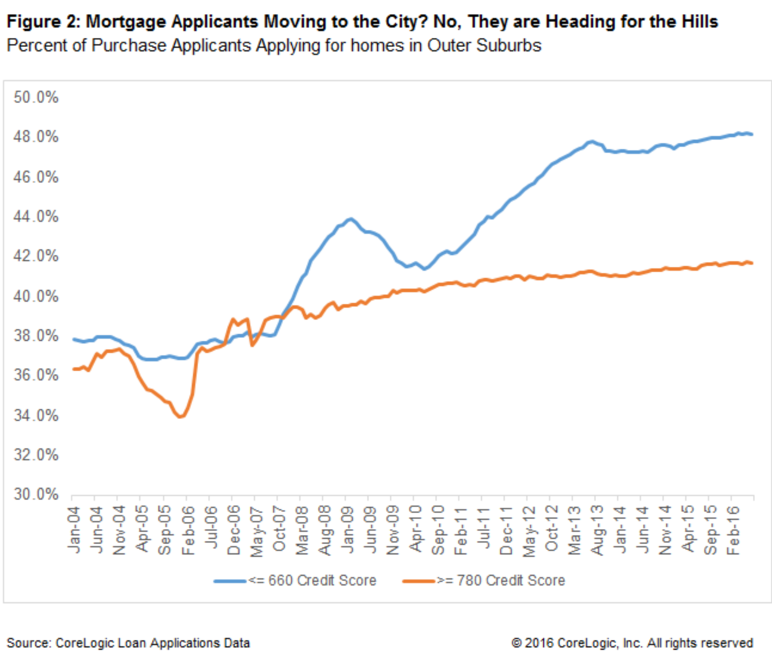
		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jul 10	206.1	-0.19%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%

		Value	Change
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

Consequently, there has been a countervailing trend for purchase mortgage applicants, especially lower credit borrowers, to **seek affordability further out into the suburbs**. During the housing boom in the mid-2000s, 38 percent of low credit purchase mortgage borrowers applied for loans in the outer suburbs. This shift continued even into the recession and by the fall of 2008 the percentage of lower credit borrowers in the outer suburbs reached 44 percent.

In mid-2010 that percentage declined and Khater attributes that to the temporary first-time homebuyer tax credit which allowed some borrowers to move closer in than they otherwise could. **After that tax credit expired**, the shift to the outer suburbs resumed.

By the middle of this year the percentage of lower credit purchase applicants applying in the outer suburbs was up to 48 percent, the **highest** since CoreLogic started tracking the phenomenon. Higher credit borrowers are also increasingly applying in those outlying areas, but the gain in that cohort is less than half that of lower credit borrowers and "there is a clear sorting of lower credit and income borrowers to the outer suburbs."



Khater, who was writing in the company's *Insights* blog, says this "increased sorting has **economic and policy implications** for spatial risk and increased concentration of lower credit borrowers in America's outer suburbs."

Update: Buyer Broker Agreement

After requests from real estate companies, a nonprofit consumer watchdog group the Consumer Federation of America has developed a list of factors to consider when creating a buyer contract in preparation for upcoming practice changes in the industry.

CFA released its “Proposed Criteria for Evaluating Home Buyer Contract Forms” on Tuesday. The 15 criteria focus on the contracts’ form — whether the documents are readable and understandable — and content — whether they are fair to homebuyers.

-the document’s expiration date (CFA recommends buyers asks for a three-month contract and never sign one longer than six months)
-the right to terminate the contract
-the disclosure that compensation is negotiable
-the broker’s compensation clearly stated and that the buyer broker can’t receive additional compensation for facilitating a sale
-that any additional fees, such as for showing a home, will be deducted from the broker’s commission if there is a successful sale
-that the commission is due only if there is a successful closing
-that buyers have an obligation — for no longer than 60 days, CFA recommends — to pay a broker who earlier showed them a home they purchased after the contract ended
-seller concessions paid directly to buyers
-dual agency not pre-approved by the contract
-an explanation of how a broker treats different buyer clients interested in the same property
-that buyers should not be required to first go through mediation or arbitration if they have a complaint

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