

JANUARY 2026

2025 REAL ESTATE RECAP

Stats and Facts

RIDE THE SKI BUS

Transportation to
Stevens Pass

WE DID IT!

1,000 pounds of plastic
recycled and out of the
landfill

WHITE BEAN CHICKEN CHILI

Love the peppers in
this!

2026 REAL ESTATE FORECAST

National Association of
REALTORS® (NAR)
predictions



GWEN RHINES

2025 RECAP ISLAND COUNTY

STABLE PRICES, MORE CHOICE, AND A CALMER PACE

The Island County residential market moved into a more balanced and sustainable rhythm in 2025, reflecting many of the same shifts seen nationally—but with stronger local stability.

Across Island County, **closed home sales increased just over 10%** year-over-year, with pending sales also up nearly **12%**. This shows steady buyer confidence, even as higher interest rates slowed activity in many parts of the country.

New listings rose nearly 15%, giving buyers more options than they've had in recent years. Nationally, inventory remains tight in many markets, but Island County benefited from a modest increase in supply while still maintaining a seller-friendly environment. We closed the year with about a **2.1-month** supply, which is lower than the national average and continues to support home values.

Homes took longer to sell, averaging **48 days on market**, a healthy sign of normalization. Buyers are no longer rushing decisions, and sellers are being rewarded when homes are priced thoughtfully and well-prepared.

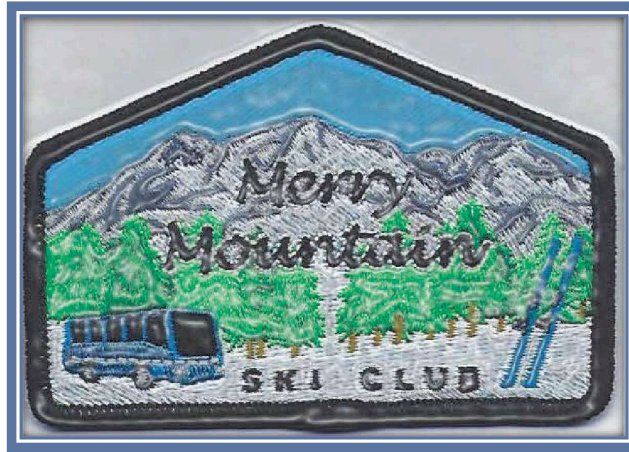
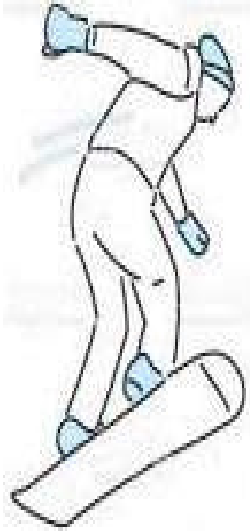
Prices remained stable. The median residential price ended the year around **\$630,000**, up nearly **2%** year-over-year. While

some national markets experienced price plateaus or slight declines, Island County continued to show resilience, supported by limited inventory and consistent demand.

Homes sold for approximately **98.6% of list price**, indicating that sellers generally did not need to make major concessions—another point of strength compared to many national markets where price reductions became more common.

ACTIVE PROPERTIES 213	MEDIAN SALES PRICE \$630,000	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET 48
SOLD PROPERTIES 1,220	MEDIAN PRICE PER SQ FT \$341	MONTHS OF INVENTORY 2.1

STEVENS PASS – 2026 Tuesday Ski Bus



Ski, Snowboard or just hang out in 2026!

The Merry Mountain Ski Club, a Not-For-Profit (social club) corporation, brings you easy travel for a fun ski day in a luxury coach with stops in Bellingham, Burlington, Stanwood and Everett. We have a Seattle, Kirkland and Monroe bus too!

Great folks & great fun. Come and join us. Get in touch with us for more details!

**Pick your dates! One ride or multiple rides.
Every Tuesday for 8 weeks beginning January 6, 2026.
Additional weeks if interest and good conditions.**

Call: 206-550-4908 email: tuesdayskibus@gmail.com
website: www.merrymountain.com or use the QR code below.

Merry Mountain.com



We collected over 1,000 pounds of plastic!



The bench has been ordered!

The Oak Harbor Garden Club **collected over 1,000 pounds of plastic in less than one year.** Thank you to those who participated! You helped keep the plastic out of landfills. and helped earn a **Trex bench** for a local park in our city.

More to come on how the program will evolve, but for now the collection sites are still open. Now that you know how to identify the plastic you can also drop it at Safeway or Haggen's in Oak Harbor.

FROM THE STORE

- ✓ Produce bags
- ✓ Store bags
- ✓ Ice bags

FROM YOUR PANTRY

- ✓ Ziploc® & other reclosable bags
- ✓ Cereal box liners
- ✓ Case overwrap
- ✓ Bread bags

FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR

- ✓ Newspaper sleeves
- ✓ Dry cleaning bags
- ✓ Bubble wrap
- ✓ Plastic e-commerce mailers

CHICKEN CHILLI

Recipe courtesy of Food Network Kitchen

(I LOVE the Chilies in this recipe - adds flavor, but keeps it lite)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, copped
- 3 cloves garlic chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers(1 diced, 1 halved; remove seeds for less heat)
- 1 poblano chile pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 lbs ground chicken
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 15-ounce cans white navy beans
- 1 4-ounce can chopped green chiles(do not drain)
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 corn tortillas, torn, plus more for serving
- 1 bunch cilantro, leaves roughly chopped



DIRECTIONS

- Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, both jalapenos, the poblano, cumin, coriander, oregano and allspice. Cook until the vegetables are softened and the spices are toasted, about 7 minutes. Add the chicken, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until it starts browning, about 5 minutes.
- Add the beans, canned chiles, broth and 1 ¼ cups water; bring to a boil. Add the torn tortillas to the pot; reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 40 minutes
- Remove the halved jalapeno from the chili and stir in all but a few tablespoons of the cilantro; season with ½ teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper.

NOTES

- I substitute 4 cups chopped rotisserie chicken instead of using ground chicken
- Toppings we've used include shredded pepper jack or cheddar cheese, sour cream and tortilla chips
- The fresh lime adds such a nice twist!

2026 REAL ESTATE FORECAST

Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist for the National Association of REALTORS®, is projecting 2026 as a meaningful rebound year for U.S. residential real estate after several years of stagnation. After a challenging 2023–2025 stretch of slow sales and elevated mortgage costs, Yun’s outlook centers on improved activity driven by modestly lower borrowing costs, rising inventory, and steady economic fundamentals.

Key Forecast Highlights for 2026:

- Existing home sales are expected to grow significantly, a double-digit increase compared with recent years. National figures point to roughly a 14% rise in transactions.
- Home prices should continue to climb, albeit at a moderate pace – Yun and NAR anticipate about 4% appreciation nationwide.
- Mortgage rates are forecast to ease modestly from mid-2025 highs, likely settling closer to an average around 6% in 2026. This is a meaningful improvement over the 7%+ peaks earlier, though not a return to the ultra-low era.
- Inventory trends look more balanced, with more listings coming onto the market and a slow uptick in supply.
- Affordability is improving modestly, but remains a hurdle for many first-time buyers.

Sellers should feel confident that values aren’t poised for a collapse, while buyers can anticipate more reasons to act as conditions become more navigable.

Feel free to reach out if you have specific questions about our local market, your neighborhood or just residential real estate in general. I’m happy to help!



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SCAN FOR A FREE
HOME VALUE
ESTIMATE

