



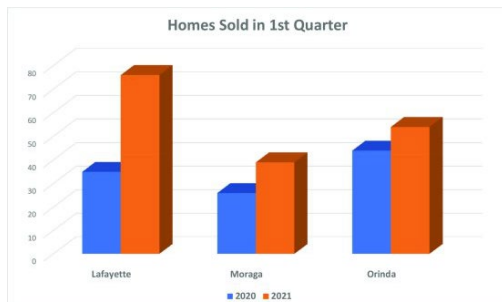
Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published April 14th, 2021

The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T; Licensed Real Estate Broker



The first quarter of 2021 began with a continued fast pace in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. The closings that occurred, for the most part, came from properties that went under contract in late November to late February - with no seasonal slowdown that often has accompanied the winter.

Where a year ago the first quarter closings were not affected by the pandemic, early second quarter supply went down as many people took their homes off the market not knowing what to expect. The average sales price has skyrocketed so far this year in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. The days on market remained short and the homes that had multiple offers were plentiful.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from Jan. 1 through April 14, 76 single-family homes closed in Lafayette - more than double the 35 in

the first quarter of 2020 and far above the 40 that closed in the same quarter in 2019. Sales prices ranged from \$992,250 to \$5.25 million, with an average 25 days on the market. The average sales price was, for the first quarter ever, over \$2 million at \$2,062,932. A year ago, it was \$1,825,127 down from the 2019 average of \$1,984,125 but still exceeding the \$1,469,744 in 1Q2018. This change can be due to a larger sample size and more homes selling at the high end of the range.

The median sales price was \$1,849,450 - far exceeding last year's \$1.65 million.

In Moraga the number of single-family closings was 39, a 50% increase over the 26 in 1Q2020 and a huge increase from the 15 in the 2019 first quarter. Prices so far this year have ranged from \$1.06 million to \$3.9 million. The average sale price was \$1,800,433. In 1Q2020 it was \$1,578,476 and \$1,436,733 in 2019. The average marketing time was 15 days, versus 27 days a year ago.

In Orinda, there were 54 single-family closings, compared to 44 in 2020. Sales prices ranged from \$1.3 million to \$3.7 million with an average price of \$2,021,192. It was \$1,783,674 a year ago and \$1,587,598 in the first quarter of 2019. It took an average of 28 days on the market to sell a home in Orinda, versus 37 days a year ago.

No single-family homes sold below \$1 million in Moraga, Orinda or Lafayette for the first time ever.

In the first quarter of 2020, Lafayette homes sold at an average of \$737.02 a square foot, a substantial increase from the \$648.43 per square foot in the first quarter of 2020. Moraga came in at 703.47 a whopping increase over a year ago when it was \$594.32. Orinda was at \$703.56 - up from \$635.02 in 1Q2020 and when it was \$617.12 in 2019.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had four closings reported to the MLS. They ranged from \$885,000 to \$1.1 million. Moraga again had 16 ranging from \$490,000 to \$1,171,536. This includes the sales of some new construction on Wallace Circle and Country Club Drive. Orinda had one on Village Gate Road that traded at the price of \$1,411,100.

As of April 7, there were 132 homes under contract per the MLS in the three combined communities (a year ago it was 53 and 76 in 2019) with asking prices of \$434,950 to \$5.795 million.

Inventory is at 62, less than the 89 a year ago and less than the 103 in 2019.

There are 27 Lafayette properties currently on the market versus 30 properties on the market in April 2020. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$929,000 to \$3.995 million. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 18 homes, down from 27 homes at this time in 2020. The price range is \$405,000 to \$2.795 million.

In Orinda there are 17 homes on the market. A year ago there were 40. The list prices range from \$525,000 for a condominium on Brookfield to \$5.25 million.

There are no distressed (bank-owned or a short sale) sales available in Lamorinda.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" areas. At the high end, 72 homes sold above \$2 million in the three communities combined. One year ago there were 28

so the affordability factor is subject to a lot of interpretation. There are 33 currently available above this amount in Lamorinda.

Interest rates have bounced a lot in the last few weeks but have seemingly settled at very competitive rates. Relocation from the corporate side has slowed as many companies continue to have their people work remotely and as such, many of those buyers are on the sidelines at their departure locations before making housing decisions.

Lamorinda continues to be attractive with BART access and highly rated schools. The real estate markets in Oakland, Berkeley and Piedmont have continued to be active so there has been some spillover effect where buyers are willing to make longer commutes in order to find more "affordable housing." Of course, Lamorinda and affordable housing is also subject to interpretation.

We also continue to see a lot of buyers in Lamorinda being represented by agents based in San Francisco and the Peninsula. Prices there have been higher for many years so many have sold there and bought more house for less money in Lamorinda.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices and they do not sell. We also are seeing more homes listed well below true values so that it may encourage bidding wars that sellers hope might generate a higher overall sales price. In the first quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 76 single-family home sales that closed in Lafayette in the first quarter of 2020, 53 sold at or above the list price. In Moraga, 30 of the 39 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 37 of the 54 sold at or above the final listing price.

This will typically happen when a house goes pending in the first two weeks on the market. Of the 132 currently pending sales in the three Lamorinda communities combined, 103 went pending in 21 days or less. The actual average days on the market would be markedly lower but many agents are setting up marketing plans where they market the home to the public and to brokers and follow with an offer date in a week or so after exposing the property to the market-pointing to a high likelihood of a continued trend in homes selling above the asking price.

In the detached home category in the first quarter of 2020, the average sale price in Lafayette was 103% of the asking price. In Moraga it was 105.6% and in Orinda it was 104% of the final asking price.

Of course, the ability to market homes at this time has changed as Open Houses are not allowed and there are limitations on how homes can be shown other than "virtually." Local real estate boards as well as state groups have put limitations on the number of people who can be in a home to see it at one time as well as how the agent can show the house.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA