



A Message from the 2026 DCAR President: Mortgage Rate Update

"As of February 26, average mortgage rates have dropped to around 5.98 percent, the lowest level we have seen in several years, according to Freddie Mac. We are bringing this up because even modest stabilization in rates is worth paying attention to. As rate volatility hopefully begins to settle, buyers and sellers can plan again. Experience teaches us that clients who can plan with more confidence will take action, and that action creates momentum in the DC market.

The more significant story is the shift in psychology, not just the percentage. For the past few years, rates have dominated every conversation. The National Association of REALTORS® estimates that millions of households who previously could not qualify may now be able to revisit the idea of homeownership. That does not mean a surge overnight, but it does suggest we may see renewed inquiries and thoughtful re-entry from consumers who had paused. Rates are still higher than the historic lows many people remember, and affordability remains a serious consideration in the District.

Inventory levels, pricing trends, and local economic conditions will continue to shape our market more than any single national headline. What this shift does provide is a bit more predictability, and predictability supports confidence.

As professionals, this is an opportunity to add context. Instead of reacting to rate headlines, we can help clients understand the full financial picture, their buying power today, and how long-term ownership fits into their broader goals. Clear, calm communication matters in moments like this. DCAR will continue monitoring national trends and advocating for policies that support housing stability and sustainable growth in the District. My commitment is that our communication this year will focus on giving you usable context, not just headlines." — Harrison Beacher



New Rules Expand Exemption Eligibility for Vacant Property Owners

The District changed the vacant property tax rules as of October 1, 2025 under the Vacant to Vibrant Amendment Act, and this is something every DC REALTOR® needs to understand. If a property is vacant, it is still subject to the higher Class 3 tax rate unless the owner qualifies for a specific exemption, and those timelines are now tighter. If a home is simply listed for sale, the exemption window is only half a tax year for single-family properties, down from a full year, and up to two tax years for commercial or mixed-use. There are other categories like active construction, probate, economic hardship, or pending approvals. But each has strict limits and requires documentation. None of these exemptions are automatic.

Here is the practical takeaway. If your seller moves out and the property is empty, assume it is legally vacant and talk to them immediately about the tax impact. A For Sale sign does not protect them, and the clock starts at the initial listing or advertisement. If the home sits longer than expected, the tax bill can increase quickly if they have not applied for or qualified for the right exemption.

This is part of competent representation in Washington, DC. Please review your current listings and pipeline and confirm whether any vacant properties may be affected. Make sure your sellers understand the timelines and what steps they need to take. Your job is not just to sell the home, but to help your clients avoid preventable financial surprises.

Please review the following documents:

[Department of Buildings Vacant Building Exemption Flyer](#)

[DCAR Overview: Expanded Tax Exemption for Vacant Properties](#)

2026 Economic Outlook and Sphere of Influence

2026 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Join us for an insightful discussion on the 2026 economic outlook and its impact on the real estate market, including strategies to expand your sphere of influence.

Wednesday, March 25th
DCAR Office 1615 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Floor 3
20001

• What to Expect •

Key economic trends for 2026
Market insights affecting buyers, sellers, and investors
Tips for growing your professional network and influence

FREE! Reserve Your Spot Now >>

Meet our speakers

Jessica Lantz
Deputy Chief Economist and Vice President of Research, National Association of REALTORS®

Samantha Tunador
V.P. of Loan Officer, Atlantic Coast Mortgage

DCAR logo and YPN logo.

DCAR Installation Video

Throwing it back to a night of inspiration and celebration!

Last December, we proudly installed our 2026 Board of Directors and celebrated the leadership of our 2026 President, Harrison Beacher.

An evening filled with vision, unity, and the energy that set the tone for the year ahead.

Grateful to everyone who made it so special!



Text REALTOR to 30644
to sign up for important NAR updates!

Please Follow Us on Social Media

