



Local existing home sales drop 16 percent in December

By [M.B. Taboada](#) | Thursday, January 24, 2008, 11:39 AM

Sales down for all of 2007, further decline expected for start of 2008

Sales of existing homes in Central Texas fell in December, **but 2007 still proved to be the second-strongest year on record.**

The Austin Board of Realtors reports that for the month of December, sales of existing homes fell 16 percent, totaling 1,655, compared to the same month in 2006. But the median home price rose to \$191,250, an 8 percent increase.

That put the year-end total for sales at 25,151, an 8 percent decline from 2006, which was a record-breaking year. Still, the number of homes sold was higher than in 2005, when 24,539 existing homes were sold. And the annual median price for single-family homes topped out at \$185,000, up 6 percent from 2006.

The Austin area market fared well compared to the weak national housing market, which stumbled 13 percent in 2007, the biggest plunge in 25 years, according to the National Association of Realtors. The national median price for single-family homes also fell to \$217,000, nearly a 2 percent drop from the year prior.

But real estate experts expect Central Texas homes sales to further decline in 2008. Pending sales — an indicator of the market's health for at least the next month or two — saw the worst decline in recent history, dropping by 48 percent in December to 954.

Even after the tech bust, pending sales in Austin were higher, with only one decline in 2005 by 1 percent. And homes are staying on the market longer, an average of 78 days in December, an 11 percent increase from the same month in 2006.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin