

A Sign of the Times: Zillow Shows Climate Risk Data for All Active Listings

I was as shocked as anyone to hear that Asheville, North Carolina, had been devastated by flooding from Hurricane Helene. It is over 300 miles inland from the Atlantic coast and on the western slope of the Appalachian mountain range. It is 2,100 feet above sea level.

To those of us who comfort ourselves that we live in a climate change haven, this should be a wake-up call.

Zillow heard that wake-up call and recently introduced "Climate Risk" ratings for all active listings on its website. At right are charts you'll find if you search on Zillow for my listing at **48 Lang Street in Twin Lakes, Colorado**, at the foot of Independence Pass. I'm only showing the Flood risk map here.

It was a year ago last month that Zillow released a report stating that "A clear majority of prospective buyers in each region of the United States consider at least one climate risk when shopping for a home." In the Midwest the percentage was 77% and in the West it was 90%.

Surprisingly, such risks were of least concern to prospective buyers in the South, including Florida, but I suspect that may change after recent hurricanes.

The Sept. 2023 report continued: "Climate risks are a major concern for younger home shoppers, who are driving the market. The median age of today's home buyer is 39, and first-time buyers make up 50% of all buyers. Millennial and Gen Z shoppers — who comprise 54% of all home buyers — are most likely to consider a climate risk when determining where to shop for a

home." Across all age groups, 70% or more of homebuyers reported taking into account at least one climate risk when looking for their next home.

Although 86% of Millennials are likely to consider climate risks when searching for a home, **the average for all groups is 83%**, with Baby Boomers the lowest at 70%. **Bottom line:** it's a big concern for **everyone**, and we ought to take notice.

The data source for Zillow is **First Street**, which provides climate risk data across multiple industries, including government, banking and insurance.

First Street's analysis of the destruction caused by August's Cat-1 hurricane Debby found that **78% of flooded properties were not in a FEMA flood zone.**

According to Zillow, "First Street is the standard for climate risk financial modeling (CRFM), working to connect climate change to financial risk. First Street uses transparent, peer-reviewed methodologies to calculate the past, present, and future climate risk for properties globally, and makes it available for citizens, industry and government."

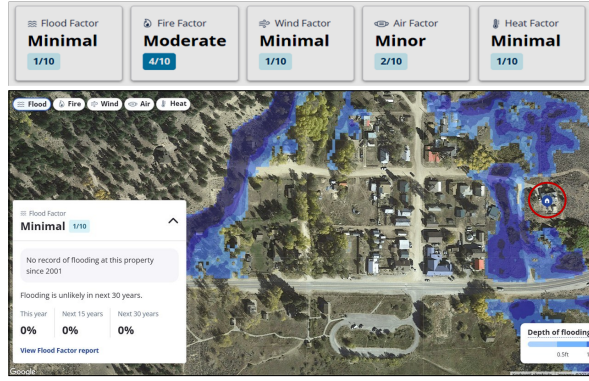
Don't expect to find climate risk data for **your** home on Zillow, unless it is currently for sale. However, you could look for a nearby home that is for sale and find your home on the maps displayed for each risk.

Years ago I learned a couple important things about flood insurance. First, for water damage to be covered by standard homeowners insurance policies, the water can't hit the ground before entering your house. **If the water hits the ground first, it is considered flooding** and is only

covered by flood insurance. However, **even flood insurance does not cover a finished basement.**

It will cover anything in your basement, such as a furnace and water heater, that serves the above-grade floors, but it will not cover the below-grade walls, floors or furnishings.

Climate risk information is currently available on Zillow's iPhone



app and on the Zillow website, with an Android app expected early next year.

NAR: 'Make Your Listings Shine Online'

Last week, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) had a newsletter item that caught my attention.

Covid had, of course, increased the importance of making listings more attractive to potential buyers who might not be able to visit the home in person. The newsletter article pointed out that, just like working at home, buying without seeing a home in person is still a thing for many buyers.

The article quoted a 2022 survey of 1,000 homeowners by Lending Tree which showed that 47% of them bought without an in-person tour of the property.

We already know that the vast majority — well over 90% — of buyers begin their home search online and only call an agent when they want to see a home. During Covid, that meant, at best, a FaceTime tour of the home by a showing agent. (Real estate agents were deemed "essential workers.")

Americans got so used to Zoom meetings and working virtually during Covid that many of them still prefer Zoom meetings, and that translates into wanting to see a home virtually before making a trip to see it or even making an offer.

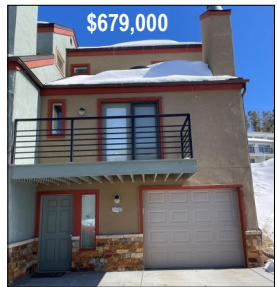
What the article failed to mention was that most sight-unseen buyers probably **do** attend the professional inspection of the home after going under contract, but the fact remains that a good online presence probably is what got that home under contract originally.

The article mentioned some of the technological tools, in addition to FaceTime, which have allowed listing agents to dramatically improve the online presentation of their listings, thereby allowing buyers to feel comfortable with submitting an offer prior to seeing the listing in person.

Matterport's photos linked interactively to a floor plan is one of those technologies. It allows a person, with their computer mouse, to rotate each still photo 360 degrees and even look at the ceiling and floor.

What wasn't mentioned, and shocked me by its absence, was the use of **narrated video tours**, which my broker associates and I create for **every residential listing!** What could be more useful than being able to walk through a home with the listing agent pointing out all its features — basically simulating an in-person showing?

Price Reduced on 2-BR Winter Park Condo



With ski season just around the corner, don't miss your chance to make this fabulous condo at **693 Wapiti Drive #16A** your home in the mountains. Full of natural light, you'll delight in the open concept living and dining area with windows that showcase the beautiful views. The kitchen features hickory cabinets, an island and granite countertops. There is also a pantry/laundry room on the main floor. Additional features of this unit include a gorgeous moss rock fireplace, a skylight, and a private balcony with stunning views of Byers Peak. All bathrooms have granite countertops with hickory cabinets, and the two full bathrooms, including the primary ensuite, have tiled floors and bath. Both bedrooms have double closets. There is an oversize garage with a large locked room for plenty of storage. No more scraping snow off your car! This condo is tastefully furnished and has reasonable HOA dues. The free Lift bus line will take you to concerts in Hideaway Park, skiing & summer activities at Winter Park Resort and all of the events, restaurants & entertainment Winter Park offers. Take a narrated video tour at www.GRElistings.com, then call David Dlugasch at **303-908-4835** to set a showing.

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