



Dear CarolinaMLS Member Participants and Subscribers:

Exciting things are happening at CarolinaMLS — here is just a peek! We're giving Member Participants and Subscribers as much advance notice as possible, and soon we will also notify our technology partners, IDX vendors, and others who may be affected.

New MLS system coming in early 2014

In February 2012, we introduced the Fusion™ system. Since that time, we have trained all new users exclusively on Fusion. Statistics show that about 60 percent of all MLS usage occurs in Fusion, and 40 percent still occurs in TEMPO™.

Since the rollout, many Fusion users have reported problems. The Help Desk still receives calls about configuration and other issues related to Fusion, Fusion Mobile (mobile website), and Fusion Experience (iPad only).

Fusion user dissatisfaction led to the creation of the CarolinaMLS Search Task Force in late 2012. The group began researching future MLS system options. The task force met six times, and with the help of consultant Gregg Larson of Clarity Consulting, accomplished the following:

1. Created and issued a user survey.
2. Chose vendors to consider based on results of the user survey.
3. Issued a Request for Proposal (RFP).
4. Reviewed proposals and selected vendors to demonstrate their systems.
5. Tested systems at home using vendor-provided access credentials.
6. Viewed vendor demos and selected a new system.

The CarolinaMLS Board of Directors approved the recommendation of the CarolinaMLS Search Task Force in June. *Because contract negotiations are still taking place, we cannot officially announce the name of the new system, but expect an announcement at any time.*

Goodbye to square-footage ranges

In July, the CarolinaMLS Board of Directors voted to eliminate square-footage ranges and return to using a fixed number for square footage when we transition to our new MLS system. This decision was not made lightly; it followed months of discussion at the leadership level and a survey of Member Participants and Subscribers specific to the issue. Below are a few reasons that supported the decision.

- Consumers demand accurate listing data.
- Realtors® are the best source for accurate listing data.
- Consumer portals refuse to use ranges and confuse consumers with their own versions of square footage.

- Agents are ultimately responsible for accurate reporting, with or without ranges.
- Square-footage ranges provide a false sense of protection.
- Returning to a fixed figure encourages agents to measure the property or have someone else measure it.
- MLS vendors struggle to accommodate our unique system requirements related to ranges.
- IDX vendors routinely fail to follow our square-footage display rules, making compliance cumbersome.
- Neighboring MLSs syndicate a fixed square footage, which is a problem for dual-MLS listings.
- Only three MLSs nationwide use a range system.
- There is no rule preventing agents from distributing fixed numbers in the “Remarks” field, on agent websites, etc.
- Results of CarolinaMLS Square Footage Survey, conducted May 6-22:
 - 12.5 percent of agents admit to not measuring or not having someone else measure the property.
 - 48.3 percent of agents routinely divulge fixed square footage.
 - 67.5 percent think inconsistent third-party display of square-footage numbers is a problem.
 - 60.2 percent of clients request square-footage information.
 - 49.9 percent of agents want to go back to using a fixed figure; 36.7 percent want to keep the range.

A portion of the new MLS system mandatory training will be devoted to agent responsibilities regarding square-footage reporting.

More detailed information on this change will be forthcoming prior to the transition.

Phasing out CarolinaMLS ‘Area’ and ‘Sub Area’ fields

Also in July, the CarolinaMLS Board of Directors voted to discontinue the use of the “Area” and “Sub Area” fields when we transition to our new MLS system, but the CarolinaMLS Area/Sub Area map overlays will remain. The “Area” and “Sub Area” fields are a holdover from when map searching was not available. Below are a few reasons that supported the decision.

- Area/Sub Area boundaries are arbitrary.
- Area/Sub Area boundaries are a holdover from the days of pre-Windows, pre-map, pre-technology.
- Area/Sub Area boundaries do not define a market by price, home type or value.
- Many agents believe Area/Sub Area boundaries do define a market by price, home type and value.
- Searching by Area/Sub Area is sometimes cumbersome.
- Map searching allows Realtors® to search based on their own knowledge of the market.
- Modern tools allow the best map search based on actual location, not arbitrary areas.
- In general, the public is not aware of our Area/Sub Area until a Realtor® shows them.
- Areas/Sub Areas are frequently entered incorrectly based on perception, error or repeating previous agents’ mistakes.
- From 2010-2013, Area/Sub Area violations reported accounted for an average of 5.6 percent of total violations.
- National consumer portals do not use Area/Sub Areas.
- The majority of local IDX sites do not use Area/Sub Areas.

A portion of the new MLS system mandatory training will cover searching alternatives for agents. *More detailed information on this change will be forthcoming prior to the transition and agents will be notified in advance via email of Saved Searches that will be affected.*

New websites in progress

The Charlotte Regional Realtor® Association has partnered with a local Web development company to redesign our three websites: CarolinaHome.com, CarolinaRealtors.com and MingleSchool.com. All three sites will be more user-friendly, visually appealing and fully mobile ready.

The Charlotte Regional Realtor® Association and CarolinaMLS leadership and staff look forward to these exciting changes, and we hope that you do, too.

Before responding to this email, please keep in mind that anonymous responses will be discarded and all others will be read by the CarolinaMLS Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Steve Byrd, CTO
Carolina Multiple Listing Services, Inc.