



Spring buyers boost GTA home sale

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO STAR

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Last month represented the second consecutive month in which Greater Toronto Area transactions exceeded the 10,000 mark, with 10,898 homes changing hands.

This figure exceeds April 2009's 8,107 sales, a month that heralded the outset of our market's recovery. Most significantly, it surpassed April 2008's 8,762 transactions and even the 9,452 sales that took place in April 2007, which was followed by the only other two consecutive months that exceeded 10,000 sales.

Breaking down last month's numbers, there were 4,310 sales in the 416 Area and 6,588 transactions in the 905 Region.

The 3,349 condominium purchases that took place comprised nearly 31 per cent of all sales last month. By contrast, at this time a year ago condominium apartments comprised 28 per cent of the month's transactions. This indicates a growing preference among Torontonians for the condominium lifestyle.

With respect to prices, the results are also very positive. Currently, the average price of a home in the GTA is \$437,600 which represents an almost 12 per cent increase over the April 2009 average price of \$385,641. Price increases in both regions were nearly equal last month. In the 416 Area the average price of \$479,340 rose nearly 14 per cent from \$421,470 a year ago. In the 905 Region, the average price of \$410,293 increased more than 13 per cent from last April's \$362,009 average.

Homes are currently on the market for an average of 21 days compared to an average of 37 days on market last April and there are now 22,951 homes available for sale throughout the GTA in contrast to 23,515 a year ago. In the coming months though, it is expected that homeowners will be motivated by

recent activity, which should result in more listings and thus, a more balanced market.

While sales have undoubtedly been robust throughout the past 12 months, the market is functioning as expected. This spring's homebuyers are hoping to achieve purchases before July 1st due to the impending Harmonized Sales Tax and an anticipated increase in interest rates.

While homebuyers in the second half of this year will incur additional expenses due to these two factors, Greater Toronto REALTORS® are constantly advocating on your behalf to ease costs associated with homeownership. For example, we are currently seeking a commitment from Toronto's mayoral candidates to repeal the Toronto Land Transfer tax, an action that will save homebuyers thousands of dollars.

Regardless of the many variables that can affect a transaction though, you can increase your chances of a favourable outcome by seeking the guidance of a REALTOR®. They can advise you on market conditions in your specific area, offering insight into recent sales in the neighbourhood so that you can make informed decisions when planning your next move.

For more information, be sure to visit www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com as well, where you will find market updates, GTA listings, neighbourhood profiles, plain language explanations of common real estate forms, information on government programs and much more.

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Tom Lebour is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.