



January's Resale Housing Market Report

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

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There are currently 20,990 resale properties listed for sale through the TorontoMLS system, compared to a year ago when 15,911 were available.

Increase in choice generally results in more moderate prices, which is appealing to first time homebuyers. Equally positive for some homeowners is the fact that interest rates have remained historically low.

If you are an existing homeowner, you're probably keeping a close eye on news reports to gauge what's ahead for the Greater Toronto Area real estate market in 2009.

Concerning many Canadians are current employment figures. We have seen two consecutive months of employment decline according to Statistics Canada.

To fit these factors together and get a better idea as to where the market is headed, it makes sense to look at where we have been.

Sales for all of 2008 in the GTA totaled 74,552 as compared to the 93,193 homes that changed hands in 2007 and the 83,084 sales recorded in 2006. Prices meanwhile, averaged \$379,347 last year, compared to \$376,236 in 2007, and \$351,941 in 2006.

To give a more precise picture though, it's important to look at the most recent figures. As of the middle of January 2009, there were 888 sales throughout the GTA, compared to 1,776 a year earlier. The average price stands at \$332,495, compared to \$367,574 a year ago. In the 416 Area there were 369 sales to mid-month, compared to 800 last year at this time. The average price in the 416 Area is \$350,835, compared to an average of \$394,205 a year ago. In the 905 Region there were 519 sales to mid-January compared to 976 transactions a year earlier. The average price in the 905 Region is \$319,455 compared to the \$345,745 average recorded at mid-January 2008.

Although the market has moderated in recent months, there are however, a number of reasons for Canadians to be optimistic. For example, in its twice-yearly report published in November, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development projected that Canada will lead the G7 nations in economic recovery in 2010.

Indeed every New Year, particularly one in which a new world leader takes the reigns, brings with it new hope. I believe we can certainly look forward to increased activity as the spring months approach, with greater stabilization to follow in 2010.