

Real Estate Market Report



Compliments of Sunny Gandhi

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Greetings! You're receiving this newsletter with hopes that you find it informative and entertaining.

If you're thinking of making a move, or are just curious as to real estate trends in your area, please feel free to call at any time. It's always good to hear from you!

All the best,

Sunny Gandhi



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Canadians Show Confidence in Housing Market

As we await confirmation of final 2009 housing statistics, Canadians can be assured that the state of our real estate market is now not only stronger than it has ever been, but set to improve even more throughout 2010.

The Canadian Real Estate Association charted the highest level of home sales on record in July, September and October 2009, while National MLS® home sales activity is forecast to rise a healthy seven percent in 2010.

"Momentum for sales activity remained strong throughout the third quarter," said CREA President Dale Ripplinger. "Low interest rates, rebounding consumer confidence and an improving overall sense of economic security continue to draw homebuyers to the housing market."

Bob Dugan, Chief Economist for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, said, "We expect housing markets across Canada to strengthen leading into and over the course of 2010 as economic conditions improve."

CREA Chief Economist Gregory Klump predicts that increased home prices will prompt more sellers to list their homes. In time, "An increase in new listings will keep a lid on price increases."

Now that the holidays are over, there's more time to take stock of your housing situation, and start thinking about plans for a move in 2010. It takes planning to prepare a house for sale, so before you even think of listing it, let's make time to talk. You'll want to hear valuable tips that could make the difference between a quick sale and a property that lingers on the market. And pay heed to other homeowner's simple, quick-sale strategies.

Take the first step to a successful sale by calling for more information today.

CNSF



STAY IN, WORK OUT

With a new year come New Year's resolutions. Many will resolve to make physical fitness a priority in the coming year, a goal more easily achieved at the gym or when you have a home gym — which you can have, no matter where you live or how little space is available.

Those living in condominiums are fortunate, as many condos offer fitness facilities just an elevator-ride away. But condo gym-goers and regular gym-goers still share an all-too-common problem: lacking the energy to actually go. Here are some tips to help get those suffering from inertia into the gym:

- Overcome the intimidation factor by familiarizing yourself with the equipment. The gym staff may help by providing equipment orientations. At the very least, written instructions on how to use each piece should be available.
- Keep your workout gear in your car so you can head straight to the gym from work or your condo's parking garage. Try to avoid going home first — once you're at home, finding the motivation to leave again can be difficult.
- Find a workout buddy who can help motivate you, and make your workout more enjoyable. If you don't already know someone, consider approaching a regular gym-goer, or post a notice in your condo building or a bulletin board at the gym.
- Hire a personal trainer. A trainer will motivate you and push you to do your best. Ask your gym or condo's recreation staff — they will be able to put you in touch with a personal trainer.

But what if you're not in the position to join a gym, or your condo doesn't have a gym or you prefer to exercise in private? No problem! You can set up a home gym, whether you have a whole room to spare or just the corner of one.

The largest piece of equipment in your gym will be your cardio component: treadmill, stationary bike, elliptical trainer, or rowing machine, for example. If you're starved for square footage, take note: elliptical trainers have relatively small footprints; there are folding treadmills that collapse for storage; upright stationary bikes consume less space than recumbent bikes. If you're really squeezed for space, jump ropes are great for cardio, but a poor choice where impact noise is an issue. Alternatively, stationary bikes are a great option where impact noise is a concern.

For strength training, invest in a set of free weights, an exercise ball (aka a stability ball), a set of resistance bands, and a mat, all of which take up little space and can be easily stored out of sight — and are relatively inexpensive, to boot!

A few cautionary words: Before undertaking any fitness program, consider consulting your doctor, especially if you have a history of any medical condition. And be sure to spend 10 minutes warming up and cooling down before and after your workout, incorporating a stretching routine, in order to help prevent injuries.





Relocating Responsibly

Whether you're relocating across town, across the country or across the world, you can make your move a little easier on the planet. Follow these tips to make your next move a more environmentally friendly one.

- One of the main tenets of green living is, "reduce." So get rid of as much of your stuff as you can *pre-move*. The fewer things you have to move, the less packing material and fuel you will require. But purge the eco-friendly way: offer items that don't make the cut to friends and family, hold a garage sale, or sell, donate, or recycle them.
- Don't buy boxes; scavenge them from local retailers or friends and family, and recycle them post-move or pass them on to someone else. Alternatively, you can rent storage containers, either from a regular moving company or one of the increasing number of green moving companies that offer containers made from recycled materials.
- Bubble wrap and Styrofoam peanuts are made in an eco-unfriendly way and linger in landfills. Don't buy packing material — collect it from the products you buy and reuse it for your move; use your clothing, bedding, towels and kitchen cloths to pad your belongings; or pack with paper products like newspaper and cardboard, which can be recycled when you're finished with them.
- Hire an eco-friendly mover. They provide the reusable, recycled and/or recyclable storage containers and packing materials for you, take them away when your move is over, and, in some cases, they use trucks that run on biodiesel fuel to transport your belongings.



New Year, New Home?

The year just changed — are you ready for a change of address as well? Below are five signs the answer to that question is "yes!"

- Your current home's flaws are affecting your daily life. Maybe your floor plan doesn't work, you don't have enough space, or your commute's too long. Whatever the issues, when you start thinking a move would improve your daily life, you're probably ready to move.
- You've been investigating your options. Have you been eyeing listings? Scouting areas you might like to live in? Attending open houses? Checking out the competition to see what other homes in your area are fetching? If so, it's likely time to call a real estate sales representative.
- You're able to view your property as a product. A large part of preparing to sell your home has to do with preparing yourself emotionally. Once you stop thinking of it as your home and start thinking of it as someone else's future home, you are ready to sell.
- You're prepared to put in the effort it takes to get and keep your home in show-worthy condition. That means doing repairs, making improvements (like a new paint job), decluttering, and keeping your home sparkling clean until it's sold.
- You're motivated. Perhaps you've been offered a new job, have kids starting a new school, have already purchased a new home, or need to sell for financial reasons.

Whatever the reason, sometimes you're ready to sell because — you have to. Local real estate sales representatives can tell you what your current home is worth and help you find your next dream home!

Take Credit

Are you in the process of making improvements to your house, or did you have work done last year? Make sure you keep your receipts, and remember you only have until February 1, 2010 to qualify for Canada's Home Renovation Tax Credit.

Part of the federal government's Economic Action Plan, the HRTC is a non-refundable, family-based tax credit for eligible home-improvement expenses. To qualify, the expense (be it goods purchased or work performed) must have been incurred between January 27, 2009, and February 1, 2010, and cost between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

The list of eligible expenses is, happily, a long one. It includes, but is not limited to: kitchen, bathroom and basement renovations; additions, like decks and garages; new carpeting, hardwood, lighting and window coverings; a new furnace, central air conditioner, boiler, fireplace, water softener or heater; driveway resurfacing and roof reshingling; landscaping; pool and hot tub installation; interior and exterior painting; and electrical wiring. Ineligible expenses include furniture, appliances, electronics and tools, as well as maintenance expenses.

As a rule of thumb, if the goods purchased or work performed will not become a permanent part of your house, it is not eligible for the HRTC.

Your 2009 personal income tax return will include a new schedule, complete with a new line, to allow you to calculate and claim your HRTC. Don't include your claim's supporting documents — receipts, invoices, contracts — with your return. But do hold on to the documents in case you are asked to produce them.

For more information about the HRTC, including details outlining what constitutes acceptable supporting documentation, call 1-877-959-1-CRA or visit the Canada Revenue Agency website at cra.gc.ca/hrtc.



Terminology Tip

Acceleration Clause — Included to protect the lender, an acceleration clause is a common provision within a mortgage loan contract. The clause grants the lender the right to demand full and immediate payment of the remaining balance of the loan in the event the borrower violates any of the conditions of the mortgage agreement. Such violations can include the sale or destruction of the property, refinancing of the mortgage loan, or failure to make a payment, or payments, in a timely manner.

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Wishing you & your family a prosperous & Happy New Year.
Let's make 2010 the best year ever for everyone!

Sunny Gandhi