



ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER 150 HOME SALES

Across the Lower Mainland, more than 150 homes sold every day last month, yet Realtors say the market remains stable, not spectacular.

Calling it “an even keel”, Scott Olsen, president of the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board says the ratio of sales to active listings has not changed in the past five months. Since February, the ratio has stayed at 14 or 15 per cent, which means for every 100 properties available to purchase, 15 sold, he explained.

“It’s a healthy, competitive market. It gives buyers excellent selection and the time to negotiate, but not too much time. The average number of days to sell a detached home or a townhome is still only a month and a half and for condos a little over two months, which is why we’re seeing benchmark prices in most communities holding steady,” Scott said.

The same scenario is holding within the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver region, according to Board president Eugen Klein. “Our sales-to-active-listing ratio sits at 16 per cent, which is indicative of balanced market conditions,” Klein said.

In Chilliwack home sales have also remained “on a solid footing” over the past few months, said Cynthia Admiral, president of the Chilliwack and District Real Estate Board.

Based on figures from the respective Boards, buyers are guiding the market’s even keel this spring.

In Greater Vancouver, new listings of homes for sale through MLS were up 16 per cent in May, compared to a year earlier, to just under 7,000

units. Total sales, meanwhile, were down 21.1 per cent from the ten-year May average, but, at 2,853, were virtually unchanged from the two previous months.

The overall “benchmark” residential price in Greater Vancouver last month was \$625,100, up 3.3 per cent from May 2011. The benchmark price for a detached house increased 5.1 per cent from May 2011 to \$967,500.

(A benchmark price, used by the Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley Real Estate Boards, is the value of a home with characteristics “typical” to a neighbourhood, whereas the average price is simply the dollar volume divided by the number of sales, which can be skewed if prices in one are much higher – or lower – than in others.)

The Fraser Valley saw 1,616 sales in May, on par with the 1,608 sales processed in May 2011. Last month, 3,305 new listings were reported on MLS, up 8 per cent from a year earlier. The Board says there are now about 10,800 residential properties for sale in the Valley. Benchmark prices in the Valley increased modestly. The typical detached house sold in May for \$548,000, up 3.3 per cent from a year earlier; while typical townhome and condo apartment prices were up less than 1 per cent, at \$306,800 and \$203,600, respectively.

In Chilliwack, the average price of the 241 homes sold in May is just under \$300,000, virtually unchanged from a year ago.

“Scores of home buyers are taking advantage of stable prices and increased listings to buy a home in the Lower Mainland this spring.”