

Market at a Glance

2nd Quarter 2008

Greater Vancouver Real Estate Market activity offers awaited relief for home buyers

Increased property listings and moderating home prices have eased the Greater Vancouver housing market dramatically over the past month. Housing prices, on a year-over-year comparison, continue to show single-digit percentage increases, it is nevertheless important for people to accurately identify their home's value when putting it on the market. Homes priced at a competitive level continue to sell quickly.

FINTRAC

Real Estate Representatives in Canada are now required to confirm who their clients are, where they live, their date of birth and what they do for a living. – Document this information and store it for safekeeping. It's the law as of June 23, 2008,

Ottawa tightens mortgages rules to avoid "Bubble"

The federal government will no longer guarantee mortgages with durations longer than 35 years, one of the few measures aimed at guarding against a U.S. style housing bubble. In addition, government guarantees will not be allowed for high-ratio mortgages where mortgages begin with interest-only payments.

Canadian housing prices are still in line with economic factors such as low interest rates, rising incomes and a growing population and the demand for residential housing remains buoyant.

The percentage of bank mortgages in arrears is also stable at 0.27%, the lowest levels experienced since 1990 and well below the highs of 0.65% in 1992 and 1997.

The historically prudent and cautious approach taken by Canadian financial institutions to mortgage lending, combined with sound supervisory regime has allowed Canada to maintain strong and secure housing mortgage markets.

Secondary Suites Program

A few years ago, Vancouver City Council formally approved changes to the Zoning and Development By-law which make it possible to have a secondary suite in every detached single family home in the City of Vancouver. The changes include:

- **One-family dwelling with secondary suite to be permitted in all residential RS, RM and RT zones.**
- **One on-site parking space will be acceptable for a house with a secondary suite, if the house was built prior to March 23, 2004;**
- **Partial sprinkler system will no longer be a requirement. Instead, interconnected hard-wired smoke alarm w/battery backup is needed.**
- **Ceiling height requirement for an existing house reduced to 6'6" over 80% of the suite area and in all areas of exit from the suite.**

A reminder

Owners who wish to either put in a new secondary suite in your house, or keep an existing suite that has no prior approval, refer to City's website for details of the process as to how to legalize the suite.

