

## September Sales: Low Volume again

By Andy Dodge, CRA

Westmount real estate prices climbed again in September but the statistic is based on just four sales, in a range between \$980,000 and \$1,739,000 with an average of \$1,308,500. And late last month agents finally reported more sales in July and August, including two higher than \$2 million, bringing to six the number of \$2 million-plus sales this year. Thus it might be said that there is still a market for the higher-priced houses in Westmount, but the problem now is volume.

So far in 2009, 108 one- and two-family houses have been sold in Westmount, some 27 percent lower than average and the lowest year-to-date number since 1994, just before the Quebec sovereignty referendum. While we would expect more sales to be posted in the next few weeks, there is little chance volume can recover from its 15-year low.

Basically, prices have held up but there are fewer buyers with the funds to be able to afford those houses. This should eventually lead to a downturn in prices, but at least for now the sellers are holding out. The average markup for September is low, but because volume is so small it becomes difficult to gauge the effect on prices.

Three condominium sales in September, two apartments and a part-duplex, bring to nine the number in the third quarter of 2009, about the same volume as in the third quarter last year and one less than in the second quarter this year. The third-quarter price range was between \$250,000 and \$970,000; so far this year three sales have been logged at over \$1 million, all in the second quarter.

Two houses sold in the “Golden Square Mile” area of Montreal in September, and two more just east of the Westmount city limits, all for prices from \$505,000 to \$800,000. There were no house sales in the other adjacent-Westmount areas. The six highest-priced homes in adjacent-Westmount all sold in June and July, but averages were down slightly in the last two months.

October and November usually are the best months for the fall “mini-market,” so if there is to be any recovery in terms of volume, now is the time it must happen.