

# March Sales: Still Humming

by Andy Dodge, CRA

*(NOTE: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings which were reported by the local real estate agents as having been accepted in March, 2007. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses and prices cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph on page xx offers a picture of these trends over time.)*

Real estate agents just smiled smugly when asked about the current market, satisfied that the spring market is still strong and that the March 26 provincial election -- minority government for the Liberals and third place for the Parti Québécois -- is not going to discourage buyers who are willing to put out \$1 million and more for average Westmount houses.

Six of 17 sales reported in Westmount last month involved prices over \$1 million, the highest price was just over \$2 million, and the lowest price -- for a tiny row-house just above Sherbrooke Street -- was \$550,000. Though the average of those sold last month was slightly more than \$977,000, when the average markup is applied to the average valuation, we are looking at a price level closer to \$1,150,000. While volume is down about 20 percent compared to last year, prices are up nine percent compared to the first-quarter average for 2006.

Four of the 17 sales reported so far for March were less than the new 2007 municipal evaluation, all within 10 percent of that valuation, and the highest markup was 38.5 percent above valuation -- a more modest range than we saw last year.

Eight condominium sales were negotiated in March, indicating a surge in that market which had been lagging in January-February. Three apartments at 1 Wood Avenue brought prices between \$160,000 and \$775,000; four involved portions of duplexes or triplexes which sold for a range between \$250,000 and \$687,200. The average markup for the first quarter of 2007 is only 6.3 percent above municipal evaluation compared to 17.7 percent for one- and two-family dwellings, but because the average valuation increase was higher for condos than for single-family dwellings generally in Westmount, it is safe to say that prices are up the same 9 percent compared to the levels of the first quarter of 2006.

Three sales took place in the Côte des Neiges district just north of Westmount and another three in the Notre Dame de Grâce district just west of Westmount, only one in the area to the east of the city, though three condo sales at Fort de la Montagne, 3577 Atwater Avenue, were reported there. The Côte des Neiges sales -- on Circle Road, Grosvenor and Roslyn Avenues -- actually averaged less than their 2007 municipal evaluations, while two sales on Northcliffe Avenue and one more on Vendôme Avenue averaged 15 percent above valuation.