

RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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Senior Account Executive
ZACH SHOUB
zach@auroran.com

Senior Account Executive
DOUG SHERRITT
doug@lpcmedia.ca

Senior Account Executive
DIANE BUCHANAN
diane@auroran.com

Art Director
SARAH DIDYCZ

Published By:



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King Weekly Sentinel • www.kingsentinel.com

Are you hoping for the market to crash?



By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

WELL... we continue to proceed in unprecedented times. We are in a global pandemic, and the market is beyond crazy hot right now. If you are a seller, this is a great time to list your home!

There is very minimal supply, and there is an extremely high demand for detached homes.

For the foreseeable future, this pandemic has shown us that we will be working, living and spending much more time at home. Having had to endure lockdown in small spaces, many of these city dwellers are looking to move to the suburbs for more space.

As a result, for those looking to buy and get into this market, you may be thinking, I am going to wait until the market dips, and then I will buy. While that may happen and it may benefit your particular situation, a cheaper home doesn't

necessarily mean cheaper monthly payments.

Interest rates have never been so low, which makes the cost of borrowing money very reasonable. As soon as interest rates increase, even if the purchase price of the home is slightly lower, the cost of carrying the loan may actually be higher.

For example, at the current approximately 2% interest rate, a home listed in Aurora for \$500k with a 20% down payment will cost approximately \$1,694 a month. Now, if that same home is listed for 450k and you have a 20% down payment, BUT the interest rate is now 3.99%, your approximate monthly payment would be \$1,892 a month. For some, that extra \$200 a month on top of all the other household expenses could be a deal-breaker.

Right now, we are in uncharted waters, and it's very critical that you take the time to work with a

professional who understands this market. It could be very easy to get swept up in the drama of a bidding war and put yourself in a tough position financially. I am happy to discuss and answer any questions you might have! Spring market here we come!!!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

SPRING CLEANING Tips for safe use of household chemical products

(NC) As the days get noticeably longer and milder, we emerge from winter hibernation and giving our home a good spring cleaning suddenly appears on the to-do list.

Household cleaning chemicals can have an important role in keeping kitchens and bathrooms clean. However, if they're not used safely, they can find their way beyond the kitchen or bathroom walls, posing a risk to your health and those around you.

By following these tips, you can keep you and your family safe when you tackle household chores.

1. CAREFULLY READ THE PRODUCT LABEL. Is there a hazard symbol on the label? If there is, be sure you understand what it means and carefully follow the warnings.

2. USE CHEMICALS CAREFULLY. All that fine print under "directions for use" in household chemical products is there for a good reason. It explains how to use the product safely.

3. LET THE FRESH AIR IN. Ensure proper ventilation by opening windows or doors and running exhaust fans during and after cleaning.

4. DON'T MIX CHEMICAL PRODUCTS. Never mix household chemical products together. Some mixtures can produce harmful gases. Bleach products should never be mixed with other cleaning products.

5. STORE HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS SAFELY. Keep all household chemical products in their original containers, safely stored where children cannot see or reach them. Try not to store products that may release harmful fumes or catch fire inside your home. These items include solvents, gasoline, fuels or varnishes. Store them according to the instructions on the product's label in a separate building if you can, or in an area that is well vented to the outside.

6. DISPOSE PRODUCTS PROPERLY. Check your city or town's guidelines for instructions on how to dispose of hazardous household waste. As well, check the label for disposal directions. Don't pour unused chemical products down the drain or burn or bury them.

Find more information on keeping a healthy home at canada.ca/healthy-home.

www.newscanada.com

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We're thinking of widening our home location search to see what else might be available.

Do you think we will get more home for our money?

As home sales continued to rise in February, pushing pricing to double-digit growth compared to last year, interest rates remain extremely low; some Buyers are feeling anxious to purchase, fatigued from multiple offer scenarios on homes for sale and outpriced from their target locations.

Competition in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond continues. Affordability improves the further the commute, typically away from Toronto. People who may not have considered the GTA suburbs have changed their minds since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared across Ontario a year ago. Buyers have been able to consider areas further from their ideal location, feeling there's less demand for employees and entrepreneurs to commute. Instead, many work from home more than ever. A longer commute to a workplace may be forgiven if the hours are flexible; the days commuting are reduced which saves on commuting expense, time and size of home for money spent is increased.

The best thing a Buyer can do is have an open conversation with their workplace as to whether these changes may be here to stay. Home pricing seems to be increasing by the week, and competition for the low inventory of homes for sale remains high, driving pricing to new normals across the GTA and surrounding regions. Being priced out of an area may not be a permanent situation. But, many Buyers are feeling too anxious to wait and see when the housing market will correct to a more balanced market. When there are more homes for sale to choose from and fewer Buyers, typically means average home pricing decrease. The rise in home prices is affecting all sorts of conditions of homes as well. To be competitive many are opting not to have licensed inspections conducted beforehand. Those wanting an investment property to flip may find it tougher to find the low-cost gems to build quick equity in. As prices increase, many Buyers additionally need to widen their area home search, which drives demand further geographically.

Widening a geographic search for a home may open new possibilities of value and how life will work once the Buyers relocate. With population growth expansion continuing across the Greater Toronto Area, there is more convenience being added to manage the population increases and small towns that may have had limited amenities and infrastructures have certainly been experiencing growth. It's a great exercise to view the planning department expansion plans for towns in question to understand future growth plans. Competition may still be stiff as the search widens, depending on the price range the buyer is pre-approved for.

Call a REALTOR® today to discuss competitive buyer strategies and complete a comprehensive home buyer analysis to set the course towards a successful home purchase.

— Written by Connie Power
Connie Power is Manager, Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES® for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond. Empowering you in real estate!
**Not intended to solicit those currently under a real estate contract

Is your internet too slow? It's probably not you

(NC) We all know the aggravation of a school lesson that just won't stop freezing or the family video call that looks more like a photo montage. And, as we adjust to the impact of COVID-19 on our day-to-day, that slow connection can have frustrating consequences.

Working from home and learning remotely, both need fast, stable internet, something not enough Canadians have yet. Even if you have fast devices in your home, if the infrastructure in your area is not optimal, your connection won't be either.

Right now, cities have the infrastructure needed to ensure access. But rural and remote communities are hugely underserved, with fewer than half having high-speed internet, and fewer than a third of households on reservations have high-speed connections.

Fortunately, change is coming. The Universal Broadband Fund is backing projects across Canada right now to ensure the reliable, high-speed internet connections families need to work, study, access services online, and safely stay in touch with each other.

The fund existed before COVID, but as a response to the pandemic, its timetable has been moved up by four years to a target of 98 per cent of Canadians with high-speed internet access by 2026. With the faster pace, at least 90 per cent of us should be connected by the end of 2021.

The fund is focused on improvements in rural and remote communities across Canada to fix the disconnect between internet access for urban and rural households. This means more remote work opportunities, better access to remote learning and safer access to health-care, no matter where you live.

It's not just for good connections at home, either. The improvements mean much better access to mobile networks on highways between remote communities. The result is better, safer navigation and access to emergency services for your family, even on the road in the middle of nowhere. Mobile projects will be focused on serving Indigenous communities and the roads leading to them.

The shape these improvements will take in your area will depend on where you live. Canada is huge, and its communities are hugely diverse, with diverse needs. Keep an eye out for local projects — they're a small part of something much bigger.

Find more information at canada.ca/getconnected.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS



Helping support the community

With the current restrictions within York Region and to keep the community safe, the Key Advantage Team was unable to host their annual Client Appreciation Event this year. In lieu of the event, they still wanted to show their sincere appreciation by donating to the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation on behalf of their clients and referral partners to help those who do not have a safe place to call home. In addition to this donation, a portion of every commission the team makes is donated to the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation on their client's behalf. Together, we can make a difference.

Tips to improve WiFi around the house

Speedy, reliable internet is something people have quickly grown accustomed to. That's no doubt why dropped WiFi signals can be so frustrating.

Various things can contribute to slow or interrupted Wi-Fi. As a result, there's no one-size-fits-all solution to address underperforming Wi-Fi. But that's good news, as it means there's an assortment of strategies that consumers can try to improve the Wi-Fi in their homes.

Upgrade your router. Many people rent their routers from their internet service providers, but it may surprise some to learn that they can buy their own. Buying your own router can be beneficial in various ways, not the least of which is it can save money. Router rental fees vary, but they typically cost between \$10 and \$15 per month. Consumers will save money in the long run by buying their own router rather than renting one from their ISP. When buying their own routers, consumers also can pick from a host of options, including routers with strong performance ratings that may contribute to better WiFi performance.

Set up automatic firmware updates. It's easy to forget a router after it's been plugged in, and internet service starts working. However, manufacturers routinely issue firmware updates to improve router performance. Turning on automatic updates may improve WiFi performance, and such updates also can provide a host of additional benefits, including added security measures.

Relocate the router. PCMag.com notes that the location of the router can affect WiFi performance. If possible, locate the router in the center of the home so it can easily reach all parts of the house. Locating wireless routers away from walls and other obstructions also may improve performance.

Switch frequencies. Switching frequencies can help wireless consumers whose service might be adversely affected by congestion. Consumer Reports notes that wireless congestion can affect WiFi performance in apartment buildings and densely populated neighbourhoods. In such instances, consumers can check their routers to see if they're running on the 2.4 GHz frequency band. If so, switching them to the 5 GHz band, which has more channels and is likely to be less congested, may improve WiFi performance.

Slow and/or interrupted WiFi signals can be very frustrating. Thankfully, various strategies can help consumers quickly remedy such issues.



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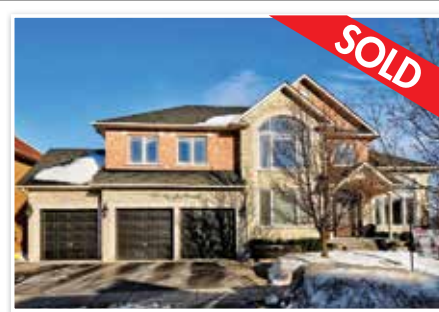
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How to choose the right lighting inside your home

Lighting in a home serves both practical and aesthetic purposes. It's easy to maneuver around a well-lit home, reducing the risk of slips and falls, and the right lighting can help homeowners create their desired ambiance, which typically changes depending on which room you're in.

When choosing lighting for their homes, homeowners must walk a fine line between appearance and functionality. A fixture in the foyer that instantly impresses visitors likely won't prove as awe-inspiring if it's installed in the living room. When choosing lighting for a home, some general rules about what works in each room can help homeowners make the most informed decision.

KITCHEN
Kitchens are often the busiest room in a home, so lighting here can be especially important. A kitchen often benefits, both practically and aesthetically, from different types of lighting. For example, pendant lighting above kitchen islands can make meal preparation easier and safer, but such lighting likely

won't work in breakfast nooks and informal dining areas in the kitchen. Recessed lighting works best in such areas. In kitchens with no island, under-cabinet lighting can be used to illuminate countertops and simplify meal preparation.

FORMAL DINING ROOM
Many people enjoy the look of chandeliers in formal dining rooms, and such fixtures can be installed directly above the dinner table. The interior design experts at Better Homes & Gardens advise hanging chandeliers roughly 33 inches above the table in dining rooms with eight-foot ceilings, adding three inches for each additional foot above eight feet. Darkened dining areas may be ideal in restaurants, but homeowners may want to split the difference at home and choose dimmable chandeliers for their

...A professional consultation with a lighting expert or interior decorator can help homeowners...

dining rooms. This allows homeowners to dim the lights for romantic dinners but turn them up for family gatherings with lots of people around the table.

LIVING ROOM
Adaptability is important in the living room, where homeowners may host anything from movie nights to book clubs to parties for the big game. It can be a tall order to accommodate such a wide range of activities, and many homeowners come down to deciding between recessed lighting and track lighting. If the living room currently has neither style, homeowners should recognize that it will cost considerably less to install track lighting than recessed lighting. Better Homes & Gardens notes that flexible track lighting provides ambient, task or accent lighting. Track lights can even be moved to change lighting schemes at any time, making them a budget-friendly option for homeowners whose living rooms are multi-purpose spaces. Recessed lighting also works well in living rooms, especially ones with low ceilings. That's because recessed lighting is installed into the ceiling, meaning it does not take up any visual space in the room. That can help living rooms feel bigger.

BEDROOM
The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that bedroom lighting should provide enough light when getting dressed, but also be able to be toned down as residents prepare for their bedtime routines. Both portable and installed lighting can be used in bedrooms to serve these various functions. Recessed fixtures that dim can ensure there's ample light to get dressed in the morning, but they also can be dimmed at night as residents try to get ready to sleep. Portable nightstand lights can make it easier for couples sharing a bedroom, allowing one person to stay up and read while the other goes to sleep.

Homeowners have many options and many needs when choosing lighting for their homes. A professional consultation with a lighting expert or interior decorator can help homeowners find lights that provide both practical and aesthetic appeal.

FOREST SETTING

Updated end unit freehold townhome siding and backing onto forested woodlands at the end of a cul de sac in South Aurora. Finished walk out basement with 2 pc bath, new deck with bar seating, Hardwood & new broadloom thru-out, new 4 pc bath, huge master suite with 4 pc & w/in closet. Large open space beside lot. End of court with no houses offers a great play area for kids. Rare offering at **\$849,900**

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5 tips to create an at-home spa experience

(NC) A visit to the spa might not be an option for many of us, so here are five quick tips to create a spa-like experience in the comfort and safety of your own home.

Atmosphere Lighting, scent and calming music are all key elements associated with a visit to the spa. Candles are quick and easy mood-enhancing items that not only add softness to lighting, but can also be used to introduce aromatherapy. Lavender is a great aromatherapy option because it promotes a sense of wellness and calm.

GET STEAMY While a warm bath is a go-to ritual for many, you can also dial up your in-home spa game by converting your shower into a mini steam room. Turn your shower on with high heat to steam up your bathroom, grab an exfoliating scrub or loofah to remove dead skin cells and finish with a shower.

DIY FACIAL Consider turning your bedroom into a treatment room. When trying a new or trusted facial mask, remember to choose one that targets your skin-care concerns — such as dry skin, clogged pores, or anti aging. You can also add a foot mask, hand mask, under-eye mask or lip mask for an extra-targeted boost of hydration.

TRY NEW TOOLS Explore adding a new and affordable skin tool to your at-home spa. Depending on your skin's needs, choose from a variety of devices such as sonic cleansers to remove impurities and minimize pores, or microdermabrasion tools to reduce the appearance of acne scars and age spots.

You can also try an online skin analysis tool, which uses new technology to provide a customized summary of your skin health. "The virtual skin tool from Shoppers Drug Mart is the next step in learning more about your skin and having personalized products recommended," said Chanel Cruz, a Shoppers beauty pro.

MANI/PEDI TIME Complete your spa experience with a manicure or pedicure. After your skin is prepped and hydrated, finish by trimming and shaping your nails and pushing down your cuticles. Top with nail colour and topcoat if desired.

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Wabi-sabi

Embracing the Japanese art of imperfection at home

(NC) The unexpected challenges and changes of 2020 have taught us that not everything can be perfect or go as planned all the time.

Wabi-sabi is a Japanese term, meaning to find beauty in imperfection. But it isn't just a philosophy for life, it's also a design philosophy that you can incorporate into any space.

Embrace beautiful imperfection at home and check out these tips from Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert.

BE INSPIRED BY NATURE

To get comfortable with wabi-sabi, take your cue from nature. Choose a palette inspired by natural spaces, textures and materials like surf, sky and sand to create spaces that welcome and comfort.

Enhance your neutral palette by inviting organic materials and handmade pieces. "From live-edge wood furniture, to hand-thrown pottery and lush greenery, natural textures will help create a sense of calm, space and lightness in any home," says Grech.

SEEK INSPIRATION FROM THE IMPERFECT

As we look to the year ahead, now is the time to reflect use of wabi-sabi in colour and design. Find inspiration in beautiful, imperfect natural materials such as linen and terracotta.

"Paint colours like Potters Clay CC-30 and Muslin OC-12 take their names and inspiration from craftsmanship and lend laid-back elegance to any room."

CHOOSE AUTHENTICITY OVER PERFECTION

Instead of obsessing over making every detail perfect, opt for authenticity and imperfection. Choose furniture in organic, rounded shapes, instead of more angular, streamlined styles to instantly make your space more welcoming.

Adding rounded mirrors, or painting an arched colour block on a wall will add interest and a free-form touch to even the most modern spaces.

"With Regal Select interior paint you can easily achieve beautiful results for a DIY colour block that adds visual interest and wabi-sabi style to any room, even if you make a couple mistakes."

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Differences in dishwasher loading styles may cause household tension

(NC) Have you ever come home from a long day and opened the dishwasher to tidy up only to see it's loaded in the worst way possible and your dishes are still dirty?

Everyone has experienced that moment where their partner, roommate or kid has loaded the dishwasher like a poorly played game of Tetris. In fact, 33 per cent of Canadians surveyed with a dishwasher say they are dissatisfied with how some or all others in the household load the appliance.

To help you avoid disagreements, finding the right dishwasher that gives you flexibility is essential. Here are some tips for what to look for and how to load:

- Remove excess food before loading.
- Make sure all dishes are facing downward.
- Follow the grooves and inserts.
- Load silverware in mixed patterns to avoid cutlery sticking together.
- Be careful not to overload.
- Look for features like three racks for added space and/or adjustable racks that help you customize each load. For example, KitchenAid offers dishwashers with features like a third rack that have dedicated wash systems and an adjustable middle rack to fit larger items.
- Consider a dual-power filtration system that filters out, chops up, then drains food from the dishwasher in extra small pieces, helping prevent clogs so you can skip the soaking, scrubbing, and pre-rinsing altogether. Maytag offers a reliable option which also has a third rack.

Try these simple loading tricks and consider a dishwasher with a third rack and you will be sure to avoid any future dish-loading disagreements.

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The average timelines for popular **RENOVATION PROJECTS**

HOME RENOVATION PROJECTS are significant undertakings. Working with skilled and experienced contractors can ensure projects go smoothly and are completed promptly. Timing is a big consideration for homeowners as they begin renovating their homes, and the home improvement experts at HomeAdvisor note that the following are some general timelines for popular renovation projects.

HOME ADDITION

Short of a full-scale demolition and rebuild, home additions are the most time-consuming projects homeowners can undertake. HomeAdvisor notes that its survey of customers who recently completed home addition projects reported that the average time from start to finish was between three and four months. Certain variables, including the scale of the project and the local permit process, can extend the time it takes to complete a home addition.

KITCHEN REMODEL

Scale is a big factor to consider when estimating the time it takes to complete various home improvement projects, and kitchen remodels are no exception. Some HomeAdvisor users reported projects taking as long as four months, though the average time

reported was roughly six weeks. Projects that require major overhauls like rearranging the plumbing and moving walls will likely take longer than more cosmetic projects that are limited to replacing cabinets and countertops.

BATHROOM REMODEL

More than 1,000 homeowners surveyed by HomeAdvisor reported that bathroom remodels took about 4.5 weeks from start to finish. Small-scale remodels that focus on painting the walls a fresh colour and replacing existing tiles can be completed in less than two weeks. But like with kitchen remodels, bathroom remodels that involve replacing plumbing fixtures and removing walls figure to take much longer than that.

SIDING INSTALLATION

HomeAdvisor users report that new siding projects take roughly two weeks from start to finish. That estimate is the same regardless of which materials homeowners are replacing and installing.

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

Homeowners who want to replace all the windows in their home can expect such a project to take

roughly three weeks. HomeAdvisor notes that such a timeline need not concern homeowners worried that they will be forced to brave the elements during the length of the project. Much of a contractor's time during a window replacement project will be spent on upfront measuring and then ensuring a tight fit once the windows have been installed.

...Timing is a big consideration for homeowners as they begin renovating...



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Renovation trends

that figure to be popular in the year ahead

HOME RENOVATION TRENDS are ever-changing. Renovations that might have been de rigueur 20 years ago may seem dated now. Recognizing the potentially popular trends of tomorrow is a great way for homeowners to give their homes a fresh new look and put themselves in a position to capitalize on popular trends when they put their homes on the market. That's especially so after 2020, a year when millions of people spent more time at home than ever before. All that time working from home and relaxing at home gave millions of homeowners ideas about what they like about their home and what they hope to change. The following are some renovation trends that various experts suspect could emerge in 2021.

ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING

Web magazine, urdesignmag.com, that showcases creative trends in design, architecture, art, technology, and fashion, predicts that eco-friendly living solutions figure to be hot commodities in 2021. Eco-friendly appliances, furniture and designs can help to conserve energy and reduce waste. Environmentalists and government agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency note are two critical components in the fight against climate change.

LARGE WINDOWS

Large windows can provide stunning views of the outdoors and allow ample natural light into a home. It may not be a coincidence if large windows prove to be a hot trend in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic that dominated much of 2020 forced many people to spend considerably more time at home. Darker homes without much natural light can adversely affect mood,

...potentially popular trends of tomorrow is a great way for homeowners to give their homes a fresh new look...

especially when people are spending more time at home. HGTV predicts that homeowners will seek ways to bring more natural light into their homes in 2021, and large windows naturally brighten homes while making rooms appear bigger, helping people feel less cramped. That's an especially beneficial characteristic when spending more time indoors at home.

MINIMALISM

The anticipated popularity of minimalism in 2021 may also be connected to the pandemic. As professionals, we're forced to work from home and many families spent more time together inside their homes than ever before, they may have recognized a need to cut back on clutter, including extra furniture. A minimalist approach is both simple and clean, which can make homes feel less claustrophobic.

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACES

Homeowners asked a lot of their homes in 2020, as rooms were transformed into multi-functional spaces seemingly overnight. HGTV notes that spending more time at home showed homeowners that it may not make sense to dedicate entire rooms of a home to a single purpose. Renovations that can help homeowners transform rooms into multi-functional spaces figure to be hot commodities in the years ahead.

Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Buyers Pushing into Aurora

The cold didn't deter home Buyers in the month of February from snapping up 118 homes of all descriptions across Aurora's ten neighbourhoods which was 47.5 percent more sales than in the prior month. The average home price for all types of homes rose to \$1,238, 894 and upon further examination by eliminating the highest and lowest sale the median average price in February was \$1,109,056.

The trend of competing offers continued and homes sold swiftly within 14 days on the market for about 107 percent of the asking price in this strong Seller's market. There were 196 homes placed for sale, and by March 1st, 2021, only 124 remained for sale, meaning at the current demand, it would take 1.8 months to deplete the inventory currently available for sale.

Upon closer examination of the sales in February, 66 percent of the homes purchased were detached homes at an average median price of \$1.4 Million; that's a \$380,000 price increase year over year. Townhomes rose to an average of \$1,048,000 from \$785,000; Semi-detached homes rose to \$990,000 from \$800,000,

condo townhomes rose to \$745,000 from \$446,750. Condo apartments that sold had an average price of \$540,000 with just a \$30,000 increase in value compared to the remaining home types.

Low-interest rates persist, however with rising home values some buyers may be temporarily priced out of the town of Aurora depending on their buying criteria, opting for the area further out of the Greater Toronto Area. Contact a REALTOR® today to discuss your motivation to buy or sell real estate.

– Written by Connie Power

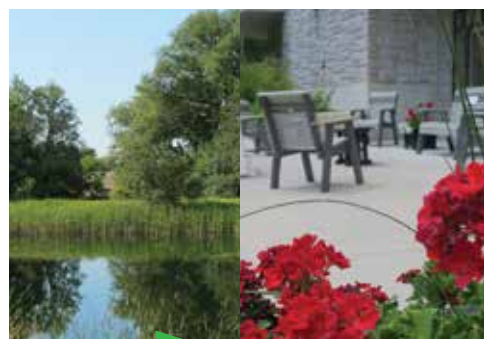
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*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board; Regional Housing Market Tables; York Region, Aurora for January, February 2021 and market Watch Summary of Existing Home Transactions, All Home Types, for February 2021.

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