

## **HOME SALES, PRICES FALL ACROSS GREATER BOSTON IN SEPTEMBER AS BUYERS SIT STILL**

**Boston, MA.** — Sales activity slowed across the Greater Boston housing market last month as expectations of an interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve and uneasiness about the presidential election has prompted many buyers to wait rather than move forward on a home purchase since mid-summer. Sales of single-family homes and condominiums fell on an annual basis for a second consecutive month in September, and monthly median selling prices declined for a third straight month to their lowest level since February, according to the latest data issued by the Greater Boston Association of Realtors® (GBAR). In the single-family home market, sales decreased on an annual basis by 1.3 percent in September, easing from 754 homes sold in September 2023 to 744 last month, and fell 30 percent on a monthly basis from 1,063 homes sold in August. It's the fewest homes sold in any month since March, and lowest single-family homes sales volume for the month since September 1995 when 577 homes sold. Meanwhile, condominium sales declined 10.6 percent on a year-over-year basis, from 705 units sold last September to 630 in September 2024, and slid 24 percent from the previous month when 829 units sold in August. September was the slowest month for condo sales since February, and last month's sales total is lowest for any September in over a dozen years, dating back to September 2010 when 609 condominiums were sold.

“There was a noticeable lull in market activity over the final weeks of the summer as many buyers opted to delay their home purchase decision until after the Fed moved to lower interest rates, while others have grown more skittish and adopted a wait-and-see attitude as the presidential election approaches. That's resulted in a smaller buyer pool and decidedly slower sales pace since the start of September” said GBAR President Jared Wilk, a broker with Compass in Wellesley.

“We've also seen a sharp increase in listings since the Labor Day Weekend which has afforded buyers more time and a greater selection of homes to choose from, so they're acting with less urgency than they did earlier in the year,” he noted.

Notably, with a larger inventory of homes and condos for sale, median selling prices showed some softening last month. In the single-family home market, the median sales price of \$850,000 was flat over the past 12 months, and declined 7.4 percent on a month-to-month basis from a median of \$917,500 in August. It's the first time in 15 months that the single-family median home price has not risen on an annual basis. Furthermore, September marks the third consecutive month the median selling price for single-family homes has declined on a month-to-month basis since reaching an all-time high of \$960,000 in June, and the median sales price is now at its lowest level since February when the median was \$783,000.

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Meanwhile, the condominium median selling price decreased modestly on annual basis in September, slipping 1.7 percent from \$685,000 in September 2023 to a median of \$673,500 last month, and declined 4.2 percent from the prior month when the median sales price for August was \$703,000. As was the case in the single-family market, the median selling price for condominiums has now declined on a month-to-month basis for three consecutive months since peaking at \$750,000 in June, and the median sales price for September is also the lowest since February when it dropped to \$639,900.

“With fewer buyers in the market over the last couple of months and a more plentiful supply of homes and condos now available for sale, we’re not seeing as much upward pressure on prices,” Wilk observed. “Today’s buyers are not only finding more opportunity to negotiate, but with mortgage rates down about a half point since late spring and a full point from a year ago purchasing power has improved, making the market moderately more affordable,” he added.

Buyers can also take comfort in the fact that listing inventory for single-family homes and condominiums stands at its highest level in three years, dating back to September 2021 when there were more approximately 4,400 homes and condos on the market. As of the end of September, single-family home listings are up 23 percent over one year ago, from 1,430 homes for sale last September to 1,759 in September 2024, and have risen 40 percent from August when 1,255 homes were listed for sale. In addition, condominium listings have increased 23.5 percent in the past 12 months, from 1,855 units for sale in September 2023 to 2,290 this September, and rose 36 percent from 1,679 condominiums for sale in August.

Still, despite the larger number of listings on the market, the majority of properties sold in September did so at close to full asking price, as demand continues to outpace supply in most communities. Last month, the typical single-family home sold for 99.3 percent of its original list price, while the typical condo received 98.8 percent of its initial sale price.

“Sellers still hold the upper hand in this market, but not to the extent they did previously. With more inventory to choose from, buyers are now able to be more selective, which makes it essential that pricing reflect current market conditions. It’s mostly properties that are priced right and in excellent condition that are selling for top dollar in today’s market,” Wilk said.

Accordingly, the GBAR president cautioned homeowners not to be too aggressive on pricing as it could limit buyer interest.

“With the prime selling season behind us and sales activity having become more seasonal of late, we’re seeing fewer multiple offer situations, more bids below asking price, and lengthier listing times before properties go under agreement. In addition, properties that are overpriced will attract a more limited pool of qualified buyers and often require a price reduction or other seller concession in order to sell,” Wilk stated. “As a result, those who are able to adjust their expectations and price their property in line with others currently listed for sale will have the most success in this market,” he concluded.