

## Niagara/St. Catharines Home Prices See Significant Growth in the Second Quarter of 2016

*Prices increase as buyer demand and new residents outpace available inventory*

**NIAGARA/ ST. CATHERINES, July 13, 2016** – The aggregate<sup>1</sup> price of a home in the Niagara/St. Catharines region saw a significant increase in the second quarter of 2016, rising 7.2 per cent year-over-year to \$289,239 according to the Royal LePage House Price Survey<sup>2</sup> and Market Survey Forecast released today.

When broken out by housing type, the median price of a two-storey house posted a sizable increase of 10.6 per cent year-over-year to \$315,777, while the median price of a bungalow saw a more moderate increase of 2.9 per cent to \$260,029.

“Prices have shot up across the region in the past year reflecting the confidence of local buyers within the area” said Brad Johnstone, broker of record, Royal LePage Niagara Real Estate Centre. “Inventory is uncharacteristically low and the effects can be seen in terms of reduced days on the market and steep price increases. Currently, there about 530 active listings in the area; in contrast, at this time last year there were roughly 1,200 available properties.”

Johnstone points out that in addition to retirees, former residents of the Niagara region are moving back home with their families to avoid the high home prices of the Greater Toronto Area. Meanwhile, first-time home buyers are attracted to GO Transit’s plans to extend GO-train development designed to ease the commute to Toronto.

“There is wide range of people who are buying property in Niagara and St. Catharines; no single demographic is driving the demand,” stated Johnstone. “Retirees and new families are moving to the area. Foreign buyers living abroad, who have children going to school in the area moving out of on-campus housing to local properties have also shown interest, believing Canadian real estate is a great investment.”

Looking forward to the remainder of 2016, Johnstone predicts that prices will continue to increase significantly across the region with supply remaining scarce.

Nationally, Canada’s residential real estate market continued to show strong appreciation in the second quarter of 2016, posting the highest national year-over-year gain seen in five years. Amid continued world economic uncertainty, the historically low interest rate environment that has fueled Canada’s real estate market growth in recent years – most notably in Greater Vancouver and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) – is expected to continue longer than anticipated. This extended period of low-cost borrowing will in turn further delay the cyclical cooling of Canada’s hottest real estate markets, originally forecasted for the second half of 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Aggregate prices are calculated via a weighted average of the median values of homes for reported property types in the regions surveyed

<sup>2</sup> Powered by Brookfield RPS

The price of a home in Canada increased 9.2 per cent year-over-year to \$520,223 in the second quarter of 2016. During the same period, the price of a two-storey home rose 10.7 per cent year-over-year to \$619,671, the price of a bungalow increased 7.9 per cent to \$437,121, and the price of a condominium increased 4.2 per cent to \$348,189. Looking ahead to the remainder of 2016, Royal LePage forecasts that the aggregate price of a home in Canada will increase 12.4 per cent when compared to year end 2015.

“Our forecasting models, which pointed to a slowing housing market as the year progressed, included a modest increase in the cost of borrowing,” said Phil Soper, president and chief executive officer, Royal LePage. “Economic and social disruptions have rocked the world once again, introducing new risks and making it very likely that the Bank of Canada will leave interest rates as-is for now. Few industries are as rate sensitive as real estate. We don’t see even a mild correction for either the Toronto or pistol-hot Vancouver markets in 2016.”

“Our call for 12.4 per cent national price appreciation in the final quarter of this calendar year as compared to the final quarter of last year, is a landmark in Canada. I believe it is the highest value put forward by any serious forecasting agency since the turn of the century,” added Soper.

### **About the Royal LePage House Price Survey**

The Royal LePage House Price Survey provides information on the three most common types of housing in Canada, in 53 of the nation’s largest real estate markets. Housing values in the House Price Survey are based on the Royal LePage National House Price Composite, produced quarterly through the use of company data in addition to data and analytics from its sister company, Brookfield RPS, the trusted source for residential real estate intelligence and analytics in Canada. Commentary on housing and forecast values are provided by Royal LePage residential real estate experts, based on their opinions and market knowledge.

### **About Royal LePage**

Serving Canadians since 1913, Royal LePage is the country’s leading provider of services to real estate brokerages, with a network of over 16,500 real estate professionals in more than 600 locations nationwide. Royal LePage is the only Canadian real estate company to have its own charitable foundation, the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, dedicated to supporting women’s and children’s shelters and educational programs aimed at ending domestic violence. Royal LePage is a Brookfield Real Estate Services Inc. company, a TSX-listed corporation trading under the symbol TSX:BRE.

For more information visit: [www.royallepage.ca](http://www.royallepage.ca).

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