

IT'S A FACT THAT THE GTA IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE



Ask any community leader about what makes the GTA one of the world's best places to live and you'll hear terms such as "cultural diversity," "innovation hub" and "environmental sustainability" used to illustrate quality of life throughout the region.

While they are worthy descriptors, one's quality of life is also influenced by individual circumstances such as family roots in the community, nearby friends and great neighbours, which can't easily be quantified.

Fortunately though, statistics are available on a number of other criteria that capture what it's like to live in each of the GTA's 25 municipalities. Using information from Statistics Canada and Environics Analytics, MoneySense magazine compiles data on such factors as employment, crime rates and access to healthcare to produce its annual Canada's Best Places to Live report.

This year, two GTA communities were ranked among its Top 10 best places to live, with Burlington taking third spot and Oakville in sixth place among the 209 municipalities evaluated.

In addition to placing third overall, Burlington took top spot in the category of best medium-sized communities, with populations between 100,001 and 400,000. It rated second on a list of best places to raise children, sixth for new immigrants, and Canada's 10th best place for retirees. Several factors contribute to Burlington's stellar reviews. For example, it boasts a range of industries including biotechnology,

software development and financial services. Burlington also offers outstanding recreational opportunities for fitness buffs and nature lovers alike. With the Bruce Trail at its doorstep, Burlington has 31 kilometres of trails, 84 kilometres of pathways, 119 parks and more than five kilometres of parkland along Lake Ontario.

Neighbouring Oakville was a close second on the list of Canada's best medium-sized communities, and placed fourth among the nation's best communities for raising children. Oakville is one of the GTA's most attractive municipalities with lakeside views, 19th-century architecture in its downtown shopping district (which plays host to an annual jazz festival) and access to top quality schools and recreational facilities like Appleby College and Glen Abbey Golf Course. It is also ideally situated about a half hour drive from Toronto and an hour from the United States border.

Halton Region also fielded the GTA's next best performer in the annual study, with the community of Halton Hills placing in 21st spot overall. It also took ninth spot among best small communities and places to raise children. A growing community with a population of more than 64,000, life in Halton Hills includes access to the majestic Niagara Escarpment, great shopping at Toronto Premium Outlets and country living within reach of the city via Highway 401.

Not far behind Halton Hills on the list of best places to live in Canada was the York Region municipality of

Newmarket. It placed 23rd on the list and was rated Canada's 11th best small community. Newmarket offers a small-town feel throughout its Main Street and Fairy Lake Park, complemented by a number of big city amenities including Southlake Regional Health Centre, Upper Canada Mall and an improved transit route along Davis Drive under construction.

A number of other GTA municipalities also fared well in the study including Aurora in 30th position, Toronto and Richmond Hill in 35th and 36th, and Vaughan in 38th place overall. It's interesting to note that Toronto also rated highly as a wise place to retire, ranking second on that list. The neighbouring municipalities of Pickering and Whitby also cracked the Top 50, in 43rd and 45th spots.

Extend the parameters to the Greater Golden Horseshoe and our region offers even more municipalities where quality of life is outstanding. These include Guelph and Waterloo in 15th and 16th positions, the latter of which is also noted as the fourth best place in Canada for new immigrants. Kitchener, Hamilton and Barrie placed 40 to 42 on the list and Collingwood was in 49th place.

This comprehensive study and many others of its kind point to the fact that together, we are building one of the most outstanding regions in the world in which to live.

To find the GTA location that's best suited to your needs, talk to a Toronto Real Estate Board Professional Member realtor and for updates on the market visit TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.

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