



## Go site-seeing

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

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As a GTA resident, chances are you've enjoyed visits to the city's major landmarks. This summer though, you may want to skip those in favour of a different kind of sightseeing tour.

Our city's new condominium developments offer a glimpse into the height of luxury and modern design. And these steel and glass monoliths aren't just breathtaking to behold from outside. In an effort to distinguish their projects in this burgeoning market, developers are in a seemingly limitless pursuit to offer the finest features and amenities.

You'll find stunning three storey lobbies that feature an awe-inspiring mix of glass, exotic wood and marble.

For a mere \$30 million, a luxury 9,000 square foot penthouse on the 55th floor of the Four Seasons Private Residences can be yours.

Condos are not a one-room box with a view of the nearest brick wall. Today's condominium developers are offering two and three bedroom units with panoramic views high atop the city.

And when I say high, I mean really, really high. Due to an increased focus on urban intensification in recent years, GTA condos are growing taller, with the some of the highest reaching 65 storeys.

Higher density living is of course, beneficial to the environment but again developers haven't rested on their laurels when it comes to being green. Many have pursued the coveted LEED certification, involving an independent audit of a building's sustainable characteristics. Condo owners have benefited by enjoying features like suite controls that allow them to monitor and limit energy usage, energy saving appliances and separate bicycle storage. As an alternative to owning a vehicle, many condo owners use the services of car sharing companies like AutoShare.

Convenience is a huge factor in condominium living. Several downtown projects are mixed-use

developments, with commercial space on the lower levels and in some cases hotels are integrated into the mix. This means that condo dwellers have the opportunity to enjoy the services of the finest luxury hotels like room service, housekeeping and laundry service. Even pet services and grocery delivery are available upon request.

While such services aren't yet widely available, standard features like security, entertainment and fitness facilities have all been taken up a notch. Lush rooftop gardens feature gas barbeques and fire pits. Fitness facilities include current pools and spas. Concierge and valet services are available around the clock. With libraries, theatres, billiard lounges, wireless Internet and more, you never have to leave the comfort of your building.

It's no wonder that a strong sense of community has sprung up around each new development. Developers celebrate the heritage and the location of their communities, each designed with an identity to appeal to specific lifestyles. Owners in fact, identify so strongly with their condo communities that specific groups on social networking sites like Facebook have developed around them.

With all that today's condo have to offer, it's not surprising that condominium transactions now constitute almost one in every three homes that changes hands in the GTA and 60 per cent of resale transactions in central Toronto.

If you're interested in learning more about trends in GTA real estate, contact a Greater Toronto REALTOR®. They have access to the most timely, in-depth information on new and resale housing throughout the GTA. To find out more visit [www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com](http://www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com)

*Tom Lebour is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.*