



Choose a home that fits your style

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

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For some people, one of the most challenging aspects of buying a home can be choosing from the numerous options to help fit their lifestyle. From a condominium in the heart of the city to a farm set amongst rolling hills, from life on an island to a home near ski slope, few world cities can boast the eclectic mix of housing that the Greater Toronto Area offers.

This spectrum of choices means that it's particularly important to use the services of a REALTOR® to carefully identify a home that is best suited to fit your lifestyle.

Start by signing a Buyer Agency Agreement, the BRA helps outline your REALTOR's® commitment to represent your best interests by working exclusively on your behalf for a designated period of time.

A REALTOR's® direct access to a number of important databases may help you identify all of your options.

If you prefer a home in an established community, your REALTOR® can use the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS) to search for thousands of available properties, which are displayed in real time, as soon as they are listed for sale.

Your REALTOR® may also register your criteria in the Toronto Real Estate Board's Buyer Registry Service (BRS). It is a password-protected database in which your personal information is only accessible to your REALTOR®. While you can receive regular email notifications on homes that match your specifications, communication between buyers' and sellers' REALTORS® who use the BRS can occur even faster.

Your REALTOR® may even be aware of soon-to-be available properties through their network of contacts in the community.

Be sure to visit www.BRAFirst.ca for more information on the Buyer Representation Agreement.

If a brand new home is what you have in mind, your REALTOR® can advise as to new home construction options throughout Greater Toronto Area using the Realnet Canada database. Developments can be searched by housing type, location, price range and a number of other specific criteria.

Once you have selected a few options, your REALTOR® can gather information that can be key to your decision-making like any price adjustments that have occurred and the property's number of days on the market. They can also use the MLS® to help you evaluate asking prices based on the information of other properties recently sold in the area.

In fact, regardless of whether it was ever available on the MLS®, your REALTOR® can advise on a property's previous sold price by accessing their link to Teranet's land registry system. This database contains other key information as well, like neighbourhood demographic profiles, aerial views and land surveys.

Insight into other specifics like assessed values, a home's age, and square footage can also be gleaned using the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) database.

By weighing all of these factors you can develop a focused pursuit of your perfect home and with a REALTOR's® expert negotiating skills, it could be yours sooner than you think.

Regardless of whether you choose new or resale, every market is different be sure to contact a REALTOR®. Their skills and expertise may give you a winning advantage and help find the right home for you.

Bill Johnston is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 30,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.

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