

NEWHOMES

Considering the small town option

Gananoque has 'quality of life,' jobs and new homes to offer



MARTIN SLOFSTRA
EDITOR'S
NOTE

Whenever friends and I go on one of our weekend get-aways which could be anywhere in Ontario, it's always in the back of our minds: 'What would it be like to live here?'

We have no plans to leave the Toronto area any time soon, but you do start to think — when factoring in quality of life, the average cost of home, time of daily commute if you did work here — and it could all lead you to consider making such a move.

Our latest adventure took us to Gananoque (just east of Kingston). We stayed in the Turtle Island B&B, just a few minutes walk from the waterfront, and as luck would have it, owned and operated by Ted Lojko, who is also mayor of this town.

(Imagine having your breakfast prepared and served by a Mayor, definitely a first-time experience for all of us, and yes, the omelettes we had tasted great.)



Turtle Island B&B in Gananoque: Definitely worth the stay.

Anyways, a conversation at that breakfast on a Sunday morning proved interesting.

Most know Gananoque as a tourist town — it literally plays host to hundreds of thousands of visitors a year not just from the province but around the world. Live local theatre and ferry cruises around the Thousand Islands are two of the more popular things to do.

It also has a picturesque waterfront and walkable downtown area,

with a historic charm that — in the prime of summer — could make you feel like you walked onto the set of a Hallmark movie.

All romance aside, the other side of it is that this is a decent place to live — jobs go begging here not just in the service/tourism sector, but for well-paid engineering and IT positions at any of a number of infrastructure and public works projects underway in the area.

And while its mostly baby boomers/empty-nesters that would consider moving to the area, Lojko says he would really love to see younger folks and families settle in Gananoque as that is what ultimately contributes to the vitality and long-term development of an area.

He says also there is no shortage of housing options — from beautiful estate century homes that come up for resale, to luxury waterfront condos, to modest bungalows, to modern new townhomes now in the process of being planned and zoned for.

Small town living in Ontario is obviously not for everyone, and even if not planning to move here, it is definitely worth a visit.



Gananoque's historic downtown area is very walkable. Seen here is the Town Hall built in 1831 and deeded to the town in 1911.



There's lots to do in Gananoque on this beautiful summer day including a ferry cruise of the famous Thousand Islands area.

Making the move from 'low-rise' to 'high-rise'



BARBARA LAWLOR
CONDO PRO

If you have purchased a new-construction condominium in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area, congratulations!

You have made a wise decision and investment in your lifestyle future. Many of you are likely the owners of low-rise homes that you plan to sell, and buying pre construction means you have time to make the most of that real estate transaction.

Your first consideration should be to make your house as attractive as possible to potential purchasers.

Certainly a good real estate agent can guide you in the sale.

In the meantime, here are a few tips to help you wrap your mind around getting the most for your lovely home.

- Fix obvious defects. Even small things can turn off those who tour your house with buying in mind. Are there loose baseboards? Cupboard doors that hang crookedly? Doors that do not close properly? Nail holes in the walls? A bit of effort now can make a big difference in the price you actually get for your home.

- Keep it clean. If people touring your home notice dirt in the corners and stained carpeting, they will wonder how well you have taken care of the rest of the house. Make an effort to clean your home every day, or hire

someone to come in and do it for you. This includes cleaning windows until they sparkle.

- De-clutter. The more "stuff" you have sitting around within view, the more your home looks smaller to viewers. They need to see that there is plenty of space for their belongings, so empty shelves and surfaces are the goal. Plus, you will likely have to purge items anyway to make the most of space in your new suite. It's win-win!

- Set the table. Take some time to create a lovely, welcoming ambience with settings that include matching dishes, and add some fresh flowers in a pretty centerpiece.

- Spiff up your interiors. How about new knobs on your kitchen cupboards or new throw cushions on the

sofa? Touch up paint where needed, and

- Consider hiring a stager. Having an outside person come in and stage your home can make you a lot more money in the long run than you pay out. These professionals understand exactly how to entice potential buyers by making the home as inviting and appealing as possible. If you are décor challenged, turn to the professionals for help!

- Pay attention to the exterior. Curb appeal can make the difference between someone getting out of the car to tour your home ... or not. Tidy your lawn and gardens. Mow, trim, weed and do whatever else you can to beautify your surroundings. Repair any obvious problems such as loose patio stones, shutters and

the like. In the winter, shovel sidewalks and the driveway. Think about some little touches such as installing new house numbers or a fresh new door mat.

The point is to make your home look welcoming and move-in ready. Once you sell, you can get prepared for a lifestyle of convenience and ease in your new condo, which will be move-in ready to the ultimate degree!

— Barbara Lawlor is president and CEO of Baker Real Estate Inc. where she oversees the marketing and sales of condominium developments in the GTA and overseas. Keep current with The Baker Blog at blog.bakerrealestate.com