



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Considering that the purchase of a home is the biggest investment most people will ever make, location has a tremendous impact on the value of that investment. Nothing beats a good location, and that's why it should be one of the most important factors that shape any purchase decision.

The significance of location differs depending on whether the purchaser is an investor or will be the ultimate end-user living in the property. For an investor, location is just a part of the overall focus. Their larger goal is to make money through rental income, and ultimately make a good return on their real estate investment.

For a homebuyer who plans on living in the home that they purchase, location becomes a far more critical part of the evaluation.

The one thing you can count on through the ups and downs of the real estate market is location. It's the golden rule, an age-old adage that is a constant factor in the real estate equation.

When considering a location, investors and end users should always keep resale value at top of mind, as a good location will appeal to the largest number of potential homebuyers down the road.

Throughout my 25-year career in the real estate business, I've sold homes in areas that certainly would not have been my first choice. However, for my purchasers, the neighbourhoods fit their specific criteria.

A good location depends on the tastes of the individual buyer. Typically, a good location has quality schools, is close to the homebuyer's workplace or offers convenient transportation networks, and is close to shopping and recreational amenities.

In a survey by the Ontario Real Estate Association, a location close to shopping and/or transportation was among the most important factors. Safety and the perceived value of the home are two other key considerations.

The survey also indicated that 80 per cent of younger Ontarians (ages 18 to 34) considered a property close to work as an important factor, versus 65 per cent of those in the 35-54 age group. A higher percentage of men (62 per cent) said that a coveted neighbourhood was important to them, versus 53 per cent of women.

Not everyone has the luxury of living in a popular neighbourhood, therefore it may be necessary to make concessions and purchase a home in a location that doesn't meet all of your needs, but satisfies some.

Create a checklist of things that you're looking for in an ideal location. Then, research areas that appeal to you to see what homes are available. Bear in mind that just because a neighbourhood doesn't look like much at the moment, it doesn't mean that it won't eventually turn into a good location as the forces of gentrification take effect. This is particularly important advice for cash-strapped first-time home buyers, who should aim to, as that other old saying goes, buy low and sell high.

Ultimately, you want to find a property in a good location that is an area where you'll have the best quality of life. ■

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