



# CANADA'S #1 PLACE TO BUY REAL ESTATE

## SAFE GROWTH AHEAD →

2018's number one city to buy real estate, Brantford is affordable with a strong economy, making it a safe bet for homeowners considering a move or investment opportunity.



**A LOW UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, AFFORDABLE YET STEADILY RISING HOUSING PRICES AND A THRIVING ECONOMY MAKE BRANTFORD AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE.**

Since MoneySense magazine's highly anticipated list of Where to Buy Real Estate placed the unassuming town as #1 last year, all eyes have been on Brantford, Ontario.

Home to Empire's most established community, Wyndfield, we believed in Brantford's potential long before the media took notice. Over the last decade, we've watched first-hand as the town grew from its small-town roots into a thriving city. Today, Brantford has achieved a very unique harmony between a small Southern Ontario town and a thriving community that has welcomed growth. Having kept a strong commitment to community involvement, historical preservation and remembering where it came from, the town doesn't feel quite like the traffic laden GTA suburbs of Brampton or Mississauga, but offers a strong variety of amenities and jobs to welcome new residents.

So how did Brantford make it to the very top of the list? Thanks to a low unemployment rate, affordable yet steadily rising housing prices and a thriving economy, all of which were the result of strategic investments in the town's future.

### A DIVERSE ECONOMY

If your one of millions of Canadians who enjoy the delicious chocolaty spread Nutella, you have Brantford to thank. Nutella, Ferrero Rocher and Tic Tacs are all made in Brantford at the Ferrero plant,

which has become such an integral part of the Brantford community that they host World Nutella Day every February. While many municipalities across Southwestern Ontario relying on manufacturing fell on tough times as the industry declined, Brantford was able to diversify, keeping its economy thriving and unemployment low while continuing to employ many at the Ferrero plant.

The opening of Brantford Campuses of Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University gave the downtown a significant boost, while former Brantford mayor, Chris Friel, also made significant efforts to attract Japanese and European companies in the food processing and advanced manufacturing industries. The strong job market and affordable living costs is why Friel says Brantford has become an attractive option for homebuyers in the GTA. "You can sell your home in Mississauga for \$720,000 and buy the same home in Brantford for \$420,000," says Friel. "You have all the amenities you need, and yet you're only five minutes away from beautiful little towns and a rural area." All this while being able to put a little money in your pocket for investing, experiences or the future.

### STRONG HOUSING MARKET

Of course a huge factor in MoneySense's annual analysis is the housing market in the town in question. To identify the value of a neighbourhood, they compare average housing prices provided by local real estate boards across the country. However, looking for



cheapest prices alone isn't everything. Low prices can be indicative of neighbourhoods with a lack of amenities or low appreciation. Instead, MoneySense looks for relative value compared to neighbouring communities among other factors. The top-ranked cities have strong economies, solid rental markets, great value and robust price appreciation.

Brantford may not have seen the skyrocketing property values of Toronto, but someone who bought in 2007 would have generated an annual rate of return of 8.5% over 10 years, better than the 7.1% generated by the average single-family home in the GTA.

### LIFESTYLE

But of course strong housing and the job market still needs to be coupled with liveable amenities. Former mayor Chris Friel says that new Brantford residents are attracted by more than housing costs. Instead, they're looking for a place they can feel safe letting their children walk to school, enjoy a small town lifestyle while surrounded by amenities and putting a little extra money in their pocket. Brantford's strong community spirit, multiculturalism and vibrant downtown means residents can experience the very best of the in between; a community with amenities like a city and charm like a small town.

We're excited to continue to build new homes in Brantford as more homebuyers realize the benefits of this amazing town. ♦