

TORONTO STAR

This Toronto neighbourhood was named one of Canada's best places to live in new report

A new RE/MAX report screened neighbourhoods in Canada's 21 largest cities to find the most "livable" places to settle down. Here's what they found.

By Kevin Jiang, Staff Reporter

Say what you will about Toronto's affordability and cost-of-living crises, but the city can be a wonderful place to live. Further proving it is a new RE/MAX report that has named one downtown neighbourhood among the most "livable" in the country.

Toronto's Old Town neighbourhood made the RE/MAX report's top ten list for providing the best "liveability" in Canada — defined as "the qualities that give each homeowner the true satisfaction of living in their neighbourhood," from housing affordability, to access to green space and restaurants.

Old Town's placement comes one year after another Toronto neighbourhood was listed among the "coolest" in the world. Other extraordinarily liveable locations included neighbourhoods in Calgary, Winnipeg and Edmonton.

"Liveability is largely related to lifestyle preferences, and is entirely subjective," the report continued.

More townhouses and small apartment buildings could come to Toronto neighbourhoods under city planners' shakeup

GTA

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Buildings of up to 30 units could come to major streets such as Islington Avenue and Brimley Road where those roads cross through residential areas.

RE/MAX's report was performed in partnership with Montreal data analytics company Local Logic, which ranked neighbourhoods in 21 of Canada's biggest cities based on location scores and census data, in accordance with the liveability factors Canadians said were most important to them in a previous Leger survey.

This data was then supplemented and vetted by RE/MAX brokers and agents, who were surveyed on their local insights regarding their cities' unique areas, the ranking read.

Here's what made the list.

Canada's ten most liveable cities

The following cities were ranked on the basis of the following factors, as determined by a Leger survey: Affordability, proximity to work, easily walkable, access to green spaces and parks, proximity to health or medical services, low-density neighbourhoods, proximity to public transit, easily driveable, proximity to

preferred childcare/schools, access to bike lanes/walking paths, a neighbourhood with diverse cultures and ethnicities and high-density neighbourhoods.

“According to the Leger survey, 44 (per cent) of Canadians prioritize affordability when evaluating the liveability of a neighbourhood,” the report read. “Thus, some of the neighbourhoods that ranked high of the list reflect affordable housing and a lower cost of living.”

Downtown West End — Calgary, AB

Daniel McIntyre — Winnipeg, MB

Oliver/Wihkwêntôwin — Edmonton, AB

Heritage — Regina, SK

Sandy Hill — Ottawa, ON

Quinpool Area — Halifax, NS

Westmount — Saskatoon, SK

Le Sud-Ouest — Montreal, QC

Old Town — Toronto, ON

Corktown — Hamilton, ON

Ontario has some of the most liveable neighbourhoods in Canada

Ontario dominated the top ten list with three locations — more than any other province listed. That said, the prairie provinces topped the list, given their relative affordability, the report continued.

In Ontario, “it’s worth noting these neighbourhoods are generally located within older, established areas, with high walkability scores,” the ranking read.

Included was Ottawa’s Sandy Hill neighbourhood, a vibrant canal-side district bordering the University of Ottawa, which helps contribute to its trendy bar scene and abundant amenities. Once Ottawa’s wealthiest neighbourhood, the area is well-connected to public transit and located just minutes away from shopping at Rideau Centre and the Byward Market, as well as Parliament Hill.

Toronto’s own Old Town neighbourhood also made the ranking. Believed to be the first named neighbourhood in the city, back to around 1815, the central downtown location boasts cobblestone streets, Victorian architecture and historical landmarks including the Flatiron Building and St. James Cathedral. It’s well-serviced by public transit, but given its close proximity to most anywhere you’d need to be (and the notorious Toronto traffic), many opt to bike or walk instead.

Finally, Corktown in Hamilton made the list as “one of Hamilton’s oldest and most vibrant neighbourhoods,” according to the report. Settled by Irish immigrants more than a century ago, the area mixes old residential cottages with new condos and homes — although critics worry the rapid developments could spell the end of Corktown’s relative affordability.

What do Canadians consider “liveable”?

The vast majority — 86 per cent — of respondents to the Leger poll on liveability say they “like the quality of life and liveability” offered by their neighbourhoods.

The most important factor for liveability, as identified by 44 per cent of respondents, was affordability. The result comes as parts of Toronto face a mass exodus of residents, with its skyrocketing cost of housing labeled a major factor.

Next was neighbourhood safety, which got 10 per cent of the vote, and walkability and the age of the homes in the neighbourhood, both with 6 per cent of the vote.

Our cost-of-living crisis: In just three years rent and groceries are up nearly 40 per cent. There are solutions

Notably, the Local Logic rankings did not factor in neighbourhood safety, and thus had to be vetted by RE/MAX brokers and agents. The walkability factor likely gave central neighbourhoods in Toronto and Vancouver a boost, as they were often developed before cars — but this was counterbalanced by their lack of affordability, the report continued.

The best neighbourhoods in Toronto

RE/MAX agents also provided their input on the most desirable neighbourhoods in Canada’s largest cities, including Toronto.

“Quality-of-life aspects in Toronto go beyond green spaces and transit,” the report read. “Now more than ever, in addition to affordability, Torontonians are focused on belonging, peace of mind and diversity.”

As Toronto is generally expensive, “it’s less about neighbourhood affordability and more about the type of property within the neighbourhood,” it continued. “Currently, in Toronto, semi-detached and row houses in all neighbourhoods are the most affordable.”

Here are the city’s top neighbourhoods:

St. James Town

Moss Park

Garden District

Bay Street Corridor

Old Town

St. Lawrence

Church & Wellesley

Entertainment District

Regent Park

Corktown (Toronto)

Toronto has an ‘ambitious’ plan for Villiers Island. But is it missing the chance to build a neighbourhood of the future?

REAL ESTATE

Toronto has an ‘ambitious’ plan for Villiers Island. But is it missing the chance to build a neighbourhood of the future?

Planners say they’re balancing housing density with an inviting public realm, but critics say plans don’t go far enough in an affordability crisis.

The following eight neighbourhoods were considered the city’s most up-and-coming. “All eight have key elements in common: they are mature neighbourhoods with renovated and modernized homes with character,” the report explained.

Leaside

East York

Trinity Bellwoods

Beaches-Leslieville

Davisville

Midtown

South Etobicoke

Bloor West

“Homes with character, renovated and modernized tend to have the most appeal,” it continued. “Mature neighbourhoods, particularly the more modernized ones, are also in high demand.”

Kevin Jiang

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