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# FIRST TIME HOME BUYING

We're REALTORS®  
Real Estate Is Our Life.

For most of us, buying our first home is an exciting experience, full of anticipation and opportunity. Not only can residential real estate be a good investment, but home ownership also provides a necessary refuge in an ever-changing world. Whatever your reasons for buying, be sure to go about it the right way or it can become a time-consuming and frustrating event. Enlist the services of a REALTOR who specializes in the type of property you would like to buy.

Before your first meeting, here are some suggestions to bring your first home into focus:

## Plan ahead

Make up a 'buying blueprint' based on your needs and wants. Establish your basic requirements first – for example, three bedrooms or a formal dining room – and then rate your needs in priority order according to their importance. Don't forget to list your wants – the things you would like to have if you can afford them and they are available.

## Decide where you want to live

Consider your total life in helping to pinpoint the location of your residence. Where do you work? Would you mind a long commute? Do you prefer life in the city or does the unhurried pace of a small town or rural acreage appeal to you? How do you spend your leisure time? Consider all the possibilities and be prepared to tell your REALTOR where you don't want to live as well as where you do.

## Consider your options

Survey the housing alternatives available in the marketplace and choose the one that best suits your current and anticipated lifestyle.

- **New homes** come with warranties and are built to contemporary standards. But don't expect full-grown trees and the character that comes with the years.
- **Resale homes** are more likely to have established lawns and gardens, but repairs may be needed and the decorating may not be to your taste.

- **Townhouses** and **condominiums** often mean sharing a common wall, hallways, landscaping and parking areas with your neighbours. If you opt for a condominium, you will have to become a voting member of the condominium corporation and pay a monthly fee to maintain common areas.
- **Rural** and **small town properties** are often less expensive than properties in the city, but commuting expenses are higher and community services more limited.

## Complement your lifestyle

Proximity to schools is very important for families with young children. You may wish to consider the amount of traffic on the street and the availability of special programs (such as Special Education or French Immersion). Access to shopping, recreational facilities or public transportation could be features that help you to choose one neighbourhood over another.

## Taste and personal preference

The style of home you choose, whether modern or Victorian, will reflect your personal taste, but don't let it blind you to the home's other attractive points.

## Look to the future

A number of factors may have an impact on what your property will be worth in the future. Plans for construction of a highway nearby or zoning bylaws that may limit additions or renovations could affect the value of your home. A local REALTOR can discuss these issues with you.

Above all, be informed and don't be afraid to ask questions. REALTORS have broad and current knowledge of most areas affecting your purchase and can make recommendations that save you time and effort as you look for the home of your dreams.



Compliments of the Alberta Real Estate Association  
Revised March 2003