

BUYER'S GUIDE

Let's find your perfect home

STRATA
REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE

ANDREW BRUNNER

647-272-5084 | ANDREW.BRUNNER@STRATA.CA



There are so many things to consider when buying real estate.

From narrowing your search criteria to making an offer—there's a lot at stake in this process.

As your agent, I have two objectives: To find you the right property, and make sure you're well-positioned to secure it. If I can fulfil those two goals (while making things as seamless as possible)—then everybody wins.

In this guide, you'll find everything you need to know about the purchasing process. Come back to it during each stage of your transaction. And of course, reach out if you have questions.

In the meantime, I hope you'll partner with me to make your homeownership dreams a reality!

Sincerely,

Andrew Brunner





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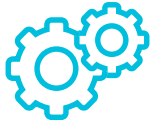
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The background image shows a bright, minimalist interior. A light-colored wooden table holds a tall, grey, tiered vase with dried orange flowers, a small woven basket, and two glass candle holders. To the left, a stack of patterned pillows (black and white geometric, and yellow and black geometric) sits on a wooden surface. A large window with white frames and sheer curtains is in the background, letting in natural light. The floor is made of light wood, and a piece of natural fiber rug is visible in the foreground.

GETTING READY

Buying real estate is an exciting adventure!
But just like any other adventure, your journey will require some
planning. Although you may run into hiccups, being prepared
will help you navigate them with ease.



Working with an Agent

Our city is filled with thousands of agents. So it's important to choose someone you feel most confident with. Here are some of the reasons why I can represent you best.

I'm local.

Let's face it—real estate is a local business. That's why it's important to work with someone who not only understands market trends, but also 'gets' the lifestyle that comes with living in this city. I'll ensure your property search is targeted to the schools, parks and other amenities that matter most to you.

After all, your new home will lay the foundation for designing a life you've always dreamed of.

I rely on data.

It is my sincere opinion that everyone should have access to timely statistics, so they can make informed purchasing decisions. That's why I'm with a brokerage famous for its real-time data on the GTA real estate market.

Not interested in reviewing graphs and spreadsheets? Not a problem. I'm happy to summarize the market for you.

My business comes from referrals.

Sure, traditional marketing is important for any growing business. But I've built a healthy following thanks to happy clients who have personally recommended me to their family and friends. In my opinion, referrals are a very strong measure of service quality.



When you work with me, I'll make sure these questions are answered:

- ✓ What type of home, such as a condo or freehold, would make most sense for me?
- ✓ Which neighbourhoods are best suited for my lifestyle?
- ✓ How much will I need for a down payment?
- ✓ How can I be best represented during negotiations?



Mortgage Pre-approval

I strongly advise my buyer clients to get a mortgage pre-approval, if they haven't done so already. I've seen firsthand how disheartening it can be to fall in love with a property, only to discover last-minute that it's not within budget.

To avoid surprises, get pre-approved upfront. I'm happy to introduce you to excellent mortgage brokers who can help.

What factors influence how much mortgage you qualify for?

✓ Down Payment

The money you can pay upfront on the closing day for the property.

✓ Credit Score

Indicates how worthy you are to receive new credit, and the likelihood you will pay your bills on time.

✓ Debt Service Ratio

Determines if you have the capacity to make your mortgage payments. It is calculated by dividing your monthly debt by your monthly income (before taxes).

✓ Current Employment

Your annual income and job stability will also be considered.





Down Payment 101

A down payment is the money you must pay upfront when buying a property. This lump sum can come from your personal savings, or even a financial gift from your family. It's usually shown as a percentage of your home's purchase price.

Homes priced under \$1M

Minimum 5% down on the first \$500,000, then 10% on every dollar above \$500,000

Homes priced \$1M and up

Full 20% down payment is required

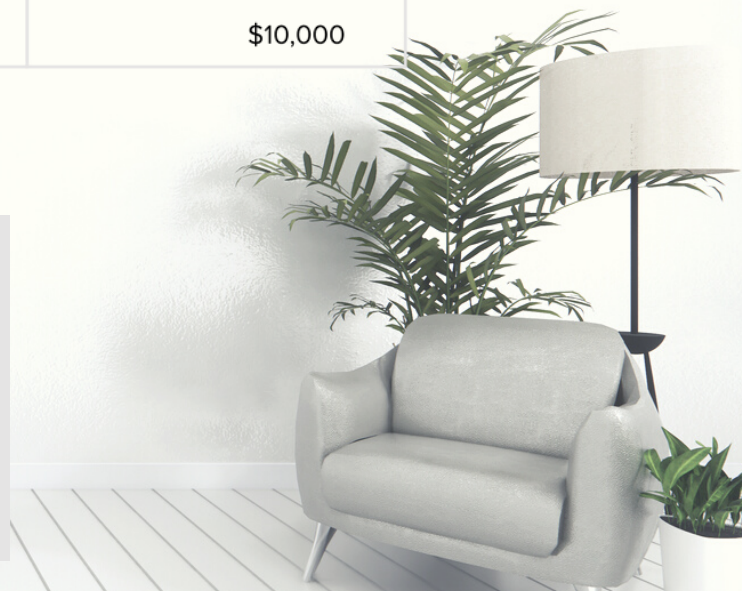
Let's calculate your minimum down payment using a \$600,000 home as an example:

| Calculation | Formula | Amount (\$) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 5% on the first \$500,000 | $5\% \times \$500,000$ | \$25,000 |
| 10% on every remaining dollar | $10\% \times \$100,000$ | \$10,000 |

Minimum Down Payment: \$35,000

A larger down payment will:

- ✓ Typically allow you to afford a home in a higher price point
- ✓ Result in lower monthly mortgage payments because you're borrowing less overall



A top-down view of a workspace featuring a silver laptop keyboard in the upper right, a spiral-bound notebook with a pencil in the lower right, and several white peonies with green leaves on the left. A semi-transparent white box with a light blue shadow is centered over the image, containing the title and two paragraphs of text.

FINDING YOUR HOME

Once you've laid the financial groundwork, now comes the exciting part: Starting your home search.

Although you can look at available listings online, I can personally curate a number of properties we can view together. But to do that, we'll have to determine a few things first.

Did you know
there are three
ways to own
property?



Types of Home Ownership

Let's define them, so you can choose the ownership type that's right for you.



Freehold

Most properties fall into this ownership category, including detached and semi-detached houses and many townhomes. You not only purchase the actual dwelling, but you also own the land it sits on.



Condominium

When you buy into a condo, you have titled ownership of your unit and shared ownership of the common spaces and amenities.



Co-op

You own a portion of the building as a whole, and have exclusive use of your unit. But unlike a condominium, you do not actually own your unit. There are a lot of drawbacks to purchasing a co-op that we should discuss if you see one of interest.





Features to Consider

The next step is to distinguish which property features are essential, and which ones you could live without.

Needs versus 'nice-to-haves'

Whether it's a lake view or guest bedroom for your mom, each feature comes at a cost. So how much is that feature worth to you?

Here are some commonly-sought after features:

- Large backyard for children
- Extra space for a home office
- Easy access to major highways
- Two-car garage

Location, location, location

Very few buyers have zero criteria when it comes to the areas they'd like to live. Beyond the actual property, I can help you consider some crucial location factors.

School districts:

If you have children, the quality of local schools can be highly important. But you may have to pay a premium to live in a good school district.

Transit:

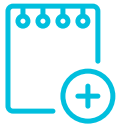
Do you need easy access to public transportation or major highways? If so, you'll want a location that reduces your overall commuting time.

Natural amenities:

Living near parks, walking trails or the beach can dramatically increase your quality of life. Because so many people value green spaces, property values tend to be higher in neighbourhoods surrounded by nature.

Privacy:

Be prepared to pay a premium if you want space from neighbours. Privacy is especially hard to come by in high-density neighbourhoods.



Additional Considerations

Depending on the property type—I advise my buyer clients to pay attention to certain features, and whether they meet the bar for your needs.

DETACHED & SEMI-DETACHED HOMES

Lot size

Bigger lots offer more flexibility, in case you want to expand your deck or add a home extension. But they will command a higher price, especially in high-density areas of the GTA.

Finished basement

Do you have children? Or maybe you want some extra space to entertain. Then a finished basement may be important to you. Although, homes with an unfinished basement will be more affordable.

Garage

Many properties come with a single garage to store your vehicle. But if you have more than one car, determine whether a two-car garage is a 'nice-to-have' or absolutely necessary.



FOR CONDOMINIUMS

Maintenance fees

All condo corporations charge maintenance fees on a per-square-foot (PSF) basis. I can certainly isolate buildings with the lowest fees PSF if that's of interest to you.

Note: Buildings with high maintenance fees per-square-foot are often poorly managed—something I'll advise on as the search unfolds.

Building amenities

Most condos offer a gym. Other common amenities include a games room, meeting/party room, library and pool. Amenities do influence maintenance fees, but very modestly.

Layout

No one wants to live with an awkward floor plan. So look for units with functional layouts, even if their square footage may be slightly smaller. These units typically sell faster and at a higher price. I'll be the first to point out inefficient layouts with wasted space.

View

Many buyers will gladly pay a premium for stunning views, whether it's of the lake, a ravine or Toronto sunset. That's why units on higher floors with south or southwestern exposures are usually in higher demand.



Submitting an Offer

When making an offer, we must do our best to ensure we've settled on the right negotiating and offer strategy. The approach must be taken on a case-by-case basis, and will be greatly influenced by market conditions.

What's included in an offer?

✓ Proposed purchase price

This is the amount of money you're offering to pay for the property.

✓ Deposit

This is the amount of money you're offering as collateral to secure the property and is usually provided within 24 hours of an accepted offer. It assures the seller that you're serious about this purchase, and you have every intention to complete the sale. On the closing date, the deposit will be deducted from your down payment.

✓ Conditions

Conditions are designed to protect you. For example, a financing condition will allow you to exit the purchase agreement, should your lender not approve your mortgage. Other conditions can include a home inspection or your lawyer's review of a condo status certificate.

✓ Irrevocable period

The irrevocable period is simply the timeframe you've given the seller to consider your offer before it expires. During this time, you are legally obligated to the terms of your offer. If the irrevocable period is reached without an agreement between both parties, the offer becomes null and void. The irrevocable period I would advise going with will depend on our overall negotiating strategy.

✓ Chattels included

Chattels are items inside the property that could be moved, but are included as part of the sale. The most common chattels referenced in the purchase agreement are appliances, such as the fridge, dishwasher and washer/dryer.

✓ Fixtures included






Fixtures are items that are 'nailed down' to the property, such as a built-in storage unit, light fixtures or a pre-fabricated fireplace. These fixtures are assumed to be included in the sale, unless they are expressly 'excluded' in the purchase agreement.





FINANCIAL & PROPERTY DUE DILIGENCE

Now that the offer is submitted,
let's understand what must be done
on your end—should that offer be accepted.



Deposits

Remember the deposit that was required to secure your offer? If that offer is successful, your deposit will be held in trust by the listing brokerage and applied towards your down payment.

Upon acceptance

The deposit must be submitted within 24 hours of the seller accepting your offer. This arrangement is most common.



Tip!

Have the funds ready in an easily accessible bank account before submitting the offer. This way, you'll avoid delays that can jeopardize the offer agreement.

Herewith

The deposit is submitted with the offer. This arrangement is common in multiple offer scenarios when you're competing with other buyers for the same property.



Tip!

A herewith deposit is a strong gesture that shows you're serious about buying the home, and that you have the money in hand should your offer be accepted.





Home Inspections

This examination is a buyer's last opportunity to discover problems within a home before purchasing. It's also a chance for the seller to address those problems and negotiate a solution with the buyer.

What are some of the elements an inspector will review?

- Interior plumbing & electrical systems
- Heating system & central air conditioning
- Walls, ceilings and floors
- Foundation, including basement condition

Who pays for the home inspection?

The buyer typically pays for it.

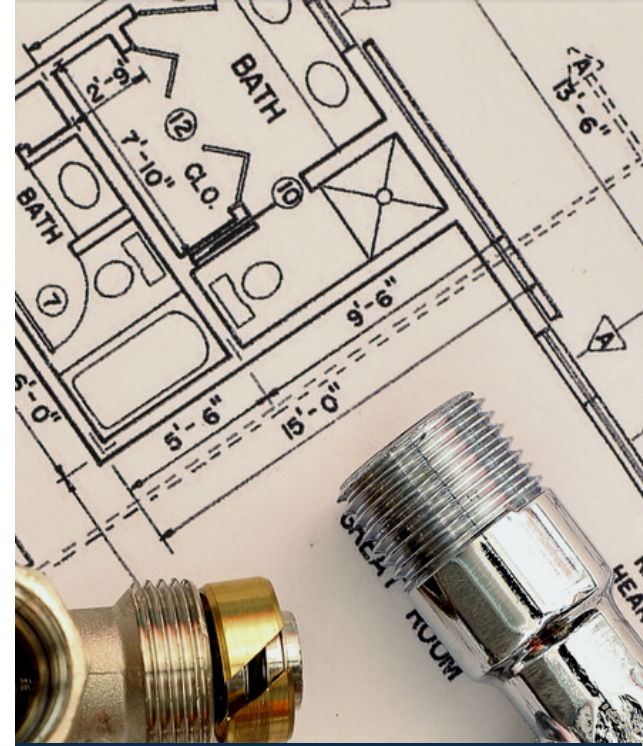
Sometimes though, sellers will have a home inspection completed before listing their property to reassure potential buyers.

If the inspection report is unbiased and has been provided by a reputable company, it may be helpful. However, if you'd prefer to conduct your own independent assessment, I can recommend some high-quality home inspectors.

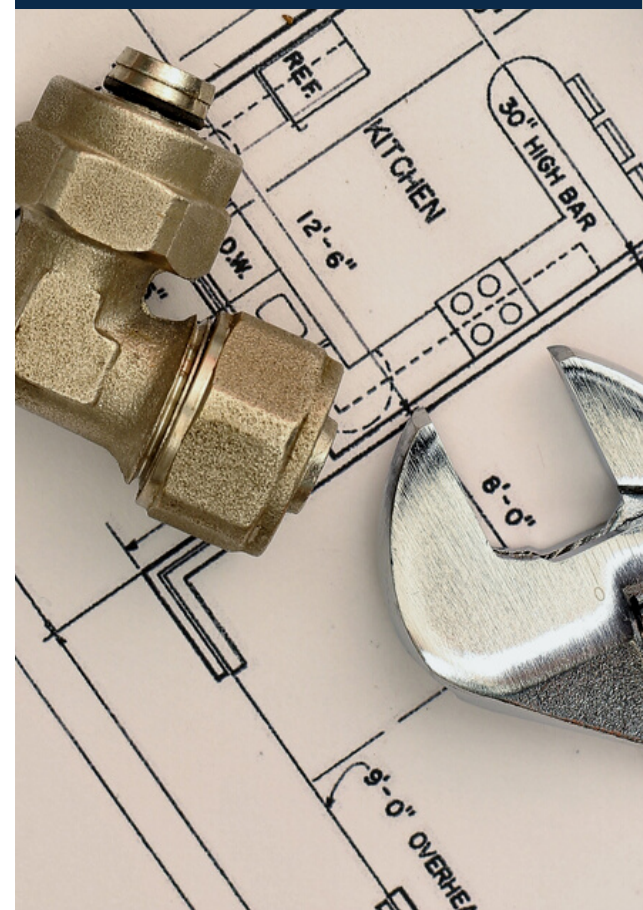
What happens if the inspector discovers issues?

It's very rare to see a home inspection report that is blemish-free. If you already know what a home inspector will be looking for, it'll be easier to sort out minor issues in advance.

If the home inspection reveals a deficiency that wasn't visible during showings and wasn't already disclosed by the seller or their agent, we would have grounds to reopen negotiations.



"Remember that
no home is
ever perfect."





Status Certificates

Because home inspections are not typically performed on condo units, a status certificate is needed to understand the financial, legal and structural integrity of the condominium.

This document is provided by the condo board to buyers of resale units. It provides valuable information on the financial and legal circumstances of the condominium corporation.

Here are some questions the status certificate will help you answer:

- ✓ Is the condo corporation involved in any lawsuits?
- ✓ Is there enough money in the reserve fund to address major repairs?
- ✓ For utilities, are the units metered separately?
- ✓ How many units are currently leased versus owner-occupied?

Get a legal opinion.

As an agent, I can put you in touch with a reputable real estate lawyer. They will review the status certificate, and look for underlying signals indicating if the condominium is in jeopardy.

For example, if it's an older building and there are outstanding repairs—this could be a sign maintenance fees will increase. Or if the board is involved in a lawsuit—this could hurt your chances of reselling the unit, or result in a special assessment.



A photograph of a brick house with a white door and a large evergreen tree on the left. The house has a dark roof and a small arched window above the door. A large evergreen tree is on the left side of the image. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center.

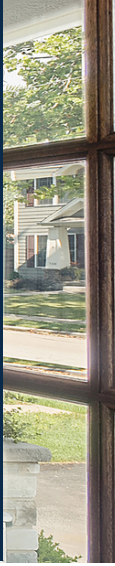

PREPARING FOR CLOSING

Closing day is an exciting time!
This is the day you finally take legal possession of your new home.
But before doing so, there are some final tasks that must be
completed prior to closing.



Pre-Closing Day Check List

- ☐ **Final walkthrough**
This is when we arrange a pre-closing visit to the property. During this walkthrough, we'll verify that the appliances and fixtures included in the sale are in working order.
- ☐ **Buy home insurance**
Before your bank advances the mortgage on closing day, they will require proof of home insurance.
- ☐ **Know how much cash is required**
You'll need to know exactly how much money is due on closing day. Make sure your lawyer provides a Statement of Adjustments, which will include an itemized breakdown of the cash required.
- ☐ **Have the cash ready**
Whether you're paying for the down payment and closing costs with savings or money from relatives—make sure the funds are in an easily-accessible bank account. Prior to closing day, have the money ready for withdrawal.



Did you know
the funds
required on
closing day can
be significant?

Closing Costs

It's crucial to understand what closing costs entail—even before starting your property search. This way, you can budget accordingly.

✓ Legal fees

In Ontario, it is mandatory to have a lawyer act on your behalf when buying a property.

- Approximately \$1,500 - \$2,000

✓ Title insurance

'Title' describes your legal ownership of a property and its land. Your lender may ask you to obtain title insurance, in case there's a dispute about such ownership. Most lawyers will recommend you have it.

- Approximately \$400

✓ Ontario Land Transfer Tax

This is a tax charged by the provincial government. If you're purchasing a property in the City of Toronto, you must pay an additional municipal tax.

- Percentage of purchase price





Land Transfer Tax

When you buy property in Ontario, you must pay a Land Transfer Tax (LTT). This provincial tax is determined by a percentage of the purchase price.

If you're buying within the City of Toronto, you'll have to pay a secondary tax to the municipal government. This is known as the Toronto Land Transfer Tax (TLTT).

Below is a breakdown of each tax, plus a sample calculation.

\$600,000 home in Toronto

- ✓ Ontario Land Transfer Tax
\$8,475
- ✓ Toronto Land Transfer Tax
\$8,475
- ✓ Total: \$16,950

ONTARIO LAND TRANSFER TAX

| Portion of Purchase Price | Marginal Tax Rate |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| \$55,000 and under | 0.5% |
| \$55,000 to \$250,000 | 1.0% |
| \$250,000 to \$400,000 | 1.5% |
| \$400,000 to \$2,000,000 | 2.0% |
| \$2,000,000+ | 2.0% |

TORONTO LAND TRANSFER TAX

| Portion of Purchase Price | Marginal Tax Rate |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| \$55,000 and under | 0.5% |
| \$55,000 to \$400,000 | 1.0% |
| \$400,000+ | 2.0% |



Did you know?

If you're a first-time homebuyer, you'll be eligible for a land transfer tax rebate equal to the full cost of your LTT, up to \$4,000.

In Toronto, first-time homebuyers can receive a refund of their municipal land transfer tax, up to \$4,475.



A modern living room with a white sofa, a large window, a snake plant, and a woven ottoman.

CLOSING DAY

Congratulations!
This is what we've been waiting for:
The day you officially become the owner
of your new home.



The Final Details

Your closing day will be particularly busy, but also very exciting!

Here's what you'll do today:

- ✓ Provide the remaining down payment, plus closing costs
- ✓ Sign off on final documents from your lawyer, related to the mortgage and mortgage loan
- ✓ Be officially listed as the property owner through a title transfer
- ✓ Receive the keys by end of business day

Your lawyer will facilitate the closing date payments and transfers. But I'll be there as usual if you need anything at all!



Let's Connect

Make your dreams a reality by buying your next home with me.

Whether you're in the research phase or ready to take the next step—I'm here for you.



Andrew Brunner

📞 647-272-5084

✉ andrew.brunner@strata.ca

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