
A BETTER PROPERTIES GUIDE

Toronto's Top Condos for Downsizers

12 buildings, ranked — for the move
from house to home.

**BETTER PROPERTIES
REAL ESTATE GROUP**

Royal LePage Signature Realty, Brokerage

WHY THIS LIST EXISTS

Most Toronto condos are glorified rental apartments.

After years of helping downsizers find the right condo — and then preparing their homes for sale — I can say this plainly: the majority of condos in this city were built to be rented, not lived in. Small suites. Thin walls. Investor-heavy hallways. That is not what you spent thirty years working for.

The right building changes everything. Generous floor plans. Concrete quiet. A concierge who knows your name. Neighbours who own, not rent. Walkable streets, real amenities, fees that make sense. This list is the fourteen buildings I point my own downsizing clients toward first — ranked by how well they deliver the life you're actually buying.

A note on honesty: buildings change. Management changes, fees change, reserve funds change. Treat this list as your shortlist, not your verdict — and read the status certificate on anything you consider. When you're ready to look, that's the part I help with.

— **Jim Emilson, Better Properties Real Estate Group**

HOW THE LIST WAS RANKED

Eight things that actually matter.

Suite size & layout — 2 bed plus den, 1,100+ sq ft. Room for guests, a home office and a dining table that seats the whole family.

Concrete construction — Soundproofing is the difference between a home and a hotel room you can't check out of.

Fees vs. what they cover — A higher fee covering heat, water, parking and amenities can beat a low fee covering nothing.

Reserve fund & management — A healthy fund and a serious manager protect your equity. Read the status certificate.

Walkability & transit — Groceries, healthcare and transit within a short walk. One day the car goes; the neighbourhood stays.

Pet policy — If there's a dog in the family, the building's rules decide before you do.

Parking, locker & guest suites — Underground parking, real storage and a guest suite for visiting family.

Elevators & accessibility — Reliable elevators and step-free access aren't luxuries at this stage. They're the point.

THE RANKED LIST

Fourteen buildings worth your shortlist.

01

Palace Pier & Palace Place

2045 Lake Shore Blvd W / 1 Palace Pier Ct — Humber Bay Shores, Etobicoke

The classic downsizer move. Generous suites, a genuinely social established community, waterfront trails at your door, and management that has kept these buildings desirable for decades.

BEST FOR Space, serenity and community — with the city still in reach.

WATCH Older buildings: the status certificate and reserve fund matter more than the lobby. Some suites are ready for updating.

02

The Residences of 488 University

488 University Ave — Downtown

Hotel-style living on one of the city's most beautiful streets: valet, concierge, spa with pool, sauna and steam room, café downstairs, and the subway at your door.

BEST FOR Full-service living where the car becomes optional.

WATCH Downtown premium. The fees reflect the service level — make sure you'll use what you pay for.

03

Avoca Vale

38 Avoca Ave — Midtown, bordering David Balfour Park

An elegant respite on the park's edge. Suites run from a comfortable 639 sq ft all the way to a house-like 2,800 sq ft, most with ravine or city views, plus a library and landscaped courtyard with gazebo and barbecue.

BEST FOR Park-side calm with midtown convenience — and all-inclusive fees.

WATCH Boutique building, so the right suite doesn't come up often. Be ready to move when it does.

04

Village Gate

18 & 19 Lower Village Gate — Forest Hill

Two seven-storey buildings, 164 suites, in the heart of Forest Hill. Spacious 1,200–1,450 sq ft layouts with large balconies or patios and floor-to-ceiling windows — urban luxury without the tower feel.

BEST FOR Staying in the neighbourhood you love, minus the stairs and the shovelling.

WATCH Low-rise living means elevator reliability matters. Ask about it.

05

Harbour Square

33 Harbour Square — Waterfront

An established waterfront community with the generous floor plans new buildings rarely offer. Downtown's restaurants, theatres and the lake are all a short walk away.

BEST FOR Waterfront living with downtown at your doorstep.

WATCH Building age again: read the status certificate like your money depends on it — it does.

06

Shangri-La Residences

180 University Ave — Downtown

Five-star hotel amenities, over-height ceilings and top-tier finishes — with maintenance fees that are remarkably reasonable for the luxury tier. After decades of hard work, some buyers simply choose to spoil themselves.

BEST FOR The no-compromise luxury option.

WATCH A lifestyle choice, not an investment thesis. Buy it to live beautifully in it.

07

Grand Harbour

2285 & 2287 Lake Shore Blvd W — Humber Bay Shores, Etobicoke

An elegant building in a pristine, serene lakefront setting — one of the waterfront's most peaceful addresses, and a building I know well.

BEST FOR Serene lakefront living in an elegant building.

WATCH Condo fees run high — make sure the lifestyle justifies the carrying cost.

08

200 Russell Hill

200 Russell Hill Rd — Forest Hill

Boutique, quiet, prestigious — large suites in one of the city's blue-chip pockets. The kind of building where neighbours know each other.

BEST FOR Blue-chip neighbourhood continuity in a smaller footprint.

WATCH Limited turnover. Patience — or an agent watching daily — wins here.

09

Pier 27

39 Queens Quay E — Waterfront

True waterfront living with resort-style amenities, walkable to the St. Lawrence Market, the Distillery and downtown culture. The rare balance of tranquility and city access.

BEST FOR The lake as your front yard, the city as your backyard.

WATCH Waterfront exposure: check suite orientation and window condition.

10

Marina Del Rey

2261, 2267 & 2269 Lake Shore Blvd W — Mimico waterfront, Etobicoke

Three established towers on the Mimico waterfront: the lake, the trails and a real neighbourhood feel — the Humber Bay lifestyle at a more approachable price.

BEST FOR Waterfront calm and community, sensibly priced.

WATCH Older buildings: status certificate and reserve fund first, as always.

11

Mabelle — Tridel

5, 7 & 9 Mabelle Ave — Islington, Etobicoke

Newer Tridel buildings with top-tier, retirement-grade amenities and the subway close by. Purpose-built for exactly this stage of life.

BEST FOR West-end downsizers who want new construction plus transit.

WATCH Newer-building premium. Confirm pet and suite-size policies before you fall in love.

12

One Hurontario

1 Hurontario St — Port Credit, Mississauga

A prime Port Credit waterfront address with seamless transit, village shops and lakefront trails. Downsizing doesn't have to mean downtown.

BEST FOR Village life on the water, with the GO train in your pocket.

WATCH If your doctors, friends and grandkids are Toronto-centred, map the drive honestly.

13

66 Collier

66 Collier St — Yorkville fringe

Yorkville's shops and restaurants without the Yorkville price tag. A favourite for buyers who want the neighbourhood's polish on a saner budget.

BEST FOR Luxury-adjacent living, sensibly priced.

WATCH Smaller building — weigh the amenity package against the fees.

14

20 Dean Park

20 Dean Park Rd, Unit 510 — Rouge Hill E11, Scarborough

The space-per-dollar champion: around 1,800 sq ft, 2 bed plus den, in a quiet established community near Highway 401 and Rouge National Urban Park — recently around \$650,000. A house-sized condo without the house-sized upkeep.

BEST FOR Maximum space for the money, with east-end roots.

WATCH Car-dependent. If downtown is your daily life, this isn't it.

BEFORE YOU FALL IN LOVE

Five traps that catch downsizers.

The glorified rental. Small suites, thin walls, investor-heavy ownership. Too many Toronto condos were built to be rented, not lived in — and it shows in the hallways, the noise and the resale.

Fee shock. Low fees today can mean a sick reserve fund tomorrow. A special assessment can erase years of “savings.” Read the status certificate every single time.

Pet policies. Large-dog restrictions eliminate half the buildings in this city. We learned this the hard way with clients — check the rules before you fall in love with the suite.

Investor buildings. High tenant turnover means more wear, bent rules and a different hallway culture. Ask about the owner-occupancy ratio.

New-build roulette. Assignments, delays, finishes that don't match the brochure. When you can walk the actual suite you'll live in, do that.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Talk with us.

The list gets you started. The right choice comes from walking buildings, reading status certificates, and knowing which questions the listing won't answer. That's the work we do every week — first finding the condo, then preparing your home for the sale that funds it.

Message Jim on WhatsApp at **416-523-3964**, or start at **betterproperties.ca**.

Better Properties, Better Presentation, Better Negotiation.