

6. How Can You Find the Right Home?



Once you figure out what you can afford to pay for a house and obtain a pre-qualified mortgage, you are ready to start your search. There are a variety of sources you can use to find the home that is right for you:

- **Word of mouth.** By telling everyone you know that you are looking for a house, you might hear about homes that are just becoming available on the market.
- **Newspapers and real estate magazines.** Check the new homes section in daily newspapers or look for real estate magazines available at newsstands, convenience stores and other outlets. These free publications feature pictures and brief descriptions of a variety of homes.
- **The Internet.** Check out real estate websites, such as <http://www.mls.ca> for information and pictures of a wide range of properties. This site allows you to narrow your search by location, price, number of bedrooms and other features.
- **"For Sale" signs.** Drive around a neighbourhood that interests you and look for "For Sale" signs. This is a good way to find homes that are being sold by the owner.
- **Visit new development sites.** If you are looking for a newly built home, this will allow you to see the different models available and to get information from builders.
- **Work with a real estate agent.** For most buyers, a real estate agent is the key to finding the right home.

Useful Tips for Your Search

- **Keep records.** Whether you work with a real estate agent or search by yourself, it's a good idea to visit lots of different homes before choosing one. To make sure you have all the information you need to compare homes, use detailed notes and pictures. Don't forget to consider the home's utility costs, property taxes and major repairs, as these will affect your monthly housing expenses. Ask to see copies of bills. You should also be ready to compromise. Chances are you won't find a home that has everything you want.
- **Check out the existing financing on the property.** It may be possible to take over a favourable existing mortgage from the vendor or even obtain a vendor take back mortgage in order to help close the deal.
- **Think twice.** Even if a home seems perfect, go back and take a closer, more critical look at it. Visit on different days and times, chat with prospective neighbours and look beyond cosmetics.