

# RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

AURORA/KING  
VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5

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Published By:



THE AURORAN • www.theauroran.com  
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## Turn your new house into a home

Historically low mortgage interest rates are helping to drive a new wave of home sales. Statistics Canada's Canadian Housing Survey found about half of Canadian households have either moved within the past five years or intend to do so within the next five.

People relocate for various reasons. After moving into a new house, it can take some effort to turn that house into a true home and feel comfortable in your new environs. These steps can help that process along.

**Create at least one complete and serene space.** Focus on setting up the bedroom so you can retreat at the end of the day. Invest in new furniture or get new bedding to give the room this comforting feeling.

**Create an organizational plan.** It can be tempting to want to throw everything in closets and unpack quickly, but give yourself time to fully analyze where you want to store items, where you may need to paint or reconfigure spaces, as well as any home improvements you want to make before taking out all of your stuff. When you fully unpack, you can immediately enjoy your hard work.

**Hang artwork.** Hang a few select pieces of artwork or family photos shortly after moving in. Surround yourself with things that make you feel good.

**Bring mementos.** Your first home may bring about warm feelings. While you can't recreate it entirely, you can use a piece of furniture or a few family heirlooms to make your new space feel homey.

**Rely on familiar scents.** Break in the new space with familiar aromas, whether it's preferential air fresheners, scented candles or baking your favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe.

Moving into a new home can be exciting. Certain touches can help make the new space feel more like home.



## How home design trends are evolving for social distancing

COVID-19 has brought changes to everything, and home design is no exception. Experts are expecting to see lasting impacts on everything from the materials we use to the rooms we prioritize. Check out these and other noteworthy trends:

**HOUSES OVER APARTMENTS:** Many people who live in condos or apartments do so to be closer to the action — work, entertainment and shops — and never planned on spending much time at home. But the pandemic has changed that, and more people are going to want a home that offers plenty of room and outdoor space in case they need to self-isolate again.

**SELF-SUFFICIENCY:** A hard lesson we've learned is that things and services we thought we could

count on aren't necessarily a sure thing, so items that increase self-reliance will become very popular. Expect to see more homes with sources of energy like solar panels, sources of heat like fireplaces and stoves, and even urban and indoor gardens that allow you to grow your own produce.

**OUTDOOR LIVING:** Between playgrounds closing and parks becoming overcrowded, many of us are turning to our balconies, patios and backyards for fresh air and nature. This means we're going to be investing more in our outdoor spaces, with functional kitchens, soothing water features, cozy firepits, and high-quality outdoor furniture to create a much-needed escape.

**HEALTHIER SPACES:** Thanks to spending more time indoors and reprioritizing our health, we'll turn to design to help ensure our homes are safe and healthy for our families. We'll see a rise in products like water filtration systems as well as materials that improve indoor air quality. For new homes and additions, alternatives to wood-framing like insulated concrete forms from Nudura, which

offer improved ventilation for healthier indoor air quality and an environment that's less susceptible to mold, will be key.

**HOME OFFICE SPACE:** Business experts are suggesting many companies will see that working from home is not only possible but offers tangible benefits, like saving money on office space rent. With working from home on the rise, creating a home office space that inspires productivity will be a major project many of us tackle. Luxury home office furniture that feels chic and blends into your décor as well as ergonomic chairs and desks will see a major boost.

**CUSTOM AND QUALITY:** With the hit to the economy, people are going to be buying less, but what they do buy will be better quality, while at the same time making an effort to support American businesses. When it comes to design, trends will shift to locally made furniture, custom-built homes and pieces and materials that stand the test of time.

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By Julien Laurion  
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

## Flags For Aurora

**MY FELLOW AURORANS**, this month I wanted to use this space to share my empathy and support for our community as we navigate through this pandemic. We have embarked on a whole new journey. We have not seen a disruption like this in our history. It is truly amazing how quickly life can change in a matter of months. The impacts of this virus have been far-reaching; job loss, deaths of loved ones and the freedom to move about in our daily life without fear or worry.

The economy has been hit hard with almost two million Canadians losing their jobs this past month, which is both sad and shocking. As a business owner myself, this pandemic has changed everything and given me much to think about in the days since we entered into a state of emergency. In both the personal and professional, I feel that we, as a community, will have some real obstacles to overcome in the coming months to get back on our feet. I have admired so

many of my friends and colleagues who are looking for ways to help and continue to be inspired by their family and work life. With this in mind, the Flags for Aurora Campaign was born.

As I have experienced a major shift in my professional life, I began to explore my passion for wood-working to keep busy and I began to create wooden Canadian flags for family. It occurred to me that I can offer these to the community and mobilize our collective goodwill and Canadian spirit to raise money for a charity in need and brighten up our backyards this summer, while we spend a lot of time at home.

The Flags for Aurora campaign will last until Canada Day with a goal to raise \$1000 minimum for the Aurora Food Pantry. A portion of the proceeds from each flag sold will be directed to the Food pantry. I hope to help our local businesses by buying all my supplies here in Aurora and will share on my social platforms; we all need a little light shone on us during this time.

If you are interested in purchasing a flag, please visit my website [www.bigtuna.ca](http://www.bigtuna.ca) and click the link 'flags for aurora'. From there, please fill out the order form and I will be in contact with you shortly. Each flag will sell for \$120.00 with \$40.00 from each flag going to charity.

I know we will get through this so let us stay Aurora Strong.

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna, is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and have been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or [julien@bigtuna.ca](mailto:julien@bigtuna.ca) or by alternatively visiting my website [www.bigtuna.ca](http://www.bigtuna.ca) or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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**We have waited to sell until the pandemic ends, is now a better time?**

While many wanting to sell their home this Spring paused taking this action due to the COVID-19 pandemic; others needing to sell have been successful within a month of the home being placed for sale. The more preparation in advance of placing the home on the market while staying safe at home will benefit how the home attracts buyers.

Book a video conference consultation with a REALTOR® to discuss your home selling needs. The upside to a thorough marketing consultation with a Seller's Representative Specialist (SRS) is they will be able to guide and provide the best plan of action checklist to prepare the home for sale.

It's essential to consider the risks of potential exposure to COVID-19 with the home placed for sale if it's currently occupied or even if it's vacant and have that discussion with your REALTOR®, COVID-19 protocols would be a necessary conversation around safely navigating through physical showings. Will Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) be provided and health checklists signed prior to showings? How much of the process can be handled safer with virtual means right up until the closing of the sale? Ideally the REALTOR® may be able to provide virtual staging, guided live interactive walk through videos for buyers since open houses have been stopped.

Ask if negotiations and offers can also be handled electronically. Pricing is crucial as always and a detailed comparative market assessment would need to be reviewed virtually as well. Marketing the home in the best clean, repaired, bright and spacious condition is essential for photography and video.

Buyer demand is strong yet the experience of shopping for a home has shifted online more than ever before and quality images matter. Does the REALTOR® use drone video and images? Do they use Matterport technology or iGuide for images, floor plans, video walkthroughs and what is the difference? Seller's in most cases want to be sure that Buyer's are indeed serious and well educated before they are permitted for safe physical showings. Buyer's agents need to ask more questions to uncover all of their clients needs, wants, pre-qualified budgets and lifestyle preferences to be a more suitable home finding matchmaker.

- Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Assistant Manager, Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES® for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate, Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

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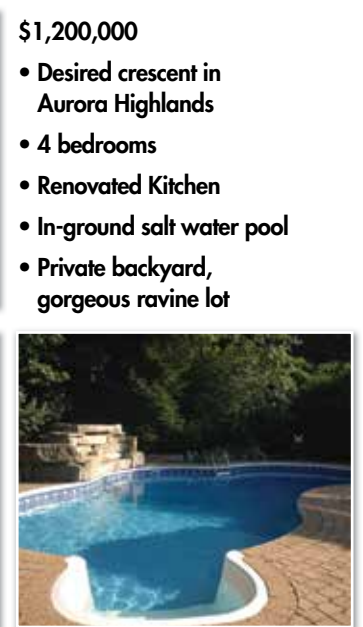
**Did you know?**

Outdoor living is wildly popular, as more and more homeowners are bringing elements once reserved for home interiors into their backyards.

When designing outdoor living spaces, homeowners may learn about biophilic design, an architectural concept that aims to incorporate natural elements into outdoor living spaces. Proponents of biophilic design say it satisfies an innate human need to affiliate with nature, thereby helping to reduce stress that people may experience after being stuck indoors for much of their days. Biophilic design is often part of a home interior design, but many homeowners also embrace it when designing their outdoor living spaces. For example, surrounding outdoor living areas with noninvasive plants, flowers and trees and using natural materials like wood and stone when building such spaces are great ways to embrace biophilic design and create a tension-free ambiance in outdoor living spaces.



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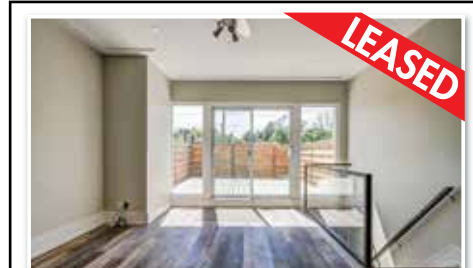
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# 3 perennial gardening pointers

Gardening is an engaging hobby that can provide a host of benefits, some of which may surprise even the most devoted gardeners.

For example, the Harvard Medical School notes that just 30 minutes of gardening activities burns 135 calories, making gardening a fun and simple way to incorporate more exercise into your daily routine. In addition, scientists have long proven that gardening releases the hormones serotonin and dopamine in the brain, each of which are associated with improved mood.

Perennial gardens can be especially attractive to seasoned gardeners and novices. Perennials are plants that come back year after year, and committing to a perennial garden can ensure people stick with gardening for the long haul, reaping all of the rewards that come with making such a commitment.

Before planting a perennial garden, those new to gardening may want to consider these three tips.

**1** Make a plan. A perennial garden comes back year after year, which means any mistakes you make when planting are likely to haunt you year after year as well. Factors like space and location must be considered before planting. Many gardeners utilize garden planning applications like GrowVeg to make the process of planning a garden simpler and more organized. Such applications can be especially useful for novices.

**2** Consider aesthetics. Gardens can be awe-inspiring, especially when gardeners consider aesthetics prior to planting. The DIY Network advises gardeners to consider scale before choosing which perennials to plant. Tall plants and wide beds tend to look best outside large homes, while short plants in small beds tend to look better outside small homes.

**3** Work with a professional. Local garden centres can be excellent resources when planning perennial gardens. Representatives at such businesses can offer tips on native plants, which will be more likely to thrive year after year than non-natives. Such representatives also can help you choose the right plants based on the amount of sunlight the plants will likely get after being planted. Each of these factors can be easily overlooked by people without much gardening experience.

Perennial gardens can provide years of joy and inspiration, especially when gardeners give ample attention to certain details prior to planting.



## 8 garden tools for beginners

The right tool for the job is essential to working safely and efficiently. This is as true in the workplace as it is in the garden.

Novice gardeners may not know where to begin in regards to which tools they need. The following are eight items that can serve as a solid foundation for beginning gardeners.

**GLOVES:** Your hands will be working hard, so it pays to protect them from calluses, blisters, splinters, insects, and dirt. Look for water-resistant gloves that are also breathable.

**HAND PRUNERS:** Hand pruners are essential for cutting branches, cleaning up shrubs, dead-heading flowers, and various other tasks. Choose ergonomic, no-slip handles that will make work easier. Rust-resistant, nonstick blades also are handy.

**WHEELBARROW:** A wheelbarrow can transport gear to garden beds or tote dirt, leaves, rocks, and other materials around the landscape. A good wheelbarrow is strong but light enough to maneuver when full.

**LOPPERS:** Long-handled loppers will fit the bill for thick branches. The long handles provide leverage to cut through branches an inch or more in diameter.

**HAND TROWEL:** A hand trowel is a handy tool that lets you dig holes or unearth weeds. While shopping for a trowel, consider getting a hand-held garden fork, which can aerate soil and cut through roots.

**HOSE/WATERING CAN:** Keeping gardens hydrated is part of ensuring their health. That makes a hose and a watering can two invaluable tools to have around. Invest in a lightweight, expandable hose if storage space is at a premium. An adjustable nozzle will enable you to customize the water flow as needed. A watering can is an easy way to tote water to hard-to-reach pots and containers.

**GARDEN KNEELER:** Gardeners often bend and kneel while working in the soil. That puts pressure on the back and knees. A comfortable garden kneeler with memory foam or one made from shock-absorbing material can reduce aches and pains.

**GARDEN HOE:** Garden hoes till soil, remove weeds and perform many other tasks. A garden hoe can be used along with a full-sized shovel, trowel and garden rake.

This list is just the tip of the garden tool iceberg. Visit a garden centre and speak with a professional about other tools that can be added to the mix.



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# How to maintain your gas grill

**GRILLING IS A WILDLY POPULAR** way to cook meals. According to a 2018 survey from The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, 70 percent of adults in the United States owned a grill in 2017, while 80 percent of Canadians could make that same claim. While grill ownership figures have remained relatively steady over the last 20 years, spending on grills has been on the rise and industry-wide revenue is expected to reach \$7.2 billion by 2022.

Such figures illustrate that grills have become increasingly significant investments. The HPBA survey found that gas grills are the most popular type of grill, and adults investing in a new gas grill would be wise to protect such investments by learning how to maintain them. Weber\*, one of the world's leading manufacturers of gas grills, offers the following maintenance tips to gas grill owners who want their grills to keep cooking great meals for years to come.

**Clean the outside of the grill lid.** A paper towel and some cleaner can help gas grill owners keep their grills looking good on the outside. If your grill has a porcelain-coated lid, use glass cleaner. Stainless steel cleaner can be applied to stainless steel lids. When cleaning a stainless steel grill, use a microfiber towel and buff with the grain instead of against it for the best results.

**Don't overlook the side tables.** Many people love gas grills because the side tables provide a great place to place cooking utensils or spices and other special ingredients. Keeping these tables clean can prevent the formation of potentially harmful bacteria and also maintain the appearance of the grill. Use a microfiber towel and stainless steel cleaner, again making sure to buff with the grain, if cleaning a stainless steel side table. Tables made of thermoset plastic can be cleaned using a mild dish detergent and warm water.

**Don't shy away from cleaning the cook box.** The cook box can seem like an intimidating part to clean, but Weber notes that it's actually quite simple to maintain the cook box. Wait until the grill is completely cool before you carefully remove the cooking grates and Flavorizer bars. Then use a stainless steel brush to brush all excess grease and debris into the bottom tray. Once all of that is in the tray, it's easily discarded.

**Burn off leftover residue.** Let heat help you when trying to remove stubborn food debris from your grill. Turn all burners on high for 15 minutes before grilling. As the temperatures rise, any remaining debris will turn to ash, making it easy to remove using a stainless steel brush.

Maintaining a gas grill can help it ensure it's around to cook delicious meals for years to come.



## Real Estate Market Update – Aurora

### Carefully Selling Homes

The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused a global pause and shift to staying at home and minimizing all outings to stay safe and healthy. The strong start to the 2020 housing market has shifted to caution and necessity as the drivers until the Ontario and Canadian governments declare safer times. Interacting face to face happens with social distancing now and the recommendation of wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for outings which should be limited. Real Estate has remained an essential service throughout the pandemic and many who need to sell are still achieving success across the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board.

There were 2,975 sales across Toronto and the Greater Toronto area in the month of April with very low inventory of homes for sale to select from which lead to multiple offer scenarios in many cases. In Aurora, 40 homes sold at an average price of \$943,712 and there were 81 homes placed for sale with 158 homes in total for sale as of May 1st. With the current demand from buyers to meet the supply of homes it would take just under 3 months to deplete that current homes for sale inventory of all home types.

Typically, Seller's received 97 per cent of the asking price within a month of placing the home for sale in April.

The average price for a detached home was \$1,182,150; even in times of pandemic, homes are still maintaining their values while interest rates remain low. Buyer's in need to make a purchase continue to shop virtually and can attend live streamed open houses. Showings may be more limited as Seller's agents follow COVID-19 protocols and encourage most of the shopping to occur online prior to home visits.

Call your real estate professional for a video conference to discuss your real estate needs and examine the area statistics in depth as you plan your next move.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is a Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SR® ABR® SRES®, Assistant Manager, Mentors and Develops New Real Estate Sales Representatives for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate, Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

\*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Real Estate Board; Regional Housing Market Tables; York Region, Aurora for April 2020 and the Summary of Existing Home Transactions of all home types, April 2020 for all TRREB Areas.

\*\*\*Not intended to solicit those currently under a real estate contract.



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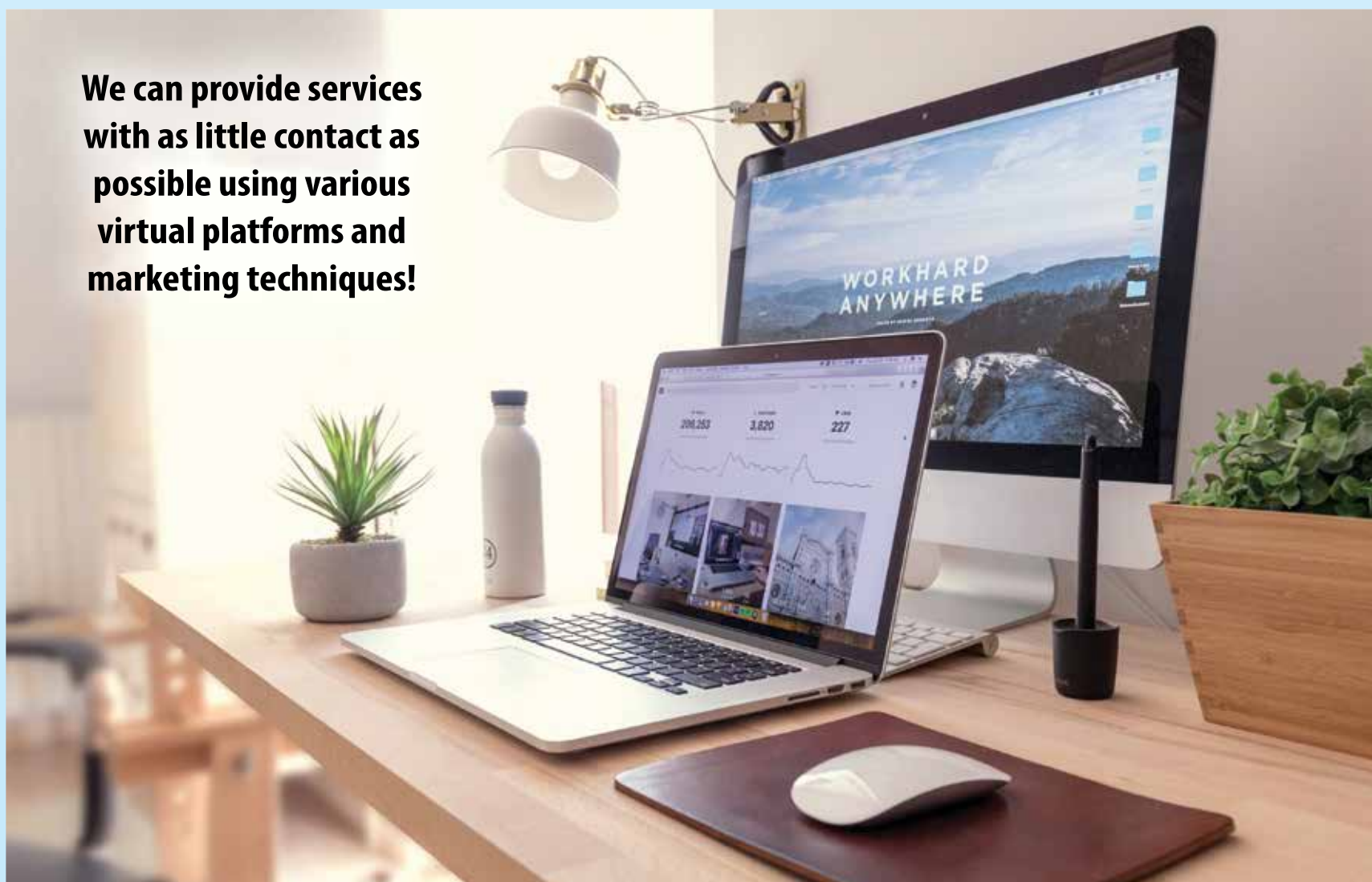


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## As Essential Workers We Are Here To Help You!

Despite Covid-19 there are those who need to buy or sell out of necessity and we have adopted the necessary measures to safely help you do so! Call us to talk about your needs, concerns or questions regarding our COVID protocol.

We can provide services with as little contact as possible using various virtual platforms and marketing techniques!



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