

# RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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## Top home renovations to invest in this fall

(NC) Today, many families are focused on improving their homes instead of spending money on vacations and entertainment outside. With autumn as your last major chance to renovate before the winter, here are some of the best projects to tackle now for maximum enjoyment of your space.

### UPGRADE YOUR KITCHEN

The kitchen is the heart of your home, and where you'll be spending lots of time cooking for the holidays and entertaining your small social circle. So, give it a facelift to make sure it's a bright and welcoming environment. A great DIY project is painting the cabinets in a bold or warm shade and updating the hardware in a metallic neutral. You can also invest in sleek, energy-efficient appliances for a clean, modern aesthetic and get fresh seasonal linens for your tablescapes.

### FINISH YOUR BASEMENT

A finished basement extends your living space and has an excellent return on investment. It's also the perfect place to turn into a spacious dedicated home office, so you can finally stop working on your dining table or couch and boost your productivity and comfort. But whether you want to turn your basement into that, a rec room or in-law suite, the first step is installing a high-performance subfloor. The best option for this is Dricore subfloor panels, which are designed with air gap technology to help protect against mould and moisture and keep floors dry, comfortable and cozy all year. It's an easy DIY project, as the panels are easy to install and a room only takes half a day to do.

### ELEVATE YOUR EXTERIORS

Not only does the exterior of your home make the first impression, it can also extend your living space – which is crucial when we're working, living and playing at home. Make the most of it with areas you can spend time in even when the temperature drops. For example, you can create a sitting area to relax in or host smaller outdoor get-togethers for your social bubble by screening in your porch or installing an awning over your backyard patio. Laying down Dricore panels can work here too, as they will make cold surfaces feel warmer, softer and cozier for your feet. Complete the space with a heating lamp and you'll be able to enjoy your exteriors almost all year-round.

www.newscanada.com



By **Julien Laurion**  
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Hi Julien, I am a long-time reader and I very much enjoy your articles and social media! Julien, I am a renter and I am starting to look into buying a home since it seems we will be spending lots more time indoors. I've noticed some listings will say things like 'new composite decking' or 'new 25 year shingles'. Are these important to consider? Thank you in advance, Clara.

**HI CLARA**, congratulations on starting your home search! It can be both overwhelming and exciting.

Upgrades can be tricky and are subjective. They require consideration for both the seller and the potential buyer. It is no secret that certain upgrades, like updated kitchens and bathrooms, typically do add value to a home. However, some upgrades may actually decrease the value of the home and others just justify the asking price. Specifically, if the upgrade is specific to that current homeowner.

For example, as a long-time reader, you probably read my article about the shower beer fridge. This is a rather unique item that may not have a lot of appeal to other homeowners so it would not likely increase the value of the home. In addition, if this shower fridge was not properly installed, or if it is difficult to remove, it could potentially decrease the value of the home. Pools are also a great example of an improvement that does not increase the value of a home. Some buyers will be pleased to have a pool

in the back yard and won't be put off by it. However, some buyers are turned off by a house that has a pool and find pools a burden and an extra expense they do not want to take on. In fact, I have a close family member who bought a house because of its great location, and then had the pool filled in!

In your question, you mentioned composite decking. This is often a positive upgrade for a home.

When I see composite decking in a home, it tells me that the current owner cares for the home and has invested in it. Composite decking is much more expensive compared to wood alternatives. This is a feature I would point out to my clients as we are assessing the total package offered in the home if we were to extend an offer to buy it. But like everything, there is not a single perspective. One of the downsides to composite decking is that it tends to be warmer on the feet in the summer months. I recently had a client who stated that they did not like this feature. Clara, it is pretty simple. If you walk into an unkempt

home that has not been updated, the price you pay should reflect this. Typically, a home that needs a lot of improvements is going to sell at a lower price than a fully renovated home. However, if the home is clean and cared for with thoughtful upgrades, then it may make sense for you to pay close to the listing price. As I said, upgrades are tricky and subjective so it is best to work with a Realtor like me to help navigate those waters. Happy house hunting!

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 has 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 or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtunarealty.com or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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# 10 things to know about pre-delivery home inspections

(NC) If you've purchased a new build house or condo, the pre-delivery inspection – or PDI – is your first opportunity to explore your new home. It's also a very important step in the new home-buying journey.



This inspection is your chance to document any items that are damaged, incomplete or missing before moving in. Here's what new homeowners need to know about the process:

**1** The inspection should take between 45 minutes to an hour per 1,000 square feet of a home – plenty of time to be thorough without feeling rushed.

**2** Bring a copy of the Pre-Delivery Inspection Checklist along. This helpful document is available for free from Tarion, the organization that provides warranty assistance for new home buyers. It gives you an idea of what items to inspect – and which issues to watch out for – in every part of the home.

**3** This is also an opportunity to learn about how to operate and maintain the home's systems, such as heating and cooling. Don't be afraid to ask questions – the builder's representative is there to help.

**4** Make sure any issues are documented on the PDI form that the builder's representative will fill out. Include any items that have been substituted for others without your consent, such as kitchen cabinets or countertops. Although this isn't an official warranty form, it does serve as an important record of issues that existed before you moved in.

**5** Keep your own documentation records of any issues identified. Don't be afraid to take photos and/or videos as a part of this process.

**6** Feel free to bring someone along, like a parent, realtor or home inspector. Just remember that whoever joins in should not try to interfere with the builder's process.

**7** If you're not able to attend, someone can go on your behalf. Just remember to notify the

builder in advance by filling out the Appointment of Designate form.

**8** PDIs happen in all seasons and weather conditions, which may pose some challenges. If you're not able to inspect a part of the home, make a note of it and remember to look at it as soon as possible.

**9** If anything is reported on the PDI form but hasn't been resolved by the time you move in, report it to the builder. You can also submit a warranty form to Tarion.

**10** Understand that guidelines and procedures may be affected by whatever COVID-19 measures are currently in effect.

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## 5 tips for creating your own gallery wall

(NC) With more people spending time at home and postponing vacations this year, many of us are taking on more DIY projects. A fun thing you can try is a gallery wall, which is a great way to display memories and decorate your space.

Gianmarco Bernaudo from Fujifilm Canada recommends these top five tips for making a flawless gallery wall at home:

**PICK A SPACE:** An important first planning step is identifying the square footage you have to work with. Think about the corners and spaces that are often overlooked, as these can make great places to display photos.

**WORK WITH A THEME:** To make your wall more aesthetically pleasing, identify elements you want to consistently show, such as colour schemes or subjects like travel or family photos to tell a story.

**SELECT AND PRINT:** Once your space and theme are selected, it's time to start printing. Consider the medium you want to use, like standard prints in frames or on canvas. Finally, look for user-friendly printing services such as Fujifilm Printlife, which allows you to order prints from the comfort of home.

**MAP YOUR ARRANGEMENT:** Before you start putting holes in your wall, test your design on the floor to pick the best layout. You can use tape or the printed photos to trial.

**ADD NON-PHOTO ELEMENTS:** Consider adding whimsical items like a clock, baby shoe or succulent planter to create a more eclectic vibe, or pay tribute to a treasured memory with a sentimental item, such as dried flowers from your wedding.

Find more tips on photo printing and creating gallery walls at [fujifilmprintlife.ca](http://fujifilmprintlife.ca).

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# CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET

(NC) You don't have to wait for a change of season to tidy up your wardrobe. Go through your clothes and accessories one by one in order to have an accurate count and take the opportunity to donate what you don't want anymore. This will help you develop an estimate of what your closet is worth. In the future you can save your receipts to update your inventory with new items.

### USE ONLINE TOOLS

Some insurance providers such as Belairdirect offer user-friendly forms to help you. They will speed up the process and make it easy to keep it updated, organized and accessible.

### RENT WITH PEACE OF MIND

Even if you are a tenant, it is important to make an inventory of your belongings. Whether it's the fridge your aunt gave you when you moved out, your grandmother's sofa or your parents' old bed that furnishes your home, all your belongings must be listed so that you have an accurate replacement cost for all your household goods should anything happen.

After all the hard work you've done, it's important to stay on top of your list with check-ins every year or each time you make large purchases.

Find other tips and learn more about the importance of an up-to-date personal inventory at [belairdirect.com](http://belairdirect.com).

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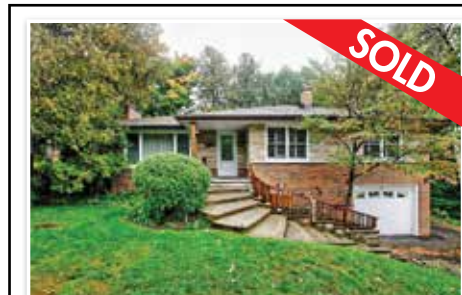
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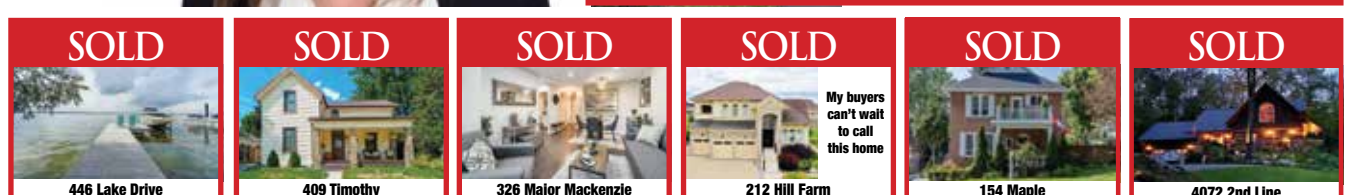
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## Should we buy now or wait?



The desire to buy a home expands beyond dollars and cents and current global concerns, including the pandemic. Buying a home is a personal decision. Motivation varies for every individual based on multiple factors.

Low-interest rates have sparked the urge for Buyers to take action now rather than wait once they've done the calculations to uncover what they can afford. More homeowners have considered refinancing their mortgages at a lower rate or pulling equity from their current home to use for renovations. Other Sellers have been preparing their homes for sale due to persistent Buyer demand that has caused it to be a Seller's market across the Greater Toronto Area. Some Sellers based on current home values may be relocating outside of the neighbourhood, perhaps even outside of the region.

If uneasy about what to do next, think about why a move may make sense in the first place. What is the reason behind the desire to purchase a home? Is this your first home? Has there been a change in the family which could include health concerns, employment changes, marriage, baby(s), divorce or death are common and very real reasons to move.

Is the purchase for investment purposes as a vacation property or income property?

Is the idea of moving linked to wanting a lifestyle change to be closer to public transit, family or friends, to be in a specific school district, to have a shorter work commute, to be near more amenities, or to own more property? Assessing how you envision living in and around the home for the next five years is a great exercise to complete in advance of taking action.

Once motivation has been uncovered with a REALTOR® who ideally has an Accredited Buyer's Specialist (ABR®) designating the plan towards achieving the customized goals. It is easier to map out, and actions can follow more smoothly in this competitive and heated housing market. Attention to budget, location and style of home is the next consideration. If the ideal home is found after all of this self-assessment, it makes sense to take action and commit to buying sooner than later.

— Written by Connie Power  
Connie Power - Manager, Sales Representative  
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## PANTRY 101

### Top tips on how to stock successfully

(NC) With cooler evenings and falling leaves around the corner, we can look forward to seasonal comforts like getting cozy by the fire and cooking warm and hearty meals. And after months spent outdoors, now's the perfect time to revisit and organize the kitchen, starting with your pantry.

"A well-stocked pantry is my best friend," says Andrea Buckett, food expert and content creator on andreabuckett.com. "I review recipes, make lists and stock up on essentials regularly; it really helps with easy weekday meals and is also budget-friendly."

Don't know where to start? These simple tips will help you save money and stress in the kitchen.

**1** Organize what you have. Start by listing what you have, identifying what you use and what you don't, grouping items together in different categories. Then, purge what you don't use and donate it to your local food bank.

**2** Review recipes and make your list. Flip through cookbooks and write down pantry staples from your favourite recipes. Beans, pasta, oils, spices, canned vegetables and legumes are all key ingredients to make easy weekday meals. Want to try something new but always missing that certain spice? Add it to your grocery list. Shop your list and avoid impulse purchases so you stay organized and on budget.

**3** Stock up on value. Pantry items have a long shelf life, so when a key staple that you use goes on sale, it's a good idea to stock up. Olive oil, spices and pasta sauces are good items to purchase on sale. It's also a time to turn to a brand like No Name, offering quality products at a great value. Baking experts love the brand's cocoa powder – it's one of many baking ingredients you'll find always stocked in their pantry.

**4** Freeze frame. Frozen fruits and vegetables are a must in your freezer pantry. Add colour and nutrition to meals in a flash. Think frozen fruit for morning smoothies, yogurt bowls or fruit-filled muffins. Frozen vegetables can also be easily added to sheet pan dinners, stir-fries, soups, pot pies or pasta dishes. Or whip up a quick veggie side dish – just heat, add butter and season with dried spices or herbs.

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# Safety reminders for your home office

(NC) As many of us continue to work remotely, having a functioning home office is essential. From lighting to storage to décor, there are several factors to consider, so it's easy to overlook safety. Here are some key steps to help ensure your new workspace is safe as well as productive.

**SAFEGUARD YOUR COMPUTER.** With hackers exploiting the increase in remote working, it is critical to keep operating and anti-virus packages up to date. Perform frequent updates to help prevent malicious software from invading your computer and network. Change your passwords regularly and back up your files.

**AVOID OVERLOADING OUTLETS.** Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International. Make sure your outlets contain arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), which can prevent fires caused by damaged or overheated wiring or electrical devices. In case of an emergency, keep the easy-to-use First Alert EZ Fire Spray in your home office to quickly defuse small electrical

fires. The light aerosol can design makes it easy to hold, use and store.

**SET UP A CLUTTER-FREE SPACE.** Keep your work area organized to prevent potential hazards. Avoid injuries by keeping scissors, staplers and all sharp or heavy office tools away from edges of the desk, especially if you have children or pets. Secure all phone lines and electrical cords along a wall or under a desk to keep them away from heat sources and high-traffic areas.

**INSTALL AND MAINTAIN ALARMS.** Beyond the office, installing smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms will help protect your entire home. For optimal protection, install working smoke and CO alarms on each level of the home, inside every bedroom and outside each sleeping area. To properly maintain your alarms, test them regularly, change the batteries every six months and replace the units every 10 years.

Find more home fire safety tips at [firstalert.ca](http://firstalert.ca).

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**Real Estate Market Update – Aurora**

## Home Buyer's urge to live in Aurora

The push to live in Aurora continued in the month of October for 138 home purchasers leaving a bare minimum of 2.1 months of inventory to meet the current demand. Last year at the same time measured there were 64 percent fewer home transactions on record. There were 176 homes placed for sale during the month and 192 homes total were available at the start of November for purchase. Seller's yielded on average 99 percent of their asking price within 20 days on market.

The average price of a home including all home types was \$1,052,457 and when the highest and lowest sale for the month are removed from this comparison a median price of \$949,300 was the factor to note in October. When looking at the median pricing for detached homes the price rose to \$1,225,000, for those shopping for a freehold semi-detached home or townhouse the median price was between \$792,000 and \$793,500 and for a condominium townhouse \$691,500. For those home hunting for a condominium apartment, \$510,000 was the new normal median price in October 2020.

Open homes have not been permitted in York region and this has not deterred sales. Buyers can experi-

ence homes virtually more than ever with Selling real estate Registrants having the ability to share up to 40 photos, virtual tours, virtual open houses, multiple attachments like floor plans, home features, disclosures and more online.

Call a REALTOR® today to book your virtual or in-person appointment following COVID-19 safety protocols wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) and discuss how home values have continually improved for Seller's across the ten core Aurora neighbourhoods.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Manager, Real Estate 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.

\*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board; Market Watch Report Summary of existing home Transactions for October 2020 for Aurora and the Regional Housing Market Table Report for York/Simcoe for October 2020.

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

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# Follow these tips to winterize your home and *stay warm*



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(NC) The weather is getting colder and with Old Man Winter around the corner, it's important to make sure you and your home are prepared. Use these tips to stay cozy and know you're protected until the spring thaw.

#### EXTERIOR

**Empty exterior pipes:** To keep your pipes from freezing and bursting, empty all exterior taps and shut off the valves until next spring.

**Inspect gutters, roof and exterior walls:** Empty leaves or any other debris from gutters, and make sure they're still firmly attached. Now is the time to replace any shingles on your roof that are broken or loose to avoid any leaks that could happen when the temperature drops with a pile of snow on the roof. Inspect all walls for developing cracks that need to be sealed to keep water out; the freezing and thawing of water can cause major damage.

**Clean and store outdoor furniture:** If you haven't already, ensure your patio tables, chairs and barbecue are cleaned and stored away. Avoid rust on your grills by brushing them with vegetable oil and wrapping them in newspaper.

**Insulate doors and windows:** If you feel a draft around door and window frames, it may be time to install (or replace) the weather-stripping. You may also want to seal windows with inexpensive yet effective weather-strip film. You can find DIY insulation film at your local hardware store.

**Clean heating and ventilation systems:** Before turning your heat on, clean electric baseboards to prevent bad odours when they come back on and test each one to ensure they're all working properly. If you have an air exchanger, clean it before using it too, or you'll find yourself in a house full of the dust that's accumulated in the ductwork over the summer months.

Now is also a good time to check in with your home insurance provider to make sure your optional coverages account for your needs. This can include risks like water damage from in-ground or above-ground sources and water service pipe damage. But rest assured, if you run into problems, your insurance provider will be with you every step of the way. Some providers like Belairdirect even offer home claim forgiveness, which can protect your premium from increasing after your first claim.

Find more information at [belairdirect.com](http://belairdirect.com).

#### INTERIOR

**Protect pipes from extreme cold:** Water expands in the cold, which means when a severe cold snap hits, pipes can be at risk of bursting. Seal any air leaks surrounding plumbing indoors to keep out cold drafts. On very cold days, keeping faucets running just enough to drip can prevent water from freezing inside the pipes.

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)

### MODERN FARMHOUSE SHOWSTOPPER



Enjoy your "Happily Ever After" in style with complete luxury in this one of a kind bungalow nestled on a picturesque half acre mature lot in Aurora! This rare offering exemplifies exceptional detail & craftsmanship from 16' vaulted ceilings with custom beams to a showpiece 25x20 ft kitchen that jumps off the pages of a magazine! 10' island, white oak plank Hrdwd flrs, 14' bdrm vaulted clngs, 8' solid doors, walk up finished open concept basement, triple heated garage with parking for 9 cars! Gorgeous entertainer's patio, nightscape lites, irrigation syst & so much more!! **\$2,988,000**

### LOCATION LOCATION!



Fabulous family neighbourhood of Bayview Greens! Stylish renovated 4 bdrm home features updated Bistro style white kitchen with centre island, granite counters, pantry & lrg breakfast rm with bay window overlooking family rm w/ gas frpl. Stunning designer lvg & dng rms with wainscot and crown mldng, Hrdwd fir, hrdwd stairs, new carpet on 2nd level, spacious bdrms, updated baths, finished bsmt w/ rec rm, 5th bdrm, bath, office, exercise area & more! Inviting front porch & large interlock patio surrounded by perennial grdns. Steps to all amenities, parks, schools, walking trails. Will not last! **\$1,099,00**

### BUNGALOW TOWNHOME



Rarely offered 2 bedroom bungalow townhouse in the heart of Aurora within steps to all amenities. This beautifully renovated home offers stunning new white kitchen with quartz counters, huge island and new stainless steel appls. Family rm with vaulted ceiling & gas frpl, wide plank hardwood flrs throughout main level, new carpet in fin. bsmt, Master suite with vaulted ceiling & gorgeous new ensuite with large shower & glass enclosure, sleek black hardware and barn door feature, stylish new front door & wainscot entry, new trim & baseboards. Offered at **\$818,000**

### PENTHOUSE LIFESTYLE



Enjoy this 3 year new Penthouse in The Arbors lowrise condominium with spectacular South & West views overlooking treed conservation backdrop! Minutes to all amenities in Aurora as well as a 2 minute drive to HWY404, this fabulous penthouse suite features 10 foot ceilings, sleek kitchen with granite counters, centre island, glass backsplash & stainless steel appls, laminate floors, walk out to balcony with sunny Southwest views, 4 piece ensuite & ensuite laundry. Amenities include stylish lobby, guest suite, large shared outdoor terrace with BBQ area, party room with bar/kitchen, billiards rm, exercise & yoga rm, pet mudroom/bath. **\$478,800**



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# MEMORABLE DINING MOMENTS: Set the tone with inviting colours

(NC) From family meals to intimate gatherings with friends, the right ambiance can instantly elevate any occasion. To create a warm, welcoming space, start by choosing colours that invite you and your guests to the table.

Drawing from a palette inspired by fall's warm hues and turning leaves, you can make your dining space the best seat in the house. Here, Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert, shares her professional advice to help you create memorable dining moments at home.

**BRING THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE HOME.** Thoughtfully pair the colours in your dining space with food. "To emphasize the art behind every dish, shades of red are always a great choice," says Grech. "Favourite reds from Benjamin Moore such as Rosy Apple 2006-30 and Caliente AF-290 will make

food look almost too good to eat, and ensure your family and friends are left craving more."

**CHOOSE COLOURS THAT SPARK CONVERSATION.** For fans of intimate dinner parties that last into the evening, Grech recommends incorporating rich, earthy hues such as Caponata AF-650 and Warmed Cognac AF-235, as these comfortable and convivial shades will encourage your guests to linger at the table just a little bit longer.

**VISUAL EFFECTS CREATE A SEPARATE DINING ROOM.** If you don't have a designated dining room, you can

easily create a space that celebrates dining at home by colour-blocking a portion of a wall. Just as a plate focuses the eye on the meal, colour blocking can help focus the eye on one specific section of the space and create a defined area, even when you have an open-concept floorplan.

"Painting a colour block is a great weekend project, and Aura Waterborne Interior Paint helps you achieve professional results at home so you can always dine in style."

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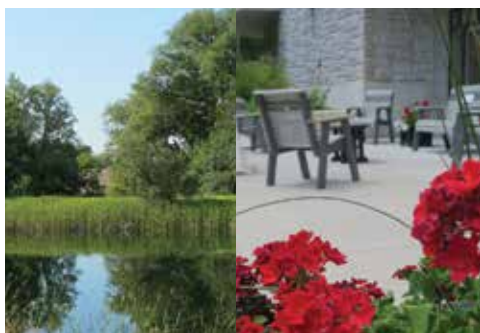
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