



Places to Live: Paris, Ont.

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Our town is an easy sell for so many people simply because we have it all here, says Mayor David Bailey

If you are ready to escape the hustle and bustle of suburbia and big city life, then you should really consider Paris, ON, as your next new home. "Life is crazy for everyone these days, and people are moving here so they can breathe, feel more relaxed, and much more welcomed," says Mayor David Bailey. "This is a beautiful town that has a slower pace of life and has so much to offer for people of all ages."

With the magnificent Grand River as its backdrop, downtown offers lots of shopping and dining experiences with all its candy and cheese shops, bakeries, cafes, pubs, and specialty shops and boutiques. A handful of local notable establishments that are raved about among residents and visitors alike include John M. Hall, Piper & Oak, Suzanne's of Paris, Chocolate Sensations, Stillwaters Plate & Pour Restaurant, and Juniper Dining Co. – and the list could go on.

Then there is the Paris Wincey Mills Co. market, which is always a perfect spot to buy local produce, meats, seafood, cheeses, vintage items, art, clothing, and handmade crafts.

With a population of just over 12,000, the town is both quaint and beautiful.

The architecture is totally astonishing with its scores of Victorian, Edwardian, Gothic, and Post-Modern style buildings that are checkered throughout the downtown core and across the entire community. The town also has lots of cobblestone churches and homes. In fact, this is why many have long nicknamed Paris as “The Cobblestone Capital of Canada.”

Located where the Grand and Nith Rivers meet, Paris was established in 1850, and 20 years ago amalgamated with the County of Brant. The town was named after the deposits of mined gypsum discovered along the Grand River during the late 1700s, which was used to make “Plaster of Paris.”

The community was recently voted “The Prettiest Little Town in Canada” by Harrowsmith Magazine, and this past summer Maclean's Magazine named Brant County as the 7th Best Community in Canada. “Our town is an easy sell for so many people simply because we have it all here,” says Bailey. “Everyone who lives here is just as equally enthusiastic with our rich history as they are with all the new growth

that is happening. We are building a new library and more new buildings, and our industrial park is full of new technology businesses moving in. The growth of course is creating lots of jobs and all sorts of new opportunities.”

Bailey and council, along with town planners, just launched a comprehensive transportation plan in order to address all the growth happening.

“We are certainly growing, so having the right transportation plan in place to move people around more efficiently is a must,” he says. “This will be a challenge, but we are ready for it. People want to move here, work here, and get around more easily, and this means that we need to find the right plan to accommodate everyone on the transportation front.”

Paris has long been known as being a backdrop in popular film. Movies that have been shot in town include The Hard Part Begins, Blood & Guts, Ordinary Magic, Shadow Builder, Phil the Alien, Silent Hill, and Away from Her, to name a handful. Only a few weeks ago Walmart also just shot its fall fashion line-up in the streets of Paris and its national TV ad campaign will soon be launched from coast-to-coast.

“People really love the look and feel of our town,” says Bailey. “It’s warm, cozy, friendly, and scenic, and we are absolutely delighted to be a part of popular culture.”

The new development going on in Paris is also exciting news. There are a number of new builds happening and more are being planned too.

One new community that’s getting lots of attention is Paris Riverside by Fernbrook and Crystal Homes. With a total of 700 units near the Grand River, this development is ideal for young professionals and retirees.

This project will first unveil condos, then townhomes, and then single detached homes over the next decade. Over 40 percent of the

community is greenspace and woodland protected and will be accessible to homeowners and members of the community. It's here where watersports, fishing, cycling, kayaking will be right at your doorstep.

Kathy Di Silvestro, spokesperson for the project, says owners will enjoy being close to everything – shops, restaurants, downtown, and access to the river and trails is second-to-none. The community is minutes away from the Brantford GO Station and is only a one-hour drive from the Toronto Pearson International Airport. As well, cities like Hamilton, Cambridge, Burlington and Kitchener-Waterloo are a short and easy drive.

“The livability of the site is amazing,” she says. “There are lots of trails close by for mountain biking and walking, and you can even head downtown on your bike or on the river on a kayak. The development is all connected to the outdoors and this is a big seller for new owners.”

Locals and business owners seem to really like the idea of the growth in Paris.

“I really love the growth in Paris right now and our future looks really fantastic,” says Andrea Legacey, who is the co-owner and co-founder of Juniper Dining Co. “People are moving here because they are getting tired of the big city and want to dial it back a few notches in order to live a more comfortable lifestyle. We have everything you need, and I am very confident our town will grow in the right direction. And growth is good for local businesses and it also creates more employment opportunities.”

Bailey too is pleased with the transformation of Paris but wants to make sure that it is all planned out properly and done right.

“Like other regions, we have also been mandated by the provincial government to grow, so we need to target specific areas for new

development properly that works for our infrastructure and future as a whole,” he says.

He adds, “Paris is known for so many things – our arts, history, culture, friendliness, innovation and diversity. We have just had a reawakening and know full well that our future will be just incredible.”