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Nearly four out of 10 Ontarians considering leaving due to cost of housing: survey



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A real estate sold sign is shown in a Toronto west end neighborhood May 16, 2020. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Graeme Roy

Nearly four out of 10 Ontarians say that they are considering leaving the province due to the high cost of housing, a new survey has found.

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey of 4,204 Canadians last month and found that 28 per cent of all respondents were considering a move out of province due to concerns about the cost of housing.

But among Ontario residents that number jumped to 39 per cent, which was the highest in any Canadian province. British Columbia had the second highest percentage of residents mulling a move elsewhere (36 per cent), followed by residents in Nova Scotia (25 per cent).

Among Ontarians who said that they were “seriously” contemplating leaving the province, about 26 per cent listed “abroad” as their most likely destination while Alberta (17 per cent), the United States (17 per cent) and Atlantic Canada (14 per cent) were next on the list.

The results also pointed to a generational divide, with Ontarians between the ages of 18 and 34 nearly twice as likely (46 per cent) to say that they were contemplating moving due to the cost of housing compared to those 55 and up (26 per cent).

New immigrants were also more likely to say that they would consider leaving due to the cost of housing when compared to Canadians as a whole.

About 39 per cent of those who have been in Canada for 10 years or less said that they were considering a move due to housing costs compared to 28 per cent overall. The number dropped to 30 per cent among immigrants who have resided in Canada for 11 years or more.

“Historically, Canada has been viewed as a ‘role model’ by the OECD for labour migration and has outperformed most OECD countries when it comes to economically integrating immigrants. But many recent immigrants are departing the country because of the high cost of living, and especially housing, perhaps harming Canada’s reputation as a welcoming country for newcomers,” a release accompanying the poll states.

The average cost of a Toronto home decreased 3.5 per cent year-over-year in May but still stands at \$1,117,400.

Real estate listing website Zoocasa has also previously warned that all Toronto neighbourhoods will hit the \$2 million average price mark by 2034.

Ontarians may still have some optimism about housing costs, though.

Among Ontario residents 58 per cent of those surveyed said that they are hopeful housing affordability will “improve over the next few years.”

That number was 53 per cent among Canadians.

The survey was conducted between June 14 and June 20. Angus Reid says that a probability sample of the same size would typically carry a margin of error of 1.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.