

Tips For Finding The Perfect Neighborhood

By J. Lennox Scott

Finding a great neighborhood can be just as important as finding the perfect home. However, what constitutes a great neighborhood varies from one buyer to the next. Some buyers select neighborhoods based on the school district, for others it's important to be close to the city, and for many buyers, it simply comes down to what they can afford. Researching a variety of neighborhoods will help narrow down your search parameters so that you can find the best home and neighborhood for your lifestyle. You can also look to your Realtor to provide you with neighborhood information so that you can make your decision with confidence.

The best way to familiarize yourself with neighborhoods is to simply drive around. As you're driving around take note of the general appearance of the surrounding homes. If you want to live in a neighborhood with well-maintained homes, this is the best way to determine if residents in the area share your sentiments. Or, if you have children and you want to live in a neighborhood with other families, look for neighborhoods with plenty of kids.

When it comes to choosing a neighborhood, school districts and crime rates are consistently the two most influential factors for homebuyers. The school district alone will cause some buyers to select one neighborhood over another because of the quality of education that is offered. Even if you don't have children it's worth considering areas with good schools because it will help with the resale of your home in the future. Any Realtor will tell you that homes in strong school districts sell more quickly because they typically attract more buyers.

If you're concerned about crime rates, online sources like www.access.wa.gov can help because they offer information about crime statistics throughout the state. The other thing you can do is talk to residents in the neighborhoods you're considering to get their opinion on local crime. You could also stop by the nearest police station to discuss neighborhood safety first hand with local law enforcement. These resources, as well as your Realtor, can assist in determining what neighborhoods are deemed the safest and which areas suit your needs the best.

If neighborhoods are important to you, then it's vital to do some research. Start by creating a list of priorities that you're looking for in a neighborhood. Do you want to live close to work? Do you want to live near shopping and restaurants? Do you want schools and parks within walking distance? These are just a few of the questions you should address prior to heading out on your home search. Ultimately your answers will help streamline the home buying process as well as ensure that the home and neighborhood you select are the best fit for your needs.

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