

## Walkable Neighborhoods

You might have seen the term in advertisements for homes or apartments: “Walkable neighborhood!” But what does it mean?

In general, a walkable neighborhood is one in which a person could easily live, work and shop without the use of a car. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines walkability as “communities [...] created or enhanced to make it safe and easy to walk and [where] pedestrian activity is encouraged for people of all ages and abilities.”

WalkScore.com, a website that assigns walkability scores to neighborhoods, offers a more detailed definition, laying out seven essential components of a walkable neighborhood. They include a center, such as a main street or public square; enough people for successful businesses and frequent public transit; a mix of affordable housing and businesses; plenty of parks and public spaces; pedestrian-friendly design; schools and workplaces to which most residents can walk from their homes; and “complete streets”



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designed to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and public transit.

There is more than one reason to live in a community with good walkability: convenience, the environment, safety, and even your health. If you're a builder or developer, building walkable properties can even be good for your bottom line.

### **GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Environmental Protection Agency advocates

for walkable communities through its Smart Growth initiative. “Smart growth,” according to the EPA, “covers a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse.” Among the benefits the EPA lists for walkable neighborhoods are improved air and water quality, reduced greenhouse admissions and open space conservation.

### **GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH**

So critical is your daily dose of walking that the United States Surgeon General's office has called for governments and developers to “Step It Up” and build more walkable neighborhoods. Noting that half of U.S. adults are living with a chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, HHS's “Step It Up” call to action prescribes improvements to community and street design to achieve greater walkability

and enhance Americans' health.

### **GOOD FOR SAFETY**

HHS lists safe, convenient places to walk as a major component of walkability. Well-planned walkable neighborhoods have safe walking routes for students getting to and from school, and safe sidewalks and bicycling lanes.

### **GOOD FOR BUSINESS**

A 2013 report by the Environmental Protection Agency titled “Smart Growth and Economic Success” outlined various benefits for real estate developers, investors, businesses and local governments for “compact development.” Among the listed benefits were using land more efficiently; reducing land, infrastructure and public services costs; increased economic productivity; increased tax revenues; and a higher return on investment.

### **KNOW THE SCORE**

New York, San Francisco and Boston topped WalkScore.com's 2017 top list of walkable cities, the most recent year for which data was available. How walkable is your city or neighborhood? Visit WalkScore.com for scores for not just walkability but also for public transit and biking.





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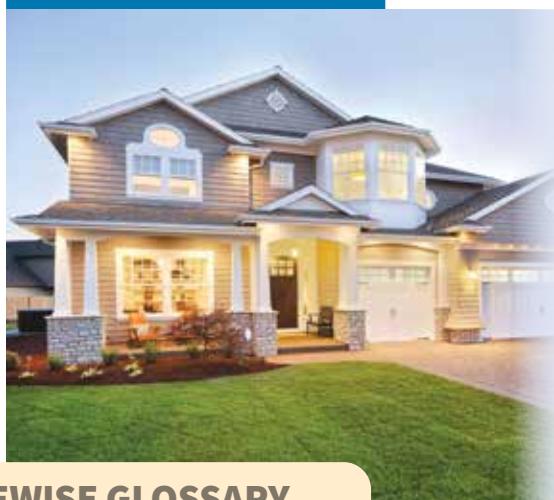
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#### REAL ESTATE 101



#### Get Moving

If you’re interested in making your neighborhood more walkable, consider the programs offered by America Walks, a nonprofit that helps people and communities advocate for more walkable neighborhoods. Their programs include grants, trainings and technical assistance to local governments. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2Qvc1br>.

#### HOMEWISSE GLOSSARY

**Junior mortgage:** a second, third or equity mortgage that is subordinate to an existing lien already on the property.

SOURCE: MLS.com

# AD SPACE