

# Find Your New Neighborhood

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

Choosing a good neighborhood — or one that offers promise — can increase the value of your home.

They say it's better to buy the least expensive house in a good neighborhood than to buy the best house in a bad one.

The reason is simple. Houses are more than just a roof over your head. They are a home that brings comfort, stability and many years of quality living to your life. Some of the factors to consider when you purchase your next home include the following:

## GOOD SCHOOLS

Whether you have children or not, choosing a neighborhood with good schools makes good sense.

The re-sale factor of the property goes up when the prospective buyers can be assured that the community schools are recommended. You may inquire of your Realtor or real estate broker to get you information about school districts and schools near your dream home.

Facts such as driving distance from the house, honors and decorations to the school staff, and quality of the school campus can make or break the future real estate deal.

## NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

The piece of real estate you have your eye on may seem like perfection until you weigh in the benefits from the local community.

Be sure to ask your Realtor or real estate agent how far essential businesses are from the property's front door. This includes grocery stores, gas stations, hospitals, and moderate- to low-cost dining options.

In some cases, a property that is near entertainment and shopping malls can be a big plus to the future buyers.



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When buying or selling real estate, hiring a good agent and educating yourself will keep you from running into deal breakers at the closing table.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Many cities and towns across the nation are undergoing a makeover one home at a time. Older and antiquated properties are being replaced by newer, more fashionable dwellings.

Though the area of concentration for your search may be in a low-cost region, keep an eye out for newer homes shooting up near the local residences. The immediate area where your home is located is upgraded as the city begins to improve.

Vacant land scattered about

town is another indicator that good things are going to happen to that city with new residential or commercial construction.

## NEW COMMUNITIES

If you need an iron-clad guarantee that the city is going to be fresh and new, you may opt to purchase in an up-and-coming municipality.

New homes built on the outskirts of town are a telltale sign that the region is expanding. Get your slice of paradise a little further out from the city center and

watch a new world shoot up around you.

The flip side to the new community utopia is that you don't know exactly when things are going to get started. It may be months or it may be years, but you can bank on a vibrant new city being on the way.

## LOW CRIME RATES

Crime statistics from almost every neighborhood are provided by the local law enforcement officials and their community relations departments. The statistics break down the rate of crime and the severity with a distinct separation of

## REAL ESTATE 101

### Neighborhood checklist

Keep these factors in mind as you evaluate your potential new neighborhood:

- School rankings/test scores
- Availability of public transportation
- Proximity to amenities, such as hospitals, dining, entertainment
- Age of the neighborhood
- Location, location, location
- Crime rates, as compared to the national average

violent and non-violent crimes.

No neighborhood is perfect, but you do want to ask about how the city compares to the national average with robbery, rape, murder and other crimes.

Petty thefts and misdemeanors should not always deter your decision to buy a home in that area. These low-level kinds of crimes will be up and down everywhere in the world — and may actually be a factor of different reporting requirements as opposed to real differences in crime rates — so they are not always a major concern.



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### HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

**Community Planning And Development (CPD):** HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development seeks to develop viable communities by promoting integrated approaches that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. The primary means toward this end is the development of partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

**SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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