

Choosing the Right Neighbourhood



When you are buying a new home, choosing the right neighborhood is as important as choosing the right home. After all, a house won't feel right if you don't like the neighborhood it's in. So, when you are considering what neighborhood you want to live in, it pays to ask yourself some key questions.

What Kind of Property and Home do You Want?

The most important thing to consider when choosing your neighborhood is whether or not it contains the style of home you want. Are you looking for a single family home, a condo, a townhouse, or a co-op? This will determine what communities are available to you.

What is Important to You in a Neighborhood?

Make a list of what you ideally want in a neighborhood. This list may include things like whether the neighborhood is quiet or busy, new or older, whether there are schools for your kids, or whether it fits into your daily routine (plenty of good jogging routes, or local coffee shops for example). Consider how close the amenities are, and whether you have a pet that requires backyard space or places to exercise.

What is the Crime Rate in Your Chosen Neighborhood?

A good place to start for looking into the crime rate in your chosen neighborhood is online. By Googling the name of your city and neighbourhood, you can often find statistics on the local crime rate. You can talk to the local police about the issues in chosen neighborhood, or drive around the neighborhood a few times, at different times of the day. Look for signs of vandalism, excessive litter, run-down homes, homes with barred windows or guard dogs, vacant buildings or lots, and

the state of the neighborhood school. A well-kept school, if there is one, usually means it's a good neighborhood.

What About the Commute to Work?

The commute to work should be an important consideration when you are choosing your neighborhood. You will need to factor in how long the commute would be, whether traffic would be against you, or if there is reliable public transit if you don't drive.

What Kind of People Live There?

Walk around the neighborhood a few times, at different times of the day. This will help you get a feel for the area and the people who live there. A community that houses families will often have a different feel than one that is largely made up of young adults, for example.

If you get a chance, talk to some of the people living in your chosen neighborhood. By asking them how they like living there, you will get a more rounded idea of what the neighborhood is like.

What are the Average Property Values and Taxes in Your Neighborhood?

This is also something you can ask the people living in your chosen neighborhood. By visiting your city hall, you can also find out if the property value has gone up in the last 10 years, or if it will be going up in the future.

Ask the residents, or a local real estate agent, what the average property taxes are. Have they gone up in the last 10 years? Are they expected to go up in the near future?

Does the Neighborhood have a Community Association?

When you find a tight-knit neighborhood, you will often discover that it has a Community/Neighborhood Association. By asking around, you can find out whether that association has yearly fees, and what their yard and building restrictions are. If these things don't fit your needs, that neighborhood may not be the one for you.

If you have taken all these things into consideration, and found that the neighborhood you picked does not measure up, you may want to consider finding another neighborhood to buy a home in. After all, when you buy a home, you are buying into the neighborhood it is in.