

## Find The Perfect Neighborhood

Finding your perfect home starts with searching for your kind of neighborhood.

What is so important with a good neighborhood? The environment you live in affects your lifestyle and quality of life for you and your family. You may want to live near a park so you and your kids can often walk there and they could play with other kids. Others want to live in a quiet suburb so after a hard day's work they could retire to a relaxing home. For some, a perfect neighborhood should be close to busy commercial districts where shopping and dining is convenient.

The search for a perfect neighborhood starts with driving around, especially in areas you're not familiar with. Take note of neighborhoods that interest you. Walk around to get a better feel. See if the homes are well-maintained.

If you have children, you might be looking for a safe, kid-friendly neighborhood. You'll also want to think about these things:

- Are there good schools in the area?
- How is the crime rate?
- Are there grocery stores nearby?
- Is the property value likely to increase?

If you work with a realtor, they should be able to tell you things you want to know about the neighborhood you're interested in.

- **School**

Even if you don't have children, there's a good reason for living near a good school. Properties near a reputable school are more likely to appreciate. Years from now, if you sell your house, you will be able to sell it at a higher price in no time. Properties like this are attractive to buyers. If you want to know more information about the schools in the area, you can ask your agent or search online. There, you'll be able to find ratings for the school system as well as standardized test scores. Try talking to neighbors with children who go to the school. If you have kids, the best thing to do to validate your research is to visit the school yourself.

- **Crime Record**

This is a very important aspect you should look at. The good news is, you can easily find information online. There are websites where you can see statistics on crime and other relevant information. Homestore allows you to search for crime data and school information in the area you are searching for.



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Just enter the zip code or city you choose. The site can also give a comparison of crime rates between areas.

You can also do these as you research:

- Observe if the windows and doors of the homes in the neighborhood have bars.
- Look for graffiti and vandalism on walls and walkways.
- Talk to the neighbors.
- Ask the police or sheriff's office.
- If you're looking in town or in busy areas, noise and traffic is expected.

Go beyond the facts and figures. Don't focus too much on the value of your investment. There are other key factors to consider aside from this. Consider the convenience it offers to work and school; its proximity to restaurants and shopping centers; or even just the relaxing feel it can give you and your family. Property value is a direct reflection of the area's overall health. When you do your research, consider how much property taxes have gone up over the past few years.



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