

How to Inspect the Neighborhood of a Potential Property You Want to Buy

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Before you move, get the facts. Although a property looks in good shape, you don't know what goes on in the neighborhood on a daily basis unless you 'scope' it out. There's nothing worse than signing your name on a mortgage only to find out the neighborhood and neighbors are that great. You'll save yourself time and heartache if you inspect a neighborhood before you move. Be patient, there are plenty of properties available. It's better to hold out for the 'right' property in the 'right' neighborhood versus buying a property because you want to move. Patience is a virtue!

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1. Visit a neighborhood during different times of the day (morning, noon and night). It's important to inspect the property at all hours of the day. If you only inspect a neighborhood in the morning, you may not receive the full picture. It may be quiet but what about at 3:15 pm or 2:00 am. Is it noisy? Do neighbors have loud parties? Do they have people coming in and out at all hours? It's important to see what goes on in the neighborhood at different times. This may sound like a 'sting' operation but it's better to be safe than sorry.

2. Walk around the neighborhood and inspect the properties. Are the properties kept up? Is the grass cut? How are the trees? Do they look healthy? How long are the branches? Can you see the stop signs? How many vehicles are parked in the driveways of the other homes? Are they parked on the front yard and tree lawn? What about the backyard? If you see 'junk' all over the place, you may want to forgo purchasing a property within the neighborhood.

3. Has the neighborhood experienced growth? How many families do you see in the area? This is a good indicator that a neighborhood is experiencing growth and attracting a 'younger' or professional crowd. How many restaurants are in the area? How many grocers are in the area? Are they in walking distance? Walk around a neighborhood and speak to local merchants to get a 'feel' for the neighborhood.

4. Has the neighborhood experienced revitalization? Many cities are revitalizing areas to attract young and professional people. What amenities are offered? Is public transportation readily available? How well are buildings converted from apartments to condos? How well are old buildings converted into condos? Gather information from local real estate agents about the revitalization of a neighborhood.

5. How many parks are there in the neighborhood? Are they maintained? A good indicator of growth is the number of parks in a neighborhood. Couples with small children enjoy taking kids to the park for a picnic or to use the playground equipment. Singles like going to the park to work out or to walk the dog. Make sure the parks are maintained. Visit them at different hours to get a sense for the 'work' schedule and observe how well workers cleanup the park.

Sometimes it's a good idea to bring someone with you when you inspect a neighborhood. The person will be more objective than you because they're not purchasing a property within the neighborhood and won't be as 'emotionally' invested as you. Gather all of the facts before you buy a property. Take as much time as you need and remember to listen to your 'gut' instinct. If you get a sinking feeling the pit of your stomach or your jaw tightens, the neighborhood isn't for you. Be patient, you'll find the right neighborhood for you.