

6 Tips for Finding the Perfect Neighborhood

The neighborhood you choose can have a big impact on your lifestyle, safety, available amenities, and convenience all play their part. Remember, there's no "right" time to buy, any more than there's a right time to sell. If you find a home now, don't try to second guess the market by waiting. Changes don't occur fast enough to make a big difference in price, and good homes won't last long.

1. Make a list of the activities-movies, health club, church-you engage in regularly and stores you visit frequently. See how far you would have to travel from each neighborhood you're considering to engaging in your most common activities.
2. Check out the school district. The Colorado Department of Education can provide information on test scores, class size, percentage of students who attend college, and special enrichment programs. Even if you don't have children, a house in a good school district will be easier to sell in the future.
3. Find out if the neighborhood is safe. Ask the police department for neighborhood crime statistics. Consider not only the number of crimes but also the type-burglaries, armed robberies-and the trend of increasing or decreasing crime. Also, is crime centered in only one part of the neighborhood, such as near a retail area?
4. Remember your home doesn't exist in a vacuum. Don't get caught up in the physical aspects of the house itself that you forget such issues as amenities, noise level, etc., that have a big impact on what it's like to live in your new home.
5. See if you'll make money. Ask a LIVE broker to get information about price appreciation trends in the neighborhood. Although past performance is no guarantee of future results, this information may give you a sense of how good an investment your home will be. Your LIVE broker also may be able to tell you about planned developments or other changes in the neighborhood-like a new school or highway-that might affect value.
6. See for yourself. Once you've narrowed your focus to two or three neighborhoods, go there, and walk around. Are homes tidy and well maintained? Are streets quiet? Pick a warm day if you can and chat with people working or playing outside. Are they friendly? Are their children to play with your family?