

THE **INFORMED** Home Buyer/Seller™

Helpful Advice for Making the Right Move

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Signs of an **Improving Neighborhood**

Buying a home in a neighborhood that is on the upswing can be a very good investment, both financially and in terms of lifestyle. As the area improves, the home values will likely increase. In addition, the people who live there will tend to enjoy their properties and surroundings, and continue to invest in them.

So how do you determine if a neighborhood is improving? Here are a few signs to watch out for as you shop for a new home:

- **Home Improvements.** Look for indications that home renovation or remodeling projects are being done in the neighborhood – contractor signs on the front lawns ... tradespeople's trucks parked in the driveways ... building supplies being delivered. When homeowners spend money to improve their homes, it shows that they are happy enough with the neighborhood to invest in it.
- **Landscaping.** Notice how well the homeowners take care of their home exteriors. Are the shrubs pruned? Are the driveways swept? Are the lawns mowed and relatively weedless? Homeowners who keep their landscaping well-maintained tend to also care about the surrounding area.
- **Real Estate Activity.** Look for "Sold" signs on the lawn. This may mean that the neighborhood is in demand. By contrast, lots of "For Sale" signs could be an indication that people are trying to move out of the area.
- **Commercial Investment.** When there are a lot of nearby shops and restaurants under development, there is a strong indication that business owners have faith in the area. If, however, you see a lot of "For Lease" signs on empty stores and buildings, this may mean that these businesses have moved onto greener pastures.

All the above signs are, of course, just indicators. You should research the neighborhood thoroughly to understand what it may be like in five to ten years.

Hobbies and **Hangouts**

Imagine that you're looking for your next home. You drive into a neighborhood, and it looks beautiful. There are plenty of trees, well-kept homes, and parks nearby. What more could you ask for?

In addition to the usual characteristics of an ideal neighborhood, it's important to make sure it also fits your unique lifestyle – and that of your family. For example, is the area reasonably close to upscale restaurants where you and your spouse can enjoy dinner? Or, is there an indoor recreational center where your daughter can continue her swimming lessons? Or a golf club where you can refine your swing?

The closer a neighborhood is to hobbies and hangouts, the more ideal it will truly be.

Think, Act... Live!

*"Tomorrow morning before we depart,
I intend to land and see what can be found
in the neighborhood."*

Christopher Columbus

*"Love thy neighbor as yourself, but choose
your neighborhood carefully."*

Louise Beal

"Never let fear of striking out get in your way."

Babe Ruth