

Walkable Neighborhoods

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

Walkability: it's more than a buzz word that gets tossed around real estate listings. It's an environmentally friendly mix of affordable housing, businesses, green space, community services and various transportation methods.

As buyers have tended to place higher value on convenience and green living, preferring to drive less and walk more, the concept of walkability has emerged.

According to the National Association of Realtors, it's a concept that is particularly prevalent among young buyers.

A 2015 poll conducted by the National Association of Realtors and the Transportation Research and Education Center at Portland State University concluded that millennials prefer walking over driving by 12 percentage points.

"Millennials are also shown to prefer living in attached housing, living within walking distance of shops and restaurants, and having a short commute, and are the most likely age group to make use of public transportation," said the NAR in a news release.

Forty-eight percent of respondents reported that they prefer to live in communities containing houses with



small yards but within easy walking distance of the community's amenities, as opposed to living in communities with houses with large yards but they have to drive to all amenities, according to the NAR.

BENEFITS

It's easy to see how a neighborhood that prioritizes walking and biking would be good for its residents. Reduced emissions, more physical activity, better relationships

with neighbors, the list goes on and on.

A 2003 article in the American Journal of Public Health concluded that residents of highly walkable neighborhoods got more than 70 more minutes of physical activity and had lower obesity prevalence than residents of low-walkability neighborhoods. A 2014 University of Utah study concluded that more compact neighborhoods may contribute to lower levels of obesity and

chronic disease. Other studies have linked walkability to higher property values and better air quality.

MEASURING WALKABILITY

Besides walking a neighborhood and getting a feel for the area, how can you quantify walkability? A slew of websites aim to do just that.

Walkscore.com assigns a rating to neighborhoods using Google maps and U.S. Census data, among other sources. Its criteria including

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Most Walkable

Walkscore.com ranked the top walkable cities in the U.S., Canada and Australia. Below are the top five. Read the whole list at <https://www.walkscore.com/cities-and-neighborhoods>.

1. New York
2. San Francisco
3. Boston
4. Philadelphia
5. Miami

the presence of a sort of town center, such as a main street or a public space; enough people for businesses to flourish and for public transit to run frequently; affordable housing located near businesses; plenty of public places to gather and play: buildings located close to the street, with parking lots relegated to the back; schools and workplaces close enough that most residents can walk from their homes; and streets shared easily by bicyclists, pedestrians and transit.

Walkscore.com is part of Redfin, providing a walkability score for homes listed in the online real estate database. According to the website, "Our vision is for every property listing to read: Beds: 3 Baths: 2 Walk Score: 84."



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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Judgment lien: A lien on the property of a debtor resulting from the decree of a court.

Recorder: The public official who keeps records of transactions that affect real property in the area. Sometimes known as a registrar of deeds or county clerk.

SOURCE: Federal Trade Commission

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