

Evaluating a New Neighborhood: Top Things to Consider

Getting around

Proximity to work is important, but the journey to your relaxation havens shouldn't ruin your fun either.

- Check for easy access to your favorite hobbies.
- Time how long it takes to reach after-school activities during rush hour.
- Note any significant changes to weekend traffic patterns.

Community associations and HOAs

If the neighborhood has a community association or homeowners association (HOA), evaluate its rules and reputation before you move in.

- Get a copy of the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) and review them.
- Find out if the community association/HOA imposes any fees.
- Chat with neighbors about their experiences with the community association/HOA.
- Search the local newspaper online for any mentions of the community association/HOA.

Connectivity

Make sure your new neighborhood offers the services you'll need.

- Confirm access to high-speed Internet.
- Determine which cable companies provide the best service.
- Test your cellphone for consistent reception.

Taxes and insurance

Property taxes and insurance rates can change dramatically across cities and counties, so determine how your desired ZIP code will affect your finances.

- Find out if your property taxes will increase or decrease.
- Verify if the neighborhood is subject to local or municipal income taxes.
- Talk to your car insurance company about possible rate changes.

Light and noise

A vibrant, thriving neighborhood can be a joy to live in, but not at the cost of your sleep and serenity.

- Pay attention to whether the roads are busy.
- Verify that streetlights won't shine into bedrooms.
- Check the proximity of bus and train routes.
- Note how close bars and restaurants are—and how late they stay open.

Walkability

Walkable local amenities save you money and keep you healthier.

- Obtain the walk score.
- Check the transit score.
- Look for bike lanes.
- Confirm that sidewalks are kept up.



- **Juan Carlos Garcia, Broker**
- **203-989-9758**
- **jc@sungeltus.com**



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