

Walkable Wisconsin Communities Attract Home Buyers

Wisconsin home buyers are looking beyond the walls when they are investing in a home – they want a home in a neighborhood that delivers a lifestyle. According to RE/MAX REALTORS® in Wisconsin, walkable neighborhoods and communities that offer activities right from the doorstep are particularly attractive to millennials and baby boomers.

According to a nationwide survey by the National Association of REALTORS® and Portland State University, 71 percent of millennials want their home neighborhood to be walkable. They, over any other demographic, would prefer to ditch their cars if they could. Residents in areas like downtown Kenosha are able to walk to the Metra train system, which services the north shore of Chicagoland with service to downtown Chicago daily. This is a huge draw for commuters looking to live outside of Chicago, yet still need to commute for work, according to local real estate professionals.

Boomers are also seeking the ease of a walkable community for many of the same reasons as millennials. They want to live, play and work without going too far from home. This generation is reinventing retirement by moving away from traditional retirement communities and locations (like Florida) to cities and towns in Wisconsin close to a lake with lots to do.

Cities, like Downtown Sheboygan, are receiving national attention for their walkability. Sheboygan, which is on the Sheboygan River and an easy walk to Harbor Centre on Lake Michigan, offers plenty of options for water activities, dining and entertainment.

So what amenities and activities do boomers and millennials seek in their communities? According to local RE/MAX REALTORS®, here are a few features that appeal to these buyers who want active lifestyles in vibrant communities:

- 1. Trails.** Whether it is walking, jogging, biking or even snowmobiling – there are trails and paths throughout Wisconsin perfect for these activities. Many cities and towns have converted abandoned railroads and divided roads for pedestrians. The Old Plank Road Trail was one of the first trails in the nation to share the right-of-way. The 17-mile trail, which allows for horseback riders, moped users and skiers, connects Sheboygan to Greenbush.
- 2. Indoor Recreation.** With more than 15,000 lakes in Wisconsin, there are plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities. Cities and towns are investing in recreational centers to allow for health and fitness activities any time



56% of millennials and 46% of baby boomers prefer to live in more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

According to the Regional Plan Association



A survey found that millennials prefer walking as a mode of transportation by 12 percentage points over driving.

According to the 2015 National Community and Transportation Preference Survey

of the year. Wisconsin is home to the largest municipally owned recreational facility in North America – the RecPlex in Pleasant Prairie. Local RE/MAX REALTORS® note that the RecPlex and other facilities like it are magnets to attracting home buyers.

3. Events. Fairs, festivals and entertainment opportunities are available throughout Wisconsin throughout the entire year. Events do more than just attract tourists; they enhance a community for residents. Boomers are particularly interested in participating in civic events, according to local real estate professionals.



50% of people said that walkability is either the top or a high priority in where they would choose to live.

According to the Urban Land Institute Survey's America in 2015