



Sunday Column

By Cher Miculka, 2021 Chairman

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You're not just buying the house

Homebuyers often have a list of criteria for their home search—their must-haves and nice-to-haves. They need three bedrooms and at least two full baths. They'd like granite countertops and a fireplace.

While those are important criteria, it's easy to get caught up in deciding what you'd like *inside* your home and leave out an equally important consideration for *outside* your home: the neighborhood. The community you belong to plays an important part in your quality of life, so here are a few related criteria to consider that may or may not be deal-breakers for you.

What about the schools?

If you have school-age children or are planning to start a family, pay attention to the school district a home is in. Your San Antonio area REALTOR® can tell you which area of town belongs to which district. Then you can do some research to decide which schools work best for your kids. Even buyers without kids will want to consider school districts in their search, as property tax rates will differ among districts, and a home in a well-regarded district means better resale value.

How's the commute?

While some workers have shifted to working from home, many people still travel to their office five times a week, for about 50 weeks a year. That is a lot of trips from your house to your office, so consider the costs and convenience of your commute when searching for a home. But distance does not necessarily indicate the time it will take. Consider impediments such as rush-hour traffic, school zones, and ongoing construction when calculating your commute.

Is it safe?

There are plenty of websites that offer crime data for neighborhoods, but don't limit your research to online. Talk to the people who know the area: current residents and the police department. They can help you interpret the data and offer their own insights.

Where's the supermarket?

A house in the newest subdivision in the county may contain all the must-haves on your list, but consider where you'll buy groceries, shop for clothes, and go out to eat. Are you OK with driving 20 minutes to the nearest gas station in exchange for a huge new house, or would you rather be able to walk down the street to the store? It just depends on what's important to you.

How does it feel?

You're spending a lot of money to purchase a place where you'll be spending a lot of time. Shouldn't you feel good about where it's located? Walk around the immediate neighborhood and talk to residents. Visit the area at different times and on different days to see what it's like. Is there a lot of traffic? Are there highway noises or train whistles that will bother you?

Work with an expert

When you're deciding the must-haves and nice-to-haves for your next home, make sure to include the criteria for the neighborhood on your list. Your REALTOR® is an expert in your local market and can help you find the areas that best fit your needs inside the home and outside.

For more information on buying, selling, or leasing your home in the San Antonio or surrounding areas, visit SABOR.com and use a REALTOR®.

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