

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Dog-owning nature lovers, culture-seeking urban aficionados, surfboard-toting lobstermen and suburban commuters with incomes in the stratosphere can all find the ideal 'hood in tiny, diverse Rhodie. With property prices at their lowest in years, it's a good time to look around and wonder whether you, too, are in your perfect neighborhood.

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PHOTOGRAPHY NAT REA

Ever notice how people don't say they're from Cranston or Warwick, they say they're from Pawtuxet Village?

That is the hallmark of a really good neighborhood—it commands fealty. It also has its own look and feel and sense of community, its own shops and restaurants (mostly) and its own real estate trends.

Neighborhood living isn't for everyone. Some people would rather live far from the nearest store or house.

We have thoughts on that; and on places to look if you're willing to take a gamble on an up-and-coming 'hood, or long to be close to the coolest streets.

We've done our research—on typical rental and purchase options, school performance, amenities and more—to bring you some of the friendliest, prettiest, most convenient, affordable or family-centric nabes in Rhode Island. Some of them you'll probably have heard of; others may be unfamiliar. Live there or not, these are places to feel proud of.

PRIME WALKABILITY (but not much yard)

Downcity Providence

Rent: 1-bed loft with city view, \$1,700/month*

Buy: 2-bed, 2-bath, 1,740 square-foot condo, \$486,000

Schools: Carl G. Lauro Elementary School (31%, 21%)**

Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (13%, 7%)

Central High School (13.9%, 9%)

Classical High School (77%, 69%)

At home: Singles, power couples with no kids

Downtown Providence's much-touted renaissance really has translated into a viable place to call home. A dearth of decent lower public schools keeps middle-class families away, but hip young things, culture-seeking empty nesters and top-earning professionals (a beach house makes a great complement!) doth still a neighborhood make. Who can argue with instant access to museums, libraries, restaurants from the cool and grungy (Taqueria Pacifica) to the decidedly grown-up (Gracie's) and, of course, Westminster Street shopping, the Riverwalk and WaterFire?

There's still no grocery store or pharmacy, but Peapod and farmers' markets help fill the gap. The I-195 relocation will free up land for open space and reunite the Jewelry District with neighboring Downcity, which is why Coldwell Banker Realtor Gemma Fabris pegs Jewelry District condos as the city's primo investment (although you'll need plenty of dinero; lenders are wary of big loans on mixed-use developments these days). And while it may not feel like a small neighborhood, you can walk to National Grid to pay your utility bills in person.