

Chicago Named Nation's 4th Most Walkable City

Add "city of long strides" to the list of Chicago's monikers, as it was recently named the fourth most walkable city in the nation, according to the Web site walkscore.com. The site ranked the nation's 40 largest cities and their neighborhoods based on their pedestrian friendliness. Just ahead of Chicago were San Francisco, New York and Boston.

A more local advocate, the Metropolitan Planning Council, also released a recent study detailing the economic strain of congestion on the Chicago region. It found that the average commuter wasted \$14.75 an hour, or \$1,580 a year, sitting in traffic, while the toll on the six-county region was as high as \$7.3 billion, twice the original estimate.

Not coincidentally, many homebuyers have taken walkability increasingly into account while shopping for a home. And among their choices, the following new communities have topped not only Walk Score's list, but also theirs.

Ten East Delaware

With a perfect walk score of 100 – also dubbed a "walker's paradise" – Ten East Delaware, in the heart of the Gold Coast neighborhood, is footsteps away from the designer boutiques of Oak Street and the shops along Michigan Avenue, as well as the dining and nightlife of Rush Street. In addition, the development's close proximity to the Loop will provide residents with a quick commute to work.

Designed by renowned architect Lucien Lagrange, the 35-story boutique building will include one-, two- or three-bedroom floor plans ranging from 845 to 3,095 square feet. Residences will include 1½ to 3½ baths, 9- to 10-foot ceilings and oversized balconies. Prices range from \$550,000 to \$2.6 million and climate-controlled, indoor parking is available starting at \$65,000.

"It offers the type of understated elegance that would make the building right at home on the streets of Paris," said Michael W. Reschke, CEO and chairman of The Prime Group, Inc., developer of Ten East Delaware. "And not unlike a Parisian residence, it is located in a highly walkable neighborhood."

Library Tower

Not far behind, with a score of 98, Library Tower, on the corner of State Street and Congress Parkway, sits in the middle of downtown Chicago's cultural and outdoor attractions. Harold Washington Library and the Auditorium Theatre are a stone's throw away; the Art Institute, Symphony Center and Chicago Architecture Foundation are a short walk; and Grant Park and the Lakefront Trail are only a few blocks east on Congress.

Developed by Lennar, Library Tower offers floor plans of one to three bedrooms with 1 to 2½ baths, ranging in size from 905 to 2,130 square feet. Residences are priced from the high \$200,000s to the mid \$800,000s, with indoor parking available at \$40,000 per space. A selection of homes is available for immediate delivery.

"This building offers one of the city's best locations – one of the few addresses in which the city's front yard, Grant Park, practically becomes your own front yard," said Michelle Williams, marketing director for Lennar's Chicago region.

Printer's Corner

Just a few blocks to the south in Printers Row, the recently completed Printers Corner ranks as another "walker's paradise," coming in with a score of 97. Its proximity to the urban campuses of

DePaul University, Columbia College and Roosevelt University makes it a prime spot for graduate students, while the restaurants and shops of Printers Row have attracted many in-town buyers.

“Young professionals like being able to walk to work in the Loop, and the in-town buyers want to entertain guests in the city without having to drive or find parking,” said Bob Horner, co-principal of Winthrop Properties, developer of Printers Corner. “In fact, the best means of transportation around Printers Corner is not the car – it’s the sidewalk.”

An 88-unit, 17-story high rise, Printers Corner features only corner units. Homes measure 769 to 1,168 square feet with one to two bedrooms and one to two baths. Prices range from \$285,000 to \$487,000, with deeded parking at \$36,000. Buyers can choose from a handful of homes available for immediate move in.

McKinley Park Lofts

For a less urban feel, yet an almost equally walkable lifestyle, McKinley Park Lofts on the city’s southwest side rests just across the street from the 69-acre McKinley Park and a few blocks from the 35th and Archer stop of the CTA’s Orange Line. And with a score of 78 – still “very walkable,” according to walkscore.com – residents should have no problem getting around by foot.

By taking the train north or south, one can arrive in either the Loop or at Midway Airport in less than 15 minutes. Closer to home, McKinley Park offers an outdoor pool, skating rink, field house, lagoon, ball fields, tennis courts and running and biking paths perfect for keeping active year round.

“Having merely to cross the street for a run through open green space is not something most Chicagoans can claim to be able to do every morning. Yet it is always a possibility at McKinley Park Lofts,” said Christine Lutz, senior vice president of Garrison Partners Consulting, the community’s exclusive sales and marketing agent.

The homes come in one- to three-bedroom and one- to two-bath configurations, some with dens and balconies, per plan. Floor plans vary in size from 885 to 1,540 square feet, with prices ranging from the \$180,000s to \$300,000s.

For more information on Ten East Delaware, call (312) 397-1010 or visit www.teneastdelaware.com; for Library Tower, call (312) 386-9427 or visit www.librarytower.com; for Printers Corner, call (312) 880-1800 or visit www.printerscorner.com; and for McKinley Park Lofts, call (773) 523-2323 or visit www.mckinleyparklofts.com.