

Lincoln Village neighborhood on Columbus' Far West Side is among nation's hottest housing markets

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Lincoln Village, the pioneering Far West Side neighborhood, is enjoying another moment in the sun.

The community, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, has been named the sixth-hottest housing market in the nation this year in [an annual ranking by](#)

Realtor.com, which bases the list on the number of searches for homes and how quickly homes sell in an area.

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While the national ranking surprised some neighborhood residents, most know Lincoln Village homes are in high demand.



"I'm very surprised," said Aaron Yancey, who bought a Lincoln Village home three years ago. "You're talking about places like L.A. and Chicago and Atlanta and you're telling me this little corner of the world is getting national attention?"

But Yancey also knows how homes have appreciated in the neighborhood, driven by intense demand for affordable property in central Ohio. A house across the street from Yancey sold last year after a few days on the market for \$150,000 — nearly double what it had sold for six years earlier.

Yancey paid \$125,000 for his fully remodeled three-bedroom 1958 ranch In September 2018. Zillow now estimates the house is worth \$178,000.

"My only regret is I didn't buy it sooner," Yancey said.

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According to Realtor.com, searches for homes in Lincoln Village's 43228 ZIP code have jumped 80% over the past year. Homes sell in the area after spending a median of five days on the market, compared with 15 days in the Columbus metro area and 37 days nationwide.

Realtor.com's figures are based on the entire 43228 ZIP code, which straddles Interstate 270 from nearly Hilliard to Grove City.

Lincoln Village, off West Broad Street immediately west of 270 in Prairie Township, serves as the ZIP code's epicenter. The neighborhood comprises about 1,000 homes, most of them modest ranches or Cape Cods.

While Lincoln Village homes can commonly be found for under \$200,000 — especially in Lincoln Village South, south of West Broad Street — many sales have topped the \$200,000 mark over the past year.

Angela Keener, a real-estate agent with Keller Williams Premier, listed a 1954 updated ranch on North Murray Hill Road in July for \$179,900, twice what the property last sold for, in 2013. After showing it to 60 prospective buyers between a Friday morning and a Sunday evening, she fielded 13 offers before accepting one for \$210,000.

"We never would have thought we would have gotten \$210 in Lincoln Village before," Keener said.

Asked to explain the neighborhood's appeal, Keener offered one word.

"Affordability," she said. "It's one of the last places in town where you can get an affordable house."

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In fact, Realtor.com's list is dominated by affordable spots outside urban cores, instead of flashy and pricey communities.

"Affordability is the name of the game in 2021 as listing prices reached record highs around the country over the past year," according to the report, which was prepared by Realtor.com economists. "The majority of ZIP codes on our list are substantially lower in price than the national median."

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Affordability may be driving demand in Lincoln Village, but residents also cite other features of the neighborhood, which played a trailblazing role in central Ohio real estate.

Lincoln Village was the brainchild of Murray Lincoln, president of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the forerunner of Nationwide Insurance. Lincoln wanted to create a self-contained community, with shopping, schools, churches and parks, along with homes and apartments. Launched in the mid-1950s, the community led the way for other similar-planned communities in central Ohio, such as the much-larger Forest Park on the North Side, which is also enjoying a revival.

The neighborhood thrived in its first few decades, as Westland Mall opened (1969) and the nearby Delphi and White Westinghouse factories provided hundreds of good-paying jobs. But by the end of the century, Westinghouse had closed, Westland was suffering from competition from the newer Mall at Tuttle Crossing and Delphi was entering its last stage before closing altogether in 2007. (Hollywood Casino now occupies the site.)

The nonprofit housing organization Homes on the Hill started buying, renovating and selling Lincoln Village homes in 2001, when properties could be easily purchased. The group continued its efforts through the housing recession, until now, on its own or with others, it has renovated about 50 homes, said the organization's Executive Director Stephen Torsell.

"I noticed in the early teens, the Lincoln Village area wasn't appreciating at all, maybe 3% total from 2012 to 2015," Torsell said.

That started changing about five years ago and the last few years have been so dramatic that Homes on the Hill has turned instead to buying lots to build new homes to sell to qualified income-restricted buyers. A Homes on the Hill model that a few years ago appraised in the upper \$140,000s now appraises at \$200,000, Torsell said.

Yancey bought one of Homes on the Hill's remodeled residences. He and his girlfriend, Bethany Stepp, were renting an apartment nearby and realized they could buy a home for a lower monthly payment that would provide more room for their three sons. Stepp grew up in the area and her family still lived nearby, so they were familiar with the location.

The neighborhood has turned out to be everything they hoped, Yancey said.

"It has everything we need," he said, "and the neighbors are great."



Many newcomers to the neighborhood, such as Yancey, are first-time buyers looking for an affordable, well-built home in a safe neighborhood, but there are plenty of veteran homeowners as well.

"We came down here because it's well-maintained housing stock, reasonably priced, in a quiet neighborhood, not in the city, but adjacent

to it," said Alan Dormire, president of the Lincoln Village Residents Association, who moved to Lincoln Village eight years ago from Dublin.

"We've got good, friendly neighbors, some original owners from the 1950s when the houses were built, and a lot of newcomers."

Ann and Jose ("Sonny") Solis bought their Lincoln Village home in 2003 after living overseas.

As a gardener, Ann Solis wishes some Lincoln Village yards were better kept, but she enjoys her walks and the proximity to amenities including Doctors Hospital, which sits in front of part of the neighborhood on West Broad Street.

"It's a good neighborhood," she said while tending her yard on Wednesday. "We've talked about selling the house, especially with what prices have been, but we like it here."

In addition to the hospital, neighbors say Lincoln Village's location in South-Western City Schools is a draw (especially the neighborhood's relatively new Prairie-Lincoln Elementary School).

The neighborhood association also hosts a string of get-togethers in Carl Frye Park including its biggest, a Fourth of July party, along with children's events for Easter, Halloween and Christmas, Dormire said.

For nonprofits such as Homes on the Hill, the neighborhood's revival is rewarding, even though it makes buying properties more challenging.

"It's been amazing to see what has happened in the last several years in this neighborhood," said Torsell, executive director of the organization.

"I think our work has contributed to the success of the area but, of course, lots of other factors are part of the increase. It is still affordable to some extent, certainly comparable to other areas, and we hope it will remain so."

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