



# Five Top Neighborhoods in the Metro Area

by MO PERRY

## Lowertown, St. Paul

Home to the St. Paul Farmers Market, the newly refurbished Union Depot, and the St. Paul Art Crawl, not to mention some of the Twin Cities' best eating and drinking establishments, it's not hard to see why *USA Today* recently named Lowertown one of the top 10 up-and-coming neighborhoods in the country.

A 2013 study by RealtyTrac crowned it the top "hipster zip code" in the nation, based on considerations including residents between the ages of 25 and 34, walkability, public transportation use, and rental and vacancy rates. All this simply underlines what area residents already know: There's an exciting energy and momentum in Lowertown's economic and cultural scene.

The Lowertown real estate market features a variety of artist lofts, condos, and apartments in converted historic warehouses, some featuring rooftop decks with both river and St. Paul skyline views. The newly completed lightrail Green Line connects young professionals to downtown Minneapolis.

**ESSENTIAL LOWERTOWN:** A Saturday morning spent perusing the St. Paul Farmers Market followed by a late breakfast at The Buttered Tin, and—in the warm months—catching a concert in Mears Park or a St. Paul Saints ball game at the Lowertown Ballpark (opening spring 2015).

## North Loop, Minneapolis

If there was any doubt about the North Loop's status as one of the hippest neighborhoods in the Twin Cities, it was laid to rest in the summer of 2012, when President Obama held a fundraiser dinner at the Bachelor Farmer, which went on to be named one of the top 10 hottest new restaurants in the country by *Bon Appetit* that same year. Since then, the neighborhood's reputation has only grown

with each new trendy boutique, chic advertising firm, and critically-lauded restaurant that has opened its doors.

In the area also known as the Warehouse District (a neighborhood group led the "North Loop" rebranding effort in 2005), the architecture still favors historic stone and brickwork in converted multi-purpose buildings, many of which house retail and dining establishments as well as lofts, condos, and apartments. The neighborhood's population nearly tripled between 2000 and 2010 and has continued climbing steadily, with much of the growth coming from sophisticated young urbanites who work and play in neighboring downtown Minneapolis.

**ESSENTIAL NORTH LOOP:** An early dinner on the patio at Borough, followed by a Theater Latté Da show at The Lab Theater and a night-cap at the nationally renowned Marvel Bar.



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**A** real estate professional, Stephane Cattalin provides exceptional service to home buyers and sellers in the Twin Cities area, Minnesota. He specializes in residential properties for first time buyers, international transferees and relocation clients.

Stephane earned his master's degree in France, majoring in hospitality industry management and marketing. He uses his award-winning customer service skills to help his real estate clients achieve a smooth transaction from contract to close. Stephane has represented many personal moves; therefore he is sympathetic to the stress families encounter during a transition to a new home and wants to make the experience a positive one.

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The Shops at West End

West End, St. Louis Park

St. Louis Park's West End has become a destination for foodies, fashionistas, movie buffs, and happy-hour aficionados alike. Home to The Shops at West End, a 32-acre mixed-use development that combines a gourmet grocery store, luxurious movie theater complex, specialty boutiques, two hotels, fine dining, and a vibrant nightlife, the West End is located at the crux of Highways 100 and 394, right outside Minneapolis, giving it the energy of an urban hotspot and the convenience (and free parking) of a suburb.

Real estate options in the immediate vicinity are primarily luxury apartments, condos, and townhomes, but you can also find modest single-family homes on quiet, tree-lined streets and upscale luxury homes on the city's east side, located just a stone's throw from Minneapolis' famous Chain of Lakes. The city, just west of downtown and Uptown Minneapolis, offers easy access to excellent private schools, including Benilde-St. Margaret's and The Blake School, as well as its own competitive public school system, making this city a top choice for young Twin Cities families.

**ESSENTIAL WEST END:** Shopping at Anthropologie, followed by happy hour at the Yard House (140 beers on tap), and a 3D movie at Kerasotes Showplace ICON Theater.

50th and France, Edina

Meredith Howell of Coldwell Banker Burnett Realty describes the 50th and France area of Edina as one of the most consistently strong real estate markets in the Twin Cities metro. Like the West End, the hub of the neighborhood is its business district, which bustles with high-end retailers, professional services, salons, an art-house movie theater, Lunds grocery store, and myriad restaurants ranging from casual to fine dining.

Surrounding the business district is one of the most affluent residential neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. "Young families and 30-somethings comprise many of the new buyers in the area," says Howell. "It's a very traditional area, with a lot of well-maintained older homes, though the neighborhoods around 50th and France are seeing a lot of tear-downs and renovations." Parents are attracted to Edina's nationally recognized public school district, and outdoor enthusiasts appreciate its 40 parks and 1,550 acres of open space.

**ESSENTIAL 50TH AND FRANCE:** Pick up your daily baguette at Breadsmith, enjoy a cup of artisan roasted coffee at Agra Culture Kitchen & Press, play with the potions at Lush Cosmetics, and catch a matinee of an indie film at Edina Cinema.



WEST END TODD PERNSTEINER EDINA TODD BUCHANAN

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# ***Five Top Neighborhoods***

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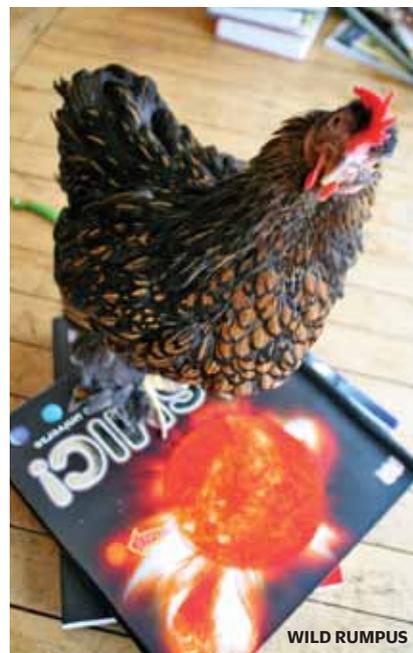
**GREYSTAR**

## Linden Hills, Minneapolis

From nationally famous children’s bookstore Wild Rumpus to weekly movies in the park and farmers markets during the summer, it’s clear to see why Linden Hills is one of the most attractive neighborhoods in the Twin Cities for families with young children. The vibe is earthy and progressive, though it also has a small business hub at its heart, featuring options such as the Bibelot Shop and Creative Kidstuff, professional services, and one of the most critically lauded restaurants in town (Tilia).

The single-family homes along Linden Hills’ peaceful, tree-canopied streets are predominantly Craftsman in style and offer easy access to Lake Harriet by foot, bike, or rollerblade. Children in the Linden Hills area are lucky to be automatically fed into three of the top schools in Minneapolis, including Southwest High School, known for its vibrant arts program.

**ESSENTIAL LINDEN HILLS:** A visit to the Linden Hills Farmers Market on Sunday morning, then a ride on the historic Como-Harriet Streetcar and an ice cream cone at Sebastian Joe’s. In the afternoon, earn yourself a craft beer and appetizers at Tilia with a walk around Lake Harriet.



WILD RUMPUS



TILIA



LYNDALE PARK ROSE GARDEN

# 5 Tips for Buyers

## 1 Get pre-approved by a reputable lender

Meredith Howell of Coldwell Banker Burnett Realty advises her clients to get a "good, clean pre-approval letter from a strong lender with a letterhead that people recognize." Pre-approval is a more thorough process than pre-qualification, with the lender taking into account your annual income, current debt, and credit history. A solid pre-approval will let you know which houses are realistically in your price range and put you in a position to make an offer quickly when you find the one.

## 2 Minimize contingencies

In a competitive market, a buyer can strengthen her offer by minimizing the number of contingencies it contains, but Howell warns her clients never to forego an inspection. "It's ideal to have the home inspected before you submit offer," she explains. This allows the buyer to make a clean offer without an inspection contingency, with the offer price taking into account the cost of any necessary repairs the inspection revealed.

## 3 Hire an experienced Realtor

The Internet has been a great democratizer, in real estate no less than in other areas, but it can also muddle and mislead buyers and sellers alike. Online estimates of a home's value often don't take into account its condition, history, or special features. "An experienced Realtor will know the story behind a neighborhood's comps, know why a specific home sold at the price point it did, and know how to negotiate," says Howell.

## 4 Think outside the box

Be open to unconventional search methods, including pocket listings, expired listings from previous years, for-sale-by-owner listings, and pre-market homes. In a competitive market, it also helps to look when no one else is looking. Capitalize on holidays and big events by sneaking in a home tour or submitting an offer when other buyers are busy or distracted.

## 5 Be prepared to walk away

Put your best foot forward, make a competitive offer, and know in advance what your limit is if it comes to a bidding war. "Don't pay any more than you determined in advance, and don't be intimidated or rushed into raising your bid," says Howell. If one house doesn't fit within your financial limits, another will.



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# Neighborhoods by the Numbers

Neighborhood	2014 Median Home Value	Value change forecast for 2015	Median household income	Diversity (% non-white)	Percentage of owner-occupied homes	Median monthly rent
Andover	\$226,000	-1%	\$92,809	6.8%	94.4%	\$1,544
Apple Valley	\$201,000	-1.80%	\$91,583	16%	83.60%	\$1,522
Armatage, Mpls	\$251,000	-1.4%	\$76,570	18.40%	82.30%	\$1,559
Battle Creek, St. Paul	\$153,000	2%	\$59,925	47%	48%	\$1,257
Blaine	\$178,000	-2%	\$89,687	17.9%	89.7%	\$1,386
Bloomington	\$205,000	0.10%	\$71,369	20%	67%	\$1,517
Brooklyn Center	\$134,000	-0.40%	\$49,254	50.9%	64.1%	\$1,306
Brooklyn Park	\$170,000	0.5%	\$73,071	48%	73%	\$1,431
Bryn-Mawr, Mpls	\$321,000	-0.6%	\$93,293	11%	84.6%	\$1,859
Burnsville	\$202,000	-1.80%	\$69,717	22.50%	68%	\$1,526
Champlin	\$184,000	0.00%	\$88,174	11.00%	87.2%	\$1,485
Chanhassen	\$292,000	0.00%	\$114,928	7.50%	88.5%	\$1,808
Chaska	\$230,000	-0.30%	\$87,886	11.90%	73%	\$1,565
Columbia Heights	\$140,000	-0.6%	\$56,273	30.3%	71.2%	\$1,264
Como, St. Paul	\$209,000	1.1%	\$58,605	17.4%	63.7%	\$1,408
Coon Rapids	\$152,000	-2.20%	\$66,129	14%	78.1%	\$1,351
Cottage Grove	\$206,000	-0.60%	\$83,728	13.5%	90.4%	\$1,459
Crystal	\$154,000	-1.30%	\$62,388	22%	77.1%	\$1,364
Dayton's Bluff, St. Paul	\$112,000	0.7%	\$46,899	60.5%	49.5%	\$1,194
Downtown Minneapolis West	\$171,000	-1.2%	\$45,108	40%	34.2%	\$1,427
Downtown St. Paul	\$151,000	-0.20%	\$37,915	29.4%	28.2%	\$1,175
Eagan	\$221,000	-1.9%	\$91,967	18.5%	74.3%	\$1,593
Eden Prairie	\$296,000	-0.60%	\$102,836	18.3%	74.1%	\$1,875
Edina	\$367,000	-1%	\$100,901	11.9%	74.9%	\$2,244
Excelsior	\$333,000	-0.30%	\$66,852	10%	35.7%	\$1,835
Farmington	\$203,000	-0.70%	\$90,870	10.2%	88%	\$1,495
Fridley	\$149,000	-1.80%	\$57,354	24.8%	64.6%	\$1,311
Forest Lake	\$204,000	-0.50%	\$82,414	5.3%	78.4%	\$1,442
Fulton, Mpls	\$366,000	-0.60%	\$105,411	9.4%	85.9%	\$1,972
Golden Valley	\$253,000	-0.70%	\$84,375	14.6%	77%	\$1,625
Hastings	\$167,000	-0.80%	\$65,994	5.9%	79.8%	\$1,363
Highland, St. Paul	\$298,000	2.40%	\$72,999	21.1%	54.3%	\$1,628
Holland, Mpls	\$148,000	-1.30%	\$34,727	49.9%	45.3%	\$1,297
Hopkins	\$182,000	-0.20%	\$54,644	29.6%	40.3%	\$1,389
Inver Grove Heights	\$190,000	-0.10%	\$93,129	14.3%	74.7%	\$1,423
Kenwood, Mpls	\$768,000	-1.80%	\$134,933	9.2%	85.9%	\$3,124
Kingfield, Mpls	\$253,000	0.10%	\$65,546	24.4%	65.2%	\$1,523
Lakeville	\$265,000	-1.80%	\$103,327	10.7%	91.4%	\$1,814

For our comprehensive neighborhood numbers, including such stats as home values, condo values, rent, population, median age, vacancy rates, walk scores, transit scores, bike scores and more, go to [MNMO.com](http://MNMO.com)

Neighborhood	2014 Median Home Value	Value change forecast for 2015	Median household income	Diversity (% non-white)	Percentage of owner-occupied homes	Median monthly rent
Linden Hills, Mpls	\$384,000	-1.90%	\$93,303	10.9%	70%	\$2,030
Lino Lakes	\$231,000	-0.30%	\$97,737	9.1%	94.8%	\$1,529
Longfellow, Mpls	\$176,000	-2.90%	\$46,059	38.1%	53.1%	\$1,377
Loring Park, Mpls	\$137,800	-6.20%	\$34,296	25.6%	19.7%	\$1,478
Marcy-Holmes, Minneapolis	\$216,000	-2.40%	\$32,621	25.5%	11.2%	\$1,614
Mac-Groveland, St. Paul	\$303,000	1.50%	\$88,647	10.4%	71.7%	\$1,646
Maple Grove	\$236,000	-0.70%	\$99,769	13.6%	89.7%	\$1,618
Maplewood	\$186,000	2.50%	\$65,264	24.4%	73%	\$1,363
Marine on St. Croix	\$306,000	-1.00%	\$105,532	2.1%	93%	\$1,735
Minnetonka	\$300,000	-1.80%	\$96,428	10%	73.3%	\$1,897
New Brighton	\$215,000	0.30%	\$65,298	18.1%	66.6%	\$1,496
New Hope	\$181,000	-1.30%	\$57,742	25.5%	56.8%	\$1,469
North Loop, Mpls	\$193,000	-0.80%	\$78,400	28.6%	50.9%	\$1,631
Oakdale	\$190,000	-1.00%	\$71,769	18.6%	80.2%	\$1,393
Payne-Phalen, St. Paul	\$128,000	3.30%	\$49,599	65%	51.9%	\$1,215
Plymouth	\$291,000	-0.20%	\$96,670	15.7%	73.4%	\$1,762
Powderhorn, Mpls	\$167,000	-0.20%	\$42,097	55.8%	46.7%	\$1,341
Prior Lake	\$261,000	0.10%	\$100,096	9%	87.2%	\$1,697
Prospect Park, Mpls	\$283,000	-1.70%	\$53,966	31%	25.5%	\$1,744
Richfield	\$180,000	-0.40%	\$59,898	30.1%	65.6%	\$1,418
Rosemount	\$219,000	-1.40%	\$97,660	12.6%	89.6%	\$1,554
Roseville	\$217,000	0.00%	\$62,693	18.7%	66.4%	\$1,475
Seward, Mpls	\$211,000	-0.60%	\$43,162	44.9%	33.1%	\$1,465
Sheridan, Mpls	\$155,000	0.20%	\$44,025	45.6%	36.7%	\$1,324
Shakopee	\$197,000	-0.60%	\$91,401	23%	80.5%	\$1,502
Shoreview	\$242,000	0.80%	\$88,092	12.6%	84.5%	\$1,558
St. Anthony East, Mpls	\$169,000	-0.60%	\$42,745	43.3%	37.3%	\$1,346
St. Louis Park	\$220,000	-1.10%	\$74,240	16.7%	60.9%	\$1,501
Summit Hill, St. Paul	\$386,000	0.30%	\$68,327	11%	47.4%	\$1,877
Summit-University, St. Paul	\$173,000	-0.10%	\$43,520	53.9%	37.7%	\$1,337
Tangletown, Mpls	\$351,000	-2.70%	\$101,582	13.9%	73.3%	\$1,949
Victory, Mpls	\$131,000	-4.00%	\$63,042	33%	84.5%	\$1,276
Waconia	\$218,000	-1.20%	\$87,052	4.3%	81.8%	\$1,517
White Bear Lake	\$191,000	0.10%	\$59,357	9.9%	72.3%	\$1,385
Whittier, Mpls	\$123,000	-1.40%	\$35,604	48.7%	14%	\$1,353
Windom, Mpls	\$234,000	-1.70%	\$66,910	39%	45.6%	\$1,523
Woodbury	\$269,000	-0.40%	\$113,001	18.6%	84.1%	\$1,705

\*Compilation of data collected from Zillow, realtor.com, walkscore.com, neighborhoodscout.com, and mncompass.org. Grid statistics were from the most recent year available.