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THE PREMIER SEATTLE MONTHLY

JULY 2007

BEST Neighborhoods

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Some homes may need a bit of updating, but the Central District is poised to become the next hot neighborhood

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HOT Investment Neighborhoods

You missed the boat on Georgetown and Columbia City—two neighborhoods where real estate values have taken off in recent years. So what's the next big thing? Check out these neighborhoods that are positioned to take off soon

CENTRAL DISTRICT

- » **MEDIAN HOME PRICE: \$390,000**
- » **MEDIAN HOME SIZE: 1,490 SQUARE FEET**
- » **INCREASE IN MEDIAN, 2005-2006: 21 PERCENT**

This classic neighborhood, like Capitol Hill, offers homes with grace and character, and a great commute to downtown. Development appears to be continuing in this most, well, central of all Seattle neighborhoods, as homes are restored and new businesses go in. The city's historic African-American neighborhood hosts plenty of gorgeous old Seattle classics and Craftsman-style homes, along with smaller bungalows. Garfield, one of the city's top public high schools, is located here, as are numerous medical offices and hospitals.

The area's Jackson Street corridor is in the midst of big changes. Several major mixed-use developments, combining condos or apartments with retail and office space, are planned, including one tagged at \$70 million for the site of a former Wonder Bread plant at 18th

Avenue S and S Jackson Street. "I'm still considerably excited by the potential of the Central District—I'm hugely enthusiastic," says Matthew Gardner, a Seattle real estate economist. Easy bus access to the downtown core, great views available from many sites and a draft decision by the Sound Transit board to extend the downtown streetcar up Jackson Street to Capitol Hill adds to the potential of the Central District, he says.

HALLER LAKE

- » **MEDIAN HOME PRICE: \$375,500**
- » **MEDIAN HOME SIZE: 1,845 SQUARE FEET**
- » **INCREASE IN MEDIAN PRICE, 2005-2006: 21 PERCENT**

Despite the overwhelming commercial presence of nearby Aurora Avenue and the rumble of Interstate 5 to the east, this North End neighborhood, with its curving streets and numerous mature trees, hangs on to a bucolic sense of place. Of course, having a 15-acre lake at its core doesn't

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RUSTON

- » MEDIAN HOME PRICE: \$440,000
- » INCREASE IN MEDIAN PRICE, 2005-2006: 31 PERCENT
- » ESTIMATED POPULATION: 745

Once the company town for the Asarco copper smelter, Ruston retains its feel of being just a bit separate from the rest of Tacoma, even though its landmark smokestack has been gone for years.

Homes here can be small, as befits a former blue-collar enclave, but amenities such as nearby Point Defiance Park and Zoo—one of the nation's great urban parks—and Commencement Bay, with several miles of walking path along the shore, make this a neighborhood with great potential in the years ahead. The Antique Sandwich Co., a funky, friendly, comfortable gathering place, serves as the unofficial headquarters for the neighborhood. Employee Nicole Townsend comments, "It's a great neighborhood. There are lots of cute antique shops. Really, nothing major ever goes on here. It's just laid-back and mellow."

MAPLE VALLEY

- » MEDIAN HOME PRICE: \$385,735
- » MEDIAN HOME SIZE: 2,169 SQUARE FEET
- » INCREASE IN MEDIAN PRICE, 2005-2006: 28 PERCENT

While housing developments are breaking out all over here these days, much of this area remains horse country—the place where you go when your kids want a Flicka of their own and a 4-H group that meets nearby. Magnificent trees blanket the area, and anyone with a yen for their own half acre will be quite happy here.

Commercial development is minimal (though growing), and you'll still find plenty of signs of country life: produce stands spilling over with pumpkins in the fall, country roads that wind past rivers or creeks and riding stables bound by tidy white fences. Of course, there are pancake breakfasts at the Grange. Naturally, you can find farmhouses and ranches. The suburban subdivisions are often tucked down quiet lanes along with that reality of country life: more than a few manufactured houses.

PUYALLUP AND EATONVILLE

- » MEDIAN HOME PRICE: \$275,000
- » MEDIAN HOME SIZE: 1,878 SQUARE FEET
- » INCREASE IN MEDIAN PRICE, 2005-2006: 10 PERCENT

A Pierce County city with a strong historic past, Puyallup feels a bit like it's bursting at the seams. Many of those considering the move here are prospective homeowners who want new construction in a good school district, and are willing to make longer commutes to the Tacoma and greater Seattle urban areas. New schools are being built around the city to meet its growing number of families, and the commercial and retail sections are growing commensurately. Once known as a farming center, Puyallup is feeling pretty darn suburban. The same is true of neighboring Eatonville, 25 miles away, though the two cities seem to increasingly run together along the commercial districts of Washington State Route 161; it's now more a suburb than a small town these

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