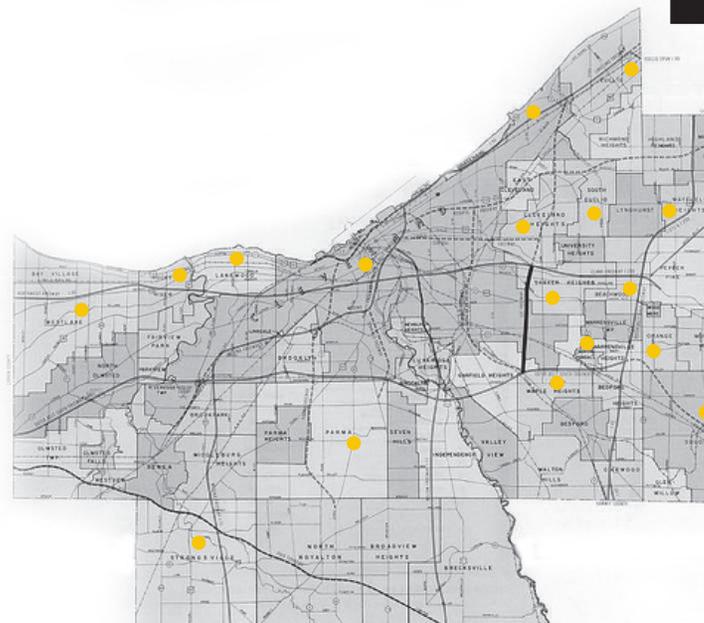


Greater Cleveland

Neighborhood Livability Ratings



A prototype study

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By G. M. Donley, special to the *Heights Observer*

Neighborhood Livability Ratings

Ratings are ubiquitous: best colleges, best cars, best cheap vacation spots, best outfits for a job interview, and of course, best cities to live in. Cleveland, as we all know, sometimes ends up at the wrong end of such ratings (is it really any big revelation that it's sometimes cloudy near the Great Lakes, and who says snow is a bad thing anyway?), but the fact is this area offers a terrific combination of desirable amenities and affordable cost. The day-to-day livability of a specific neighborhood has to do with how conveniently accessible those quality-of-life amenities are, balanced against factors including cost and safety.

This prototype study isn't one of those fluffy "rating the suburbs" games that are little more than propaganda for outer-suburban development, but rather an attempt to ascribe value to the kinds of things that lead people to choose to live in a place that lets them take advantage of a city's great amenities in their daily lives. The study is not comprehensive (we select 18 representative neighborhoods from the Greater Cleveland area, urban, inner-ring, outer-ring, and small town), nor is it as scientifically robust as it could be if it were carried out by one of our region's fine research institutions—our hope is that this prototype study might inspire the participation of one or more of those universities in expanding this study into a broader, more complete annual regional study that relates to the values of people who actually like cities.

We rate eighteen representative Greater-Cleveland neighborhoods for their all-around livability using ten equally weighted criteria: walkability, culture access, public school effectiveness, private school options, higher education access, quality of dining, commuting and transportation options, park and countryside access, safety, and annual cost of owning the median home.

Scoring system: the 18 neighborhoods are scored in each category, then ranked first to last with that ranking number constituting that neighborhood's score for that category. In the case of a tie within categories, the higher rank (lower number) is given to both, then the ranking skips a number. If a number of neighborhoods tie for last place, they all get a score of 18 (the lowest rank). The overall winner is the neighborhood with the lowest cumulative number of points (i.e., the highest overall average ranking). The data come from readily available online sources: geo-spatial information cross-referenced with business and amenity locations comes from walkscore.com; demographic and real-estate information is from the U. S. Census bureau and other sources including city-data.com and cleveland.com; crime and safety ratings are from neighborhoodscout.com, and school performance data that is omitted for the official School District Report Cards is from detailed reports available online from the Ohio Department of Education; and local restaurant ratings are from Where the Locals Eat.

Walkability index

After a couple of generations of spreading further and further out, consuming more and more resources, being increasingly at the mercy of fluctuating energy prices, and becoming more and more isolated from their neighbors, many Americans are rediscovering the desirability of a walkable neighborhood. It's simple math that everyone's house and lot must be somewhat smaller in order to bring the scale of the neighborhood down to human size, but the payoff is significant: better sense of community, smaller energy expenditures, less time sitting in the car, more time spent with friends and family. Walkscore.com compiles many factors that contribute to a walkable community to come up with a walkability score (in parentheses, on a scale of 1-100).

Source: walkscore.com.

- 1** Ohio City (80)
- 2** Lakewood (74)
- 3** Cleveland Heights (73)
- 4** South Euclid (64)
- 4** Rocky River (64)
- 6** North Collinwood (61)
- 7** Mayfield Heights (59)
- 8** Shaker Heights (56)
- 9** Parma (53)
- 9** Maple Heights (53)
- 11** Euclid (49)
- 11** Beachwood (49)
- 11** Orange (49)
- 14** Warrensville Heights (48)
- 15** Medina (47)
- 16** Westlake (45)
- 17** Strongsville (35)
- 18** Solon (25)

Culture access

How many museums, galleries, music venues, and movie theaters are within five miles? 1 point each for regional, 5 points for national, 10 points for international

Access to arts and culture resources is an important amenity of life for many Americans. In Cleveland, we have not only neighborhood arts centers and galleries, but major national cultural attractions; and not only those national destinations, but world-class organizations such as the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cleveland Orchestra. University Circle may be unique in the world in the number of cultural institutions within walking distance of each other. The value of having numerous local art galleries as well as one of the best museums in the world, all just a short trip from your house, is extraordinary. So this rating gives points for every arts and culture resource within five miles, with bonus quality points for proximity to institutions of national and international reputation. Institution locations and distances from walkscore.com.

Key to common abbreviations BotGar=Cleveland Botanical Garden; Cedar-Lee=Cedar-Lee Theatre; ChildMus=Children's Museum; CIA=Cleveland Institute of Art; CIM=Cleveland Institute of Music; CMA=Cleveland Museum of Art; CMNH=Cleveland Museum of Natural History; CPH=Cleveland Play House; Cod=USS Cod Museum; GLSC=Great Lakes Science Center; GLTF=Great Lakes Theatre Festival; SSM=Steamship Mather; MOCA=Museum of Contemporary Art; Maltz=Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage; Orch=Cleveland Orchestra; PHSq=PlayHouse Square; RR=Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; Sev=Severance Cinema; Sh Sq=Shaker Square Cinema

1 Cleveland Heights: Maltz (10), CMA (10), CIA (5), MOCA (5), CMNH (10), WRHS (5), BotGar (1), Child Mus (5), Shaker Hist (1), Nature Ctr (1), Beachland (5), Nighttown (5), Grog Shop (5), Dobama (1), CPH (5), PHSq (5), GLTF (5), The Q (5), CSU Convo (5), Peabody's (1), Apollo's Fire (10), Cedar-Lee (1), Sev (1), Orch (10), CIM (5), Cinematheque (5), Sh Sq (1), Hts Arts (1) 134

2 Shaker Heights: Maltz, CMA, CIA, MOCA, CMNH, WRHS, BotGar, Child Mus, Shaker Hist, Nature Ctr, Nighttown, Grog Shop, Dobama, Apollo's Fire, Cedar-Lee, Sev, Orch, CIM, Cinematheque, Sh Sq, Hts Arts 99

3 Ohio City: Cle Pub Theater (5), SPACES (5), Bop Stop (5), RR (10), GLSC (5), SSM (1), Cod (1), House of Blues (5), The Q, CSU Convo, Nautica (1), Tower City Amp (5), Pat's in the Flats (1), CPH, PHSq, GLTF, Peabody's, Capitol Theater, Twr City Cinema, Hilarities, Grt Lakes Theater, Beck Ctr, Wall Eye, W 78th Arts Ctr 78

4 South Euclid: Maltz, CMA, MOCA, CMNH, WRHS, BotGar, Shaker Hist, Nature Ctr, Beachland, Nighttown, Grog Shop, Dobama, Apollo's Fire, Cedar-Lee, Sev 75

5 North Collinwood: CIM, CIA, Polka Hall of Fame, Euclid Hist Soc, Beachland, Grog Shop, Nighttown, Dobama, Arts Collinwood, Sev, Cedar-Lee, Cinematheque, Lakeshore, Hts Arts 40

6 Lakewood: Lakewd Hist Soc, CAF, Phantasy, Cle Pub Theater, SPACES, Capitol Theater, Beck Ctr, Wall Eye, W 78th Arts 25

7 Euclid Polka Hall of Fame, Euclid Hist Soc, Beachland, Arts Collinwood 17

8 Orange Maltz, Shaker Hist soc, Orange Arts Ctr (1), Chag Falls hist soc, Bedford Hist Soc 14

9 Warrensville Heights Maltz, Shaker hist, MH Hist soc, Bedford Hist Soc 13

10 Beachwood: Maltz 10

11 Mayfield Heights: Mayfield, SE, Gates Mills hist socs 3

12 Maple Heights: CJO, MH Hist soc, Bedford Hist Soc 3

13 Rocky River: CAF, Romanian Ethnic Art Museum, Lakewood Hist soc 3

14 Solon: Chag Falls hist soc, Bedford hist soc 2

15 Strongsville: Strongsville Hist Soc, Berea hist soc 2

16 Westlake: Lake Erie Nature & Science ctr, Rose Hill Museum, Olmsted Hist soc 3

17 Parma: Brooklyn hist soc 1

18 Medina: 0

Public school effectiveness

Ohio's School District Report Cards, though loudly hyped and widely quoted, fail to meet some pretty basic scientific standards. Namely, the only valid way to measure school district effectiveness is to track inputs vs. outputs: that is, 1) test a sample of students, then 2) apply some education, then 3) test that same sample again and see what happened. For all the elaborate charts and figures and ratings the state provides, it doesn't provide this one measure that would actually tell Ohioans which schools are most effective. It's a sad lapse, especially coming from the folks who presume to evaluate our education system.

We set out to develop a more accurate measure using the state's raw data, and identified two tactics that should get us closer to reality: correct for race and correct for low income. No one has yet proved why, but a pervasive race gap separates the test scores of white students and black students, nationwide, no matter what the school system. This would obviously skew the results when comparing school districts that have different racial mixes. One way to remove the possibility of that distortion is to measure white student scores in one school against white student scores in the other and do the same for black stu-

dents. (These are the only two ethnic groups that consistently appear in almost every school district in our sample, which is why we don't include Asian, Hispanic, or other groups). Research also shows that students qualifying for free or reduced lunch score 10% to 15% lower than average on a nationwide basis, and that too would skew school ratings, so we also try to correct for that. Because some kids start out far behind and our interest is final outcomes, we evaluate only high-school scores. The resulting score is certainly still an imperfect measure, but considerably less imperfect than the state's published report cards.

Overview: Solon is tops in the scores of black students, followed by Orange and Beachwood (note correlation with high home cost). Meanwhile, there is no statistically significant difference among white students in the top 10 districts: at least 98% of all their white students pass all the required test sections (this suggests a need for an additional statewide measure to more meaningfully differentiate among the highest-performing students). Notably, high school student performance in Medina, Strongsville, and Westlake isn't quite up to the par of

This measure takes the average of highest test-passage percentage attained in each subject area in either 11th or 12th grade by black students (because students who pass in 11th grade need not take the test again), and calculates the corresponding figure for white students. Then, because students qualifying for free or reduced lunch score 10% to 15% lower than average on a nationwide basis, we apply a poverty correction factor, because the number of students in poverty varies widely from district to district and that variance distorts the appar-

ent effectiveness of the school systems. Because more than half of the students who do not meet a particular score standard in high school miss it by less than 10 points out of a hundred, we can estimate a very rough correction by multiplying the percentage of disadvantaged students in a district by the percentage of students who did not pass the test and dividing that percentage in half (for example, if 33% of a district is in poverty, and 9% of white students did not pass the test, we assume that a third of the 9% who failed are in poverty, and that half of

those would have passed were they not in poverty an additional—a correction factor of 1.5%). Resulting numbers are ranked against sample averages. This correction is probably too conservative because the economically disadvantaged portion of a student body is likely to be disproportionately represented among the lower scores, but it seems prudent to underestimate the effect rather than overestimate it. These corrections would be unnecessary if the state provided valid input/output info tracking samples of students over time.

CH-UH, Shaker, South Euclid-Lyndhurst or some of the other districts people say they're moving from in search of "good" schools. So if you think you're moving out there for better schools, think again. It must be some other reason.

A challenge arises when a district's population of either black or white students is too low for the state to report their scores. To produce a meaningful ranking, we split the difference between the sample average for the "missing" race and that school district's performance against the sample average for the other race and use that estimate (shown in brackets).

It is difficult to compare Cleveland Municipal schools to these other districts because students don't necessarily attend school in their own neighborhood, so the overall district numbers are used here; once we correct for the fact that the Cleveland public schools have an astonishing 100% of students in poverty, their middle-of-the-pack performance is remarkable given the challenges faced. The moral: be an informed and skeptical consumer of conventional wisdom, and of state report cards.

We list the average of test passing rates for black students and white students over the past two school years, apply a conservative income correction (see footnote for methodology), then compare each of those numbers to the sample average and rank in order of performance against the averages (for black students 89.1; for white students 97.7). DS=Disadvantaged Students

| | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|---|------------|------------|
| 1 | | | 4 | | |
| Solon | blk | wht | Shaker | blk | wht |
| 2008-10 | 98.7 | 99.8 | 2008-10 | 93.3 | 99.8 |
| DS 8.3% (0, 0) | 98.7 | 99.8 | DS 21% (.1, 0) | 93.4 | 99.8 |
| vs. avg | +9.6 | +2.1 | vs. avg | +4.3 | +2.1 |
| Rank | 1 | 1 (tie) | rank | 5 | 1 (tie) |
| Combined 2 | | | Combined 6 | | |
| 2 | | | 5 (tie) | | |
| Orange | | | Cleveland Heights-University Heights | | |
| 2008-10 | 97.9 | 99.8 | 2008-10 | 87.3 | 99.7 |
| DS 14.8% (.1, 0) | 98 | 99.8 | DS 61% (3.8, .1) | 91.1 | 99.8 |
| vs. avg | +9 | +2.1 | vs. avg | +2 | +2.1 |
| rank | 2 | 1 (tie) | rank | 10 | 1 (tie) |
| Combined 3 | | | Combined 11 | | |
| 3 | | | 5 (tie) | | |
| Beachwood | | | South Euclid-Lyndhurst | | |
| 2008-10 | 94.9 | 99.8 | 2008-10 | 89.5 | 99.2 |
| DS 7.6% (.2, 0) | 95.1 | 99.8 | DS 44% (2.1, .2) | 91.6 | 99.4 |
| vs. avg | +6 | +2.1 | vs. avg | +4.6 | +1.4 |
| rank | 3 | 1 (tie) | rank | 4 | 7 |
| Combined 4 | | | Combined 11 | | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| 7 | | | 14 | | |
| Rocky River | blk | wht | Strongsville | blk | wht |
| 2008-10 | — | 99.8 | 2008-10 | 88.2 | 98.2 |
| DS 11.3% (0, 0) | — | 99.8 | DS 13.5% (+.8, .1) | 89 | 98.3 |
| vs. avg | [+0.9] | +2.1 | vs. avg | -0.1 | +0.6 |
| rank | 12 | 1 (tie) | rank | 15 | 10 |
| Combined 13 | | | Combined 25 | | |
| 8 | | | 15 (tie) | | |
| Mayfield | | | Lakewood | | |
| 2008-10 | 90.7 | 98.6 | 2008-10 | 86.3 | 96 |
| DS 17.6% (.8, .1) | 91.5 | 98.7 | DS 49% (3.4, 1) | 89.7 | 97 |
| vs. avg | +2.4 | +1 | vs. avg | +0.6 | -1.7 |
| rank | 9 | 8 | rank | 13 | 13 |
| Combined 17 | | | Combined 26 | | |
| 9 (tie) Ohio City | | | 15 (tie) | | |
| 9 (tie) North Collinwood | | | Medina | | |
| Cleveland Municipal (system overall) | | | 2008-10 | 84.4 | 98.7 |
| 2008-10 | 86.3 | 92.1 | DS 16.4% (1.8, .1) | 86.2 | 98.8 |
| DS 100% (6.8, 4) | 93.1 | 96.1 | vs. avg | -2.9 | +1.1 |
| vs. avg | +4 | -1 | rank | 18 | 8 |
| rank | 6, 6 | 11, 11 | Combined 26 | | |
| Combined 18 (each) | | | 17 | | |
| 11 | | | Warrensville Hts | | |
| Parma | | | 2008-10 | 81.1 | — |
| 2008-10 | 91.4 | 96.2 | DS 80.7% (7.5, 0) | 88.6 | — |
| DS 40.9% (1.7, .7) | 92.1 | 96.9 | vs. avg | -0.5 | [-0.2] |
| vs. avg | +3 | -0.8 | rank | 16 (tie) | 12 |
| rank | 8 | 12 | Combined 28 | | |
| Combined 20 | | | 18 | | |
| 12 | | | Euclid | | |
| Maple Heights | | | 2008-10 | 84.6 | 92.8 |
| 2008-10 | 87 | — | DS 52% (4, 1.9) | 88.6 | 94.7 |
| DS 56 (+3.6, 0) | 90.6 | — | vs. avg | -0.5 | -3 |
| vs. avg | +1.5 | [+0.7] | rank | 16 (tie) | 17 |
| rank | 11 | 11 | Combined 33 | | |
| Combined 22 | | | 13 | | |
| 13 | | | Westlake | | |
| Westlake | | | 2008-10 | — | 98.2 |
| 2008-10 | — | 98.2 | DS 14.4% (0, .2) | — | 98.4 |
| DS 14.4% (0, .2) | — | 98.4 | vs. avg | [+0.3] | +0.7 |
| vs. avg | [+0.3] | +0.7 | rank | 14 | 9 |
| rank | 14 | 9 | Combined 23 | | |
| Combined 23 | | | | | |

Private school options

Many of these neighborhoods offer a wide variety of private-school options, many with religious affiliation (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish) and many without (private independent schools, Montessori, and special-needs). Since no one educational model works for all children, this availability of choice is attractive to many families. The neighborhoods with the most choice of private schools tend to be in older, economically stable, urban or inner-suburban communities with diverse populations.

One point for every private elementary and/or secondary school within five miles (not including nursery/day care). School locations and distances from [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com).

- 1** Shaker Heights 18
- 1** Cleveland Heights 18
- 3** South Euclid 17
- 4** Beachwood 16
- 4** Lakewood 16
- 4** Maple Heights 16
- 4** Ohio City 16
- 4** Rocky River 16
- 9** Warrensville Heights 15
- 10** Mayfield Heights 14
- 11** Orange 13
- 11** Euclid 13
- 13** Parma 12
- 13** Westlake 12
- 15** Strongsville 10
- 16** North Collinwood 7
- 17** Solon 5
- 18** Medina 4

Higher education access

How many higher education institutions are within five miles? 1 pt each for regional, 5 points for national, 10 points for international

The presence of institutions of higher education serves many positive roles: they raise the bar for intellectual activity in general, they provide area businesses an educated customer base with decent incomes, they prepare the local populace to be more productive contributors to the regional economy, and they suck brains into our region. The neighborhoods immediately adjacent to major educational institutions tend to be home to the people who work for them, and thus you get places like Cleveland Heights, the *de facto* bedroom community for University Circle, where sometimes it seems like half the residents are affiliated with one of the major Circle institutions. These listings include only 4-year nonprofit colleges and universities, plus the Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Lake County community colleges because many of their students are there not to earn a 2-year degree but to transfer to a 4-year college. Institution locations and distances from walkscore.com.

Key to common abbreviations CIA=Cleveland Institute of Art, CIM=Cleveland Institute of Music, CWRU=Case Western Reserve University, CSU=Cleveland State University, JCU=John Carroll University, Tri-C=Cuyahoga Community College (east, metro, and west campuses)

- 1** Cleveland Heights: JCU (5), Notre Dame (1), CWRU (10), CIM (10), CIA (10), CSU (5), Tri-C (1) 42
- 2** Shaker Heights: JCU, Notre Dame, CWRU, CIM, CIA, Tri-C 37
- 3** South Euclid: JCU, Notre Dame, CWRU, CIM, CIA 36
- 4** North Collinwood: CWRU (10), CIM (10), CIA (10) 30
- 5** Mayfield Heights: JCU, Notre Dame, Ursuline, 12
- 6** Warrensville Heights: Tri-C East, JCU, Notre Dame 7
- 7** Orange: JCU, Tri-C East 6
- 7** Ohio City: CSU, Tri-C Metro 6
- 9** Beachwood: Ursuline, Notre Dame, Tri-C East 3
- 10** Maple Heights: Tri-C East, 1
- 11** Solon: Tri-C East 1
- 12** Strongsville: B-W 1
- 13** Parma: Tri-c West 1
- 14** Euclid Lakeland West 1
- 18** Medina: 0
- 18** Lakewood 0
- 18** Rocky River 0
- 18** Westlake 0

Quality Dining

Number of top-100 local restaurants within 5 miles (1 point for each).

Cleveland has always been a good town for hungry folks, but in recent years, a real food culture has begun to emerge. We're a region of sophisticated and eclectic tastes and we're surrounded by some of the world's best agricultural land. The top 100 list from Where the Locals Eat identifies standouts among the many fine locally owned dining establishments, and our rating gives a point for each one of those top 100 that falls within 5 miles of each neighborhood center. Ratings from wherethelocalseat.com are cross-referenced with geo-location data from walkscore.com.

- 1** Ohio City (43 top-100 restaurants within 5 miles)
- 2** Cleveland Heights (33)
- 3** Shaker Heights (28)
- 4** Lakewood (18)
- 5** Beachwood (14)
- 6** South Euclid (12)
- 6** Rocky River (12)
- 8** Orange (11)
- 8** North Collinwood/Beachland (11)
- 10** Warrensville Heights (8)
- 11** Westlake (6)
- 12** Parma (4)
- 13** Euclid (3)
- 14** Mayfield Heights (3)
- 15** Solon (2)
- 16** Medina (1)
- 16** Maple Heights (1)
- 18** Strongsville (0)

Commuting/ transportation options

1 point each for: auto time to downtown under 20 min.; auto time to U Circle under 20 min.; walk to rapid transit rail line under 20 min.; bicycle to downtown under 40 min.; bicycle to U. Circle under 40 min.; walk to downtown under 60 min.; walk to U. Circle under 60 min. (Bus routes serve all the neighborhoods.)

Rapid transit lines and residential density that date to the early 20th century propel the region's older neighborhoods and suburbs to the top of this ranking. This measure can seem rigged in favor of Ohio City and Cleveland Heights, because only these neighborhoods are within 5 miles of both of the region's largest employment centers, downtown and University Circle. The real question this brings up is: how long before people realize that the best location for urban living in Greater Cleveland ought to be north of Chester between University Circle and downtown? In terms of its spatial setting along the water between downtown and the city's education and cultural center, this is our equivalent of Boston's Back Bay.

Having more than one transportation option for getting to work is valuable in terms of personal freedom, resource conservation, convenience, and economics. Car in the shop? Take the rapid. Nice day out? Ride the bike. Need to stop at the grocery store on the way home to buy 50 pounds of dog food? That's a job for an automobile. Cleveland's streetcar suburbs (those that still have streetcars especially) often offer this full range of choices: cars and public transit coexist and the relatively dense settlement pattern makes distances short enough to be practical for cycling or even walking. Thus these places have layers of transportation modes that give residents a lot of freedom.

- 1 (tie) Cleveland Heights 7
- 1 (tie) Ohio City 7
- 1 (tie) Shaker Heights 7
- 4 (tie) Lakewood 4
- 4 (tie) Maple Heights 4
- 6 North Collinwood 3
- 7 (tie) Euclid 2
- 7 (tie) Warrensville Heights 2
- 7 (tie) South Euclid 2
- 10 Beachwood 1
- 18 (tie) Mayfield Heights 0
- 18 (tie) Medina 0
- 18 (tie) Orange 0
- 18 (tie) Parma 0
- 18 (tie) Rocky River 0
- 18 (tie) Solon 0
- 18 (tie) Strongsville 0
- 18 (tie) Westlake 0

Park and countryside access

One of the great assets of Cleveland is the lovely countryside that still surrounds much of the metro area. On the east side in particular, the Chagrin River valley constrains outward development so that most eastern suburbs are within a short drive or bicycle ride of open country. Thus Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and South Euclid are not only within a few miles of University Circle, they're also within a few miles of the rolling countryside. On top of that, the "Forest City" also has a long tradition of establishing public park land in pockets and linear strips throughout the metropolitan area. Residents of most of our 18 neighborhoods have easy access to at least half a dozen neighborhood parks, some many more. Lake proximity counts as countryside also.

1 pt each for: auto drive time to countryside under 20 min.; bicycle ride to countryside under 30 min.; number of public parks within 5 miles. Sites geo-located through [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com)

- 1** South Euclid 17
- 2** Rocky River 15
- 2** Westlake 15
- 4** North Collinwood 14
- 4** Parma 14
- 6** Strongsville 13
- 6** Cleveland Heights 13
- 8** Shaker Heights 11
- 9** Lakewood 10
- 10** Solon 9
- 10** Beachwood 9
- 10** Medina 9
- 13** Orange 7
- 13** Maple Heights 7
- 15** Euclid 7
- 16** Warrensville Heights 6
- 18** Ohio City 4
- 18** Mayfield Heights 4

Safety

Neighborhood Scout crime index (property + violent crime per capita vs. national statistics). 100 is best.

Crime rates tend to increase as poverty increases in a neighborhood, so one would expect the places at the farthest geographic remove from poor people would have the lowest crime rates. Generally, that holds true, with the exceptions being Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and South Euclid, possibly because those closer-in communities have robust police departments.

- 1** Westlake (97)
- 2** Mayfield Heights (91)
- 3** Strongsville (75)
- 4** Solon (67)
- 5** Cleveland Heights (65)
- 6** Orange (63)
- 7** Beachwood (63)
- 8** Maple Heights (57)
- 8** Shaker Heights (57)
- 10** South Euclid (48)
- 11** Rocky River (47)
- 12** Parma (46)
- 13** Lakewood (45)
- 14** Warrensville Heights (39)
- 15** North Collinwood (32)
- 16** Medina (31)
- 17** Euclid (23)
- 18** Ohio City (13)

Median cost of home ownership

Tax rates in themselves are of limited meaning because different neighborhoods have relatively inflated or deflated property values: What really counts are the cost of buying the home and the actual tax dollars out of pocket per household. The Annual Cost to own the Median Home (ACMH) is the annual cost of a 30-year mortgage at 5% interest on the median home value in the community, assuming 20% down. Annual property tax is added to that. For example, the median home in Beachwood is valued at \$287,000 so the loan would be on 80% of that, or \$229,600; the property tax rate in Beachwood is 1.73%, which comes to \$4,965 per year for the median house; the tax plus mortgage interest and principal works out to \$19,776 per year. In Lakewood, the median home is \$136,000, the tax rate 2.49% yielding \$3,386 per year, and the total annual payment (ACMH) is \$10,404. The ACMH is the out-of-pocket cost per year (after down payment) to own the median house in one of these communities. (Median values from city-data.com are estimated taxable value, not the median of recent sales.)

| | Median home | ACMH | |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | North Collinwood | \$92,000 | \$6,516 |
| 2 | Maple Heights | \$97,000 | \$7,068 |
| 3 | Euclid | \$107,000 | \$7,632 |
| 4 | Ohio City | \$109,000 | \$7,710 |
| 5 | Warrensville Heights | \$105,000 | \$7,800 |
| 6 | Parma | \$124,000 | \$8,772 |
| 7 | South Euclid | \$131,000 | \$9,804 |
| 8 | Mayfield Heights | \$147,000 | \$10,236 |
| 9 | Lakewood | \$136,000 | \$10,404 |
| 10 | Cleveland Heights | \$140,000 | \$11,172 |
| 11 | Medina | \$172,000 | \$11,964 |
| 12 | Strongsville | \$199,000 | \$14,172 |
| 13 | Rocky River | \$204,000 | \$14,700 |
| 14 | Westlake | \$223,000 | \$15,576 |
| 15 | Shaker Heights | \$227,000 | \$18,624 |
| 16 | Solon | \$270,000 | \$19,008 |
| 17 | Beachwood | \$287,000 | \$19,776 |
| 18 | Orange | \$304,000 | \$21,720 |

Overall Ratings

A general note about the 5-mile measure: five miles is a meaningful distance in that it's a ten-minute drive in neighborhood traffic, a 20-minute bike ride, and is at the outer limit of how far most people will walk—about 70 to 90 minutes. Walkscore.com measures the five miles from the center point of the neighborhood; in situations where an amenity is just beyond five miles, we give the benefit of the doubt to the neighborhood and count that amenity as within the range.

The online sources for this data are widely accessible third-party sources that are presumably free of bias for or against any of these neighborhoods. While they provide a suitable basis for this prototype study, a long-term objective should be to engage the considerable data and research resources of Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University as part of an ongoing regional livability study.

#1 Cleveland Heights

Mature trees and architectural character distinguish this home to many who work in adjacent University Circle. The distinctive Coventry, Lee Road, and Cedar-Fairmount commercial districts abound with quality dining, shopping, and entertainment options. University Heights would likely score between Cleveland Heights and South Euclid, as it is located between them and has comparable housing costs.

| Rank | Metric |
|------|---|
| 3 | Walkability |
| 1 | Culture Access |
| 5 | Public school effectiveness |
| 1 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 1 | Higher education access |
| 2 | Quality dining options |
| 1 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 6 | Park and countryside access |
| 5 | Safety |
| 10 | ACMH |

35

#2 South Euclid

Far enough north to be close to lakefront parks but not so far to be out of reach of those in Shaker Heights and Beachwood, the least expensive of the three Heights neighborhoods offers good proximity to University Circle.

| Rank | Metric |
|------|---|
| 4 | Walkability |
| 4 | Culture Access |
| 5 | Public school effectiveness |
| 3 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 3 | Higher education access |
| 6 | Quality dining options |
| 7 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 1 | Park and countryside access |
| 10 | Safety |
| 7 | ACMH |

48

#3 Shaker Heights

Shaker has most of the advantages of Cleveland Heights, but is considerably more expensive and somewhat less walkable because larger houses with larger lots take up more space, thus increasing walking distances.

Rank Metric

- 8 Walkability
- 2 Culture Access
- 4 Public school effectiveness
- 1 Private elementary and secondary school options
- 2 Higher education access
- 3 Quality dining options
- 1 Commuting/transportation options
- 8 Park and countryside access
- 9 Safety
- 15 ACMH

53

#4 Ohio City

Best in walkability and quality dining options and tied for best transportation options, Ohio City is held back by higher crime rates and a relative paucity of parks and countryside access. The oldest surviving residential neighborhood in metro Cleveland, the neighborhood has many lovingly restored houses dating to the mid 1800s.

Rank Metric

- 1 Walkability
- 3 Culture Access
- 9 Public school effectiveness
- 4 Private elementary and secondary school options
- 7 Higher education access
- 1 Quality dining options
- 1 Commuting/transportation options
- 18 Park and countryside access
- 18 Safety
- 4 ACMH

66

#5 North Collinwood

The east-side reflection of Lakewood is somewhat grittier, but up-and-coming, with a growing restaurant scene and lots of arts activity (and the lake, and low housing cost).

Rank Metric

- 6 Walkability
- 5 Culture Access
- 9 Public school effectiveness
- 16 Private elementary and secondary school options
- 4 Higher education access
- 8 Quality dining options
- 6 Commuting/transportation options
- 4 Park and countryside access
- 15 Safety
- 1 ACMH

74

#6 Lakewood

Similar in age and character to Cleveland Heights, Lakewood is outside the scope of University Circle and thus without the same access to higher education and arts and culture; also it takes longer to get to open countryside from many West-side neighborhoods. It's very walkable and has the lake along its entire northern border.

Rank Metric

- 2 Walkability
- 6 Culture Access
- 15 Public school effectiveness
- 4 Private elementary and secondary school options
- 10 Higher education access
- 4 Quality dining options
- 4 Commuting/transportation options
- 9 Park and countryside access
- 13 Safety
- 9 ACMH

76

#7 Beachwood

It's got highly rated schools and good quality dining options but is quite expensive and thoroughly auto-centric.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Walkability |
| 10 | Culture Access |
| 3 | Public school effectiveness |
| 4 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 9 | Higher education access |
| 5 | Quality dining options |
| 10 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 9 | Park and countryside access |
| 7 | Safety |
| 17 | ACMH |
| 84 | |

#8 Maple Heights

This post-WWII suburb has modest housing stock and not much in the way of quality dining options or culture, but it's closer to amenities than it might seem and it's very affordable.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 9 | Walkability |
| 12 | Culture Access |
| 12 | Public school effectiveness |
| 4 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 10 | Higher education access |
| 16 | Quality dining options |
| 4 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 13 | Park and countryside access |
| 8 | Safety |
| 2 | ACMH |
| 90 | |

#9 Rocky River

Lakewood's western neighbor is more upscale, less culturally and economically diverse, and a bit farther away from major amenities, but has good park and countryside access and good schools.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 4 | Walkability |
| 13 | Culture Access |
| 7 | Public school effectiveness |
| 4 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 18 | Higher education access |
| 6 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 2 | Park and countryside access |
| 11 | Safety |
| 13 | ACMH |
| 96 | |

#10 Mayfield Heights

Mayfield Heights is safe and reasonably affordable, but isolated both from parks and countryside and from more urban amenities.

Rank Metric

| | |
|-----|---|
| 7 | Walkability |
| 14 | Quality dining options |
| 8 | Public school effectiveness |
| 10 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 11 | Culture Access |
| 5 | Higher education access |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 18 | Park and countryside access |
| 2 | Safety |
| 8 | ACMH |
| 101 | |

#11 Orange

Between Beachwood and Solon, both geographically and in its rating, Orange is an expensive semi-rural place with highly rated schools and one transportation option.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Walkability |
| 8 | Culture Access |
| 2 | Public school effectiveness |
| 11 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 7 | Higher education access |
| 8 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 13 | Park and countryside access |
| 6 | Safety |
| 18 | ACMH |

102

#12 Warrensville Heights

Similar to Mayfield Heights in its geographic distance from downtown, University Circle, and related amenities, Warrensville Heights is Shaker's less affluent southern neighbor.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 14 | Walkability |
| 9 | Culture Access |
| 17 | Public school effectiveness |
| 9 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 9 | Higher education access |
| 10 | Quality dining options |
| 7 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 16 | Park and countryside access |
| 14 | Safety |
| 5 | ACMH |

110

#13 Parma

Parma scores high for park and countryside access and reasonably well for affordability, but falls short on most other measures, primarily because it is a bit too far from most amenities.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 9 | Walkability |
| 17 | Culture Access |
| 11 | Public school effectiveness |
| 13 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 15 | Higher education access |
| 12 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 4 | Park and countryside access |
| 12 | Safety |
| 6 | ACMH |

117

#14 Euclid

Situated to the east of North Collinwood, Euclid has issues with safety and schools, but is affordable, is situated on the lake, and offers decent access to downtown and University Circle.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Walkability |
| 7 | Culture Access |
| 18 | Public school effectiveness |
| 13 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 14 | Higher education access |
| 13 | Quality dining options |
| 7 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 15 | Park and countryside access |
| 17 | Safety |
| 3 | ACMH |

118

#15 Westlake

This safe and quiet bedroom community isn't much more than that, though lake lovers would find its proximity to the water attractive.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 16 | Walkability |
| 16 | Culture Access |
| 13 | Public school effectiveness |
| 13 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 18 | Higher education access |
| 11 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 2 | Park and countryside access |
| 1 | Safety |
| 14 | ACMH |

122

#16 Solon

Top-rank school effectiveness and good crime data can't overcome the dearth of culture and higher education access and the dead-last ranking on both walkability and commuting/transportation options.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 18 | Walkability |
| 14 | Culture Access |
| 1 | Public school effectiveness |
| 17 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 12 | Higher education access |
| 15 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 9 | Park and countryside access |
| 4 | Safety |
| 16 | ACMH |

124

#17 Strongsville

It's near one Metropark and is quite safe, but otherwise Strongsville offers relatively poor access to Cleveland's unique amenities.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 17 | Walkability |
| 15 | Culture Access |
| 14 | Public school effectiveness |
| 15 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 13 | Higher education access |
| 18 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 6 | Park and countryside access |
| 3 | Safety |
| 12 | ACMH |

132

#18 Medina

Clearly, one does not move to Medina if things like arts and culture, college access, public school effectiveness, private school options, quality dining options, safety, or commuting options are important factors in the decision to settle somewhere. The town center is lovely, though, and living within walking distance from there could offer excellent quality of life.

Rank Metric

| | |
|----|---|
| 15 | Walkability |
| 18 | Culture Access |
| 16 | Public school effectiveness |
| 18 | Private elementary and secondary school options |
| 15 | Higher education access |
| 16 | Quality dining options |
| 18 | Commuting/transportation options |
| 9 | Park and countryside access |
| 16 | Safety |
| 11 | ACMH |

152

Rank

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | Ohio City | Cleveland Hts | Solon | Shaker Hts 1 (tie) | Cleveland Hts | Ohio City | Ohio City 1 (tie) | South Euclid | Westlake | N Collinwood |
| 2 | Lakewood | Shaker Hts | Orange | Cleveland Hts 1 (tie) | Shaker Hts | Cleveland Hts | Shaker Hts 1 (tie) | Rocky River | Mayfield Hts | Maple Hts |
| 3 | Cleveland Hts | Ohio City | Beachwood | South Euclid | South Euclid | Shaker Hts | Cleveland Hts 1 (tie) | Westlake | Strongsville | Euclid |
| 4 | South Euclid | South Euclid | Shaker Hts | Beachwood | N Collinwood | Lakewood | Lakewood | N Collinwood | Solon | Ohio City |
| 5 | Rocky River | N Collinwood | South Euclid 5 (tie) | Lakewood | Mayfield Hts | Beachwood | Maple Hts | Parma | Cleveland Hts | W'ville Hts |
| 6 | N Collinwood | Lakewood | Cleveland Hts 5 (tie) | Maple Hts | W'ville Hts | South Euclid | N Collinwood | Strongsville | Orange | Parma |
| 7 | Mayfield Hts | Euclid | Rocky River | Ohio City | Orange | Rocky River | Euclid | Cleveland Hts | Beachwood | South Euclid |
| 8 | Shaker Hts | Orange | Mayfield | Rocky River | Ohio City | Orange | W'ville Hts | Shaker Hts | Maple Hts | Mayfield Hts |
| 9 | Parma | W'ville Hts | Ohio City 9 (tie) | W'ville Hts | Beachwood | N Collinwood | South Euclid | Lakewood | Shaker Hts | Lakewood |
| 10 | Maple Hts | Beachwood | N Collinwood 9 (tie) | Mayfield Hts | Maple Hts | W'ville Hts | Beachwood | Solon | South Euclid | Cleveland Hts |
| 11 | Euclid | Mayfield Hts | Parma | Orange | Solon | Westlake | Mayfield Hts 18 (tie) | Beachwood | Rocky River | Medina |
| 12 | Beachwood | Maple Hts | Maple Hts | Euclid | Strongsville | Parma | Medina 18 (tie) | Medina | Parma | Strongsville |
| 13 | Orange | Rocky River | Westlake | Parma | Euclid | Euclid | Orange 18 (tie) | Orange | Lakewood | Rocky River |
| 14 | W'ville Hts | Solon | Strongsville | Westlake | Parma 18 (tie) | Mayfield Hts | Parma 18 (tie) | Maple Hts | W'ville Hts | Westlake |
| 15 | Medina | Strongsville | Lakewood | Strongsville | Medina 18 (tie) | Solon | Rocky River 18 (tie) | Euclid | N Collinwood | Shaker Hts |
| 16 | Westlake | Westlake | Medina | N Collinwood | Lakewood 18 (tie) | Medina | Solon 18 (tie) | W'ville Hts | Medina | Solon |
| 17 | Strongsville | Parma | W'ville Hts | Solon | Rocky River 18 (tie) | Maple Hts | Strongsville 18 (tie) | Ohio City | Euclid | Beachwood |
| 18 | Solon | Medina | Euclid | Medina | Westlake 18 (tie) | Strongsville | Westlake 18 (tie) | Mayfield Hts | Ohio City | Orange |

Walkability

Culture Access

Public School Effectiveness

Private School Options

Higher Education Access

Quality Dining Options

Transp/Commuting Options

Park/Countryside Access

Safety

ACMH
Annual Cost for Median Home