

NEIGHBORHOOD HOME PRICE SURVEY

A luxury life on a fixed budget

Developer builds affordable town home gated community in popular subdivision



UNDER CONSTRUCTION: The development company is selling three to four town homes each month. Thirty of the 70 remain unsold at the moment.



R. CLAYTON MCKEE PHOTOS: FOR THE CHRONICLE

LOOKING GOOD: John Santasiero, president of Riverway Properties, shows off the bedroom of a model home in the Shadow Springs gated community. The development is currently under construction in the Spring Shadows subdivision of Spring Branch.

TOP-SELLING SUBDIVISIONS

Following are the top-selling subdivisions with the most houses sold in 2009 in Memorial/Spring Branch, according to a survey by Crawford Realty commissioned by the Chronicle.

Subdivision	School Dist.	Typical Pr. range (1,000s)	price sq. ft. 2008	price sq. ft. 2009	pct. chg. 2009	sales 2009	tot. in sub.
Briargrove	Houston	\$409-\$1,234	\$252.38	\$226.55	-10.2%	70	891
Briargrove Park	Houston	\$275-\$530	\$157.95	\$151.56	-4.0%	67	1,351
Tanglewood	Houston	\$763-\$2,850	\$309.16	\$264.99	-14.3%	53	1,172
Walnut Bend	Houston	\$155-\$287	\$98.12	\$102.64	4.6%	49	979
Spring Shadows	Spring Branch	\$138-\$215	\$74.18	\$78.96	6.4%	48	1,934
Lakes of Parkway	Houston	\$499-\$972	\$159.13	\$157.08	-1.3%	42	661
Nottingham Forest	Spring Branch	\$308-\$530	\$142.21	\$132.28	-7.0%	38	933
Briarwood	Houston	\$215-\$375	\$122.76	\$129.79	5.7%	35	683
Parkway Villages	Houston	\$293-\$526	\$134.99	\$132.25	-2.0%	33	575
Tanglewilde	Houston	\$134-\$203	\$103.96	\$97.18	-6.5%	32	684
Lakeside Place	Houston	\$187-\$370	\$94.03	\$94.92	0.9%	25	560
Briarhills	Houston	\$155-\$250	\$89.44	\$81.66	-8.7%	24	644
Shadow Oaks	Spring Branch	\$106-\$193	\$81.93	\$90.24	10.1%	23	486
Country Village	Houston	\$136-\$282	\$85.29	\$92.15	8.0%	23	476
Wilchester	Spring Branch	\$319-\$705	\$173.07	\$175.23	1.2%	23	604
Wilchester West	Spring Branch	\$387-\$665	\$174.48	\$173.55	-0.5%	23	518
Memorial Bend	Spring Branch	\$295-\$854	\$174.83	\$182.80	4.6%	22	356
Fleetwood	Katy	\$228-\$408	\$90.95	\$97.31	7.0%	22	515
Ashford West	Houston	\$125-\$182	\$81.91	\$87.72	7.1%	21	347
Memorial Forest	Spring Branch	\$459-\$822	\$220.22	\$217.27	-1.4%	19	278
Binglewood	Spring Branch	\$91-\$152	\$80.41	\$72.14	-10.3%	19	713
Spring Oaks	Spring Branch	\$166-\$571	\$134.09	\$191.37	42.7%	18	349
Frostwood	Spring Branch	\$499-\$838	\$222.46	\$188.10	-15.4%	17	336
Village West	Houston	\$165-\$256	\$89.74	\$89.44	-0.3%	17	424
Ashford Forest	HISD, SBISD	\$155-\$333	\$91.20	\$103.83	13.8%	16	607
Nottingham	Spring Branch	\$290-\$520	\$152.11	\$152.24	0.1%	16	478
Westhaven Estates	Houston	\$425-\$910	\$186.77	\$177.73	-4.8%	15	551
Barkers Landing	Katy	\$236-\$451	\$98.69	\$96.52	-2.2%	15	362
Nottingham West	Spring Branch	\$212-\$580	\$131.31	\$125.25	-4.6%	15	349
Westchester	Spring Branch	\$273-\$502	\$138.18	\$125.04	-9.5%	15	366
Lakeside Estates	Houston	\$190-\$276	\$95.80	\$92.71	-3.2%	14	270
Lakeside Forest	HISD, SBISD	\$192-\$451	\$92.73	\$95.13	2.6%	14	295
Briarcroft	Houston	\$303-\$1,403	\$202.61	\$231.38	14.2%	14	276
Briar Village	Houston	\$120-\$185	\$79.23	\$74.93	-5.4%	14	568
Olive Hill Court	Houston	\$261-\$297	\$102.37	\$110.99	8.4%	14	39
Stonehenge	Houston	\$123-\$247	\$84.95	\$81.16	-4.5%	14	226
Thornwood	Katy, SBISD	\$222-\$329	\$102.80	\$99.05	-3.6%	14	388
Spring Meadows	Spring Branch	\$78-\$118	\$60.91	\$61.86	1.6%	13	420
Cedarwood	SBISD	\$294-\$1,096	\$184.61	\$203.89	10.4%	13	208
Lamar Terrace	Houston	\$441-\$849	\$160.97	\$180.52	12.1%	13	361
Afton Village	Spring Branch	\$287-\$469	\$184.35	\$176.93	-4.0%	12	268
Village of Afton Wds	Spring Branch	\$276-\$424	\$142.67	\$154.24	8.1%	12	139
Skyline Park Village	Houston	\$259-\$282	\$106.85	\$109.56	2.5%	12	NA
Ashford Village	Houston	\$159-\$230	\$82.83	\$90.05	8.7%	12	360
Shadowbriar	Houston	\$186-\$248	\$90.31	\$82.49	-8.7%	12	401
Campbell Woods	Spring Branch	\$98-\$147	\$77.64	\$85.97	10.7%	12	475
Long Point Woods	Spring Branch	\$97-\$253	\$133.91	\$97.98	-26.8%	11	389
Larchmont	Houston	\$245-\$384	\$207.71	\$185.28	-10.8%	11	280
Westmont	Houston	\$127-\$198	\$116.09	\$105.47	-9.1%	11	224
Terraces on Memorial	Houston	\$276-\$564	\$118.42	\$110.80	-6.4%	11	206
Royal Palms	Alief	\$190-\$249	\$94.49	\$92.04	-2.6%	10	90
Briar Lake	Houston	\$156-\$228	\$82.07	\$85.47	4.1%	10	210
Kempwood North	Spring Branch	\$77-\$150	\$74.74	\$63.27	-15.3%	10	234
Spring Branch Oaks	Spring Branch	\$142-\$301	\$109.79	\$100.50	-8.5%	10	240
Whispering Oaks	Spring Branch	\$427-\$780	\$229.59	\$187.72	-18.2%	9	230
Sherwood Oaks	Spring Branch	\$158-\$228	\$82.77	\$85.68	3.5%	9	342
Ashford Hollow	Houston	\$171-\$252	\$91.65	\$88.24	-3.7%	9	225
Ashford South	Houston	\$141-\$183	\$87.70	\$95.51	8.9%	9	395
Hilshire Lakes	Spring Branch	\$203-\$280	\$121.68	\$111.20	-8.6%	9	40
Royal Oaks	Spring Branch	\$128-\$214	\$75.57	\$79.95	5.8%	8	434
Timber Oaks	Spring Branch	\$115-\$199	\$80.94	\$81.57	0.8%	8	239
Westwick	Spring Branch	\$194-\$294	\$83.24	\$88.72	6.6%	8	252
Spring Branch Woods	Spring Branch	\$126-\$254	\$96.19	\$96.20	0.0%	8	383
Broad Oaks	Houston	\$746-\$1,437	\$252.54	\$195.78	-22.5%	8	73
April Village	Houston	\$123-\$178	\$73.58	\$71.50	-2.8%	8	252
Southlake	Houston	\$128-\$163	\$88.02	\$87.03	-1.1%	8	191
Pine Terrace	Spring Branch	\$67-\$189	\$101.58	\$97.78	-3.7%	7	388
Memorial Thicket	Houston, Katy	\$358-\$506	\$112.58	\$113.46	0.8%	7	156
Emmora Heights	Spring Branch	\$114-\$169	\$59.35	\$51.45	-13.3%	7	27
Fonn Villas	Spring Branch	\$415-\$1,020	\$207.07	\$176.29	-14.9%	6	347
Memorial Hollow	Spring Branch	\$352-\$670	\$203.34	\$175.53	-13.7%	6	230
Enchanted Forest	Spring Branch	\$103-\$183	\$65.37	\$63.10	-3.5%	6	129
Spring Branch Valley	Spring Branch	\$80-\$159	\$71.88	\$79.50	10.6%	6	404
Ridgecrest	Spring Branch	\$68-\$138	\$70.87	\$75.06	5.9%	6	622
Meadow Briar	Houston	\$275-\$360	\$104.13	\$92.73	-10.9%	6	120
Reflections	Houston	\$192-\$266	\$83.49	\$86.72	3.9%	6	188
Parkwood East	North Forest	\$33-\$77	\$24.95	\$26.54	6.4%	6	226
Verde Forest	North Forest	\$27-\$61	\$31.42	\$30.89	-1.7%	6	342
Memorial Dr. Acres	SBISD	\$268-\$416	\$120.56	\$120.18	-0.3%	6	109
Memorial Glen	Spring Branch	\$450-\$1,139	\$213.63	\$197.63	-7.5%	6	169
Memorial Plaza	Spring Branch	\$286-\$598	\$151.39	\$165.69	9.4%	6	225
Rustling Pines	Spring Branch	\$370-\$779	\$212.66	\$212.09	-0.3%	6	126
Tealwood	Spring Branch	\$430-\$602	\$163.74	\$158.49	-3.2%	5	179
Willowick	Spring Branch	\$130-\$278	\$85.27	\$339.36	24.2%	5	97
Sherwood Terrace	Spring Branch	\$230-\$309	\$126.14	\$115.47	-8.5%	5	50
Timber Creek	Spring Branch	\$278-\$366	\$159.14	\$175.91	10.5%	5	168
Westview Terrace	Spring Branch	\$101-\$151	\$99.44	\$78.08	-21.5%	5	541
Lakeview Forest	Houston	\$175-\$247	\$89.45	\$92.50	3.4%	5	120
Woods of Lakeside	Houston	\$261-\$356	\$107.00	\$112.56	5.2%	5	88
Spring Branch Estates	Spring Branch	\$76-\$274	\$68.32	\$84.75	24.0%	5	366

By IRIS KUO

CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

Perhaps Julie Koti, a new resident of the Shadow Springs subdivision in Spring Branch, sums it up best when she describes the appeal of the hot-selling subdivision.

"Where in Spring Branch can you get a two-story house for under \$200,000 and it's new construction? Nowhere," said Koti, a teacher at Houston Community College who is working on a Ph.D. "The location is perfect, close to everything."

The gated community lies in the southern portion of Spring Shadows in Spring Branch. It is also close to several amenities needed in a thriving community.

It's a short drive away from a Memorial Hermann hospital and Memorial City Mall, and it's next door to Pine Shadows Elementary School. Residents have a short commute to major freeways like Loop 610, Beltway 8 and Interstate 10. A trip downtown can take 20 minutes.

Shadow Springs town houses are built by River Way Homes, which is owned by John Santasiero. The houses have been selling briskly since Santasiero began building in 2008, with 30 lots remaining of the total 70.

In a recent survey by Crawford Realty, commissioned by the Houston Chronicle, the Spring Shadows subdivision had the highest amount of home sales in the Spring Branch area in 2009.

"We're averaging about three to four sales per month," said Dale Bancroft, the on-site sales representative for Shadow Springs. "That's a good pace in today's market, especially in this little niche market there. We're on pace to double what we did last year."

Buyers have been motivated in part by the tax credits offered by the national government, Bancroft said. The makeup of the neighborhood is diverse, with most homeowners being well-educated workers in the teaching, accounting and engineering fields. The average price of the home is around \$200,000.



FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH:

The new gated community is located within minutes of major shopping areas and an elementary school.

"It's very secure, very quiet. It's sort of amazing how many people discovered it just driving by," Bancroft said.

Homes in the subdivision are built from six models, which buyers can choose and customize with hardwood floors, granite counter tops and steel appliances.

"I got to customize the inside," Koti said. "I picked my lot and I got to watch my house being developed. I got to pick my floors and my counter top and my tile."

Others can buy pre-built homes, which Santasiero said were going quickly.

"It's hard for us to keep any inventory. We just sold three this weekend," Santasiero said on April 6.

Another plus: the homes are energy efficient. Bancroft said residents have reported electricity bills as low as \$100 a month.

Santasiero said the community is a viable alternative to purchasing a home inside Loop 610.

"If you go inside the Loop you really can't get a home. You get a really small lot and kind of transition areas wherever you are," Santasiero said. "We wanted to offer something around \$200,000 and around 2,400 square feet. We felt there were a lot of people who could afford that and would like the location."

For more information about the Spring Shadows community, visit www.riverwayhomes.com.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Houston features a variety of local volunteer opportunities in the community.

Help at a book sale

A giant book sale benefiting the Houston Public Library system will be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center April 23 through April 26. Many volunteers will be needed to serve as cashiers, direct visitors and help keep sales tables stocked. Some assignments are appropriate for teens. Morning and afternoon shifts will be available. Free parking and refreshments will be provided.



Spend time with senior citizens

Life enrichment is the focus of a program for senior citizens, some with Alzheimer's, at a Meyerland area community center operated by a United Way agency. Volunteers with good interpersonal skills who like working with older adults are needed. Consider volunteering once or more a week to accompany these seniors on outings and help them enjoy the recreation and educational activities offered at the center itself. Program sessions take place Mondays through Thursdays.

Become a camp counselor

A few good men are

HOW TO HELP

Volunteer Houston matches individuals and groups with opportunities at local nonprofit organizations.

- **Phone:** 713-965-0031
- **Hours:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- **More on the Web:** www.volunteershouston.org

wanted as volunteer counselors at a summer camp for children with muscular dystrophy. The camp will be in session June 5 to June 12 at a special barrier-free facility near Brenham. Helping make this a safe, fun camping experience for youngsters in attendance, volunteers are sure to come away with a wealth of wonderful memories.

Transportation to and from the camp will be provided. Plans have to be worked out in advance, so please start the application process now.

Help clean up a beach

Comb the beach as a volunteer for the annual "Texas Adopt-a-Beach Spring Cleanup" taking place on April 24 all along the Texas Gulf Coast. Volunteers team up to help remove debris that spoils the appearance of the shoreline and poses hazards to marine wildlife. Some of the debris will be recycled to fund other environmental improvement projects. Volunteers should call now to reserve a place on the beach of their choice.

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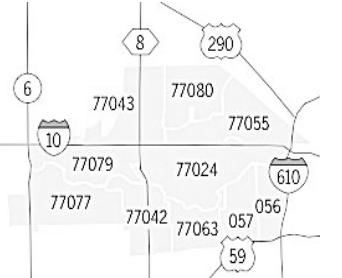
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Every day on chron.com

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R. CLAYTON MCKEE: FOR THE CHRONICLE

Using the Force

LEGO master model builder Dan Steinger works on a larger-than-life model of R2-D2 from the Star Wars saga during a promotional event signifying the opening of a new Lego store in the Galleria.

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