

[www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/Lake\\_County\\_IL/chi-highwood-profile\\_chomes\\_1211dec11,0,864306.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/Lake_County_IL/chi-highwood-profile_chomes_1211dec11,0,864306.story)

## chicagotribune.com

**Community Profile: Lake County**

### **Highwood: A lively 'hood on the North Shore**

**The Lake County city abounds with shops, restaurants and cultural amenities**

By Mary Lu Laffey

Special to the Tribune

December 11, 2009

The aroma of fresh baked goods fills Bent Fork Bakery on the east side of Highwood. It's Friday and the stream of customers is steady.

One woman is picking up a cake for a dinner party. A mom stops for her daughter's birthday cookies and another succumbs to the temptation of bags filled with brownie ends.

The pace suits Michael and Elizabeth Bearwald, the husband-and-wife team that opened the small-batch bakery five years ago.

"We spent so much time here," she said. "It just made sense."

By "time" Bearwald was referring to the socializing as well as the business the two Highland Park residents conducted in Highwood.

In the last 10 years, Highwood has become a magnet on the North Shore for upscale antique shopping, entertaining, and ethnic and fine dining.

Add creative community events to the mix -- the Wednesday Evening Gourmet Farmers Market, Highwood Festival Days, Pumpkin Fest, Left Bank Parisian Flea Market, Last Call Art Fair, Highwood for the Holidays -- and there is always something going on.

City manager Greg Jackson says marketing special events is important to Highwood. "Sales tax numbers are down because of the economy, but residents are staying close by and shopping here.

"In many ways, Highwood is a typical neighborhood of Chicago, only we are located in the suburbs," Jackson says. He offers examples of a progressive business district, cultural amenities like the Midwest Young Artists music ensemble program, Attic Playhouse and locally owned galleries and retail shops.



Diversity is part of Highwood's strength, Jackson says, explaining that Italian, German and Irish immigrants founded Highwood.

According to Jackson, Highwood has a large Hispanic population and that the annexation of part of Fort Sheridan has brought more white-collar residents.

When Fort Sheridan closed in 1993, the highly-coveted area on the North Shore was sectioned off for use in part as a U.S. Army Reserve base, a U.S. Navy housing complex, commercial properties like the Fine Art Studio of Rotblatt-Amrany and a residential development called The Town of Fort Sheridan within the cities of Highwood and Highland Park. All parties were committed to preserving the history and architectural significance of the Fort's buildings while providing guidance for new construction to do the same.

Honoring preservation regulations, original buildings were converted into residences and commercial space. Lots were parceled and sold for new construction, all within strict and supervised guidelines. In addition to condo and town home associations, The Town of Fort Sheridan Master Homeowners' Association oversees the covenants of the entire development.

The Town of Fort Sheridan added approximately 270 upscale residences to Highwood, which increased the size of the housing stock by nearly 30 percent, according to Shelly Lurie, Realtor/owner of Milestone Realty, Highwood.

"We have the lowest property tax in the area," Jackson says.

Lurie adds that Highwood is not immune to current economic woes. Yet, she says, she has noticed an upturn in sales, as slender as it is.

For the first time in two years, Lurie's year-to-date closed sales have increased year-over-year.

One of her listings is a four-bedroom home built in 2003 with a basement and garage within the parade ground section at Fort Sheridan. It is listed at \$650,000.

According to Lurie, buyers who want to live in Fort Sheridan have to buy into the entire package -- preservation guidelines, residential covenants, etc. "If you are into preservation, restoration, then this is the place for you."

A big draw to Highwood is the schools: North Shore School District 112 includes Oak Terrace School in Highwood and Northwood Junior High in Highland Park. Highwood residents are also part of Township High School District 113 that includes Highland Park H.S. while St. James School, a Catholic school for pre-K through 8th grade, is in Highwood.

Lucy Hospodarsky knew about Highwood's excellent schools when her family decided to make the move from Park Ridge. But it was the opportunity to return to the area where she grew up and to be closer to her parents that convinced them to build a home in The Town of Fort Sheridan.

Highwood's police department is also well-respected.

Police Chief Lou Rossi says the 13 sworn officers in the department do a fine job and cites the 2008 Illinois State Police Crime Index that shows crime in Highwood down 11.8 percent.

Rossi believes part of their success is due to foot patrols downtown and the walk-and-talk program, which generates face-to-face communication.

Accessibility is also important to Hospodarsky. Within the Highwood area, she says that none of her daily errands takes her more than 10 minutes to accomplish.

Main north-south routes are Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road. O'Hare International Airport is 20 miles away. Major highways include Illinois Route 22, U.S. Highway 41 and Interstate Highway 94.

There are two Metra stations in Highwood and Pace bus service.

In warm weather, Hospodarsky prefers to walk, even to the farmer's market downtown. She observes, "It is such a social event, you know you are always going to see someone you know."

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](#)