

Buyers leave subdivisions for village atmosphere

ORLANDO, Fla. -- March 10, 2006 -- Traditional Neighborhood Developments, or TNDs, are gaining popularity among homebuyers frustrated with cookie-cutter subdivisions.

There are about 500 TNDs nationwide, including the 4,300-home Baldwin Park in Orlando.

TNDs are pedestrian-friendly communities, with homes built around a town center. Construction costs are as much as 20 percent higher for TNDs, mainly because developers create a quaint village atmosphere with pricey features like full-grown trees and old-fashioned street lamps. Residents can easily walk to shops, restaurants, and parks.

But despite higher construction costs, developers benefit because municipalities allow higher densities for walkable communities. Jim Constantine, community planning director for Looney Ricks Kiss Architects in Princeton, N.J., says TNDs started out as experimental but have gone mainstream. He predicts that they will account for 20 percent to 30 percent of all subdivisions built in the next decade.

The scarcity of vacant land has forced developers to locate TNDs in urban areas on land that once was used for industrial purposes. The 537-home Westshore Yacht Club planned for Tampa, for example, will be built on a former shipyard.

Source: Wall Street Journal, Jim Carlton (03/08/06)