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West Loop Living

KEVIN AND MELISSA KNEPP BOUGHT THEIR FIRST WEST LOOP HOME IN 1997 IN THE HABERDASHER SQUARE LOFTS BUILDING. And while both the Haberdasher and the Knepps are still in the West Loop nine years later, the neighborhood has undergone a sea change.

Although still recognizable from its earlier self, the West Loop has none the less been dramatically reinvented. Once home only to warehouses and factories, it has now become a destination neighborhood with great places to live, world class restaurants, art galleries, and shopping.

Extending west from the Chicago River to Ashland Avenue, and south from Grand Avenue to Harrison Street, the West Loop is bounded on two sides by the Eisenhower and Kennedy Expressways. It is served by two El trains, the Green and Blue Lines. Its close proximity to downtown Chicago and easy access to all forms of transportation has fueled a housing boom in the neighborhood, one that shows no signs of slowing down. When the Knepps moved into the neighborhood nine years ago, 210 condominiums were sold in the neighborhood for an average sale price of \$188,432. Last year, 1,094

condominiums were sold for an average sale price of \$366,020.

“People don’t believe me when I tell them this, but there’s a housing shortage in the West Loop,” says Kevin Knepp. “There may be lots of buildings being built, but the available inventory, when priced right, is selling quickly.”

There are currently 33 new developments either planned or underway in the neighborhood, and demand for that housing remains high. Projects currently underway include 740 W Fulton, 909 W Washington, 223 S Sangamon, and 1040 W Adams.

With the neighborhood adding so many new residents in the past decade, its features and attractions have grown in equal measure. The Randolph Street corridor is home to some of the city’s best restaurants: from Blackbird to the east to The Tasting Room to the west, and all those in between such as Marché and Vivo, this street has a restaurant to satisfy even the most discretionary palette. But the restaurants on Randolph aren’t the only places in the West Loop to find a delicious meal: this neighborhood is home to Chicago’s Greektown with its fabulous restaurants such as Pegasus, Santorini and Parthenon.

The neighborhood’s cultural heart is its gallery district running roughly along Fulton Street, where some 30 art

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galleries are located. The spring and summer months see neighborhood residents spending more time outdoors, and the neighborhood’s green space is found at Skinner park between Monroe and Adams. Another park is currently being planned at the corner of Sangamon and Adams. One of the city’s more enjoyable outdoor festivals is hosted in the West Loop: the Taste of Randolph Street, in which revelers can sample from the neighborhood’s fantastic restaurants and listen to live music.

“When we first moved here it sometimes felt like we were on a deserted island,” says Melissa Knepp. “Now it feels more like we’re at the center of everything. The way the neighborhood has changed is astonishing.”

It remains yet to be seen, of course, what the West Loop neighborhood will look like in the next nine years, but one thing’s for sure: it’s going to be a fun ride getting there.

Knepp Realty Group lives and works in the **West Loop**. Give us a call today!

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