

# Tri-Cities Research District a place to live, work and play

I've written about the Tri-Cities Research District before, but I've not acknowledged that it's as much a growing residential area as it is a technology one.

The name TCRD doesn't imply that it includes residential developments, but the fact is three such developments are alive and well in the district and it continues to grow.

According to a study commissioned by the Tri-City Development Council, by 2013 we can expect a population of more than 10,000, up from 8,000 in 1990, living within the three-mile radius of North Richland that is considered the TCRD.

Willow Pointe Development, Sienna Sky Townhomes and University Park Condominiums have all done well.

Willow Pointe is along the river, tucked behind office buildings associated with work at Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. PNNL's Steve Wiley was the development's first resident. Today, he and his

wife Julie still enjoy the attributes — the river, the peacefulness and the proximity to work — that attracted them to the then-new development.

"My husband was biking to work at PNNL one day when he noticed Willow Pointe," said Julie Wiley. "He instantly thought about the advantages of living close to the laboratory. We're both very happy about our decision to build here."

Sienna Sky Townhomes and University Park Condominiums are on the opposite side of George Washington Way, just up the hill from Hanford High School.

"The developer found a real niche — and need — for one-level homes ranging from 1,700 to 2,000 square feet,"

said Susan Shay-Johnson, a real estate agent with Windermere Real Estate in the Tri-Cities. "At Sienna Sky Townhomes we offer a maintenance-free lifestyle, which means you take care of your home and the development does the rest, and the homes are very affordable."

Plans for Sienna Sky Townhomes include four phases. The first two phases are sold out and the developer will soon move forward with Phases III and IV.

Masterson Construction began the 52-unit University Park Condominiums several years ago and they've consistently been full. Kuo Ying Frenzel, of Northwest Property Consortium which represents the condos, said the residents are primarily professionals who work at Hanford or PNNL, as well as some retirees.

So what's attracting thousands of people to live in the TCRD? The common theme I heard from non-retirees was the proximity to work.

"I was looking for simplicity, first and foremost, so living in a townhouse appealed to me. But it was the proximity to work that ultimately brought me to the TCRD," said Lisa Teske, a TCRD resident. "I've also found my neighborhood to be very quiet and safe, and being close to the river for a nice run is also a benefit."

Residents Frank and Sharon Figueroa mentioned their affinity for similar attributes of TCRD living. "My wife and I like Willow Pointe for several reasons. It's on a quiet stretch of the Columbia, is adjacent to the 27-mile river trail, has loads of wildlife and I get to bike to work several times a week. We also like being on the front end of a new area, and we're excited about the opportunity to experience the amenities that will come as the TCRD evolves."

And it will evolve.

PNNL's Economic Development Office recently issued a survey to its staff about what amenities they'd like to have within walking distance of work,

which is also within the TCRD. The survey will likely be sent beyond PNNL in the near future, said Diahann Howard, executive director of the TCRD.

Wiley and Teske both said they took the survey and they hope many others did too.

"Those of us living in the TCRD are relatively close to services, but it'd be nice to have some of the basics a little closer," added Teske. Wiley agreed, but said she's hopeful more businesses won't detract from the main selling point for her living in the TCRD — peacefulness.

I, too, will hope for continued peace and tranquility for those in the TCRD, but I would like to see some amenities move in. I'm being selfish, of course, to cross my fingers for a Starbucks, but I find tranquility in grande mochas.

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