

MANSION

SPREAD SHEET | BY SANETTE TANAKA

WHERE HOUSE HUNTERS ARE EARLY BIRDS

House hunters in this Washington town like searching online home listings in the wee hours, a website analysis shows; New Yorkers like the nighttime



YOU HAVE to get up pretty early in the morning to beat the residents of Bellingham, Wash., in the house hunt.

Here, 28.2% of online property searches occur between the wee hours of 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. local time, according to an analysis by real-estate website HomeFinder.com. In the U.S., by comparison, 18.5% of all home searches occur between 4 and 10 a.m. in each time zone.

HomeFinder.com combed through its database of current listings to find out which cities have the highest percentage of searches conducted early in the morning and late at night. After Bellingham, the top early-bird cities were Palm Springs, Calif., with 27.4% of searches between 4 a.m. and 10 a.m., and Anchorage, Alaska, with 26.7%.

“I’m an early riser,” says Troy

Muljat, managing broker for the Muljat Group, a residential and commercial brokerage firm in Bellingham. The city, located about 90 miles north of Seattle, is home to lots of retirees and college students, so Mr. Muljat tries to time new home listings with their schedules. His strategy: Single-family homes are listed early in the morning, and rentals go up late at night to appeal to night owls.

The country’s greatest concentration of night owls can be found in New York City, where 17.9% of online searches take place between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. That’s slightly above the 11.4% of searches nationwide that occur between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. Other cities where searchers burn the midnight oil include Austin, Texas, and Philadelphia.

Manhattan real-estate agent Lydia Sussek, a senior associate with Corcoran Group, says her slowest period is early in the morning from 8 to 11 a.m. In the late afternoon and evening, work really picks up. “I’ll get emails at two or three



City	% of searches occurring from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m.
Bellingham, Wash.	28.2%
Palm Springs, Calif.	27.4%
Anchorage, Alaska	26.7%
Sacramento, Calif.	25.7%
Irvine, Calif.	25.6%



City	% of searches occurring from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.
New York City	17.9%
Austin, Texas	17.2%
Philadelphia	17.1%
Atlanta	16.4%
Memphis, Tenn.	16.0%

Source: HomeFinder.com analysis of listings as of June 5; Illustrations by Mikey Burton

in the morning. I’ve actually had appointments at night,” she says.

While some of Ms. Sussek’s late-night requests come from foreign buyers, most come from locals who are looking at listings after the workday, she says. A few weeks ago, she says she woke up to emails sent at 2, 2:18, 2:22, 3:41, 5:31 and 6:59 a.m.

Searchers on both sides of the spectrum might be on to something. Robert Matchock, associate professor of psychology at Pennsylvania State University, Altoona, says most people are productive in the morning and experience a drop in alertness right after lunch. Then, they perk up by early evening. Younger people also tend to be more alert later at night, he adds.

A higher percentage of late-night searchers search using mobile devices than early-morning searchers, according to HomeFinder.com. In New York, for example, 34% of searches are from a mobile device. In Bellingham, 15% of searches come from mobile devices.

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