

# Townhome buyers offered a bonus: Put the shovels away

Just when it seems as though winter is over, at least one more snowstorm often hits Chicagoland. Many times, it's the biggest one of the year. And moving into a townhome or condo is one of the best ways to avoid shoveling snow.

Three developers - Wiseman-Hughes Enterprises, Bigelow Homes, and Reserve One Homes - offer townhomes with either low or no maintenance and so much more.

There's a reason for these late winter snowstorms. Experts say that, in general, the heaviest snow usually falls when the temperature is only a little below freezing, or even above freezing at the ground. The colder the air, the less moisture it has to make snow. This is why a year's worth of snow in extremely cold climates, such as the South Pole, melts down to less than two or three inches of water.

The official world record for a 24-hour snowfall is 75.8 inches, set April 14-15, 1921, at Silver Lake, Colo. Guinness World Records states that the largest snowflake ever measured was 15 inches wide and eight inches thick. It was observed in 1887 at Fort Keogh, Montana.

Townhomes and condos usually promise maintenance-free living. This means no lawn mowing and no snow shoveling. While other people are donning hats and gloves and rummaging through the garage for a shovel, townhome and condo residents are more likely to be enjoying a cup of hot cocoa by the fireplace.

The townhomes at Oswego's Ashcroft Walk include ranch and two-story models that offer living space comparable to a single-family home. Some feature first-floor master bedrooms. All townhomes in this Wiseman-Hughes Enterprises community also include basements. Many of the homes have a lovely view of a pond and a red farmhouse and silo. Also, a 2.47-mile walking path winds through 28 acres of open space. They have two or three bedrooms, two to 3½ baths, and two-car garages. Prices range from \$255,900 to \$270,900 and square footage ranges from 1,548 to 1,892.

Another Wiseman-Hughes community, Randall Highlands in North Aurora, is convenient to highways and close to full-service commercial areas. There are four luxury townhome plans, including a ranch, and each has a two-car garage. The townhome designs are reminiscent of Chicago's Astor Street with brick exteriors, varied rooflines, and porches with colonnades.

The Plaza on New York is one of the fastest selling condominium and townhome communities in the Chicago area. The Wiseman-Hughes community is across the street from the Westfield Fox Valley Mall in Aurora. Prices range from \$260,900 to \$295,400; projected prices for the 392 condominiums will begin in the \$180,000s. Townhomes have a square footage range of 1,730 to 1,965 and condos range from 920 to 1,700.

The homes will feature two to three bedrooms, two to three baths, and single and multi-story living. Each townhome will have a two-car garage and the condos will feature underground parking.

The townhomes' rowhome exteriors are complemented by brick facades, bay windows, and fenced courtyards. The streetscape will mimic a warm urban neighborhood.



These townhomes at Running Brook Farm in Johnsburg include a roomy ranch and promise no snow shoveling.

**Bigelow Homes' The Lofts at HomeTown Aurora**, start in the low \$200s and feature a square footage range of 1,335 to 1,995. These two- and three-bedroom, two- and three-bath homes have urban architectural features found in some higher-priced homes such as finished concrete floors, curved walls, and exposed ductwork. They also include gourmet kitchens with granite island countertops, upgraded appliances, 10-foot ceilings, three-sided gas fireplaces.

Residents enjoy small neighborhood features such as traditional exteriors, front porches; white picket fences; bay windows; six-foot wide sidewalks; living courts; private cul-de-sacs; and streets designed to keep traffic under 15 mph.

Reserve One Homes' Running Brook Farm in Johnsburg offers townhomes with two-three bedrooms plus a loft, all the latest amenities, basements, and two-car garages. Prices for these ranch and two-story townhomes range from \$188,900 to \$206,990. Square footage ranges from 1,088 to 1,533.

Standard features include walk-in closets, nine-foot first-floor ceilings, and volume master bedroom ceilings. Also included are atrium doors to the back and privacy fencing between back yards. Luxury options include bay windows, a loft or second master suite, a fireplace, ceramic or wood floors, a whirlpool bath, chef-quality Cambria countertops, and 42-inch kitchen cabinets.

To get to Ashcroft Walk from Route 59 and Ogden Avenue, take Ogden Avenue west and continue west on Route 71. Then go south on Plainfield Road less than a mile. The development is on the east side of Plainfield Road on Woolley Road; look for the pond and fountain next to the sales office.

Call (630) 554-6222 or visit [www.wisemanhughes.com](http://www.wisemanhughes.com). Sales office hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday and Monday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

To visit Randall Highlands, take I-88, exit Orchard Road north. Continue to the community on the south side of the street. Sales centers are open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday; 11 am to 6 pm Sunday and Monday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (630) 907-2930 or visit: [www.wisemanhughes.com](http://www.wisemanhughes.com).

To get to The Plaza on New York from I-88 and Route 59,

take Route 59 south about 2.5 miles to New York Street, then go west on New York Street to the sales center, which is on the north side of the street.

Sales center hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sundays and Mondays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (630) 851-2090 or visit [www.theplazaonnewyork.com](http://www.theplazaonnewyork.com).

To visit the Lofts at HomeTown Aurora, take Route 59 to

Ogden Avenue, west to Montgomery Road, then north one mile. Furnished models of the Lofts are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Fridays from noon to 6 p.m. Loft models are closed on Wednesdays. No appointment is necessary. Call (888) 322-0930, or visit [www.BigelowHomes.com](http://www.BigelowHomes.com).

Running Brook Farm is near

Route 31 and Route 120. To get there; take Route 31 north to Route 120. Go east on Route 120, one-half mile to Riverside Drive. Turn north on Riverside and go two miles to Running Brook Farm Blvd., then follow the signs.

The sales center is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, with additional hours by appointment. In mid-March,

hours change to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. Call (815) 759-0808. Visit [www.ReserveOneHomes.com](http://www.ReserveOneHomes.com).

Nearly half the world's population has probably never seen snow. This includes the majority of people in India, Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America. Anyone can find out more about snow by visiting the National Weather Service's Web site at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov).