

Homefinder

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THE SEARCH

Hunt to find a perfect city 'commuter pad'

Couple choose from among several high-rise condos in Midtown.

By Lori Johnston
For the AJC

Howard Baker's commute from Cumming became taxing when his job required him to travel to locations in different directions — Kennesaw and McDonough. His time in the car could reach 2 ½ hours, or even longer.

Howard, who works in the medical device industry, started staying in Atlanta hotels to shorten the trips during the week. He and wife Berly, who have four cats and two dogs, weren't ready to downsize from their four-bedroom, five-bath house on 1.5 acres, with a finished terrace level and a pool and gazebo.

But seeing a number of condos in a short sale situation, they decided that buying a condo in Midtown, while keeping their Cumming home, would cut Howard's drive time and allow them to enjoy restaurants, concerts and other nightlife on the weekends.

Working with Ricky Rucker of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage-Midtown to find what Berly calls their "commuter pad," their choices included these high-rise condos.

**No. 1
Heart of Midtown**

A one-bedroom, one-bath unit in Metropolis, on Peachtree Street in Midtown, had a contemporary look

and a unique feature, with a rounded partial wall separating the bedroom from the rest of the unit. The luxury amenities were impressive, such as the lobby, pool and lounging area with a fire pit, Howard said. Although the unit looked toward Stone Mountain, the couple desired to see more of the city. The condo, completed in 2003, was listed for \$129,990.

**No. 2
Breathtaking views**

A one-bedroom, one-bath unit in Spire, also a high-rise condo on Peachtree Street, offered views of Peachtree Street skyscrapers as well as Piedmont Park, Kennesaw Mountain and Stone Mountain. The 15th-floor unit also was in good condition, although the carpet needed to be replaced and the walls were dingy, the couple said. An island in the kitchen also closed in that space. The Midtown condo, completed in 2005, was listed for \$119,900.

**No. 3
Focused on the Fox**

Another one-bedroom, one-bath condo in Spire was a little lower, on the 11th floor, and looked toward the Fox Theatre. A three-quarter wall separated the bedroom from the living area. Features included stainless steel appliances, granite countertops and hardwood floors. The Midtown condo, completed in 2005, was listed for \$100,000.

The Choice

No. 2. The views stood out

as they got higher in Spire. "Definitely when you walk in the door and look out, it takes your breath away," Howard said. Adds Berly, who owns a marketing company, Cre8tive Concepts, and also does interior design: "Our view is to the north, so we have a gorgeous view at night and during the day."

Since purchasing the unit in 2012, they have made a number of changes, including painting and installing zebra wood floors, she said. They removed the island and bought a CB2 counter-height table with galvanized metal and exposed nail heads, which serves as an island without boxing in the space. A wall fireplace also was added to the unit.

Howard's commute now is about 30 minutes, in either direction. On weekends, they enjoy hearing live bands, seeing shows at the Fox, and trying out restaurants in Midtown and other neighborhoods, such as Inman Park and Old Fourth Ward. "We're finding all these little gems and these neighborhood places," Berly said.

Howard and Berly Baker sit in the lobby of Spire, a high-rise at 860 Peachtree St. NE, in Atlanta. They are enjoying seeing shows at the Fox and checking out neighborhood restaurants when downtown. CONTRIBUTED BY CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO

