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Mark Deutschmann of Village Real Estate Services gives a tour of a downtown loft at The Westview. Deutschmann says the revitalization of Nashville's downtown area has made urban living more attractive to homebuyers.

Photo by Darla Jackson

More Nashvillians embrace city living

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It seems like Nashville has changed in the blink of an eye. A new commuter rail, the opening of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, plans for new skyscrapers — these illustrate just a few ways the city is growing and moving toward the future. But one of the most dramatic shifts Nashville has seen recently is the influx of residents settling into the city's core. Welcome to the newly

urbanized Nashville, more than just your average honky-tonk town. We have just one question — what took so long?

"The city wasn't promoting residential building downtown for 50 years," says Mark Deutschmann, founder of Village Real Estate Services. He says that the city didn't open up zoning for residential until the late-90s.

Then came The Plan of Nashville. In 2000, Mayor Bill Purcell's vision for transforming Nashville took

root with the founding of the Nashville Civic Design Center, which soon after produced The Plan of Nashville.

As a work in progress, the plan so far has helped to revitalize the city, and the results, Deutschmann says, is a city transformed from just a handful of owned residences downtown within the last couple of years to 200-plus and climbing.

The response to the availability of lofts, condos and houses has been immediate and immense.



Beth Molteni

"Nashville accepted urban living overnight," says Beth Molteni, Realtor for Worth Properties and listing agent

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for The Adelmia, an 18-story high-rise near Vanderbilt University. She says that since January 2006, 65 percent of The Adelmia units have been sold, with construction expected to be completed in August 2007.

Molteni says that Nashville attracts people who want to live in the city because it has the infrastructure to support them.

"People like to be close to downtown now with the Titans, the symphony and all of the places to eat," she says.

Realtor Karen Hoff with Historic and Distinctive Homes agrees.

"Convenience is a big factor. If you live in town, you can be at work in minutes," Hoff says, pointing out that value is another reason people are moving to the city.

"These houses hold their value very well, and they're going up in value every day."

And with the array of jobs to be had, things to do and places to live, Nashville is seeing a diverse population moving in.

Molteni says that many of the people who express an interest in urban living are professionals, such as doctors and music industry executives. Most of Hoff's customers are young professionals, with single



Mark Deutschmann of Village Real Estate Services points out that downtown dwellers don't have to give up green space. This rooftop area at The Westview offers residents a beautiful outdoor space and an impressive view of the city.

Photo by Darla Jackson

females being number one and single males being number two.

Deutschmann says the first wave of buyers he saw were also young professionals, who were followed by mid- and high-level executives and empty-nesters.

"The more people believe in the value of downtown," he says, "the more people who are interested in it. Nashville is a cool, hip and reasonably affordable place to live."

One thing urbanites do have to have in common, according to Hoff,

however, is savvy.

"You have to be smart," she says. "You have to like living in an eclectic place and the feeling of being on the pulse of the city."

Nashville's recent growth has definitely put its name more prominently on the map, especially when you compare its affordability to other metro areas.

"This is putting us in link with other major cities," Hoff says. "A city that wants to thrive has to redefine its urban core." ■