

HOUSING INFORMATION FOR NASA GODDARD EARLY CAREER SCIENTISTS

*Compiled by the NASA Goddard Association for Postdoctoral
Scholars (NGAPS)+*

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One of the hardest things about moving to a new area is finding a good place to live. To make life easier for early career scientists starting at Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), the NASA Goddard Association for Postdoctoral Scholars (NGAPS)+ has, for a wide range of areas, compiled living experiences of current Goddard early career scientists. This document is based on the experiences of 57 early career scientists, and describes information of 26 cities and neighborhoods in the Washington, DC area. Although this guide is predominantly aimed at those based at GSFC, we have also included information about 6 neighborhoods within NYC for those at GISS. Some general tips and tricks are included as well that might be especially relevant if you are moving from outside the US, relevant to both those at GSFC and GISS.

Please note that people will experience places in different ways. Feelings of safety are very personal as are opinions on the “best” place for someone to live (e.g., do you prefer a quiet neighborhood, or do you want to be close to the action?). Although we have strived to give an objective description of the area, note that it depends on the experience of current early careers, and others might experience the same place in a different way. Therefore, this document is only intended to help with your decision making process. Some neighborhoods are quickly changing, and so it is always a good idea to find other sources of information prior to deciding where to live.

If you would like more information about the NASA Goddard Association for Postdoctoral Scholars (NGAPS)+, please join our Facebook page (NASA GSFC postdocs) or visit <https://gewa.gsfc.nasa.gov/clubs/ngaps/>.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

How to find a room/place to live

Early career scientists have reported finding rooms in the following ways:

- Through a colleague
- Online through for example Craigslist.
 - One respondent came to DC one week before starting at GSFC, and used this time to look for house shares and small apartments. It took 3 days to find a place to live using this method. Others have found (shared) housing through Craigslist within several days.

o Other websites that might be of use:

- www.craigslist.com
- www.apartments.com
- www.padmapper.com
- www.onradpad.com
- www.trulia.com
- www.sublet.com
- www.airbnb.com
- www.apartmentlove.com/maryland/greenbelt

o With the close proximity of GSFC to the University of Maryland at College park, it might also be worth looking at:

- UMCP Housing, Sublets, & Roommates Facebook Group - https://m.facebook.com/groups/1585931414992006/forsaleposts/?story_id=1896488703936274
- Some people use a realtor/real estate agent. One early career scientist (searching in Annapolis) found their apartment through a realtor from Coldwell-Banker, who sent alerts whenever anything became available that might be of interest. This didn't cost anything, and they found an apartment within one week.

Housing situations

Living arrangements vary widely. Some people rent a studio, or a one or two bedroom apartment, and live alone or with a partner and/or with children. Others share a multi-bedroom place with one or more roommates. A few early career

scientists buy their own house. *Note: NPPs will not be able to obtain a mortgage based on their NPP income, since fellowship payments are stipends and not technically salary.

Safety

<https://dcatlas.dcgis.dc.gov/crimecards/> and <https://www.cityprotect.com/> can both help gain an idea of areas/streets that are dangerous and best avoided.

With kids

Familiarize yourself with the American school system as it might be different from what you are used to. The availability of schools depends on which county you live in, and the quality and safety of schools varies from county to county. You may find using the “Schools” overlay/filter on https://www.zillow.com/homes/for_rent/ helpful in locating nearby schools.

With pets

Check with your apartment complex or landlord if pets are allowed. In some complexes (e.g. Summit Hills in Silver Spring) certain apartments are pet friendly, while others (even within the same complex) are not. It is best to check in advance. In addition to the normal rent, you may be charged additional rent for your pet (typically around \$50 extra per month, but check with your complex or landlord).

Useful transportation information on the DC area metro and local bus networks can be found at <https://www.wmata.com/>.

Tips and tricks for people moving from outside the US

One respondent suggested the following: If you’re moving from abroad, leave time for things to come through. It can take some weeks to get your social security number (which you have to apply for), and get a valid American driver’s license. Assume you won’t have a car for the first 3 months at least, so plan on using the metro for a while. Also, you won’t have any credit in the US and it doesn’t matter if you have perfect credit in your home country. You won’t be able to get a US credit card right away if you want one, so plan ahead with how you will balance your finances. One note regarding taxes (so one can find more information about it prior to moving – this can by no means be taken as legal or tax advice): State and sales taxes vary between different states. Some foreign nationals might be able to take advantage of a tax treaty between their country of tax residency and the US, however, for the state tax this depends on the state you live in. Some states may charge you sales tax once if you register an out-of-state vehicle - so double-check this before moving to a specific state.

VIRGINIA

ALEXANDRIA, VA

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Old Town Alexandria has lots of clothes shopping, boutiques, salons and restaurants. There's a big farmers market on Saturday mornings and the waterfront is a lovely place to stroll, walk dogs, or get the kids out.

Where people ended up living

- Cameron Court, on Eisenhower Avenue. This complex is very low key. A mix of singles, older couples, and families. Lots of military. Middle income. The community is gated. It's easily accessible to Old Town Alexandria and about 30 minutes to the monuments in DC by metro. There's a movie theater and some restaurants/coffee shops a short walk away. Reasonable grocery shopping is a 25-minute walk or 5-minute drive.

Commuting and getting around

Driving is the fastest way to get to GSFC, it is a 25 mile ride on the Beltway which takes 30 minutes to an hour depending on traffic. Taking the metro and bus to GSFC is possible, but would take about 1.5 hours each way. You can get around without a car, but it is considerably easier to have one. The metro is about a 10 minute walk away. Whole Foods is about a 25 minute walk from the respondent's location.

Safety

The area is considered safe.

Child-friendliness

The respondent had no experience with schools or day care, but would consider the area to be moderately child-friendly. Lots of kids play in the streets. There are playgrounds and a bike trail within walking distance. There is also a pool, too.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered to be pet-friendly. There is a dog park.

Local schools information:

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Not reported.

BURKE, VA

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Burke is a Fairfax County town located in Northern Virginia, surrounded by Annandale, South Run, West Springfield, Springfield, and Fairfax Station. Both George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College (Annandale campus), are nearby. Burke is suburban with a mix of mainly houses and townhouses. There should be many room-share opportunities near George Mason University.

The parks in Burke have many walking paths with streams and lakes. Burke Lake Park is the largest with walking paths and plenty of shade, camping sites, recreation activities that include boating, fishing, an ice cream parlor and a small train that runs through the woods. While Walmart is located in the center of the town, there are many shopping centers in the area (with Safeway, Target, Kohl's, Giant, Lidl, H-mart, Ross, boutique shops), many auto shops, a variety of restaurants and gyms, and a range of children's activities available.

Where people ended up living

- Not reported.

Commuting and getting around

It is extremely difficult and time-intensive to commute using public transportation to NASA Goddard from Burke. Therefore, driving is the most-efficient method here and requires the smallest daily time commitment.

Driving: Depending upon the time you depart, it's about 1-2 hours, using I-95 and I-495. Fridays have mild traffic as many Federal employees on a maxi-flex schedule do not work Fridays.

Access to I-95, Braddock Road (620), Old Keen Mill Road (644), Fairfax County Pkwy-Franconia-Springfield Pkwy (286-289) are the most used. These local roads are very congested on weekday mornings after 7:30 am and evening around 5 pm.

Return: I-495 south, traffic differs daily but this road is always busy and after 6 pm traffic does get lighter according to the respondent.

If flexible working hours can be accommodated, one can drive in moderate-to-no-traffic for about 1 hour on both ways.

There are Amtrak (Burke Center Station) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) (Rolling Road Station) stations that head north (to DC and New York) and south (to Charlottesville and Roanoke), although the schedule is limited so double-check them before use.

There is no Metro rail access in Burke, so the closest stations are the Springfield/blue line (15-minute drive) or Vienna/orange line (25-minute drive) train stations. The Metro does have buses that run from every neighborhood in Burke to the Metro train stations and beyond, however the respondent does not use them so cannot comment further. There are also three “park and ride” parking lots for metro rail connector busses around the periphery of the town but the respondent notes that you must get there VERY early on workdays (presumably to secure a parking space).

Safety

Burke is a family-oriented community and a very relaxed place. It is encompassed in a single patrol area (#720) out of the West Springfield Police District Station that fares better crime-wise than the rest of the county. But as it is near a large Metropolitan area, one must always take their safety seriously as compared to counties more distant from the metropolitan area. Many Federal, State and local law enforcement officers reside in this community.

Child-friendliness

Not reported.

Pet-friendliness

There is one dog park on Guinea Road. But people walk with dogs all the time on trails, in parks and on the side of roads/sidewalks. In Fairfax County, one can be fined if dogs are not on the leash. There are many rules for animals so the respondent suggests that you are best checking out the latest information yourself.

Local schools information

Lake Braddock Secondary is a large high school here serving students from the 7th to 12th grades with a large variety of classes and sports.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

Not reported.

WASHINGTON, DC

ADAMS MORGAN, DC

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

Within a couple of minutes walk, you have two supermarkets (Safeway and Harris Teeter. Trader Joes, Giant and Target are a little further away), a CVS, and a couple of independent coffee/book shops. There is also a local elementary school (HD Cooke).

To the west, there are all the bars/restaurants/nightlife of 18th Street. The Smithsonian National Zoo, and Rock Creek National Park are within 15-20 minutes walk. Rock Creek Park is beautiful and a great place to go trail running, hiking, and cycling throughout the year. It's also great if you have kids or dogs, etc. To the east, you have Columbia Heights and 14th St. This has most of the things that you might need on a day-to-day basis (e.g., big shops like Target, Best Buy, CVS, Bed Bath and Beyond, Marshalls, gyms, chain/independent coffee shops, a mix of restaurants and cafes, fast food restaurants, etc).

To the southwest, you have Meridian Hill Park (also known as 'Malcolm X Park'). One should probably not go here after dusk, but during the day it's really popular with people enjoying the summer weather, playing sports, running, dog walkers etc. The area itself is really well-connected. You can take a number of buses down 16th Street which take you all the way to the White House and downtown, or north to Silver Spring. To the north west, you have the Woodley Park metro (red line, <15 mins walk), and to the NE, you have the Columbia Heights metro (green and yellow lines, <10 mins walk). Parking is expensive, but possible. Dupont Circle is about 20- 25 minutes walk away. Georgetown is also relatively close. If you like running, this is a great place to live as there are lots of different circuits you can do, which vary in length (i.e. you can go around the Zoo/Rock Creek Park, or run down and around the National Mall).

Where people ended up living

- At the crossing between the 18th and Columbia Rd.
- On Columbia Rd opposite the Safeway.

Commuting and getting around

Both respondents commute by public transport (walk or bus to Columbia Heights metro station, then green or yellow line to Greenbelt, and from there bus 15X to GSFC). Reported travel times are between 1 hour and 1.30 hours each way, depending on connection times. To get around the DC area, no car is needed – public transport will get you most places.

Safety

One respondent considered the area to be safe, and had never heard of or seen crime related incidents in the neighborhood. The other respondent noted that most of Adams Morgan is pretty nice, and seems largely a prosperous area. The main roads (e.g. 14th, 16th, 18th Street) and the main roads connecting these (e.g. Columbia Road) are always well lit and busy, and it appears safe to go here any time of day. However, Meridian Hill Park (Malcolm X Park) is best avoided after dark, and there are some other streets that one might want to avoid. Furthermore, it was noted that on Columbia Road, there are often police stops, but these might just be due to traffic offences.

Child-friendliness

Neither of the respondents have kids, so cannot comment on the daycare or schools. Adams Morgan is considered child-friendly: many young couples with small kids live here. The Smithsonian National Zoo, and Rock Creek Park are nearby as well.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered pet-friendly. There are a number of small local parks/green spaces (Kalorama Park, Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park), a dog bark park, and there is also Rock Creek Park.

Local schools information:

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Adams Morgan is a great place to live and has a lot to offer, it is well located with great public transport links and situated within easy walking distance of most things you could want on a day-to-day basis, and has a great bar/pub/restaurant culture. It is generally quite 'leafy'/green, and seems like a wealthy area. On the other hand, it is an expensive area. Parking is expensive. Depending on where you are it can get very noisy: people, traffic and sirens, which can also occur throughout the night.

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS AND MT PLEASANT, DC

Number of respondents: 4

The general area

The area is rich with conveniences: the mall DC USA (right off the metro) has a Target, Best Buy, and a Bed Bath and Beyond. Giant is in the Columbia Heights plaza. There are several Hispanic restaurants (it is a Hispanic neighborhood) but also Thai and American ("The Heights"). A few coffee shops options for teleworking are also nearby. Rock Creek Park is nearby, to go for a quick hike. During summer there are some events ranging from farmers markets to outdoor theater organized in the neighborhood. Another respondent states that the general area of Columbia Heights has a lot to do with good access to the rest of DC.

Mt. Pleasant is one of the historic neighborhoods. It is quiet and charming, as there aren't many large apartment buildings, so it feels a bit cozier. There are small shops and supermarkets. There are plenty of restaurants, and Rock Creek Park is what limits the neighborhood on the west side. While Mt. Pleasant is more quiet, another stated that Columbia Heights is an more urban city neighborhood.

There are plenty of buses on 16th that can take you downtown (10 min) or north up to Silver Spring. Meridian Hill Park is 10 minutes walk away, perfect for picnics.

Where people ended up living

- In an apartment complex, 10 minutes walking north of the Columbia Heights metro, slightly off 14th Street.
- Spring Place, between 14th and 16th street in Columbia Heights. - In Mt. Pleasant, at the border with Columbia Heights (16th and Park), a 7 minute walk to the Columbia Heights metro.
- Renting studio condo in a rowhouse (found on Craigslist)

Commuting and getting around

Public transport (green line from the Columbia Heights metro, then bus to GSFC) is doable but having a car would be faster. One can go by bike as well from Columbia Heights to Goddard, it is about 15 miles. The ride is surprisingly nice with quite a bit of off-road bike trails to follow. Within the neighborhood, all shops are within walking distance. Getting around DC is easier using the metro, bus or bike.

Walking distance to the Green Line is great to take the metro somewhere in DC. It is possible to take the metro to Greenbelt but it ends up being a hassle because of the transfer to the bus and then the walk to their building, so mostly they just drive to Goddard 1-2 times a week and work from home the rest. The neighborhood is walkable as well (DC in general is a walkable city) so you can walk to Adams Morgan,

Petworth, Park View, Rock Creek Park, etc. Street parking is OK but can be a bit inconvenient at times.

Safety

The area is generally safe. You have to be a bit conscious about your surroundings, and, further north of Otis Street is best avoided when walking alone at night. In general, sticking to the big streets at night is safer. Some shootings a bit further north on 14th Street have been reported recently, but these are gang-related.

Columbia Heights might make some that aren't used to city life a bit uncomfortable at times, particularly late at night around the metro. The rowhouse streets seem OK even at night. Don't leave any belongings in your car at night.

Child-friendliness

The respondents had no experience with the local schools or daycare. The area is a bit busy for children to play, but Meridian Hill Park, Rock Creek Park and the Zoom (which is free) are close by.

Pet-friendliness

There are many people with pets, but check with your landlord or complex if pets are allowed.

Yes there is a dog park around and other public city parks around, and Rock Creek Park.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

Pepco

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Some Columbia Heights respondents would consider moving to a bit of a safer area, but their current convenient location in relation to the shops, bars, restaurant and public transport, as well as the price of the apartment make it difficult to find a better deal. Another respondent says if you want to experience city life and willing to sacrifice an easier commute to be in the city, then this is a good spot.

Mt. Pleasant: The area is not the cheapest, but it is really nice, peaceful, safe, and beautiful and there is plenty to do around there.

DUPONT, DC

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Dupont Circle is a very nice residential area of D.C. with lots of restaurants, nightlife, and coffee shops. The Dupont Circle Farmer's market, which is located just NW of the circle itself, is very popular and busy on Sundays. Lots of embassies, as well as museums, are in the area. Dupont Circle is also historically known for being LGBTQIA+ friendly and hosts the yearly Capital Pride Parade and the 17th Street High Heel Race.

Where people end up living

People in Dupont Circle generally live either in an apartment building or within a townhome (often an apartment within a townhome).

Commuting and getting around

Living in Dupont Circle, you do not need a car for everyday activities. You can easily walk to several grocery stores (Safeway, Whole Foods, Harris Teeter, and Trader Joes) and activities, shopping, and dining. The entrance to Rock Creek Park is within walking distance, as well as the White House, the National Mall, and other popular neighborhoods (e.g., Georgetown, Adams Morgan, Logan Circle). The Dupont Circle metro station allows easy access to other parts of Washington, D.C. and DMV areas including the airport and the Greenbelt metro station. You can commute to NASA Goddard either by bus or by a combination of bus/metro, though the commute is quite long (approximately 1.5 hours). Having access to a car is much more practical for commuting to work; however, keep in mind that parking in D.C. can be limited.

Safety

Generally, I feel safe walking around the Dupont Circle neighborhood during daytime. The Dupont Circle roundabout itself (the intersection of Connecticut and New Hampshire Ave) does not always feel safe, even during the daytime. It seems like there has been an uptick in crime in the Dupont Circle roundabout and surrounding area (especially near metro stations) since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. At nighttime, I personally prefer not to walk alone in the Dupont Circle neighborhood if I don't have to, but that's a personal preference. Most people would consider Dupont Circle to be relatively safe, in comparison to some of the nearby neighborhoods (Adams Morgan, Columbia Heights, for example).

Child-friendliness

Dupont Circle is moderately child-friendly. There are families in the neighborhood and many quieter streets for nice walks with a stroller. There is a children's playground on P Street, between 16th and 17th Street that is newly renovated as of 2024, and a large soccer field (Stead Park) attached to it. The Dupont Circle Farmer's market on Sundays is a popular family outing. The park located within the Dupont Circle roundabout itself, however, is not particularly child-friendly.

Local school information

No response.

Pet-friendliness

Quite dog friendly, despite being right in the middle of the city. There are so many dogs in the neighborhood and dog owners are generally very friendly, respectful, and responsible. There is a small, but very nice dog park at the corner of S and 17th Street, with lots of shaded seating.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

Washington Gas, Pepco, DC Water & Sewer, Verizon, Xfinity.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

- Dupont Circle is definitely one of the pricier neighborhoods in D.C. It may be tough to find an apartment in the area for a reasonable price, but there may be more affordable options in nearby neighborhoods (e.g., Adams Morgan or Columbia Heights). Logan Circle, which is really a neighborhood of its own but is only about four blocks away from Dupont Circle, is another pricey but very nice option. In the summertime, the park within the Logan Circle roundabout is absolutely packed with young people and their friends, with picnic blankets, music, and dogs, and 14th Street is a popular spot for nightlife, shopping, and dining.

EASTERN MARKET, DC

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Within walking distance to most of SE Pennsylvania Avenue, Eastern Market shops, and 8th Street restaurants and bars. You are also within walking distance of Capitol Hill and the National Mall.

Where people ended up living

- On South Carolina Ave SE, between 5th and 6th Street.

Commuting and getting around

The commute by car is 20-30 minutes each way. For some reason traffic is always worse on the return trip, often stop-and-go. Commuting using public transport is possible: take the orange line from Eastern Market to New Carrollton (~17 minutes transit time), and bus 15X towards Greenbelt (15-20 minutes to Goddard, runs every 40 minutes during select times).

Eastern Market has a metro stop, so it is easy to get to other parts of the city using public transport. There are many grocery and restaurant options within around 5 minutes walking distance as well.

Safety

The area appears safe, and the respondent would walk alone at night. However, there is still a lot of property theft in the area: people tried to steal bikes from the respondent's rear patio.

Child-friendliness

The respondent has no experience with the local schools or daycare. There are lots of people with young kids in the area.

Pet-friendliness

There are lots of people with dogs: there is frequent green space along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Not reported.

GLOVER PARK, DC

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

It is a relatively small, quiet, and affordable neighborhood (if you are looking for a Georgetown-like lifestyle, but cheaper). The respondent notes that it definitely has a suburban feel even though it is in the city. There is a Trader Joe's on the main road (Wisconsin Avenue) and a Farmers market every Sunday that runs from March - November, as well as a Whole Foods that is a short drive away in Tenleytown (but definitely not walkable). There is also a decent number of restaurants and bars, but nothing too loud and bustling. Glover Park is also near a beautiful trail in the Glover Archbold Park; and a convenient distance away from the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal trail if you like biking (and possibly camping). There is also a small dog park to let your pups run around right in the middle of the neighborhood. It is a decent mix of semi-old, mid-50's/60's, 4 to 8 unit buildings as well as bigger apartment complexes, and single-family row homes. Very little to no entertainment aside from bars and restaurants (e.g., no movie theatre, recreational places, etc), but other parts of DC with those things are quite accessible (e.g., U Street or Adams Morgan).

Where people ended up living

- Just north of the Georgetown area.

Commuting and getting around

The neighborhood is very walkable. There is a public bus that takes you directly to Dupont Circle (Metro Station), which runs quite often and is reliable, but like Georgetown, there is no direct Metro rail that goes to this neighborhood. There is free street parking, but it can sometimes be hard to find a free spot. You have the option to pay for parking if you live in a complex or unit that has it available, or alternatively you can rent a personal parking space. You would 100% need a car to commute to Goddard. It is not an impossible commute but can be discouraging on some days (between 30 mins - 1.5 hrs one way, depending on traffic).

Safety

This neighborhood is very safe and is family-friendly. It is quiet and calm, though people can be out and about during the summer, especially since the trail is close by. However it is not well lit at night, so it is always good to use caution.

Child-friendliness

There is a local Elementary School that many families send their children to in Glover Park. Further south, there is a middle school and high school in the Foxhall area, and several private schools and daycare centers around the Georgetown area.

The park themselves are great green spaces for kids to play, again, with the emphasis that it is safe and family friendly.

Pet-friendliness

It is pet-friendly (as described above), but some apartments do not allow pets, so the respondent notes that it would be prudent to check with your landlord or residential managers.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

The respondent truly enjoyed living in this neighborhood due to all of its benefits, but wanted to caution about the length of the commute to Goddard, which can sometimes be taxing. Therefore, they would not recommend this neighbourhood as a place to live if a short commute is very important to you.

H-STREET DISTRICT / ATLAS DISTRICT, DC

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

H-street is lively and has many bars and restaurants. The National Mall and Chinatown are 10-20 minutes by bus. Stores in the area include a Safeway, CVS, and good hardware at Benning/Bladensburg. Here you are close to the RFK stadium (soccer and football) and the Anacostia river walk, which is a nice trail for running and biking. Other things of interest in the area are the National Arboretum, Atlas brewery, and Union Market (a high end food court/market).

Where people ended up living

- Flats at Atlas Complex.
- In a two-level row house at 20th and Gales St NE.

Commuting and getting around

Commuting by car takes ~15-20 minutes each way and is pretty easy. Counter commute and avoiding the city center makes for light traffic. Commuting by metro is possible but would take 1 hr+ each way. To get around DC public transport is fine, although depending on where you live there is no metro station in the immediate vicinity (closest metro stops are Union Station or Stadium Armory – from Stadium Armory one can take the orange line to New Carrollton metro station (15 minutes transit), and the 15X bus to Goddard (another 15-20 minute transit)).

Safety

It's a "emerging" neighborhood with some problems. The H-Street corridor itself is reported to be very safe, with lots of police on the corners. However, if you go to the darker side streets at night it might get shadier, with concentrations of homeless people and drug addicts. Areas on the Benning Rd–Bladensburg intersection, and walking up on Bladensburg should be avoided. One respondent reported to personally feel safe but could imagine others might not. One respondent noted to avoid walking alone at night, and during summer often getting catcalled from passing cars. Biking feels safer, as there is little traffic on the neighborhood side roads. Both respondents report having seen or heard of crime-related incidents in this neighborhood, from occasional broken car windows to drug dealing, and seeing a guy making a police report after getting mugged. One respondent reported having been threatened by a crazy guy on the bus. No reports of people breaking into houses, but bikes and such might disappear if they are visible outside.

Child-friendliness

The respondents have no experience with the local schools or daycare. One of the respondents does not consider the area to be child-friendly, whereas the other

respondent notes people don't usually mess with kids. There are schools, a public library and a recreation complex at Rosedale Park.

Pet-friendliness

Depending on where you live, the nearest green space might be quite a hike. However, it is possible to have a house with a yard in this neighborhood.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

If you enjoy doing outdoor things it might be nicer to live closer to Greenbelt to make your commute shorter or bikeable and make it easier to get out of the city. Being closer to the metro (again, depending on where you'd end up living) on this side of town would probably be nicer and would make activities elsewhere in the city more accessible.

NAVY YARD / WATERFRONT, DC

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

The area around the Waterfront Metro (green line) has a Safeway supermarket, CVS pharmacy, a local bar, burger place and an Indian restaurant. The Area Stage (a local theater) is located nearby, as is the Nationals Park (the baseball stadium). The Yards Park (closer to the Navy Yard Metro, also on the green line) is a recreation area at the waterfront, which hosts various events such as a free Friday night concert series during summer. In this area, you are within walking distance of the National Mall (around 15 minutes from the Waterfront Metro) and central downtown DC (20-30 minutes). The District Wharf area is also within walking distance, and full of independent and chain restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues.

Where people ended up living

- Waterside Towers, at the Waterfront.
- Not reported.

Commuting and getting around

Driving to Goddard takes 25-30 minutes. Taking public transport is another possibility: take the green line to Greenbelt (approximately 40 minutes) and the 15X bus (another 15-20 minutes) to Goddard. To get around DC walking or taking public transport is a good mode of transportation.

Safety

The immediate Waterfront neighborhood is safe, however the area between the Navy Yard and Waterfront metro stops should not be navigated alone at night, but is relatively safe during the day. There has been a lot of gentrification of the area in recent years, with a lot of redevelopment.

Child-friendliness

There are a number of local schools.

Pet-friendliness

The respondent has two house cats, and notes that there are many parks and areas where people walk dogs.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

It is a great place to live. The cost of areas like Waterfront and Navy Yard is fairly high compared to other areas as they are under a lot of development and you will have to consider the cost of a parking space. Waterfront is a very quiet place, this

can be a pro or con. It is perfect for getting to the Mall and museums, and up to Chinatown for pubs, and the cinema. The District Wharf area is a great place to go for food, drink and entertainment, with lots of great views of the river.

NORTH MICHIGAN PARK, DC

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

The respondent noted that North Michigan Park is a relatively quiet place to live, with plenty of green spaces. The area also has a public library, a Walmart, a brewery, fast food and convenience stores (7-Eleven) all within walking distance.

The respondent noted that North Michigan Park is a historically black neighborhood, and is currently undergoing a lot of development including multiple large new apartments and retail buildings either newly finished or under construction. As of 2020, there are several businesses that have or are planning to move into the new development including Aldi, the Children's Museum, the Meow Wolf museum, a fitness center, and a public charter school.

Where people ended up living

- 8 minute walk south of Fort Totten metro station.

Commuting and getting around

The convenience of this neighbourhood is its proximity to other places to go out. Fort Totten is a transfer station on the red and green/yellow metro lines. Petworth, Brookland, and Takoma Park are all just one metro stop away. There are buses that leave from Fort Totten to everywhere within the city. You can get by without a car, but having one opens up significantly more options.

Commuting to GSFC by public transport: green or yellow line to Greenbelt, and bus 15X from there. Door-to-desk time is anywhere between 1-1.15 hours.

Commuting to GSFC by bicycle: ~13 miles mostly along the Anacostia Trail system. Door-to-desk time is anywhere between 1.15-1.5 hours (depending on your pace).

Commuting to GSFC by car: Door-to-desk time is 25-30 min with typical traffic. Very easy commute since most of the traffic is in the opposite direction.

Safety

Generally considered a safe place, although the lighting can be inconsistent around the parks. The respondent suggests that sensible precautions are taken with respect to safety, particularly after dark. They note that in general the neighbours really look out for one another, but there are the typical city property crimes (minor vandalism, and a couple of cars being broken into).

Child-friendliness

There are a growing number of families with kids, and lots of kids play in the street. There are a couple of playgrounds within walking distance, but not close enough to let the kids go unsupervised to these.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered very pet friendly on account of the large open parks and fields for dog walking.

Local schools information

Local schools include Rocketship Rise Academy Public Charter School (planned), DC Bilingual Public Charter School, Bridges Public Charter School, University of the DC Community College, Washington Jesuit Academy (boys only), and Scrilli School Catholic Preschool and Kindergarten.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

The respondent notes that both North Michigan Park or Queens Chapel are great neighbourhoods to consider if you are wishing to maximize your living space in DC all while remaining within walking distance of the metro station. It feels like you are living in the suburbs but you can still get into downtown DC in 15-20 minutes. As Fort Totten is a major metro/bus station, public transportation is usually available to wherever you want. They note that the major downside to this area is that there are no restaurants or nightlife (other than the nice brewery which closes about 8 pm, and the fast food outlet(s)), so going out always requires planning ahead.

PETWORTH, DC

Number of respondents: 1

The general area: Petworth is a residential area with an urban feel– largely connected row houses, with a few larger apartment buildings near transit/main roads. It’s historically been a working class area, but is being rapidly gentrified (lots of rowhouses being renovated into 1M+ homes). It’s relatively quiet with lots of families, especially away from the main roads (Georgia Ave), and has a somewhat similar feel to parts of Columbia Heights/Mt Pleasant with the row houses and lots of trees. However, it’s significantly cheaper than those adjacent but more southern neighborhoods. There is a strip of restaurants on Upshur street that was already good when the respondent moved here in the fall of 2022, and it just keeps getting better: it now has one of the best ramen places in the city (Menya Hosaki), a really good new trendy Vietnamese place (Little Vietnam), a standard Chinese take out place, a fried chicken joint (Honeymoon Chicken), a Cajun place (Petworth Social), Timber Pizza (which also does killer breakfast sandwiches), Cinder BBQ, a coffee shop, and an upcoming new Italian place all in the same block. There’s also a great independent bookstore (Loyalty Books)!

Where people end up living: This respondent lives in a condo (row house converted to four units). They know people in the neighborhood living in apartment buildings near the metro (Georgia Ave, Green Line), both old and new buildings. They also know people renting houses with a group of friends, or renting rooms in shared houses. The latter you can find on craigslist.

Commuting and getting around: It’s about a 40 minute drive from Petworth to GSFC. Additionally, it’s a little over an hour on transit via the Green Line metro from Georgia Ave + the 15X bus to GSFC. The respondent alternates between these options. The green line takes you easily to much of DC, and you can connect lines to get anywhere. There is a farmers’ market centrally located in the summer months, and several grocery stores including a large Safeway. You would not need a car to live in Petworth, but it would make for a faster commute if desired. Both Dulles (IAD) and Reagan (DCA) airports are metro-accessible.

Safety: Away from the main roads + metro stop, Petworth is very quiet and the respondent has never felt unsafe even running/walking after dark or before dawn. Near the metro/main streets there are more people around, and you may have typical city experiences (like what occurs around most parts of DC and other major US cities)– people asking for money, witnessing people who are unhoused or in crisis. However this has never personally made the respondent feel unsafe– but they acknowledge that each person has their own reaction to these things.

Child-friendliness: There are sidewalks everywhere, and lots of small parks including playgrounds and a rec center. There is also a group called Petworth

Peanuts which I think connects parents? People post about it a lot in the neighborhood Facebook groups.

Local school information: Respondent does not have kids so they do not have information about schools. However, they have noticed there are a lot of schools in the area and it seems very family-friendly here- they see families constantly.

Pet-friendliness: Respondent does not have a dog but says a lot of people in their neighborhood seem to have dogs. There are lots of parks too (not specifically dog parks though).

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies: Electric: PepCo, Gas: Unknown (respondent has an all-electric home), Internet: respondent has Verizon, and thinks Xfinity is also an option.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here: Respondent would highly recommend Petworth for a compromise between affordability, still getting a “city” feel, access to DC, and reasonable access to GSFC. For those planning to move here, they would recommend joining the Greater Petworth fb group, as well as whatever Buy Nothing fb group is local to your specific address (there are several sub-groups for Petworth). These are great to get news, connect with neighbors, and get/give away free stuff!

TAKOMA PARK, DC/MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

The neighborhood is mostly made up of residential houses. It is a small town with a cute tiny downtown. Not many options for restaurants and supermarkets, but Silver Spring is close. Silver Spring has many stores, restaurants, etc.

Where people ended up living

- Near the Takoma Park library.

Commuting and getting around

By car: 25 minutes if you take the Beltway, or 30 minutes through Greenbelt Road. You need a car to do grocery shopping. Other than that public transport is decent.

Safety

The area is considered to be safe, and there are no known areas that should be avoided at all costs. In the three years the respondent has lived in Takoma, they have only heard of a couple of instances where cars were broken into.

Child-friendliness

Although the respondent doesn't have kids, the area appears child-friendly: there are many playground options in the area.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered very pet-friendly.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

There is a local Co-op if you like organic and local food. Sligo Creek Park is a very family- and pet-friendly place to go for a walk. The city has a "hippie" feeling, and people are very environmentally conscious.

MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MD

Number of respondents: 3

The general area

Annapolis is a lovely city with a small town feel, and is located right by the water within the Chesapeake Bay. The US Naval Academy is located here, and the downtown area is very pretty with lots of nice restaurants and independent shops. It is generally very quiet, and places are not too expensive to rent or buy, relative to those closer to DC. There is plenty of bars and entertainment to be found in the area, as well as a large mall with a movie theater, and all of the major supermarkets are within a short drive.

Where people ended up living

- Crosswinds Apartment Complex. This complex is right next to a mall including a Target, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and some bars and restaurants. Old town Annapolis is ten minutes away by car.
- Severn House Complex in Eastport, right on the Bay. From this complex one can walk into the downtown area of Annapolis. This takes about 20 minutes and is a pleasant walk next to the water part of the way.
- Not reported

Commuting and getting around

Downtown Annapolis is very walkable and easy to get around by foot. It is also easy enough to get a relatively cheap rideshare into downtown from anywhere in the general Annapolis area.

However a car is definitely recommended in general, particularly for the commute to GSFC; it is very difficult to commute if you rely on public transport. As you can completely avoid the Beltway on your way to GSFC, delays and traffic jams are minimal, and the drive takes around 30 to 35 minutes. Weekend traffic going over the Chesapeake Bay in the summer can be terrible on Friday afternoons so most people who have the ability to work from home do so on this day. Depending on where you live, it might be possible to walk to the city center, and there is a local bus system as well as an express bus going to downtown DC. Another option to go to DC is to drive to New Carrollton station and take the metro from there.

Safety

The area is considered safe. There are a few places closer to downtown Annapolis that are reported to be a little unsafe. Crime rates appear to be lower than in DC.

Child-friendliness

The respondents had no experience with the local schools or daycare. It seems safe for children to play, and there are a few nice parks and playgrounds around.

Pet-friendliness

One of the respondents has a dog and considers the area very pet-friendly, noting that there are multiple dog parks and a dog beach, along with lots of dog-friendly walking paths and trails.

Local schools information:

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Annapolis is relatively quiet, but with a good local music and theater culture. It feels more like a 'town' than a 'city'. The location on the Chesapeake Bay makes Annapolis a great place for all sorts of water-related activities (think sailing, kayaking, etc). However, living in Annapolis makes seeing friends and socializing in DC slightly inconvenient.

BELTSVILLE, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

It is a residential neighborhood close to the Calverton shopping center, and there are shopping/groceries/restaurants along Rhode Island Avenue and Baltimore Avenue. One needs to travel closer into DC in order to access more of the city highlights, such as bars, museums and so on. From Beltsville, one has very convenient access to I-495 (the Beltway) and I-95. Metro access is doable, but a bit awkward if you have no car.

Where people ended up living

- Right off of Powder Mill Rd (close to where it crosses I-95).

Commuting and getting around

It is a ~20 minute drive to Goddard along Powder Mill road; taking the I-495 can be a bit faster, but is subject to rush hour traffic and delays due to crashes. To get around it is best to have a car.

Safety

The neighborhood feels quite safe, though it is close to a number of busy roads, so one has to keep an eye on pets/children. The respondent is not aware of any areas in the neighborhood that should be avoided, and has not heard or seen crime related incidents.

Child-friendliness

There are many families in the neighborhood with young children; as long as children know not to wander to major roads, it is a very safe area.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered pet-friendly and most of the neighbors have pets. Access to good dog walking trails is a 5-10 minute drive.

Local schools information:

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving here?

This is a great area to live if you own a car and your recreation doesn't lie entirely within the city. The two places the respondent goes most frequently are Goddard

and Rockville: this is a super convenient place to live for access to the major highways as well as side-roads to bypass the highways during rush hours and bad traffic.

BERWYN HEIGHTS, MD

Number of respondents: 4

The general area

Varies with a mix of single family homes, low-rise townhomes, and apartment complexes. Nearby Lake Artemesia has a playground and walking trails with gazebos around the lake.

Where people ended up living

- Westchester Park Towers (off 201); although Google maps shows this in Berwyn Heights, the apartment's address is listed in College Park
- Berwyn Heights neighborhood, behind Staples, near Giant and Target.

Commuting and getting around

A car is recommended in this neighbourhood. Cars can mostly park on the street for free, but - depending on where you live - you may have some trouble parking close to your home due to limited space in parts. Some apartment complexes may require you to pay for a parking spot (the respondent noted that Westchester Park Towers offered a choice of a covered garage or uncovered parking spots).

The respondent notes that there is a bus stop, but they do not recommend using the local bus system, stating that it is much faster and easier to drive.

Depending on where you live, drive time to Goddard is between 15-20 minutes.

One respondent notes, Westchester Tower Apartments is not walkable to Greenbelt or College Park metro, but WMATA buses to both metros have stops in the area of this complex.

Safety

The respondent noted that the Westchester Park Towers neighbourhood was off-the-beaten path, and as such they felt very safe in this community. In general, the respondent(s) noted that Berwyn Heights shows up as a relatively low-crime area on www.spotcrime.com (when they last checked) and that many people feel that it is a safe-ish neighborhood and have recommended it to others. The respondent does note that one should still make sure to lock doors, as there have been reports of potential thieves trying door knobs at night to see if they are open.

As of 2023, two newer respondents had the following to say about Westchester Park Towers. Do not move there! It is tempting, due to its proximity to Goddard, and that it is very hard to beat the rates given the size of the actual apartments. However, the management of the building (Rose Valley Management at the time of writing), is abusive of the residents, and has created a very toxic environment. One

of the respondents lived in the renovated apartment that is used in all of the pictures on the main website, and hated the 1.5 years they lived there. There was a murder in the building, the building's structural integrity is questionable (aged and damaged balconies, massive building-wide flooding), animal abuse (animal control had to intervene), marijuana and smoking (despite being a "no-smoking" residence, the smell makes it into non-smoker apartments), very frequent building-wide fire-alarms (no actual emergencies), mice and roach problems (one respondent caught two mice in the 1.5 years they lived there), broken outdoor lights and garage doors, very unsanitary building dumpster zones, and it isn't a quiet building.

The local Giant grocery store/mall has a cop always guarding the entrance. Overall, this seems to suggest that the area is not safe or friendly. This was the feeling of two residents who lived in the area at Westchester.

Child-friendliness

There is a playground that you can walk or drive to, although the respondent notes that they would not recommend unaccompanied kids due to a lack of sidewalks. The respondent noted that the Westchester Park Towers apartment has a pool, and a green space – kids occasionally play soccer there.

Pet-friendliness

Many people have dogs and take them on walks in the neighborhood. There is a gated dog play area with obstacles. Nearby Lake Artemesia is also a great place to walk a dog.

Local schools information:

The respondent notes that local schools in Prince George's county are not great, but that there is a lottery system for the gifted track which gives access to an enhanced education experience within the county.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

In addition to the Westchester Park Towers apartment complex (strongly discouraged by 2 respondents), there is a twin condo tower building next to it (mostly populated with seniors, but anyone can buy there according to what the respondent has heard), and townhomes that may have rooms for rent. The respondent also notes that there are many group houses in the area with affordable rents. They recommend Lake Artemesia but wanted to note that apparently the nearby Greenbelt Park has an unusually high concentration of ticks in the wooded trail areas (they aren't sure why)!

Honestly, there are much better places to live than this area (2 respondent opinions)!

BETHESDA (DOWNTOWN), MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area: Generally suburban with urban elements, depending on how close you are to downtown. Downtown Bethesda is a popular shopping spot with a wide variety of shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. They recently opened a new Trader Joe's and now there are 2 (!) locations downtown, one on the north end of town and one on the south end. Giant is also in walking distance, and there's also a post office, Enterprise car rental, Target, and access to the Capital Crescent trail (a walk/bike trail that leads into DC). The respondent also likes the weekend farmer's market at Bethesda Elementary School. Overall, the primary demographic in Bethesda is that of young families. As a result, things quiet down by 8-9 pm downtown, and there are only a few bars, so the nightlife scene is, at best, rather quiet. The respondent and their partner are quieter introverts who have always tended toward the "old soul" characterization, and they found the area a good fit.

Where people end up living: There are many apartments available downtown, and they are continuously building more. Many parts of downtown are actively under construction, though, so the places nearby the construction sites are probably places to avoid if noise bothers you. There are houses available for rental in the suburban areas slightly off set from downtown, which would definitely be a bit quieter, so that is an option as well. The respondent stayed at The Metropolitan and loved it.

Commuting and getting around: It would be very inconvenient to get to Goddard without a car. The respondent drove to work, and the commute was about 25 minutes during off-hours – they luckily had a flexible schedule because you do have to take the Beltway, which can get extremely congested during regular commuting hours. The respondent notes that they did have to wait on a waitlist for a parking spot for their complex, which took about a month, and they used a public garage in the meantime and had no issues. They also liked that it was easy to get into Virginia and farther out into the Maryland suburbs as well, and it's a pretty convenient location to access hikes and other outdoor activities. Public transit-wise, Bethesda is on the red line and it is easy to get into DC and to both airports (DCA and IAD) without driving, especially now that they have opened the Silver Line extension to Dulles. They are also working on the Purple Line (finally!!!) which would connect Bethesda to College Park, so whenever that gets running, it will probably be convenient to get to more places.

Safety: The respondent had no issues with safety in Bethesda, and they felt safe the whole time they lived there. It seems that a fair number of public officials live in the area. This respondent said they lived quite close to Merrick Garland's house, for one, there was always secret service patrol outside. A little farther out you have Chevy Chase which is known as a ritzier neighborhood and is where a quite a few Supreme Court Justices live – take that as you will – but also adds to feeling that the general neighborhood is quite safe as a general matter.

Child-friendliness: There are a lot of young families in the area, so the area is definitely child-friendly. The respondent lived across from a daycare that seemed quite popular. There are several parks around the downtown area, and the field and playground of Bethesda Elementary seem open during off-hours as well.

Local school information: There are a few schools either within walking distance of downtown or a stone's throw of a drive. Bethesda Elementary School and Sidwell Friends Lower School (private school) are adjacent to downtown. Bethesda Chevy Chase High School is also right next to downtown. The other nearby schools that we would pass by sometimes are Thomas W. Pyle Middle School, the Landon School (private school), and Walt Whitman High School.

Pet-friendliness: The respondent did not have pets, but saw many owners walking their dogs in the neighborhood; the suburban area in particular seems to a popular area for dog-walking, and we often saw dogs in the field at Bethesda Elementary when school wasn't in session. It also seems that many of the apartment complexes allow for dogs and cats, though the respondent did not have pets so they can't comment further.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies: The respondent's apartment complex didn't use gas and billed them directly for electricity, which they did not have any problems with. They also had Verizon Fios (Fiber) through them, and although setting it up was a huge pain, it was probably the best and most consistent internet they had after things got running – which was great for teleworking on the Goddard VPN.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here: Bethesda can be on the more expensive side, but there are definitely still accessible and affordable options, especially if you have a partner or roommate to split the cost with. The respondent did not go for the more expensive/newer apartments (there are many of those) and found the cost reasonable and well worth it. We also found out that Bethesda is popular with the Japanese expat community, and that there is a small Japanese grocery store downtown, which was very convenient for them!

BETHESDA NORTH, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

This area spans from north of 495 between Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike (it's a triangle). This area is very suburban and wealthy. In the neighborhoods, most of the single-family homes are very large (McMansion style), and many people design their basements as an apartment to rent (typically updated and affordable). There are also townhomes/apartments/condos closer to Rockville Pike, and here one will be in walking distance to the Grosvenor metro. There are a few grocery stores (Harris Teeter, Giant, Whole Foods) and restaurants scattered on the main roads, in addition to the Pike and Rose outdoor mall area. Also, there is the Bethesda Trolley Trail system that goes from the north side of Bethesda North to NIH. There are a few green spaces- parks with playgrounds and also Cabin John Regional Park.

Where people ended up living

- Basement apartments in the neighborhood
- Townhomes, condos, apartments near Rockville Pike

Commuting and getting around

A car is necessary to live in the majority of locations here. Even if one lives walking distance to the metro, in order to get groceries a car is needed. In addition to the Grosvenor metro, WMATA buses run fairly regularly from the neighborhoods to both the Medical Center and Grosvenor metros. Not all streets have sidewalks, but the more heavily trafficked areas do. There is usually plenty of street parking in the neighborhoods, but each townhome and apartment community have their own parking lot and corresponding parking rules. It would typically take about 30 – 40 minutes to get to NASA during rush hour. But if leaving at semi-weird times (very early morning or late evening), it would take closer to 20-25 minutes.

Safety

The respondent always felt safe walking alone at night and at very early morning hours. It isn't always very well lit, but it still feels generally safe. The respondent lived here for two years and doesn't know of any car break ins or other crimes.

Child-friendliness

The respondent does not have kids but in the neighborhoods, it is definitely very child friendly. There is Ashburton Elementary School and Tilden Middle School in this area. Not sure about high schools.

Pet-friendliness

It is pet friendly. Not all the streets have sidewalks, but the respondent never had an issue with walking their dog here. There is a dog park and also trail system at Cabin John Regional Park, and people walk their dogs on the Bethesda Trolley Trail too.

Being able to have pets and any pet deposit/fees probably depends on the specific landlord and apartment complex.

Local schools information:

N/A

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

This is a good location to live in if one lives with someone who commutes to DC. Being close to the metro and 495 makes the commute doable for both.

BOWIE, MD

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

This is a suburban neighborhood, with lots of local supermarkets, restaurants, and parks in the general area. There is Hill Top Plaza Shopping Center, where you will find a grocery shop, 7- Eleven, Walgreens, etc.

Where people ended up living

- Zip Code: 20715
- Near Samuel Ogle Middle School.

Commuting and getting around

Unless you live near the shopping centers, you probably need to drive (or bike) to get to stores and restaurants. If you have a family, you probably want a car to get around. Public transportation is not very good. One respondent commutes to GSFC by car, and the average travel time is 20 minutes. The other respondent commutes by a combination of car-pooling, taking a bus to Seabrook, and then biking 3-4 miles to Goddard, and on rare occasions, Lyft/Uber. There is a bus to the New Carrollton metro station, but it takes a long time to get there. Parking on the street in the neighborhood is available everywhere.

Safety

The area is reported to be safe and well-lit, and one respondent said that walking alone at night is considered fine. There are no reported places that should be avoided at all costs, but one of the respondents notes that in the past there have been a few break-ins of unlocked cars.

Child-friendliness

The area is kid-friendly with lots of parks in walking and biking distance. Local elementary schools are good. One respondent has heard that the middle school is “okay, but not great”, and that the high school is “less good”. There is also an elementary school within walking distance of one of the respondents.

Pet-friendliness

Not many dog parks (although there is one you can drive to), but the respondent notes that it is a pretty pet-friendly area in general.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

It is a safe and clean neighborhood, however rent is expensive and one needs a car to get around.

COLLEGE PARK, MD

Number of respondents: 5

The general area

The southern part of College Park (south of Paint Branch Road) has a little downtown area with a couple of restaurants and bars, a CVS, and a Target that also sells groceries. In the summer there are two farmers' markets. There is a swimming pool in summer and an ice rink in winter, along with a very pretty park, Lake Artemisia, is where people go to run, walk, picnic, fish, and go birding. There is also a network of biking trails that take you down to Bladensburg. Greenbelt Park is a large forested area, and is great for walks or trail-running.

College Park is, clearly, a college town. Close to the University of Maryland, there are lots of places to eat and hang out. However, it also means that during the semester most of the bars are packed with students. Nearby Hyattsville, which has less of a "college-feeling", is just two miles south along Baltimore Avenue. Hyattsville has an excellent coffee shop (Vigilante), a pub/brewery (Franklin's), a couple of restaurants featuring different cuisines, and a pretty nice farmers' market. Grocery shops include Giant, Yes Market, Shoppers, Lidl, a Safeway and nearby Whole Foods. The metro station is walking distance from any place in southern College Park, so going into DC is extremely convenient.

Where people ended up living

- At the very south portion of College Park, close to Rhode Island Avenue and Amherst Road. This seems like a quiet area (good for quiet eating out on the porch, and for kids to play). It is within walking distance from the metro, and a lot of wildlife appears to be seen in the neighborhood (deer, foxes, woodpeckers, and the respondent even found a hawk nest and an owl nest).
- Near Route 1 and 198.
- Mazza Grand Marc Apartments at College Park. It is about a 10 minute drive from GSFC and the respondent never gets stuck in traffic in the morning. It is also relatively close to the University of Maryland, and most of the residents are actually students at the University of Maryland or working professionals. It has a closed parking garage so you don't have to dig your car out in case of a blizzard. Pets are allowed in this complex.
- Next to the Beltway and Shoppers.
- All of the above places are within walking distance of either the Greenbelt or College Park metro (less than half an hour walking).
- Westchester Tower Apartments (large apartment complex near Greenbelt Park)
 - o See notes for this apartment listed in the Berwyn Heights section.

Commuting and getting around

All of the respondents drive to Goddard, and it is generally a short drive (<15

minutes). It is also possible to take the metro, which would take around 45 minutes. Biking is another possibility, which takes either around half an hour (OK road, but not very nice), or 50 minutes (a nice bike route).

Living without a car is possible, but it was noted it will probably feel a bit limiting and challenging to do so. Although there is public transport to get to grocery stores, DC, and even Goddard, not having a car would make for a very challenging commute, and no real way to leave your house for leisure.

Parking in College Park is easy, and car insurance is reported to be much cheaper than in DC.

Safety

The respondents feel safe in the area. Most incidents like robbery supposedly involve the severely inebriated after bar closings. For South College Park, an area that was reported to feel very safe, there have been some reported burglaries, but it always turned out that they were in houses that were left unlocked (on one hand, it seems crazy that anybody would leave the house unlocked, but on the other hand it speaks about how safe people feel).

In the spring months, when the weather is nice and students have parties outside, there have been some accidents related to drunk students (noise, car windows being broken without stealing anything, a woman woke up to find a hungover student sleeping on her couch, because in his drunkenness he went in the wrong door); all very annoying but nothing very threatening and mostly centered around the area closer to the university.

One respondent who lives in the Westchester Tower apartments noted that they never felt unsafe in this specific area, which is somewhat sectioned off from the rest of College Park by a highway.

Child-friendliness

The respondents have no experience with the local schools or daycare. Child friendliness appears to depend on the area. The area around Mazza Grand Marc Apartments seems to be more student/early career professional oriented, and not many kids are around. In South College Park, many kids play in the streets and there are two playgrounds in the area. By Westchester Towers, sidewalks are all around, there is a playground and swimming pool, and Greenbelt Park is walking distance

Pet-friendliness

There seem to be enough green spaces to walk your dog, including Greenbelt Park and dog parks.

Local schools information

One respondent noted there is a public school at walking distance from the Westchester Tower Apartments, but grade level and school name were not specified.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

Westchester Towers Apartment complex: Fiber internet available (Verizon Fios) and utilities are taken care of by the leasing agency

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

College Park is relatively cheap rent-wise. It is close to Goddard, making the commute fast. Getting into DC is easy too: on the weekends you can park for free at the College Park metro and take the metro into DC. In this way, you skip driving into DC, and dealing with the parking.

However, it is not DC, and therefore the choice of close-by restaurants is much smaller and going out requires a bit more planning. For cultural activities DC is a better option. If it is important for you to leave the house and be in a city, this is likely not the best option for you.

If you like a quiet lifestyle, on the other hand, living in the streets closest to Fraternity Row, and the roads between the university and the metro is discouraged. As might be expected, the closer to the university, the higher the number of nearby student occupants, which translates into crazy parties, beer cans in the street, drunk students puking in yards (and not necessarily their yards...).

COLUMBIA, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

The city of Columbia is a wonderfully unique “planned community” comprised of 10 self-contained villages, managed by the Columbia Association. At the center of the city is the [Mall in Columbia](#), with its many shops and restaurants, and the [Merriweather Post Pavilion](#). The Pavilion is a large outdoor concert venue and one of the highest ranked amphitheaters in the U.S.

[The Columbia Association](#) provides a wide variety of services for the residents of the city. In addition to planning community events (like “Lakefront Live”) and programs (like kids camps, sustainability initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and mature adult activities), they operate three large full-service fitness clubs at different locations throughout the city. They operate tennis courts, 23 outdoor and 4 indoor pools, golf courses, huge dog parks, ice rinks, and art centers around the city. They also maintain general up-keep of the city’s outdoor public spaces.

The city is very beautiful, with many trees and winding roads. There are plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities, with hiking trails, several large lakes and parks (Centennial Park, Wilde Lake, Lake Kittamaqundi, and Lake Elkhorn), the Robinson Nature Center, and bike/foot trails.

Additionally, on the eastern side of the city (closer to I-95) there are several large shopping areas, with many big-name stores of all varieties (Target, Walmart, Home Depot, Lowe’s, Michaels, Costco, Trader Joe’s, Best Buy, etc.).

Where people ended up living

One respondent lived in an apartment in the northwest area of Columbia, in the village of Harper’s Choice, next to Cedar Lane Park. This is a beautiful park with football, baseball, lacrosse, and soccer fields, tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts, lawn bowling areas, and a forested walking trail! It is also situated next to an enormous dog park maintained by the Columbia Association (two separate parks, for dogs over and under 25lbs), along with a mini-golf course, skate park, and baseball batting park. The respondent lived within about a 10-minute walk (along a scenic foot trail) of a nice Safeway grocery store.

Commuting and getting around

You will need a car to get to/from Goddard. One respondent said the typical Goddard commute (along the 32 and then the Baltimore-Washington Parkway) was around 40min. Bad traffic – 50min, but with no traffic (or if one drives to/from Goddard during off-hours), then the commute was around 30min (ideal conditions).

Part of the design that makes Columbia a “planned community” is that it was made

with the goal to make the city easily accessible by foot or bike. There are many foot/bike trails that cross much of the city, so depending on where someone lives, they may not need to always rely on a car for errands or groceries. It is also what helps give this city a sense of encouragement and enablement towards living a healthier lifestyle.

Columbia is also located conveniently close to the Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Thurgood Marshall airport, and has quick access to Baltimore.

Another interesting consideration – Columbia is situated very close to Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. So potentially if you have colleagues that work at the APL, this may be of benefit!

Safety

One respondent said they felt very safe in and around the city. This respondent also notes that when google searching, some articles appear to list Columbia as one of the safest cities in the U.S. (but also suggests you should research this further yourself to double check!).

Child-friendliness

One respondent doesn't have kids, but does note that there are lots of sidewalks, parks, and playgrounds throughout the city. The city buses look really nice, and they often see kids walking by themselves to/from school.

Local school information

There appear to be numerous elementary through high schools in the area, but no specific information reported.

Pet-friendliness

One respondent didn't have pets, but as noted above, it does appear to be a very pet friendly city. Lots of pet-friendly trails, and the large dog park by Cedar Lane Park is the most impressive dog park they have ever seen!

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

One respondent notes the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company (BGE) services this area, and that there is also support for Xfinity and Verizon.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

Great option if you want to live in a very pretty and green area with lots of outdoor and physical activity options. Doesn't have the "big city" feel, but still close to DC and Baltimore. Also contains some surprising amenities, such as the Merriweather Post Pavilion Concert scene, and the incredible breath of services provided to the public by the Columbia Association.

CROFTON, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Crofton has several planned residential communities. There are community pools, playgrounds, and parks.

Where people ended up living

- Not reported.

Commuting and getting around

You will need a car. There is almost no way to get to stores or work otherwise. If you have children there are many houses close to schools so most children walk to school. There are shopping centers in Crofton with Wegmans, Aldi, Target, and others nearby. For anything more you may have to drive a few miles. If you live here the fastest way to get to Goddard is by taking the 450 through Bowie (you can also take 450 and then take Racetrack Road and avoid the 15 gazillion speed traps in Bowie). Drive time to Goddard is about 35 minutes.

Safety

This is a very safe place to live. The respondent has never had problems walking at night or going to a store late at night.

Child-friendliness

There are community pools, playgrounds, and parks available for children.

Pet-friendliness

There are many green spaces and trails for walking. There are many open places where dogs can run. The respondent has a cat which they are comfortable with spending lots of time outside in the neighborhood.

Local schools information

There are several elementary schools in Crofton and they are all good. The respondent's kids go to Nantucket Elementary and they consider it an excellent school. It is also one of the most diverse schools in Crofton with many families where English is not the primary language spoken at home.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

Housing is expensive in Crofton. There are none (or very, very few) apartments in Crofton. It is all either single family homes or townhouses, with a few new condos

going in. If you have children of any age this is a great place to live. But if you don't have children there is little reason to live here. The respondent noted that the location is convenient for driving to nearby STSci, Johns Hopkins, or University of Maryland.

FOREST GLEN, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

Forest Glen is just north of Silver Spring (~5 minute drive, 1 metro stop, several buses running between Silver Spring and Forest Glen). There is a large mall (Wheaton mall) 1 stop north on the metro (or a short drive). Sligo Creek Park is within walking distance. There is a large hospital nearby as well (Holy Cross Hospital). All detached houses, most seem to be shared by people who work in and around DC. The area is generally residential, and the location is very convenient (close to the Metro and the Beltway).

Where people ended up living

- Right next to the Forest Glen Metro station.

Commuting and getting around

Driving to Goddard takes about 15 minutes, since Forest Glen is right at the Beltway. Going counter flow makes for manageable traffic. Commuting by public transport is possible too (red line to Fort Totten, then the yellow or green line to Greenbelt and from there the 15X bus), and would take around 1.15 hrs. To get around the area, no car is needed: there are plenty of public transport options (the red line, and several buses). However, the area is convenient for cars too.

Safety

The area is considered to be safe: people in the area have jobs, nice cars. The houses are a little older, but people keep them in good condition. There are no places in the area that should be avoided at all costs.

Child-friendliness

The respondent doesn't have any experience with the local daycare or schools. As it is a pretty green area, with lots of lawns, it appears to be child-friendly.

Pet-friendliness

There are green spaces to walk your dog.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

The area is a nice compromise: much less expensive than the city, but getting to DC

is easy.

GLENMONT, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area:

Glenmont is a decent option if you are looking for a quiet residential area to live in with access to the Metro. It is a mostly suburban area—single family houses once you get away from the Metro station. There are a few local parks and lots of quiet residential streets for walks/jogs. The area around the Metro station has some ageing apartment complexes and a shopping center (Staples, CVS, etc.). A new Lidl was scheduled to open late 2020. For other essentials, Wheaton is a short drive down Georgia Avenue (big mall, Target, Costco) or Aspen Hill further up Georgia Avenue (groceries, Home Depot, K-Mart). Restaurants and entertainment are limited in the immediate area.

Where people ended up living

- the respondent resides in a neighborhood north of the station off Layhill Avenue)

Commuting and getting around

A car is a must. Glenmont is the end of the eastern side of the Red Line “U” so the metro is easily available to take you into DC/Silver Spring for entertainment. Commuting to Goddard via public transit from Glenmont is possible (Red Line to Ft. Totten, Green Line to Greenbelt, bus to Goddard) but not recommended due to the time the journey would take (probably 90+ mins each way). The respondent can get to/from home to their parking lot at Goddard in 30-45 minutes depending on route and traffic. They note that the nice thing about the Glenmont area is that you have many options to get to Goddard (Beltway, surface streets, MD 200) so you can avoid backups on any one particular route.

Safety

The respondent has never felt unsafe in their neighborhood or had any issues late at night walking home from the Metro station.

Child-friendliness

Not reported.

Pet-friendliness

The respondent notes that it is a pet friendly area with lots of walkable streets and public parks.

Local schools information

The respondent does not have children, but from what they understand, the schools in Montgomery County are quite good.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

The respondent advises to check out the Country Boy Market, which is a cool country market type store with great produce, dairy, and beer/wine selection.

GREENBELT, MD

Number of respondents: 8

The general area

The neighborhood is a mix of suburban homes and small apartments. Most apartment complexes have their own amenities (pool, gym, playgrounds, etc.). The central part of Greenbelt is known as “Old Greenbelt” and comprises small shops, Greenbelt co-op, a lake (surrounded by trails for walking/running), recreational fields, tennis courts, a community recreation center and pool. The Roosevelt Center includes a public library, a couple of restaurants, a small movie theater, a farmer’s market on Sundays (May-Nov), and is host to a couple of town festivals each year. In general, the retail/restaurant selection is basic but improving: most kinds of stores are available at medium-ish quality (Giant, Safeway, Target, AutoZone, Jo-Ann Fabrics, etc.), and more and more stores are coming to the area (both upscale grocery stores like Wegmans and Whole Foods, and budget-friendly stores like Lidl and Aldi, all 15-20 minutes away). Entertainment/excitement is minimal: New Deal Café has eclectic local musical acts, there is a one-screen movie theater, and an art center that stages plays. Restaurants within the city limits are chain stores and/or not that good, but the broader Prince George County restaurant scene is eclectic, affordable, and growing:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/style/2016/02/25/why-beltsville-is-the-d-c-areas-best-cheap-eats-destination/>

For top-quality amenities (restaurants, stores, entertainment), you’ll have to go elsewhere, but many good neighborhoods are not too far away: College Park is 15 minutes away by car, Silver Spring and Hyattsville are within 20 minutes, even Rockville and Bethesda are 20-30 minutes away (all in off-peak traffic, DC time dilation rules apply). Also, three Metro stations are in easy reach: Greenbelt (10 mins by car, green line), College Park (10-15 mins, green line), and New Carrollton (10-15 mins, orange line). Being able to choose between the green or orange lines can help you get to attractions in downtown DC more easily.

Shops and business located nearby at Baltimore Avenue and IKEA Center Blvd (served by a bus stop on each side, north- and south-bound) include IKEA, a gas station, Verizon, BB&T bank, FedEx print and ship center, Buffalo Wild Wings, Chipotle, Pot Belly, Dunkin Donuts. There is a Holiday Inn on another corner with Avid Car rental available inside. From here it is a 12 minute walk or short drive to other local supermarkets (Shoppers and MOM’s Organic Market), Best Buy (electronics), Home Depot, restaurants, and a Starbucks. A respondent notes that all of these are within a 5 minute drive of Greenbelt Metro station (commuter side).

Generally, living in Greenbelt optimizes one’s life for work at Goddard and/or the University of Maryland (short, predictable car/bike commutes five days a week, and easy access to mid-week necessities), while still having access to the DC region on nights and weekends.

Where people ended up living

- Near Eleanor Roosevelt High School.
- University Square Apartments, just on the outskirts of Old Greenbelt. - Charlestown North, Greenbelt (in old Greenbelt).
- Lerner University Square Apartments.
- North of the I-495/Beltway in zip code: 20740
- Verde Apartments at Greenbelt Metro station
- Not reported
- Not reported

Commuting and getting around

Driving takes about 5-10 minutes to Goddard. It is possible to bike as well, which takes 10-15 minutes. There are buses that go to the NASA Main Gate (15X and G14 in particular), and these have stops in Greenbelt. One respondent notes that - depending on where you live in Greenbelt - it would be possible to walk to Goddard, with it taking them between 45-60 minutes each way. However this walking route might require the crossing of busy roads which may not have a designated sidewalk area, and so extreme caution should be used.

Owning a car (or having access to one) is generally recommended if you live here, although most respondents noted that Old Greenbelt is generally very walkable (well-lit, with sidewalks), with the town center and lake being within 10 minutes walk of one another. Most places in Greenbelt have easy access to the I-495, and there are plenty of alternative local routes available to get places if the I-495 is backed up with traffic. There are a few bus services available: Metrobus (G12/14/15/16), Prince George County's The Bus, and the UMD Shuttle-UM service (available to University of Maryland faculty/students for free, or to Greenbelt residents for \$10/yr). Combined, you can get around town and to/from Goddard and the Metro (Greenbelt or New Carrollton stations) with a little advance planning. However, this is definitely not "urban" transport (like downtown DC): don't expect buses to everywhere every five minutes. One respondent commented that there is a bus stop that can take you to Greenbelt metro station from Old Greenbelt, but it's easier and faster to take a rideshare (Uber/Lyft).

Safety

The area is generally considered to be safe, particularly in the Old Greenbelt area. Greenbelt News-Review publishes a police blotter; crime is concentrated at Franklin Square apartment complex, and is generally rare elsewhere. Common crimes in the Greenbelt News-Review are usually theft (from cars) and impaired driving (DUI/DWI), and these are rare outside Franklin Square Apartments (near Greenbelt Metro station). It should be worth noting that several respondents commented that

Franklin Square Apartments should be avoided and have felt unsafe there. One respondent commented that parts of Greenbelt are adjacent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and as such that can make these areas feel quite isolated. Another respondent commented that venturing outside the neighborhood typically requires crossing and/or walking along major roads, which can be hazardous depending on traffic and time of day. The respondent who lives at Verde Apartments at Greenbelt Station notes that this complex has key card swipe entry, and feels very safe and clean.

Child-friendliness

The area is generally considered to be child-friendly, especially Old Greenbelt, on account of lots of green space, and playgrounds available for school-aged kids. One respondent notes that nearby housing is often organized in courts along the main roads through town, which provide little neighborhoods and kid-friendly spaces/playgrounds. Another respondent mentioned a small playground/skate park called Sunnyside Neighborhood Park, which has parking available.

Pet-friendliness

The area is generally considered to be pet-friendly, with plenty of parks and fields, including the region around the lake. There are sidewalks available in some areas, and one respondent noted that there are plenty of available dog waste bins. Some apartment complexes have fenced dog exercise areas (one respondent noted that Verde Apartments at Greenbelt Station provide these)..

Local schools information

One respondent commented that the public school system in Prince George's county are not generally considered "good". Instead they recommend those in adjacent Montgomery County and Howard County. Another respondent noted that Eleanor Roosevelt High School is a science/technology magnet school located in Greenbelt.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

Greenbelt is definitely not "the city", and it hasn't developed into a retail and entertainment hot spot like Silver Spring, Rockville, or even College Park. If you like the "buzz" of the city, being able to walk or hop on a bus to excellent restaurants, museums, stores, etc., you may be disappointed by Greenbelt. However, to enjoy that buzz, the price is higher rents and longer commutes, which leaves less time and money to actually enjoy the city. If living in the city isn't worth the cost to you, then Greenbelt offers quiet, safe, and affordable living (although rent in old Greenbelt is reported to be rather high), right near Goddard.

One respondent noted that several apartment complexes in the area give rent discounts to people working at NASA Goddard, which in many cases includes NPP fellows. It would be good to ask about this when searching for apartments. Their particular complex (Lerner University Square Apartments, and possibly others in the neighborhood) are very strict about towing cars that are not parked in

designated guest spaces, so they warn about being careful when parking in a seemingly free space.

The respondent at Verde Apartments commented that this particular apartment complex has a nice lounge area which anyone can relax in, and/or it can be booked for special events. They also note that it has a good gym, and they provide a discounted rate for rent for government employees (presumably civil servants, not NPPs/contractors).

HAMPDEN (BALTIMORE), MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

This part of Baltimore is very artsy and has somewhat of a cozy, family feel to it. There are a ton of art studios nearby (painting, pottery, glass-blowing, woodworking, etc.), and as well as a number of parks, bars and restaurants, coffee shops, and a wide variety of local shops.

Where people ended up living

There is housing throughout the neighborhood, and it's split pretty evenly between apartments, townhomes, and houses. Some of the apartment buildings are built out of a converted textile factory.

Commuting and getting around

According to this respondent, the commute to work is probably the biggest downside of this location. The respondent lives about an hour drive from Goddard so they usually spending at least 2 hours each day in the car. Around Hampden, it is much easier to get around without a car. There are multiple grocery stores, coffee shops, libraries, bookstores, parks, and restaurants within a 5-minute drive (definitely doable on a bike or by foot). There are also multiple farmer's markets throughout Baltimore that are accessible by either car or public transit. There is also easy access to the Baltimore Light Rail, which can either take you into downtown Baltimore or all the way down to BWI Airport. The respondent believes this runs 5 AM – 11 PM and costs a few dollars each way so it's pretty easy to get to and from the airport. The Light Rail is this respondent's preferred public transit but there is also a city bus system that runs throughout Baltimore.

Safety

Hampden is definitely one of the safer neighborhoods in Baltimore, but it can still feel unsafe at night. The main streets are well-lit, but there are other roads that have little to no lighting. Baltimore also has a sizeable homeless population so it's not uncommon to bump into folks if you're out late.

Child-friendliness

The respondent does not have kids, but a number of their neighbors do and the general area seems relatively safe for kids in terms of sidewalks, access to parks, and nearby schools.

Pet-friendliness

Hampden is pet friendly. Druid Hill Park (and the rest of the Baltimore Zoo) are within 10 minutes by bike or car and there are plenty of trails and open grassy areas for dogs and other pets.

Local schools information

Respondent does not have kids so they do not have any information about this.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE) is the main provider alongside Verizon and Xfinity for internet.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

This respondent chose this area because they wanted the opportunity to know their neighbors and feel like they're part of a close-knit community. It has taken time to acclimate, but they couldn't be happier based on those criteria. They also think the negative reputation of Baltimore isn't entirely fair and would recommend Hampden to anyone who wants a blend of bustling city and suburban neighborhood (although the hourlong drive to GSFC is a serious consideration). For anyone with artistic inclinations, or who just wants to take a pottery class or something like that, there are more opportunities here than they can count.

HYATTSVILLE, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

The respondent notes that the area is becoming more gentrified. There are many restaurants, some bars, local hipster spots in downtown Hyattsville and along Route 1 (including Busboys and Poets, Vigilante Coffee, Denizens), many supermarkets and big stores (including Whole Foods, Yes! organic market, Safeway, Giant, Home Depot), a large shopping mall, a movie theater, farmers markets, and many bicycle/running trails.

Where people ended up living

- near Prince George's Plaza metro station.

Commuting and getting around

You can use the yellow metro line to get to DC or commute to Goddard (Prince George's Plaza station). There is little traffic if commuting to work by car (15-20 mins). You can walk to most places, and there are many bike trails as well as bike routes through quiet neighborhoods. There are also local buses, but the respondent has not used them. Plenty of free parking everywhere. Easy to travel to University of Maryland College Park campus, or downtown College Park via bike, free shuttle, or even within walking distance.

Safety

The respondent feels safe in the areas where the restaurants/shops are. Paths around the metro station are well-lit and patrolled, and they have never felt unsafe around there, even at night. However they note that they would not consider walking alone at night in some of the residential areas, particularly those south/south-west of the metro station.

Child-friendliness

Not reported.

Pet-friendliness

Many trails and parks accessible to dogs.

Local schools information

Not reported

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

There are things to do locally, be it sports or bars, and Columbia Heights is only a 10 minutes away with metro or a ~\$10 Uber/Lyft ride. The respondent notes that rents are more affordable than in other places on metro lines. However, it has much less a city feel than DC and there is generally much less going on than in DC and Silver Spring. There are many new apartment complexes right next to the metro that seem nice. The respondent advises avoiding older buildings, as they seem to have many problems.

LANHAM, MD

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

A mix of newly-built townhomes and single family homes. The neighbourhood feels safe and is beautiful, has sidewalks, a pond, free exercise stations (pull up bars, etc.) and a playground. Some homes are even in walking distance from the main gate at NASA.

Where people ended up living

- in the area near Giant, McDonalds and Lidl
- Many people live in large houses and the house one respondent lives in is a home share that has 7 rooms with 9 people occupancy. In this house it is noted that all the tenants are the interns or research scientists of NASA.

Commuting and getting around

Depending on where you live it is only ~10 minutes drive from NASA or possibly even under a 10 minute walk. Although biking and walking is possible, one respondent does not advise this due to the highway nature of route 193; however depending on your walking/biking route and what you are personally comfortable with, it may be okay.

One respondent notes that although there is a nearby bus stop, they do not personally recommend using the local bus system as it can take a long time to get to your destination. They recommend owning/having access to a car if you live here. However another respondent does not have a car and getting to and from work and the main shopping center is doable for them by walking (30 mins) or taking public transportation (5 mins).

On respondent notes that although there is free parking within the neighbourhood, it can sometimes be difficult to find an empty spot close to your home (but you can always park a little further away within walking distance to your home).

The transportation to DC/Baltimore takes place by using bus G14 to New Carrollton Metro station and from there, line Orange goes to DC and line 537 (?) goes to Baltimore.

By changing the Orange line with the Blue line one can get easily to DCA airport in like 45 minutes.

Safety

One respondent says that they have felt very safe living in their particular location in Lanham as it is a very nice, new neighborhood. However, they caution that there are other “sketchy” apartments in the area that they would avoid.

Another respondent says that the area they live in that is closer to Goddard is safe as well. They leave home usually at 6:00 am and return on 8:00 pm and always people are around playing or walking. The area is well lit at nights, it has sidewalks, and they have not seen any crime since 6 months that they have lived there.

Child-friendliness

The respondents note that there is a nice, new playground (possibly called Seabrook Park).

Pet-friendliness

Lots of people have dogs in the neighborhood, and there is a green space and a pond for walking.

Local schools information

The respondent notes that the schools in the area (Prince George's county) are not considered great. However it is possible to get into the lottery for the gifted track which may give better access to a good education in the county.

Insider tips: what you should consider before moving here

- For those interested, there is a very large temple in the area (Sri Siva Vishnu Temple)
- Check out Airbnb for houses renting rooms in this area

LAUREL, MD

Number of respondents: 4

The area

Laurel consists of a small section of newly built townhouses, and is very suburban. Downtown Laurel is smaller and not as crowded as Silver Spring, but still has a good shopping mall and there is a new theater. However, there is no culture to speak of. This area is good for a family, it is safe and has nice schools. It is a nice new area that is still developing, with new houses and stores are currently being built. There are many supermarkets (including a well-stocked international one), strip malls, and a movie theater within 10-20 minutes drive. The Applied Physics Lab of Johns Hopkins University is also nearby.

Where people ended up living

- Spring House Apartments
- Near the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge
- North Laurel, close to the I-29 and 216 intersection, close to Maple Lawn.
- Not reported.

Commuting and getting around

In general you need a car to get around as there is not much within walking distance, unless you live right next to a strip mall. Depending on where you live, the commute to Goddard takes between 10-40 minutes by car, traffic-dependent. The area is convenient for quick access to I-95 and BWI airport. Not many places to walk around apart from your immediate neighborhood, although there are some short trails around Lake Laurel and Riverfront Park. There are more trails if you're willing to drive 20-40 minutes. You can use the MARC train to get to DC, or drive to the yellow line metro station and leave your car there. Parking is abundant.

Safety

Respondents generally consider the area to be safe and well lit, although one respondent mentions not being sure about the safety of downtown Laurel at night. Two of the respondents noted that they would feel safe coming home just after dark, and one stated that they wouldn't necessarily feel comfortable going out running later at night. There are no areas that should be avoided at all costs, and neither of the respondents have heard of or seen crime related activities such as theft from cars or drug dealing.

Child-friendliness

There are many families in the area. One respondent (with a child) remarks that the

local schools and daycare are good. There is a park and playground nearby where children can play.

Pet-friendliness

The area is considered pet-friendly, with many using the nearby Patuxent Wildlife Refuge for dog walking.

Local schools information

One of the respondent's noted that the schools in the area (Prince George's county) are not considered great. However it is possible to get into the lottery for the gifted track which may give better access to a good education in the county.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving here

The responses vary. One respondent remarked that for a young scientist that works at Goddard and has a family, North Laurel is a good and affordable place to buy a first house. However, the other respondent noted: *It's dull and far from anything lively. It's more affordable than the city by far, but it's really just the wasteland between DC and Baltimore. Ideal if you are done being young.* In general, rents in the area are more affordable than areas closer to DC, and the area is less densely populated. While it is quieter than living in a city, it is still easy enough to travel into DC or Baltimore by car, or via a car/public transport combination.

ODENTON, MD

Number of respondents: 1

The general area

There are several housing options in the development – ranging from apartments, condos, townhomes and single family homes. The development offers 3 pools, a fitness center, several miles of nature trails, a hockey rink, supermarket, and several restaurants and other shops within walking distance of the development center. There are also good gyms and yoga studios not far from Piney Orchard. Piney Orchard is about 15 minutes from either Columbia, MD or Annapolis MD, and about 45 minutes from DC or Baltimore (by car).

Where people ended up living

- Piney Orchard development.

Commuting and getting around

Driving to Goddard takes 20-30 minutes (no traffic). With traffic, in the most extreme cases (e.g. snow/rain) it can take an hour. Of note, by foot the distance to GSFC is much shorter. There are continued talks of someday expanding a nature trail that would connect Piney Orchard to Bowie/Greenbelt in about half the distance – as of yet that still has to happen though. Within Piney Orchard, there are several shops and amenities within walking distance. It is possible to walk to the grocery store, restaurants, pools and parks.

Safety

In recent years, certain areas of the development have reported more crimes – sale of drugs, etc. There are occasional reports of drug dealing and minor offences. Police presence has increased in the areas where there were problems, and hopefully the problems will be addressed and resolved.

Child-friendliness

The respondent does not have direct experience with schools/day care, but in general hears great things about the local elementary school. The area is very child friendly: often children are playing in the neighborhood and there are several parks in the development. In the summer, the pools are very child-friendly. There are family activities organized by community volunteers several times a year.

Pet-friendliness

There are many spaces to walk dogs. One can bird-watch throughout the development.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

A lesser known option when working at Goddard – with many pros.

ROCKVILLE, MD

Number of respondents: 2

The general area

Rockville is a decent-sized suburban city, composed of a few smaller neighborhoods along the red line metro in Montgomery County. The area is generally good for day-to-day shopping. It has a number of grocery stores such as Giant, Harris Teeter, Safeway, Fresh Market and Trader Joe's. It also has quite a number of restaurants, shops of all kinds, parks and play areas for kids, including a bowling alley. The Rockville city center area has a museum and recreation, in addition to many restaurants as well. This area is also 10 – 15 minutes away from some spots in Rock Creek Regional Park.

Where people ended up living

- Rollins Park Apartments/townhouse. This is located about 15 - 20 minutes walk from Twinbrook Metro Station crossing the Rockville Pike Road.
- Houses in the Twinbrook neighborhood walkable to the Twinbrook metro, and houses in the neighborhood closer to the Rockville metro.

Commuting and getting around

Driving (the Beltway) takes on average 40 minutes on a good day. Commuting to NASA by metro is not ideal: One would have to take the red line into DC first, change at the Gallery Place/Chinatown metro to the green or yellow line and then back up to Greenbelt. The metro trip alone would be more than an hour (compared to a maximum of 30 minutes from for example Columbia Heights or Silver Spring), and total journey time would be close to 1.45 hours one way (depending on how close you'd live to the metro station).

No car is needed to get around the neighborhoods. All the shops and restaurants in Rockville and the metro stations are within walking distance. A bus (which runs approximately every 20 minutes) will take you to the nearest mall (Westfield Montgomery mall - Bethesda). Also, depending on where you live, taking the metro into DC is very easy.

Safety

The area is relatively safe, although the respondent noted to not walk on the street alone during late nights as the streets become almost empty after 9 PM, particularly during winter. Almost all of the nearby shops are closed by 9 PM. No places that should be avoided at all costs are mentioned. There have been some thefts from cars, but no offences related to drugs or burglary.

Not all the streets in the neighborhoods have sidewalks, but about half do (including Rockville Pike) and are fairly well lit. Another respondent semi-regularly walks alone at night when walking their dog, but does prefer to walk in daylight when possible. It's not that it is unsafe, but as the other respondent noted, it gets very quiet by night, even in the more residential areas.

Child-friendliness

The nearest elementary school is Farmland, which is a reasonably good school. Day care and preschool facilities are also available in this area, but you may need to apply well in advance to get a place. School buses will come to your parking lots (or in front of the apartment) to pick up your kids. Kids from different countries study in this school. The apartment complex is child-friendly too. Most of the families, who live here, have small children, and they play safely in the kid's park. However, parent attention is always important since the roads are always very busy with traffic.

Within each neighborhood there are many parks with playgrounds.

Pet-friendliness

Pets are not allowed in the apartment complex. However, this will vary by complex and landlord.

Many streets have sidewalks and there are some parks within the neighborhoods. Rock Creek Regional Park is a close drive if trails are preferred.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Internet/Gas/Electric Companies

Internet: Some areas are set up for Verizon Fios

Gas: Washington Gas

Electricity: Pepco (but other options do exist)

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

It is a decent neighborhood. There are several families from foreign countries (who work mostly either at the National Institute of Health or in the IT field), so you will live in a multicultural environment. Kids can easily find friends to play with. You can find pretty much everything for day-to-day needs in the neighborhood starting from food, clothes, and electronics to hobbies. On the other hand, it is pretty far from Goddard and the area is relatively expensive. This is true for rent, shopping and many other services.

If looking to buy a house, Rockville is significantly cheaper on average than many other neighborhoods in Montgomery County. However, many of the more

affordable houses are very old and need a lot of updates.

Rockville is a great location if you have a reason to be on the red line, but some of the neighborhoods are not as walkable to the metro (specifically on the far side of Veirs Mill Road and neighborhoods to the west of the City of Rockville, to name a few).

Rockville has some of the best Asian restaurants in the area!

SILVER SPRING, MD

Number of respondents: 8

The general area

Downtown Silver Spring is fairly urban. It has undergone major renovations over the years, and is now home to various (clothing) stores, restaurants, 2 cinemas, a large concert venue, some bars and nice independent coffee places. The library opened in 2015. Supermarkets include Whole Foods, Giant and Safeway. On the main shopping street in town most nights in the summer there are bands and a farmers market once a week. People tend to come from the surrounding area to just hang out. It is not as vibrant as for example Columbia Heights, but with the metro and buses running along 16th Street it is easy enough to get to downtown DC for your bar/museum experience. Rock Creek Park and Sligo Creek Park are close, and are great for walking, running and walking dogs. Close to the northern entrance of Rock Creek Park is another small shopping center with Rock Creek Sports club (a gym), and a Chinese restaurant, a Jewish Deli (the Parkway Deli) and the Daily Dish.

Where people ended up living

- Rock Creek commons (1 mile west of the Silver Spring Metro, towards Chevy Chase).
- Summit Hills Apartment Complex, a ten-minute walk west of the Metro (two respondents).
- The Point at Silver Spring (apartment complex), 5 minutes from downtown Silver Spring and the metro.
- The Blairs (apartment complex), 5 minutes from the metro and right next to the Giant supermarket.
- Easley Street, just off Fenton.
- In addition to apartments there are houses to rent as well outside of the downtown area.

Commuting and getting around

Three of the respondents take public transport to get to Goddard: the red line from Silver Spring to Fort Totten, then the green or yellow line to Greenbelt followed by the 15X bus. This typically takes around 1 hour and 15 minutes. For transport to Goddard, the need to transfer to the red line makes this commute slightly more unpredictable than a commute along the green line. Of the respondents that drive, they say it typically takes 20-30 minutes. Silver Spring is close to I-495 (the Beltway), which makes it easy to drive to Goddard and other places around DC and in Northern Virginia.

If one was okay with the longer commute by public transit, it is possible to get around the area for other needs without a car. There are also buses and metros (red line) with easy access into DC. The bus service (S2, S4, S9 along 16th Street and 70, 79 along Georgia Ave) should be an option to consider when going to/from DC downtown during off-peak hours (it's cheaper too). Having a car does help though if you want to see outside of DC, or get to more difficult to access places (like Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum, near Dulles, for instance).

Rock Creek Park is closed to traffic on the weekends, making it a great route to bike to downtown DC. There is another bike trail that gets you to Bethesda and, further on to Georgetown, without ever sharing the road with cars.

Safety

Most respondents report feeling safe, and wouldn't know of any areas that should be avoided in the immediate Silver Spring area. One respondent mentioned having her car window getting smashed without the car actually being broken into, but said this could have happened anywhere. One respondent states that they have some unease being in such an urban area as Silver Spring because they are not quite used to that yet. They also said that as of 2023, there seems to be an increasing number of crimes reported in downtown Silver Spring.

Child-friendliness

The area is generally reported to be child-friendly, although none of the respondents has kids. There are several elementary and high schools in the area, as well as playgrounds and several parks for kids to play. At Summit Hills there are many families with small children, although at Rock Creek Commons few people appear to have kids. There is also an ice rink that is open during the winter.

Pet-friendliness

There are plenty of parks nearby (e.g. Rock Creek Park, Sligo Creek Park), and many of the apartment complexes allowing dogs will have 'bark parks'. Summit Hills has several dog friendly apartments (although one pays an additional monthly fee), and the Blairs and the Point also allow dogs. Some apartment complexes might not allow dogs, but do allow cats (e.g. the complex off of Fenton St). One respondent does not recommend walking your dog in downtown Silver Spring though.

Local schools information

Not reported.

Insider tips: what to consider before moving

If you want city living, big nights out/clubbing etc. on your doorstep then somewhere like Columbia Heights or Adams Morgan would probably be better choices. If you like a slightly quieter environment Silver Spring could be a good match: it is generally considered to be a nice balance between public transit, green

areas, commercial districts and relatively affordable apartments. It is easy to get to downtown DC when you want to.

Another respondent said there are some affordable places to live in downtown Silver Spring, but they are finding that you get what you pay for. They chose one of the cheaper options and there is a lot left to be desired about their current apartment building (Arrive Silver Spring).

GISS HOUSING GUIDE

It is uncommon for New York early career scientists to live alone, but the NPP stipend should suffice to find a good bedroom in a decent neighborhood. (Remember that you won't need a car!) GISS is accessible from almost anywhere in the city, via subway (110th St stop on the 1 train) and CitiBike stations. These nearby Manhattan neighborhoods are worth considering first, and cover a range of prices, ambience, etc.

HARLEM

- **Location:** basically everything east of Morningside Park and St. Nicholas Park
- **Area:** extraordinarily diverse, despite ongoing gentrification. Excellent restaurant and nightlife scenes.
- **Cost:** moderate to relatively inexpensive
- **Commuting to GISS:** foot or bike uphill. Note there is no crosstown (east-west) train in Harlem, and the crosstown bus is very slow.
- **Safety:** varies; in some areas a fair bit of homelessness etc. which can be intimidating for newcomers to the city
- **Children/pets:** ok, can be loud at night though
- **Insider tips:** the ABCD, 23, and 456 subway lines all cross Harlem, but take you to different parts of town. Say you want to go weekly to the symphony (or the Met museum, the Village, etc.). Then look for apartments on a subway line that goes there directly.

INWOOD

- **Location:** north of 181; Inwood proper is north of Dyckman St
- **Area:** some restaurants and good nightlife, excellent parks, diverse. Inwood proper is very South-American
- **Cost:** relatively inexpensive to moderate
- **Commuting to GISS:** bike or 1 train
- **Safety:** mostly good
- **Children/pets:** ok, Inwood proper is loud at night

- **Insider tips:** the 1 and A trains are a convenient combination, but each stop is that much further away. As with all of the NYC subway there can be long delays (especially at night) or unexpected construction.

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

- **Location:** west of Morningside Park between 110 and 123
- **Area:** dominated by Columbia and other colleges. Great access to parks, ok restaurant scene, surprisingly little nightlife.
- **Cost:** relatively expensive
- **Commuting to GISS:** foot
- **Safety:** high
- **Children/pets:** great
- **Insider tips:** it may be worth living elsewhere to get a broader view of NYC and explore the city

THE HEIGHTS

- **Location:** 145 to 181 (in Manhattan)
- **Area:** a little grittier. Restaurants, groceries, etc. are of generally low quality. However rents are correspondingly lower...and you can always order groceries online!
- **Cost:** inexpensive
- **Commuting to GISS:** walk, bike, or 1 train
- **Safety:** comparatively lower, but still better than other American cities
- **Children/pets:** less ideal
- **Insider tips:** the 1 and AC trains offer convenient service to the rest of town, so it's not all bad to live here.

UPPER WEST SIDE

- **Location:** West of Central Park between 59 and 110
- **Area:** fully gentrified, very residential, much more artsy and liberal than the finance-focused Upper East Side

- **Cost:** expensive
- **Commuting to GISS:** walk, bike, or 1 train
- **Safety:** high
- **Children/pets:** great
- **Insider tips:** between the 123 and ABCD trains, there is great access to the rest of town, as well as Riverside and Central Parks within walking distance.

WEST HARLEM

- **Location:** west of St. Nicholas Park between 125 and 145
- **Area:** a more laid-back college vibe, with City University, great restaurants/bars, mix of students and working-class
- **Cost:** relatively inexpensive
- **Commuting to GISS:** walk, bike, or 1 train
- **Safety:** mostly good; the area is overall lower-income, but not high-crime
- **Children/pets:** less ideal, due to noise and crowded sidewalks
- **Insider tips:** definitely a pre-gentrified area that captures the quirks and beauty of old New York