



SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

# DMV NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING GUIDE

## MOVING TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



Moving to Washington, D.C., opens up a wealth of opportunities to experience a city rich in culture and history. The School of Public Affairs (SPA) at American University is located in Tenleytown, a charming neighborhood in the upper northwest part of the city, making it a convenient hub for students with easy access to various parts of D.C., Virginia, and Maryland. The area offers diverse housing options, from lively urban neighborhoods to quieter suburban settings.



Finding housing in D.C. can be challenging due to the higher cost of living compared to other cities, so it's important to be prepared and proactive. Visiting in person is essential for making the best choice, as it allows you to meet potential roommates or landlords and to check the quality and safety of the property and neighborhood. You may need to make multiple visits to secure a place, but the effort is worthwhile for peace of mind during your studies. SPA offers guidance on finding housing, although it does not directly arrange accommodations for students.

### Get to Know Washington, D.C.

For those new to D.C., it is a city that offers a wide range of experiences—from iconic landmarks and museums to vibrant nightlife and diverse communities. Exploring the city and its neighborhoods will help you find a good fit for your lifestyle. Resources like [dc.gov](http://dc.gov), [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), [yelp.com/dc](http://yelp.com/dc), and [washingtonian.com](http://washingtonian.com) can be great starting points.

### Nearby Airports

- **Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA):** Located closest to downtown D.C., Reagan National is a popular choice for its convenience, though flights might be pricier compared to other airports. Check [wmata.com](http://wmata.com) for Metro options to and from the airport.
- **Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD):** About 26 miles west of D.C., Dulles now has a Metro stop, which makes access easier. Its website offers comprehensive information for travelers.
- **Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI):** Located about 40 minutes from D.C., BWI offers another travel option.

Each airport offers distinct benefits depending on your travel preferences and budget.

# GETTING AROUND WASHINGTON, D.C.



Navigating Washington, D.C., can be a unique experience, especially for those new to the city. The District's layout, combined with its traffic patterns and parking rules, can make driving challenging. Many newcomers find that public transportation offers a more straightforward way to explore and get around the city.

## Getting Oriented in D.C.

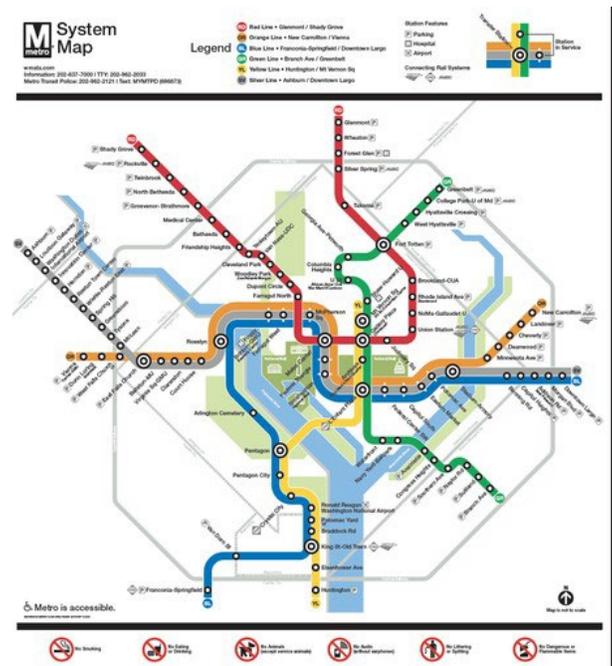
Understanding the city's design can make finding your way much easier. D.C. is divided into four quadrants—Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Southeast (SE), and Southwest (SW)—with the U.S. Capitol at the center. The city's streets follow a grid system:

- **Numbered Streets:** Run north-south.
- **Lettered Streets:** Run east-west, starting with "A" and skipping certain letters like "J," "X," and "Z." When the alphabet ends, street names move to two and three-syllable words, and later to names of trees and flowers.
- **Diagonal Avenues:** Named after states and cut across the grid, often creating traffic circles and unique intersections.

For example, if you are looking for 1700 P St., NW, it's located where P Street intersects 17th Street in the Northwest quadrant.

## Public Transportation Options

- **Metrorail and Metrobus:** Operated by WMATA, these are the primary means of public transit in the area. Their website ([wmata.com](http://wmata.com)) offers route maps, schedules, and a Trip Planner tool that helps you determine the best routes and times for your trips. The Nextbus app can be handy for real-time bus arrival updates.
- **UPass Program:** American University provides a UPass to full-time students for \$136 per semester (fall and spring), allowing unlimited travel on Metrorail and Metrobus during the school year, with the exception of winter break. Details are available on American University's transportation website.
- **MARC Train Service:** The Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) connects Washington's Union Station to Baltimore and BWI Airport, providing another way to get around.
- **AU Shuttle Service:** American University offers a shuttle service daily and picks up at the Tenley Metro station every 12 minutes. The Blue Route will take you directly from Tenley Metro to AU Campus and has a drop off location in front of Kerwin Hall.





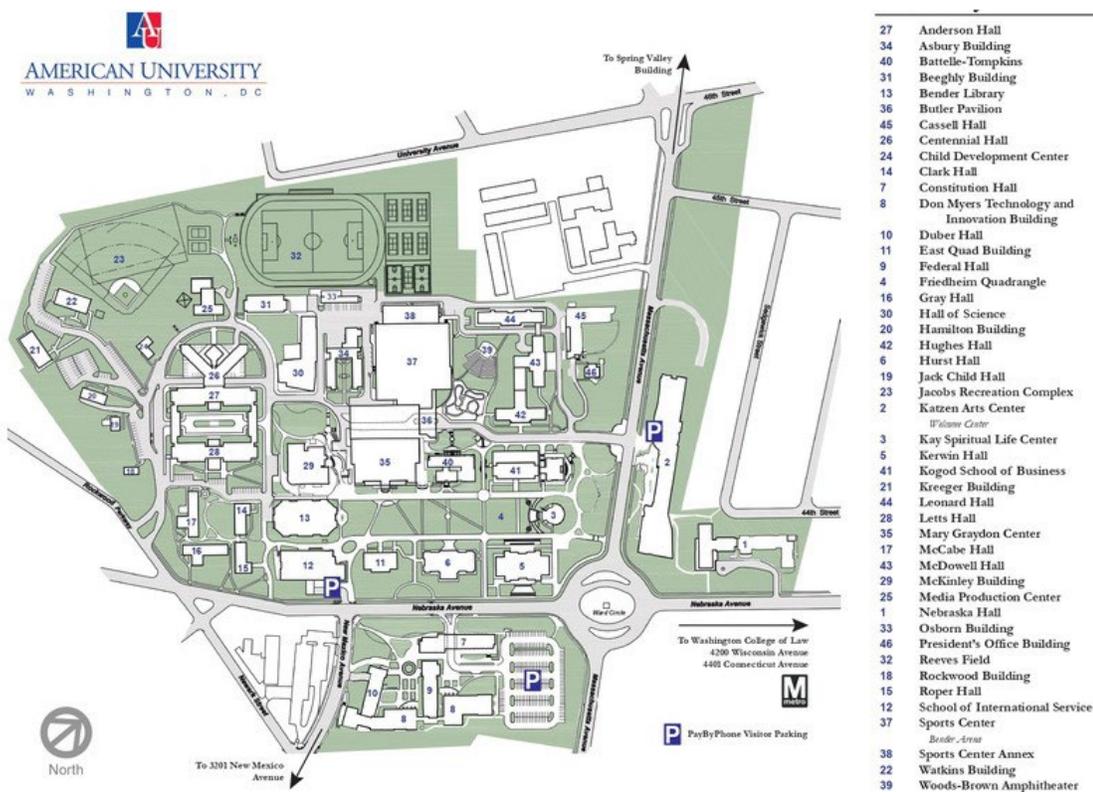
### Cycling in D.C.

- **Capital Bikeshare:** A convenient and eco-friendly way to travel around D.C., Capital Bikeshare has over 200 stations across the region. You can pick up a bike from one station and drop it off at another. There are two stations located on Massachusetts and Nebraska Ave, which are both in close proximity to SPA American University students can use the discount code CaBi4AU for membership benefits.
- **Personal Bikes:** For those who prefer to use their own bikes, there are bike racks available on campus at several outdoor locations.

### Car Sharing

- **Car Rentals:** For those who prefer driving, several rental car companies operate from D.C.-area airports, Union Station, and other locations throughout the city.
- **Zipcar:** This is a popular car-sharing service available in high-traffic areas and near Metro stops. It offers cars that can be rented by the hour or day. American University students receive a membership discount.
- **Free2Move:** Another car-sharing option that allows you to rent cars through an app, providing flexibility to choose vehicles and rental periods.

# GETTING AROUND WASHINGTON, D.C.



- **Student Parking:** Students may purchase a parking pass for the semester or year, or for occasional parking, students can use the Virtual Self Park Code located in the Parking Portal or PayByPhone, rates are \$0.75/hr + \$0.35 (per transaction service fee). To park in all general parking areas on campus through the PayByPhone mobile app, you must use your AU credentials to log in to the Parking Portal and select the "Virtual Self Park Code" option to register your vehicle and obtain the discount code and instructions for use.
  - You must have/use an Affiliated Login to access this code. If you login using a guest account, you will not have the ability to choose this parking option.
  - More info here: <https://www.american.edu/finance/transportation/parking.cfm>

Whether you choose public transit, biking, or occasionally renting a car, D.C. offers multiple ways to navigate and explore, making it easier to find a comfortable rhythm in this bustling city.

# WASHINGTON, D.C. GENERAL HOUSING INFORMATION



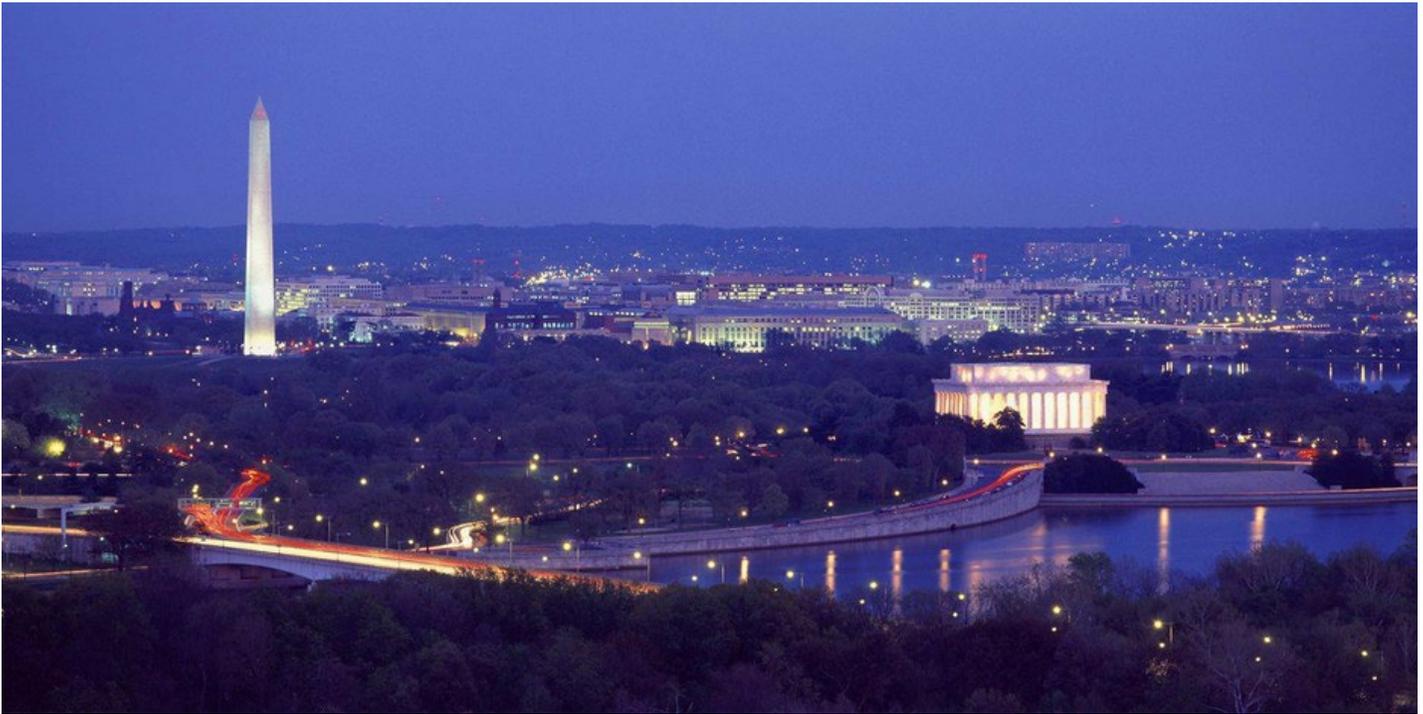
## Types of Housing

- **Apartments:** A range of styles from studio to multiple bedrooms, range in price, and usually require a 12-month lease.
- **Rooms in Private Apartments/Houses:** A private homeowner or roommate that leases out a single room, often doesn't have a lease, but get something in writing!!
- **Group Homes:** A landlord owns the home and rents individual rooms, usually have a shared common space/bathrooms along with common space rules, and have a signed renting agreement.
- **Subletting:** You take a place in someone else's apartment while they are gone for a set amount of time, you will have a sublet agreement, either through the individual or leasing office.

## Web Resources

- [american.edu/ocl/housing/off-campus-housing-services.cfm](http://american.edu/ocl/housing/off-campus-housing-services.cfm): AU's off-campus housing site.
- [washingtondc.craigslist.org](http://washingtondc.craigslist.org): Find rentals and second-hand furniture.
- [apartments.com](http://apartments.com), [padmapper.com](http://padmapper.com), [hotpads.com](http://hotpads.com), and [zillow.com](http://zillow.com): All housing search engines.
- [rent.com](http://rent.com), [forrent.com](http://forrent.com): Housing search engines, focused on apartments.
- [popville.com](http://popville.com): Neighborhood blog website.
- [apartmentratings.com](http://apartmentratings.com): Check on apartment building ratings before signing a lease.
- [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com): Can see how walkable an address is and distance to public transit.
- [apartmentdetectives.com](http://apartmentdetectives.com), [chatelrealestate.com](http://chatelrealestate.com), [padfinders.com/](http://padfinders.com/), [rentrt.com](http://rentrt.com), and [weichertrents.com](http://weichertrents.com): Apartment search companies and property management companies
- Major DC apartment leasing companies: [avaloncommunities.com/district-of-columbia](http://avaloncommunities.com/district-of-columbia), [bmcproperties.com/](http://bmcproperties.com/), [borgermanagement.com/](http://borgermanagement.com/), [equityapartments.com/washington-dc-apartments](http://equityapartments.com/washington-dc-apartments), [fasdcrentals.com](http://fasdcrentals.com), [gables.com](http://gables.com), [keenermanagement.com](http://keenermanagement.com), [lenkin.com](http://lenkin.com), and [wcmsmith.com](http://wcmsmith.com):





## Things to Keep in Mind When Searching for Housing

- **Some questions to consider**

- How much can you truly afford in rent?
- Do you want to live alone or with roommates? How many roommates?
- Do I really need/want to bring my car?
- How far do I want to live from campus or work? How much time do I want to spend on transit?
- What is the proximity to grocery stores/shopping?
- Do I need a co-signer? Who is willing to do this (parent, grandparent, older sibling, family friend)?

- **Things to bring with you while touring and applying**

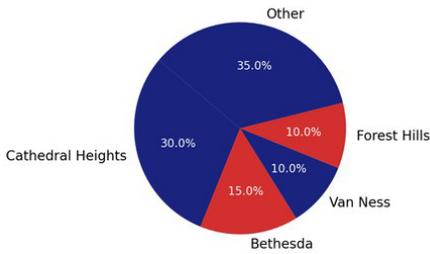
- Check book
- Credit card & credit report
- Previous landlord references
- Proof of employment and/or proof of student status
- Identification - State ID, social security card, birth certificate, etc...

- **District Zone Parking:** You must purchase a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) to park overnight in zoned street parking by your residence. You may qualify for this reciprocity and the RPP if you are a full-time student at a District college or university. For more information and details on purchasing parking permits use the DMV site: [dmv.dc.gov/node/1118916](https://dmv.dc.gov/node/1118916).

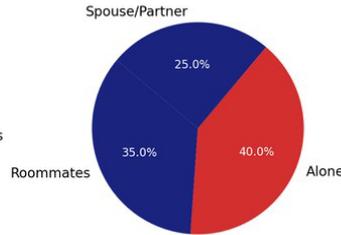
# FINDING A HOME AS A GRAD STUDENT



Where American Grad Students Live



Who American Grad Students Live With

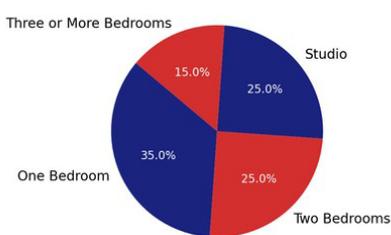


## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOUSING STATISTICS

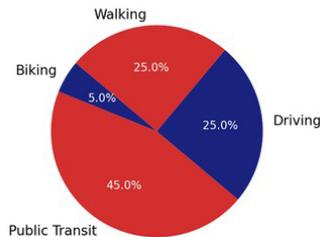
American University offers limited on-campus housing for graduate students in Letts Hall. If interested, please email [housing@american.edu](mailto:housing@american.edu).

Many graduate students live off-campus. Off-campus housing can offer graduate students more flexibility, such as larger living spaces, the ability to cook and shop, and more control over roommates.

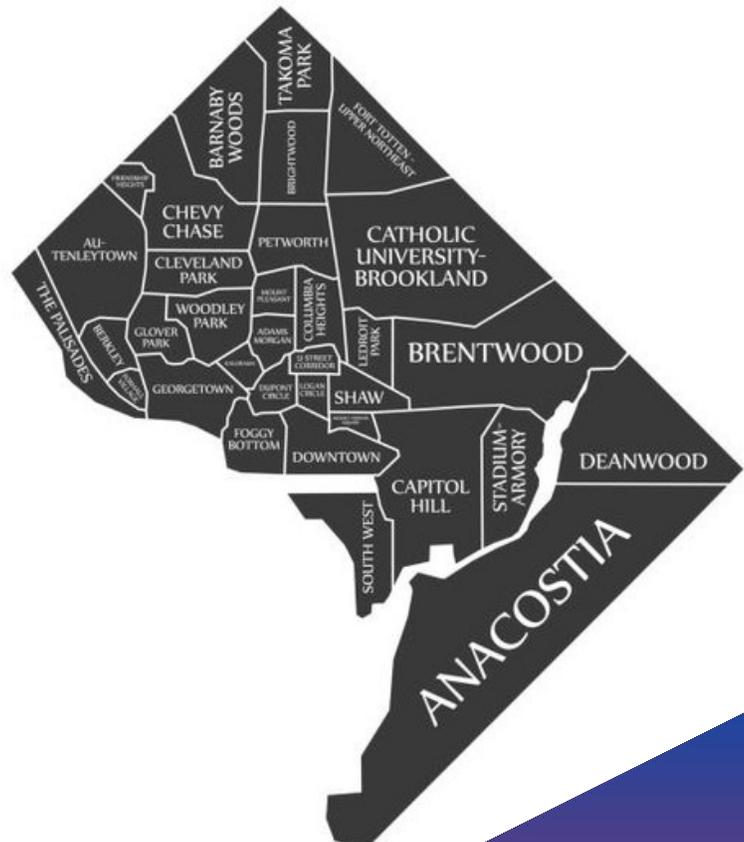
What Size Residences American Grad Students Live In



Commute Methods



## MAP OF WASHINGTON, D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS



## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS



**Friendships Heights** is technically in Maryland, but only one stop away from Tenleytown on the Red Line. It is home to great shopping, restaurants, a movie theater, and parks. It is also very dog friendly.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ♦ Metro Accessible (**Red Line**)
- ♦ WMATA Accessible
- ♦ Quiet Neighborhood
- ♦ Close to AU
- ♦ Shopping, Dining, Movies
- ♦ The Collection at Chevy Chase

### Neighborhood Gems

- ♦ Whole Foods
- ♦ Clyde's
- ♦ Lia's
- ♦ Mehwan
- ♦ Neighborhood Parks and Trails





## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: VAN NESS

**Van Ness** is a unique neighborhood, combining the convenience of Metro access and urban amenities, with the beauty and serenity of soapstone valley and rock creek park. Offering both apartments and single-family homes, residents alike are drawn to an easy commute, retail options, and a safe and family-friendly atmosphere.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ♦ Metro-accessible (**Red Line**)
- ♦ Bus-accessible (M4, L2)
- ♦ Urban/quiet
- ♦ Close to AU

### Neighborhood Gems

- ♦ Politics & Prose
- ♦ Bread Furst
- ♦ Comet Ping Pong
- ♦ The Trees (Official Tree and Slope Protection Overlay District)
- ♦ Hike/run/explore Rock Creek Park
- ♦ Embassy Row (Ethiopia, Hungary, Czechia, Singapore, and many more)





**Cleveland Park** is close to the National Cathedral and Rock Creek Park, Cleveland Park is metro accessible and close to a lot of dining options that have become some of AU favorites.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ♦ Metro-accessible (**Red Line**)
- ♦ Urban / Quiet
- ♦ Close to AU, National Cathedral, Rock Creek Park, and Sibley Memorial Hospital

### Neighborhood Gems

- ♦ Rock Creek Park
- ♦ SakuSaku Flakerie
- ♦ Cleveland Park Bar & Grill Rooftop
- ♦ National Cathedral
- ♦ Close to Zoo
- ♦ Cracked Eggery



## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: GLOVER PARK



**Glover Park** is a neighborhood in northwest Washington, D.C., about a half mile north of Georgetown and just west of the United States Naval Observatory and Number One Observatory Circle (where the Vice President resides).

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ♦ Bus-Accessible (**30N, 30S, 31, 33**)
- ♦ Quiet
- ♦ High Walkability
- ♦ Close to Downtown
- ♦ Near Georgetown

### Neighborhood Gems

- ♦ Breadsoda
- ♦ Naval Observatory
- ♦ Washington National Cathedral
- ♦ Neighborhood Softball
- ♦ Glover Park-Burleith Farmer's Market





## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: WOODLEY PARK

**Woodley Park** is North of Dupont Circle - and across Rock Creek Park from Adams Morgan - Genteel Woodley Park was one of several uptown neighborhoods where 19th and early 20th-century Washingtonians escaped the summer heat. It still boasts historic architecture, including grand hotels, plus the modern buzz of good restaurants with sidewalk cafes.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-Accessible (Red Line)
- ◆ Close to Zoo
- ◆ Close to a Lot of Dining Options
- ◆ Close to Rock Creek Park

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ The National Zoo
- ◆ Embarking on hikes through Rock Creek Park
- ◆ Brunch at Open City
- ◆ Cakepops from Baked by Yael
- ◆ Petit Monde Cafe
- ◆ Embassy of Switzerland



## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: ADAMS MORGAN



**Adams Morgan** is much more than a neighborhood with a crowded nightlife scene. You'll find historic row houses around 18th Street, including the Adam's Inn B&B, as well as a variety of independently owned stores.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-accessible (Red Line)
- ◆ Urban
- ◆ Close to Downtown
- ◆ Bustling Nightlife

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Roofers Union rooftop
- ◆ Muzette's private room karaoke
- ◆ Barbecue at the Federalist
- ◆ Pig or Smoke & Barrel
- ◆ Late night at Amsterdam Falafel
- ◆ Rise Bakery (100% GF)



## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: DUPONT CIRCLE



**Dupont Circle**, you'll discover dozens of bistros, bars, boutiques, and museums, as well as a very lively and vibrant 17th street. Perfect to take a walk and read/relax at the Dupont Circle fountain.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro Accessible (Red Line)
- ◆ Downtown
- ◆ Lots of Dining Options
- ◆ Close to Bars

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Author talks followed by drinks at Kramerbooks & Afterwords Cafe
- ◆ The picnic-friendly Spanish Steps
- ◆ Modern art at the Philips Collections
- ◆ The bars and restaurants along 17th Street
- ◆ Looped Yarn Works
- ◆ Weekly weekend farmers market & yearly Christmas market





## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

**Columbia Heights** is a mix of grand and humble historic buildings (rowhouses and embassies along 16th Street NW), Columbia Heights invited a mix of creatives, international professionals and, thanks to its leafy parks, bikers, and picnickers. The neighborhood offers an array of cultures.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro Accessible  
(Green/Yellow Lines)
- ◆ Homey Restaurants
- ◆ Lots of Parks
- ◆ Embassies

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Meridian Pint for brews and burgers
- ◆ Meridian Hill Park
- ◆ Le Caprice Bakery for French pastries
- ◆ Sticky Fingers for fast vegan eats
- ◆ Arts of Living Foundation





## D.C. NEIGHBORHOODS: CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS

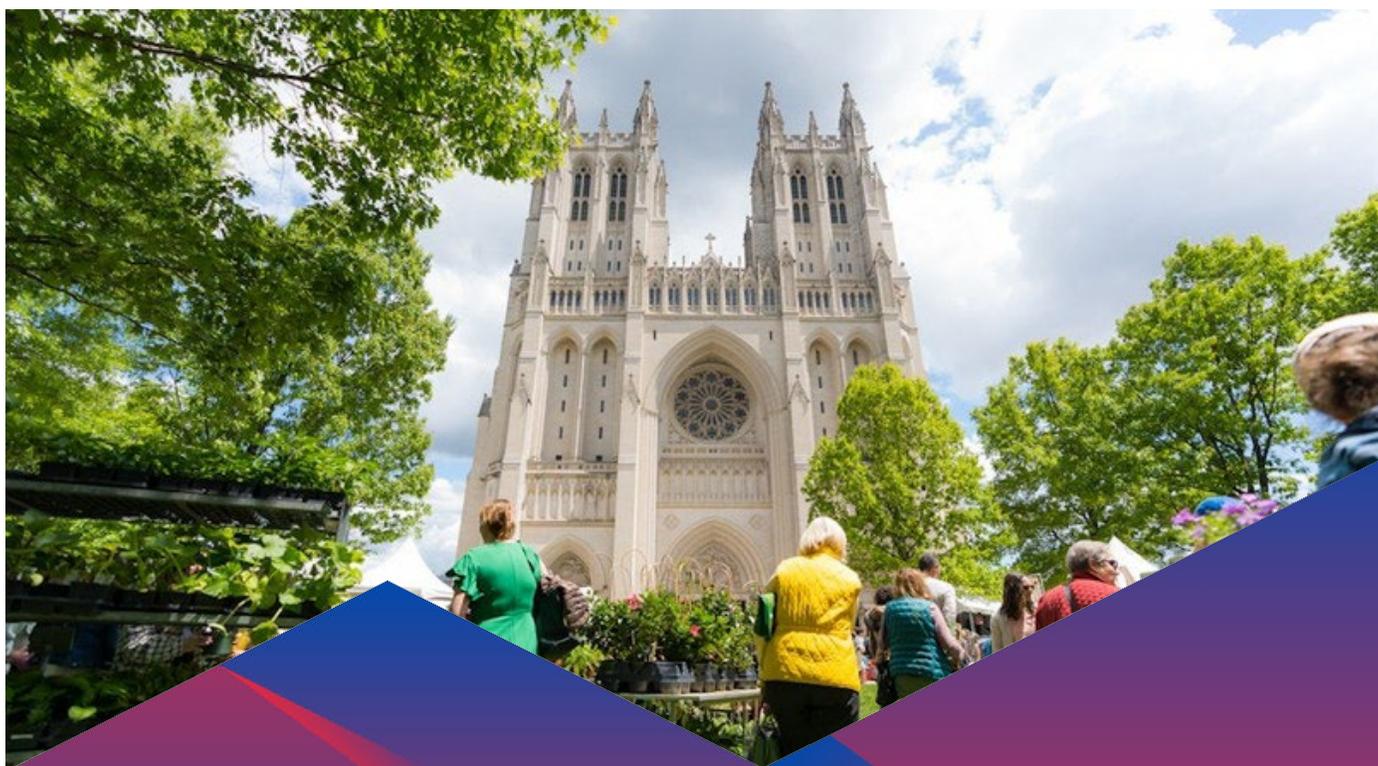
*Cathedral Heights*, is a Northwest Washington neighborhood that does not have a metro station, but is home to classic Tudors and Colonials on spacious lots, a think canopy to mature trees, and proximity to downtown Washington and other destinations.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Bus-accessible (N2, N4, N6)
- ◆ International Neighbors
- ◆ Walkable
- ◆ Walking distance to AU

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Washington National Cathedral
- ◆ Open City Cafe at the Cathedral
- ◆ Amy's Neapolitan Pizzeria
- ◆ Barcelona Wine Bar
- ◆ Cactus Cantina
- ◆ The Kreegar Museum
- ◆ US Naval Observatory (AKA Vice President's House)





**Bethesda** offers a community whose downtown is designated an Arts & Entertainment District, Bethesda is a bustling neighborhood with lots of dining and entertainment options.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-accessible (Red Line)
- ◆ Bus-accessible (L2, N2)
- ◆ Urban / Quiet
- ◆ Close to AU

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Bethesda Row
- ◆ Strathmore
- ◆ Bethesda Jazz and Supper Club
- ◆ Imagination Stage





## DMV NEIGHBORHOODS: ROSSLYN, VA

**Rosslyn** is located right outside of Washington, D.C. city limits and is the first metro stop out of the city into Virginia. It is home to a transfer metro station and an urbanized area in Northern Virginia. Rosslyn is home to a variety of walking trails, restaurants, and urban life.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-accessible (Blue, Orange, Silver Line)
- ◆ High Walkability
- ◆ Close to Georgetown

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Custis Walking Trail
- ◆ Inca Social
- ◆ Barley Mac
- ◆ Pho 75
- ◆ Continental Pool Lounge
- ◆ Eclairons
- ◆ Upside on Moore: Food Hall that includes 9 different dining options



## DMV NEIGHBORHOODS: PENTAGON CITY, VA



**Pentagon City** is in Northern Virginia and is just a few stops out of the city. Located by the Pentagon, it is a mix of neighborhood and urban center.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-Accessible  
(Blue/Yellow Lines)
- ◆ Close to DC
- ◆ Walkable

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Fashion Centre
- ◆ Nighthawk Brewery & Pizza
- ◆ Kusshi Sushi
- ◆ Pentagon Row
- ◆ Commonwealth Joe's Coffee Roasters
- ◆ Arlington National Cemetery



## DMV NEIGHBORHOODS: CLARENDON, VA



**Clarendon** is a walkable neighborhood located 3 stops outside of Washington, D.C. It is home to trendy bars, restaurants, and grocery stores like Trader Joe's and Whole Foods. This is a great area with a lot going on.

### Neighborhood Amenities

- ◆ Metro-accessible  
(Orange/Silver Lines)
- ◆ Walkable
- ◆ Close to Bars

### Neighborhood Gems

- ◆ Lyon Hall
- ◆ Kaldi's Social House
- ◆ Board Games and Brews at the Board Game Bar
- ◆ The Crossing Clarendon Mall





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