

PCS Info for Washington DC Area

Bases

Bolling AFB
Andrews AFB
Fort Meade
Fort McNair
Fort Belvoir
Fort Myer
Henderson Hall

The Pentagon
Walter Reed
Quantico
Marine Barracks
Naval Medical Center
Naval Research Laboratory
Navy Yard



Table of Contents

1. About Me & MilitaryTownAdvisor.com	p. 3
2. Things to Consider for DC	p. 4
3. Map of popular cities surrounding DC	p. 5
3. Description of each city	p. 6 – 13
4. District of Columbia	p. 14
5. Areas Near Ft Meade and Annapolis	p. 15
6. Things to Consider for Ft. Meade/Annapolis	p. 16
7. Description of each area	p. 17 - 19
8. County Maps	p. 20
9. Metro Map	p. 21
10. Transportation Options	p. 22 - 23
11. Public School Districts in Virginia	p. 24
12. Public School Districts in Maryland	p. 25
13. Things To Do	p. 26

Disclaimer: MilitaryTownAdvisor.com abides by all Fair Housing Laws and all reviews reflect the opinions of the reviewer. I am not a realtor, so any of my comments are strictly my opinion.

The majority of the comments in this guide are from other military families. Obviously, they are all opinions and not everyone will agree with the opinions. The goal is to provide a starting point for your research.

ABOUT ME & MILITARY TOWN ADVISOR



Hi! My name is Cameron and my family is stationed in Virginia Beach, VA. A few years ago, I was just like you with new orders and desperately trying to research our next duty station. There wasn't much online and we really struggled with figuring out where we wanted to live.

Questions like "Where are the safe areas? Where are the good school districts? Where do other military families live off-base?" kept running through my head.

After my own struggles, I decided to start a website where military families could help each other and leave information, aka 'gouge', about where to live.

MilitaryTownAdvisor.com is a one-stop site for finding where to live and



- **Find Where to Live**

(Includes neighborhood reviews, area reviews, apartment reviews, and military housing reviews.)

- **Find School Information**

(Includes school profiles and school ratings from GreatSchools.org)

SEARCH

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- I. Read [on and off base reviews](#). Find where to live.
- II. Looking for a home, find a [military friendly realtor](#) who understands military moves.
- III. Pay it Forward and [leave a review](#) (U.S. Locations Only)
- IV. Also check out our [Moving Tips](#) and [Things To Do](#) Blog.

Things To Consider

Things to Consider when PCSing to DC

- Consider the cost of commuting (metro cost, parking cost, gas) vs. the price of the home
- Most people stay in the area where they live. For example, Maryland residents don't like to go to Northern Virginia (NOVA) and vice versa.
- The further you live from DC, the more affordable and more square footage (but longer commute)
- Your spouse may work at multiple locations so pick a central location to multiple work sites
- Be prepared for your spouse to work long hours.
- You need a realtor to help look for houses to rent or buy. The property market moves fast here. Make sure your realtor has licenses for Virginia, DC, and Maryland. Find a [recommended realtor](#) from other military families.
- Get a GPS which has updated information and gives you the best routes. Maps on cell phones may not have the best route and/or they may not be allowed in the future with the new texting/cell phone laws.
- Make sure you have AAA and/or USAA if you run out of gas or break down.
- Check for flood zones when buying or renting a home (especially near Annapolis or Ft. Meade area)

Northern Virginia (NOVA)

- Known for their state schools, especially Fairfax County Public Schools.
- If buying a home, VA has lower taxes than DC or Maryland
- Lots of neighborhoods with an overall neighborhood feel
- Lots of upper middle class areas

Maryland

- The most recommended school district seems to be Montgomery County. Also, many recommend Anne Arundel County, and Howard County which are closer to Ft. Meade and Annapolis
- More ethnic diversity in Maryland, especially near the DC area
- More democratic
- Mix between upper middle class and lower socio economics

District of Columbia

- Very Democratic
- The district is separated by 4 quadrants NW, NE, SE, SW. The general rule of thumb is that the closer you get to the Capitol the more crime. North West (NW) DC is a popular area to live.

Most of these suggestions are based on families with kids and concerned about commute, school districts, and family friendly neighborhoods. See information for families without kids on page 13.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VA

City of Alexandria

The **City of Alexandria** has great walkability to shops. [Old Town](#) is a unique area with quaint shops, restaurants and boutiques. The City of Alexandria is more crowded and expensive than other areas in Alexandria. This area is north of the 495 Beltway and is run by Alexandria City Public schools, which has some high rated schools, as well as, low rated ones. The City of Alexandria has a lot of charm and is very desirable, however schools, traffic and home prices might be a determining factor if you choose to live in the City of Alexandria. Read more about the differences between the [City of Alexandria and Alexandria](#).

LOWER ALEXANDRIA, VA

Fairfax County

(MT VERNON, FT HUNT AREA)

The part of Alexandria (located outside the 495 Beltway called non-Alexandria / Lower Alexandria / or South Alexandria) which is run by Fairfax County and is aligned to [Fairfax County Public Schools](#). Schools, traffic, and home prices are the biggest difference between the City of Alexandria and the rest of Alexandria. Many military families moving to the DC area want their kids to attend Fairfax County Schools. The area is small enough to get around without much traffic, it's close to [Mt. Vernon](#), Ft. Belvoir for the commissary and healthcare, and it's close enough to [Old Town](#) to drive to shops and wonderful restaurants. It's close to metro, freeways, and GW Parkway (which you can take all the way to the Pentagon). If looking in this area, read about [5 amazing neighborhoods](#), recommended by other military families.

Ft. Hunt has a lot of nearby shopping on Rt 1 as well as old town. Great neighborhoods and family appeal.

➤ Nearby neighborhoods in the Alexandria area including Mt Vernon & Ft. Hunt area are:

- [Waynewood](#),
- [Collingwood on the Potomac](#),
- [Plymouth Haven](#),
- [Riverside Gardens](#)
- [Stratford Landing](#).
- [Kingstowne](#) (zips 22310, 22315)
- Island Creek

➤ **Commuting** from **Alexandria** or **City of Alexandria** TO the **Pentagon**- use the [GW Parkway](#), you can drive or choose to ride your bike 12 miles down the GW Parkway to the Pentagon especially during the beautiful spring, summer, and fall months.. [Metro Stops](#). The closest Metro station is Huntington Metro Station, which is the end of the yellow line. If you live further from the Metro in Mt. Vernon or Ft. Hunt areas, Metro buses run through lots of neighborhoods. You can walk from your house to a Metro bus, ride the Metro bus to the Metro and take that directly

into the **Pentagon, Crystal City, Washington DC**, etc... Huntington Metro Station also has parking available there if you would choose to park and take the metro into work. Commuting from Kingstowne to Pentagon is about 45 minutes. You can drive or take the bus from neighborhood to Metro Station- Van Dorn to Pentagon.

Commuting from Alexandria/Mt Vernon/Ft. Hunt TO **Fort Belvoir** Army Post your driving commute is 10 minutes.

ARLINGTON, VA (North and South Arlington)

Arlington County

North and South Arlington is separated by Route 50. **North Arlington** is typically safer and has larger, more expensive homes. There is less pockets of lower income families which usually indicates higher test scores and higher property values. Many homes in North Arlington are very expensive and may be out of the price range of some military families, however there are quite a few military families who live in North Arlington. Pros to paying above BAH in North Arlington are great schools, short commute, and a great community. **South Arlington** is typically made up of smaller houses, commercial areas, and apartment complexes. This area is a bit more diverse. There are pockets of family friendly neighborhoods in South Arlington.

View a [map of North vs South Arlington](#).

- Family friendly neighborhoods in North Arlington Zips 22207, 22205, 22203, 22201
 - South Arlington Zips are 22204 and part of 22206 (Fairlington-Shirlington area)
 - Find a list of nearby [family friendly neighborhoods](#).
 - A military spouse's view on [South Arlington's](#)
- **Commuting** from Arlington TO **Pentagon** and **DC** – Drive or use [Metro Stops](#). Arlington is very close to the Pentagon and DC.

ANNANDALE, VA

Fairfax County

Annandale has a suburbia feel with big box shopping. Many people look to live outside the loop so they are close to Fairfax, Burke, and Springfield. Annandale is more suburban outside of the Beltway. On the other end of Annandale is Burke and the 2 communities are side by side. Annandale also has a very close proximity to 95. Some may say Annandale is similar to Lower Alexandria, the part run by Fairfax County. Parts of Annandale have a Korean influence, which provides a lot of mom and pop Korean stores and restaurants. School boundary locator: <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary>

- **Nearby neighborhoods:** Long Branch, Kings Park, Kings Park West
- **Commuting** TO **Pentagon and DC** – VRE, Pentagon bus

BURKE, VA

Fairfax County

Burke gives you more for your money. Burke has great schools that are aligned to the [Fairfax County Public Schools](#). Burke has Burke Lake Park and a lot of parks and trails. Read the [Buzz about Burke](#) for more info. Burke has 2 Secondary Schools which serve grades 7-12. Each has a large campus with the middle school and high school having its very own section of the school.

- Nearby neighborhoods, the [Burke Centre Conservancy](#), The Burke Centre Conservancy is the heart of Burke and is made up of 5 neighborhoods each with it's own community center and pool. These neighborhood are rich with family friendly activities including walking paths, tot lots, tennis and basketball courts as well as Burke Lake.
- **Commuting TO Pentagon and DC**- Use Franconia Springfield Metro station, which is the end of the Blue Metro line. Metro buses run throughout the Burke neighborhoods, pick up commuters, and head straight to the Pentagon making for an easy commute. Parking is available at the Franconia Springfield Metro station for commuters. Metro buses are also available for commuters to bus to the Metro station and then take the Metro into work.
- VRE - The Burke Centre Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Station is a commuter rail station with some of the largest FREE - commuter parking in all of the DC Metropolitan area. It features a five-level parking garage building with ample space for all.
<http://www.vre.org/service/stations/BCV.htm>

SPRINGFIELD, VA

Fairfax County

Springfield is more spread out and feels more like suburbia, so you need to drive, but it's all easily accessible and the Fairfax County Parkway runs throughout. The City of Fairfax is nearby and there are great shops/restaurants there as well. Springfield is aligned to the [Fairfax County Public Schools](#), which is one of the best schools systems in Northern Virginia (NOVA). Schools are all very good although the middle/high/secondary schools are large (common throughout this area). There are lots of little neighborhoods with parks and various larger ones throughout this area. Hidden Pond Park is a great park with trails, tennis courts, tot playground, and a small Nature Center. The Fairfax County Libraries also offer frequent free events and activities for families with children of all ages. School Boundary Locator: <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/>

- **Commuting TO the Pentagon** from Burke or Springfield – use the [Express Buses](#) or the [VRE](#).

LORTON, VA

Fairfax County

Lorton is located further away from DC than other popular areas. It has strip malls and it's closer to Ikea/Potomac Mills Outlets. Lorton is close to Woodbridge, Occoquan and the beltway. Lorton is very close to historic [Occoquan](#) which is a quaint town with shops waterfront walk and water access for boats. Lorton has commuter buses, REX bus, VRE.

- Lorton has commuter buses, REX bus, VRE.
- **Commuting TO DC** would be about an hour by car.
- **Commuting TO Ft. Belvoir** would be about 30 minutes by car.
- **Commuting TO Quantico** would be about 30 minutes by car.

QUANTICO, VA

Popular areas surrounding Quantico Base are Woodbridge, Dale City, Montclair, Stafford, and Aquia Harbour. Read [on base reviews](#) and [off-base neighborhood reviews](#). Read about popular [off base apartments near Quantico](#), especially good during TBS.

FALLS CHURCH, VA

Fairfax County & City of Falls Church

Falls Church has a lot of small shops that gives it a small town feel. You can easily find a good mechanic, a local produce market, tailor, and cute little brick library. Falls Church has a lot of walking/biking paths, parks, playgrounds, and activities, as well as good proximity to DC. [Falls Church Vs City of Falls Church](#). Route 7 is the main corridor of Falls Church with Seven Corners on one end, and Tysons Corner on the other.

- **City of Falls Church** – The City of Falls Church is **NOT** part of Fairfax County Schools. Schools are run by Falls Church Public School System.
 - **Falls Church** – The part inside the 495 Beltway has Falls Church zip codes, addresses, and **IS** part of the [Fairfax County School System](#).
 - **West Falls Church** – West Falls Church is outlined in green and **IS** part of the [Fairfax County School System](#). ([See map](#))
- **Commuting TO DC** : If Driving from Falls Church on I-66 is HOV 2person inside the beltway, so unless you have 2 people in your car, you can't use I-66 from Vienna to Pentagon. Metro Orange line goes out to West and East Falls Church. (However, if you are traveling westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon you can use i-66 going against traffic without HOV restrictions.)

CITY OF FAIRFAX, VA

City of Fairfax

City of Fairfax has a suburbia feel, with lots of big box shopping. Downtown city of Fairfax has more of a small town feel with small shops. There are lots of independently owned restaurants, in addition to chain restaurants, providing lots of different types of cuisines. The public schools in the City of Fairfax are owned by the city, but administered by the Fairfax County Public Schools system under contractual agreement with Fairfax County. Find [schools here](#).

- **Commuting TO DC** would be about 30-45 min driving during peak hours by car. It is also easily accessible from the Dunn Loring Metro and the Vienna Metro stations. If Driving from Falls Church on I-66 is HOV 2person inside the beltway, so unless you have 2 people in your car, you can't use I-66 from Vienna to Pentagon. (However, if you are traveling westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon you can use i-66 going against traffic without HOV restrictions.)

OAKTON/VIENNA, VA

Fairfax County

Vienna has a very small town feel but still offers access to many big box stores, malls, shops, etc. and is very close to Tyson's corner mall and metro stops. Vienna has great restaurants. The "Main St" is **Maple Ave**, and there is a historic area in the center of town. It is west of 495 beltway of DC so it has a bit of a slower pace of life. The location is central and the schools are [Fairfax County Public Schools](#). For more info: <http://www.viennava.gov/index.aspx?nid=335>. They have lots of community festivals, Viva Vienna in the spring, Taste of Vienna (which showcases lots of the local restaurants), an Annual Halloween Parade, and Christmas Stroll on Church Street. There is a good mix of big box shops and mom/pop shops. They also have really good sports programs for kids.

- **Commuting TO Pentagon or DC**, use the Metro or the HOV lane. Vienna also has a metro stop, which is very convenient, although on the outskirts of town near I-66.

MCLEAN, VA

Fairfax County

- **McLean** is very similar to North Arlington with quaint neighborhoods, good restaurants, boutique style shops, and great schools. It's proximity to I-495 makes it a desirable place to live. McLean is located close to Tyson's Corner, which is the 3rd largest mall in the country. It has great shopping! Tyson 1 is chains, Tyson 2 is high end designer shopping. Rent and home prices are very pricey, while some military families live in McLean and are willing to pay high prices for shorter commutes, good schools, quaint neighborhoods and a great community. McLean schools are aligned to Fairfax County School District and have some of the highest rated public schools.
- **Commuting TO Pentagon or DC**, use GW parkway. New Silver Line Metro is set to open in McLean in March 2014.
- **Communing TO CIA Headquarters** - Located in McLean, VA so commute is 5-10 min.

RESTON/HERNDON; CENTREVILLE/CHANTILLY; GAINESVILLE/HAYMARKET/ BRISTOW/MANASSAS

These areas are more affordable and have lots of new construction. The stores are new, but have less character. These areas are out along the Dulles Toll Road, which can be very expensive to use during peak hours, HOWEVER by March 2014 a [*NEW* Silver Metro Line](#) is slated to go out this way so there will be a much higher demand for these areas.

LEESBURG, VA - Lots of farms and horse communities. The new Silver Line will go out that way.

***Additional Resources** - [Crime rates](#) and [demographics](#) for Fairfax County.

BETHESDA, MD

Montgomery County

Bethesda is a wonderful place to live if you are stationed at Walter Reed. Featuring some of the best schools in the area, Bethesda is a large and more metropolitan suburb with lots of high-end shopping, restaurants, and entertainment options. Downtown Bethesda has an urban feel with high rise condos and excellent walkability to shops, restaurants and outdoor plaza style activities. Bethesda is located just above Chevy Chase, which is one of the most expensive areas to live in DC. The cost of housing is higher in Bethesda than much of the surrounding areas, but it features lovely and safe neighborhoods, high walkability, and quick access to DC. Tucked just inside of the Beltway, you never need to get on a major highway to get to Walter Reed, all parts of the city, or into the District itself. Surface street traffic can be bad during rush hour, but with a short distance to go for most people, it is extremely do-able. Bethesda features a wide array of housing including trendy studio apartments, townhome style condominiums, small single-family homes, and large and impressive estates. Schools are aligned to Montgomery County Schools. Check [school boundaries](#).

- **Commuting to Walter Reed** – short driving distance
- **Commuting to DC** - Bethesda has several stops of the western branch of the red line of the Metro, which can easily convey you into the city.
- **Commute to other bases** -it is necessary to commute on the beltway or go through the District, which can take a long time.

SILVER SPRING, MD

Montgomery County

Silver Spring is a very diverse and large suburb just to the North of Washington, DC and a great option for anyone stationed at Walter Reed, and potentially the Navy Yard. Silver Spring occupies a large part of the map with lots of unincorporated parts of the town. They are cleaning up these areas, but many parts are still transitional. Downtown Silver Spring is a bustling, urban suburb. It is a very diverse and culturally focused city known for lots of public events and for its recently regentrified and vibrant Town Center. With a wide variety of restaurants, shops, and entertainment options, and numerous living options very close to the eastern branch of the Metro, it offers convenience to the District, with the advantages of the suburbs. The non-downtown part of Silver Spring is much more suburban and similar to Rockville and Gaithersburg in many ways. The schools are part of Montgomery County Schools, which are widely regarded as good, but the more urban schools in Silver Spring are not as good as others in the area. Schools are aligned to Montgomery County Schools. Check [school boundaries](#).

- **Commuting TO DC** - Silver Spring is very close to the red line and has 4 stops on the Metro. Silver Spring is a short commute (by car or Metro) to Washington, D.C. If you do drive, you're likely on city streets which move, but can become bottlenecks. Another option is the beltway which has lot of traffic during commuting hours!
- **Commuting TO Walter Reed** – 10-20 minute driving commute, depending on location

ROCKVILLE, MD

Montgomery County

Rockville is a family friendly, large suburb just north of Bethesda with good schools, a lot to do, and safe neighborhoods. The schools are part of Montgomery County Schools, which are widely regarded as good. Rockville occupies a large area on the map, so commuting times vary greatly on which part of town you live in. Rockville has a large downtown known as Rockville Town Center with shopping, dining, and entertainment. There are also numerous smaller shopping centers featuring pretty much every major chain restaurant or store you can imagine. Housing types vary depending on the area of the city. The main thoroughfare through town is Route 355, or Rockville Pike. This is the busiest part of town and stretches south to Bethesda and north to Gaithersburg. Many luxury apartments and townhome communities can be found right along “the Pike” as it’s known. Once you veer off the Pike, there are quiet, single family home neighborhoods. Price ranges for these homes vary greatly. In general, the north and eastern parts of town are less expensive than the southern and western parts that border Bethesda. Schools are aligned to Montgomery County Schools. Check [school boundaries](#).

- **Commuting TO DC** -Rockville is serviced by several stops of the western branch of the Red Line of the Metro.
- **Commuting TO Walter Reed** can be by the Pike, or by the 270 Freeway. 270 is known for horrendous rush hour traffic, but is a trade off for larger housing.
- **Commuting to other bases** - To commute to other Bases in the area, it is necessary to take the Beltway.

GAITHERSBURG, MD

Montgomery County

Gaithersburg is very similar to Rockville, it’s southern neighbor, and features more “bang for your buck” with housing. The schools are part of Montgomery County Schools, which are widely regarded as good, though the actual ones in this town are not as strong as Bethesda or Rockville. Gaithersburg is more of your typical suburbs – lots of new developments with townhomes and single-family homes, and virtually every big-box and major chain store that you can imagine. Gaithersburg doesn’t have much of a “town” feeling and the atmosphere is more predicated by the actual neighborhood you live in. Schools are aligned to Montgomery County Schools. Check [school boundaries](#).

- **Commuting TO Walter Reed** would be by freeway 270, which has horrendous rush hour traffic, but a trade off for the lower cost of living.
- **Commuting TO DC** - The southern part of Gaithersburg has the last stop on the western branch of the Red Line of the Metro. There is a large “park and ride” garage for those who wish to commute into Rockville, Bethesda, or the District.
- **Commuting to other bases** in the area would be lengthy – with a good stretch on 270 and the Beltway.

KENSINGTON, MD*Montgomery County*

Kensington is a small town in the midst of one of the busier parts of Montgomery County, and a great option for anyone stationed at Walter Reed. With Rockville and Silver Spring to the North East and North West, and Bethesda to the South, Kensington occupies a small plot of land, but is known for its involved citizenry, year round farmer's market, and charming historic downtown area complete with antique shops, cafes, and Mom & Pop businesses. The incorporated part of Kensington channels students to the Bethesda schools, which is a huge plus for this town. The unincorporated part of Kensington sends students to the nearby Rockville or Silver Spring schools, which are good, but not as strong as the Bethesda schools. Most housing options in Kensington are single family homes in established neighborhoods. Schools are aligned to Montgomery County Schools. Check [school boundaries](#).

- **Commuting** to **Walter Reed** is a cinch, with less than 5 miles from downtown Kensington to Walter Reed.
- **Commuting** to **other bases** would be possible via the Beltway. While there is no Metro stop in Kensington, it does have a MARC train (Maryland commuter rail) station and is smack dab between the two branches of the Red Line with most nearby stations offering a park and ride garage.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The district is separated by 4 quadrants NW, NE, SE, SW. The general rule of thumb is that the closer you get to the Capitol the more crime. NE, SE, & SW quadrants have higher crime. North West (NW) DC is a popular area to live.

NW Washington DC (also known as Northwest DC) is located north of the National Mall and west of North Capitol Street. The largest of the four quadrants, NW Washington DC, contains most of the city's federal buildings, tourist destinations, and wealthier neighborhoods. It encompasses the areas known as [Penn Quarter](#), [Foggy Bottom](#), [Georgetown](#), [Dupont Circle](#), [Adams-Morgan](#), [Columbia Heights](#), among others. Major attractions in NW include the museums on the north side of the [National Mall](#), [Verizon Center](#), [National Cathedral](#), [the White House](#), [Rock Creek Park](#) and many more.

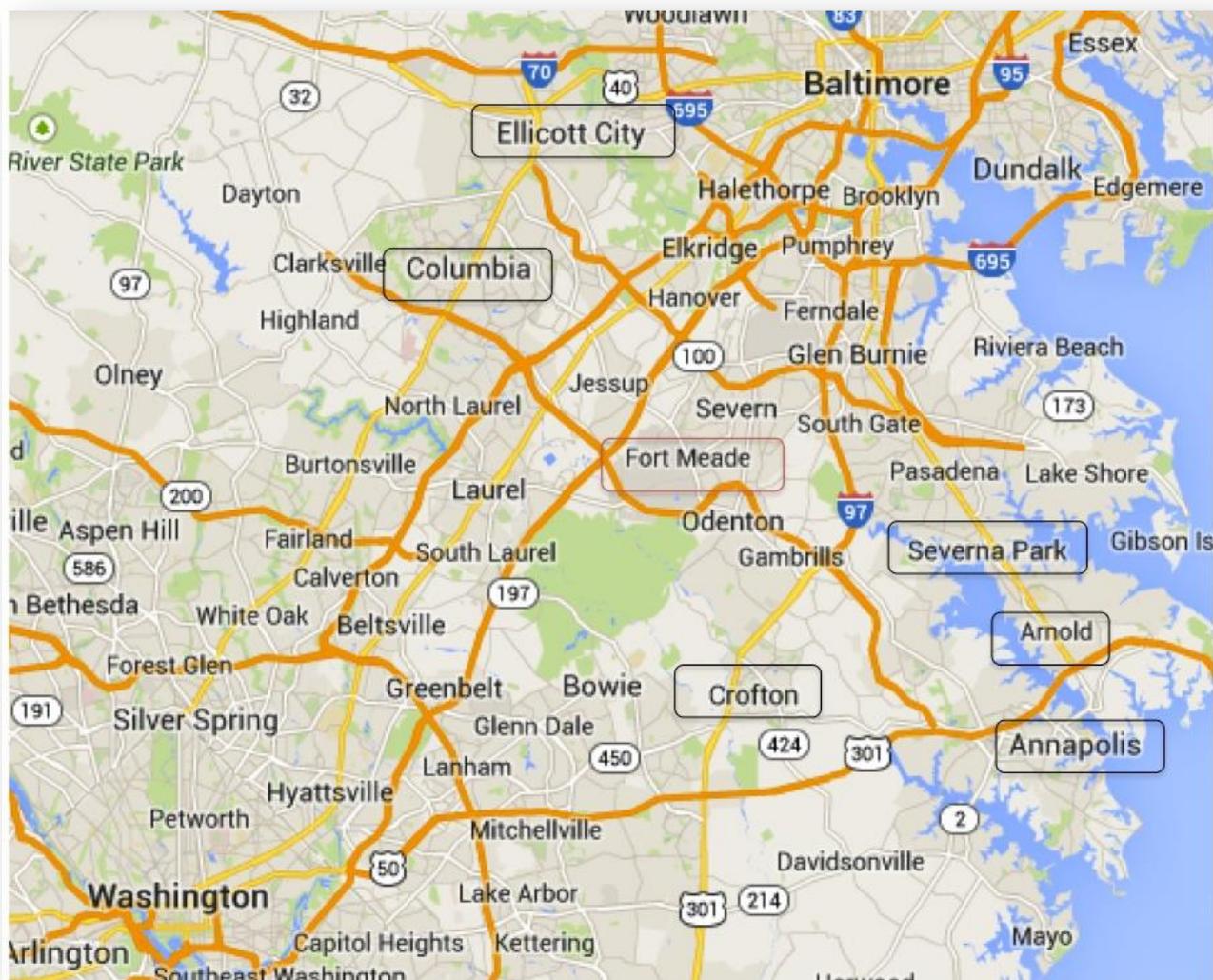


GREAT PLACES TO LIVE WITHOUT KIDS

Arlington's Rosslyn-Ballston corridor; Clarendon (bars, shops with above condo and apartment living); Old Town Alexandria; Tyson's Corner- fabulous condos in these locations...very trendy, night clubs, restaurants, metro stops, etc..

Note: Chantilly, Oakton, Centreville, Reston, Herndon are great areas for those at **National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)**

Areas near Ft. Meade and Annapolis



- Annapolis, MD
- Ft. Meade, MD
- Ellicott City, MD
- Columbia, MD
- Crofton, MD
- Severna Park, MD
- Arnold, MD

Things to Consider when PCSing to Ft. Meade, Annapolis, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Ft Derrick or surrounding bases:

- Find out if the house has public utilities or septic tank and well water. This can make a big difference when power goes out with a hurricane or Nor'easter storm.
- You need a realtor to help look for houses to rent or buy. The property market moves fast here. Make sure your realtor has licenses for Virginia, DC, and Maryland. Find a [recommended realtor](#) from other military families.
- Check flood zones
- Your spouse will work long hours. There aren't as many military run social groups in this area, so join social groups outside the military, such as Junior League, MOPS, etc. Get out and meet people and you will enjoy your time better.
- Research the different counties and the school districts in the different counties.
- If the school boundaries are unclear or change often (which happens in Howard County), then you might want to take this as a sign of concern for your kids schooling or for property values.
- There are more government contractors, retirees and reservists in the area than active duty.
- Counties in MD near DC and Ft Meade:
 - Montgomery- Montgomery county is pretty much known for good schools. [Read more about Montgomery County.](#)
 - Howard- They don't have well defined school boundaries and this can be a concern. The main population center of Columbia/Ellicott City was named second among *Money* magazine's 2010 survey of "America's Best Places to Live. Many of the most affluent communities in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area are in Howard County. Many areas of Howard County have high HOA costs.
 - Anne Arundel- Known for good schools, however the administration has been changing a bit, so do your research and make sure the schools are still up to par.
 - Prince George - A more diverse county with lower socio economics. Schools have been poor in the past, but administration has been changing so you may see improvement in the future. If you buy a house, you will pay state property taxes and county taxes in this county. It may seem houses are cheaper here, but consider the overall taxes and consider the schools.

ANNAPOLIS, MD

Anne Arundel County

Annapolis, home to the US Naval Academy, is a very friendly and fun Navy Town. Situated right on the banks of the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay, this colonial style town, which is also the Capital of Maryland, offers a very popular and fun downtown area with lots of historic sites, unique shops, and wonderful restaurants. Known as the Sailing Capital of the US, there are numerous marinas and water recreation is a large part of the community. There is also another side to Annapolis, which is newer and more suburban in feel. The recently developed Parole Town Center has a nice variety of higher end shopping and restaurant chains, and is nearby to the very popular and large Annapolis Mall. Schools in Annapolis are probably the biggest negative – the public schools are not regarded as very good, although there are lots of good private school options. The biggest drawback of the area is that if you aren't stationed at the Naval Academy, you're looking at a pretty long commute time, of at least 45 minutes to an hour to DC. If living in an extremely charming, waterfront town makes a commute on US 50 and the Beltway worth it for you, then go for it! It's a wonderful place to live. Schools in Annapolis are aligned to Anne Arundel County.

- **Commuting TO DC** – Commuter Buses on weekdays, driving a car can take 45 min – 2 hrs. (longest commutes are during tourist season because the main highway that extends to Annapolis is Route 50 which is the most commonly used route to access the beach.)
- **Commuting TO Ft. Meade** – 40-50 minute drive from Ft. Meade to Annapolis.

FT MEADE, MD

Anne Arundel County

Ft Meade has on-base housing at the base. If you have school aged kids, the schools aligned to base housing are not the best. The elementary school is fine because it is made up of a lot of military kids who live on base, however the middle school and high school pull more from areas off base near Ft. Meade. A lot of people home school their kids if they choose to live on base. Check the water supply in nearby areas. Reports of contaminants have been reported over the past years. The base has a great commissary and clinic. Schools in Annapolis are aligned to Anne Arundel County.

ELLICOTT CITY, MD

Howard County

Ellicott City, MD is located Howard County and is a bit more rural. The schools are very good there and the neighborhoods are a bit more diverse. This area is close to Baltimore so you are close to restaurants, shopping, and entertainment. Named [Best Places to Live in 2010](#) by Money Magazine. Schools in Annapolis are aligned to Howard County.

COLUMBIA, MD

Howard County

Columbia, MD is a master planned community comprising of 10 self-contained villages. It is a great area to live, especially when stationed at Ft. Meade. The city has great schools and it's very nice. It's a bit pricey and overcrowded, but a really popular area for military families to live. Named [Best Places to Live in 2010](#) by Money Magazine. The city of Fulton is nearby and may be one of the wealthiest areas in the state. Schools in Annapolis are aligned to Howard County.

Village – Neighborhoods (in rough order of opening)

- Wilde Lake – Bryant Woods, Faulkner Ridge, Running Brook, The Birches
 - Harper's Choice – Longfellow, Swansfield, Hobbit's Glen
 - Oakland Mills – Thunder Hill, Talbott Springs, Stevens Forest
 - Long Reach – Phelps Luck, Jeffers Hill, Locust Park, Kendall Ridge
 - Owen Brown – Dasher Green, Elkhorn, Hopewell
 - Hickory Ridge – Clemens Crossing, Hawthorn, Clary's Forest
 - Dorsey's Search – Dorsey Hall, Fairway Hills
 - Kings Contrivance – Dickinson, Huntington, Macgill's Common
 - River Hill – Pheasant Ridge, Pointers Run
 - Town Center – Vantage Point, Banneker, Amesbury, Creighton's Run, and Warfield Triangle
- **Commuting TO Ft. Meade** – 32 West can get really crowded with traffic during rush hour.

LAUREL, MD

Howard, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George

Laurel is located in 4 counties; Howard, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George. There are good parts and bad parts of Laurel and a lot depends on which section is in which county.

CROFTON, MD

Anne Arundel County

Crofton is a great community with great schools. The location is conveniently located between DC, Ft. Meade and Annapolis. Named the [best place to live in 2007 by Money Magazine](#). “Old Crofton” was a planned commuter community located between Annapolis and DC. The neighborhood has sidewalks, playgrounds, and neighbors are very friendly. Schools are aligned to Anne Arundel County.

- **Commuting TO DC** – 10 minutes to DC metro station – New Carrollton, then 40 mins
- **Commuting TO Annapolis** – 15 minutes to City Dock of Annapolis
- **Commuting TO Baltimore** – 30 minutes drive

SEVERNA PARK, MD*Anne Arundel County*

Severna Park is a great neighborhood with great schools. There is a little beach access in Severna Park and you are close to Annapolis for great shopping. It's a pricey area, but really nice. Schools are aligned to Anne Arundel County.

- **Commuting TO Ft. Meade**- 25 minute drive
- **Commuting TO Annapolis** - 15 minute drive

ARNOLD, MD*Anne Arundel County*

Arnold has great schools in the state. It's a great place to live and conveniently located between Annapolis and Ft. Meade. Schools are aligned to Anne Arundel County.

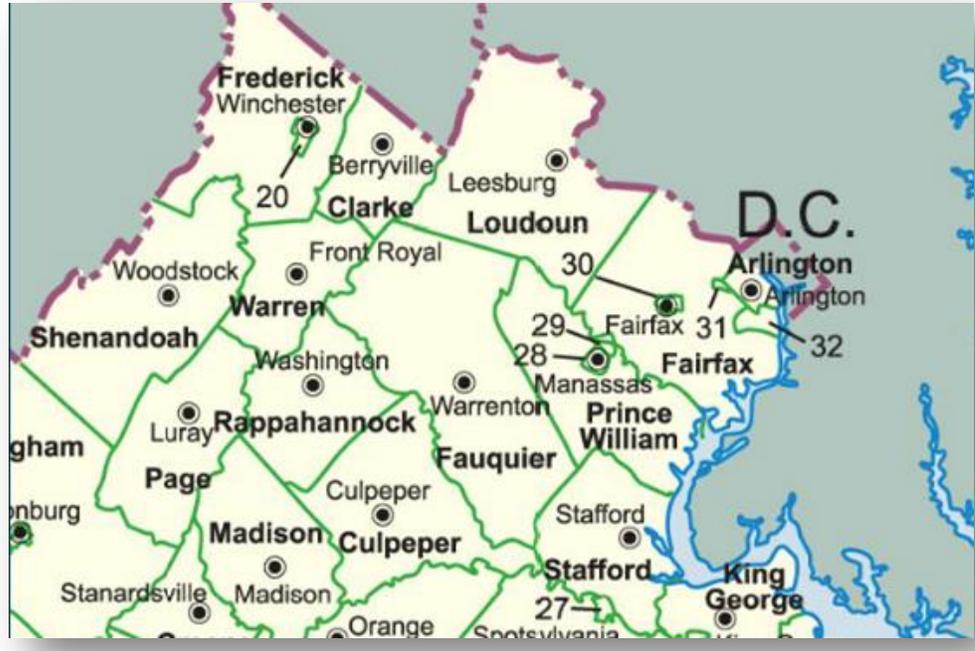
- **Commuting TO Ft. Meade**- 25 minute drive
- **Commuting TO DC** - 1 hour to 2 hours

Additional Resource:

- Read [Area reviews near DC](#) and surrounding areas
- Read [Neighborhood Reviews near DC](#) and surrounding areas
- All [On and Off Base Reviews near DC](#) and surrounding areas

*All reviews are written by military families

COUNTY MAPS - Many families refer to surrounding counties rather than city names.



METRO MAP

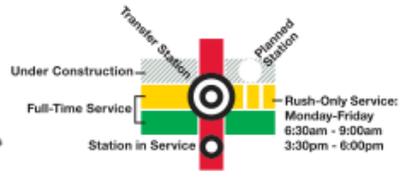
- For a larger map go to <http://www.wmata.com/rail/maps/map.cfm>
- Check out the [NEW Silver Line](#) near the Dulles Toll Road Area.



wmata.com
 Customer Information Service: 202-637-7000
 TTY Phone: 202-638-3780

- Legend**
- RD** Red Line • Glenmont to Shady Grove
 - OR** Orange Line • New Carrollton to Vienna
 - BL** Blue Line • Franconia-Springfield to Largo Town Center
 - GR** Green Line • Branch Ave to Greenbelt
 - YL** Yellow Line • Huntington to Fort Totten
 - SV** Silver Line • Future Dulles Corridor Line

- Station Features**
- Bus to Airport
 - Parking
 - Hospital
 - Airport
- Connecting Rail Systems**
- VRE
 - AMTRAK
 - AMRC



MetroRail Operating Times

- Mon-Thu** 5am-midnight
- Fri** 5am-3am
- Sat** 7am-3am
- Sun** 7am-midnight

Times are approximate; check station kiosks or online for exact times.

Metro is accessible.



Transportation Options for Commuting in the DC area

- Metro (Subway)
- Buses - Fairfax connector or Metro Bus, but they both use the Smartrip card, which also works for the METRO
- VRE - The Burke Centre Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Station is a commuter rail station with some of the largest FREE - commuter parking in all of the DC Metropolitan area. It features a five-level parking garage building with ample space for all. And there are two other large outdoor parking areas on each side of the building leading to the train platform. The VRE station serves a large commuter area with double-decker train service from the Manassas Airport, into Union Station, with additional downtown stops at L'Enfant, Crystal City, and Alexandria to serve the commuter population. <http://www.vre.org/service/stations/BCV.htm>

(Map of VRE Routes)



Driving and Traffic



- GW Parkway (Alexandria area)
- I-66 – Runs East and West through NOVA ***VERY IMPORTANT** It is HOV2 inside the beltway (basically from Falls Church to DC). So unless you have 2 people in your car, you can't use 66 from Vienna to the Pentagon. However, if you are traveling westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon you can use I-66 going against traffic without HOV restrictions. [Check out their website for more information.](#)
- HWY 267 - If you live in a town along the Dulles Toll Road, it is very expensive. During peak commuting hours it's \$5.10 with an EZ pass, one-way. [Check their website for more info.](#)
- Beltway 495 - "The Loop" is usually grid lock during peak hours. They Beltway 495 has HOV lanes for commuters.

Did you know that you can get reimbursed for part of your commuting expenses?

- Before 2013, the government reimbursed \$245 monthly, but after 2014 the reimbursement is \$140 monthly. Read more about the [Mass Transit Benefit Program](#) or call MTBP Program Office (571) 256-0962 WHSNCRTransitbenefit@mail.mil

Public School Districts around DC

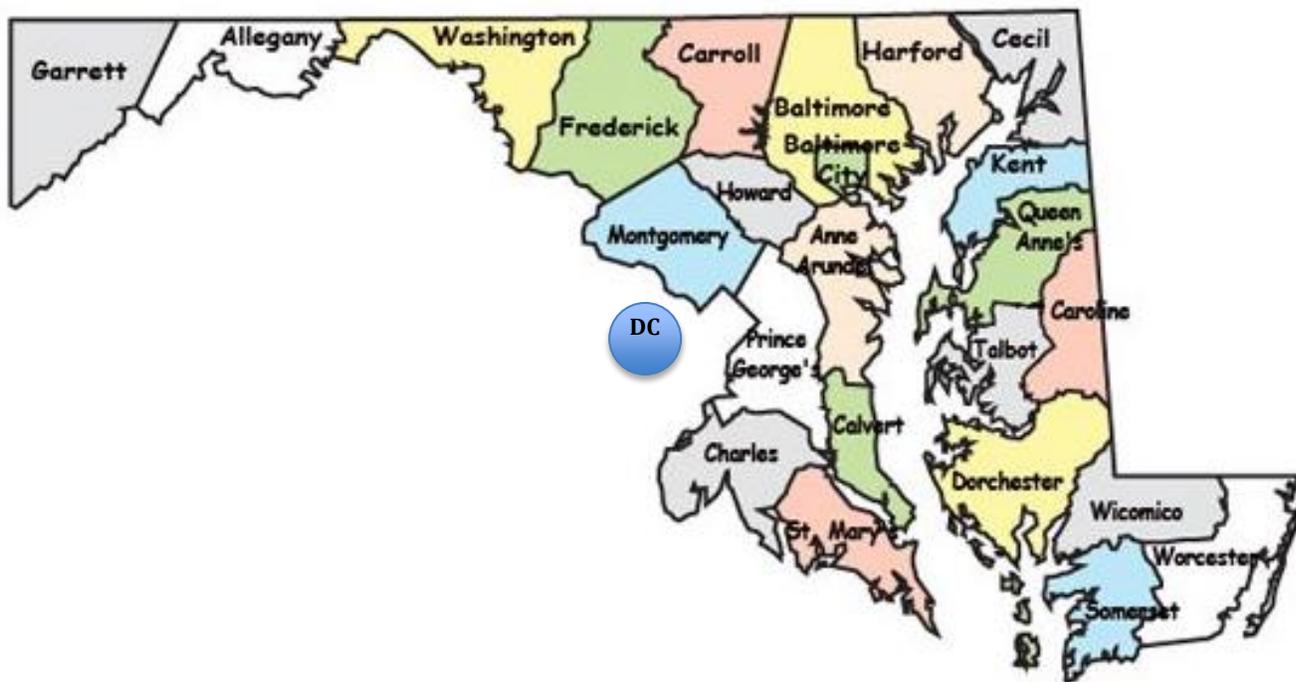
Public Schools in Northern Virginia Area (NoVa)

Arlington	Frederick	Prince William
Alexandria	Clarke	Loudoun
Rappahannock	Falls Church	Culpeper
Madison	Shenandoah	Manassas
Fairfax	Orange	Warren
Manassas Park	Fauquier	Page
Winchester		

Fairfax County Public School System – [Fairfax County Schools](#) is a very sought after school district in the Northern Virginia area. Below is a map. The boundaries of Fairfax County Schools system can be confusing. Make sure to use their [address finder](#) to be exact.



Public Schools in Maryland



- [Montgomery Schools County Schools](#)
- [Anne Arundel County Schools](#)
- [Howard County Schools](#)
- [Carroll County Schools](#)
- [Prince George County Schools](#)

[Click here](#) for more schools in Maryland

Things To Do in DC

Activities

- [Tours of the United States Capitol Building](#)
- [Running Races in DC](#)
- [Don't Miss the 135th White House Easter Egg Roll](#)
- [Walking the National Mall in DC with Kids](#)

Entertainment

- [Virginia Wineries | Wineries near Quantico](#)
- [Fort Belvoir Bowling](#)

Shopping

- [The Village at Shirlington | Arlington, VA near DC](#)
- [Old Town Alexandria](#)
- [Shopping in Washington DC](#)

Restaurant and Bar

- [Ambar Restaurant in DC | Military Discount | Great Food](#)
- [The Village at Shirlington | Arlington, VA near DC](#)
- [Old Town Alexandria](#)

Where to live

- Read a full list of articles about '[Where to Live near DC](#)' on our main website.



This is an every changing list, so go to blog.militarytownadvisor.com for a more updated list.

Send me an email, militarytownadvisor@gmail.com, if you would like to write for our blog.