

Washingtonian

Which Washington-Area Neighborhoods Will Boom Next?

All across the region, big change is on the way in formerly quiet places. Here's a look at the spots poised for some of the most dramatic transformations—and price hikes—in the decades to come.

Written by [Marisa M. Kashino](#), [Benjamin Freed](#) and [Dan Reed](#) | Published on April 15, 2018

It's not uncommon to hear lifelong Washingtonians say they barely recognize the area these days. Entire neighborhoods have emerged. (Who ever heard of NoMa a decade ago?) Once sleepy suburbs boast bustling downtowns. (Good luck battling traffic around Bethesda Row.) And still, tower cranes fill our skylines—harbingers of even more change. Here are some of the biggest evolutions ahead.

Anacostia



Rendering courtesy of Oma/Olin.

All the money flowing into DC, making other neighborhoods feel brand-new, hasn't much benefited areas east of the Anacostia River. But that looks to be changing, as development—especially along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and around the old St. Elizabeths Hospital—picks up. The Menkiti Group plans to build MLK Gateway, a modern, mixed-use site, in Anacostia's historic corridor. A \$65-million, taxpayer-funded basketball arena for Washington Wizards practices and Mystics WNBA games is scheduled to open at St. E's in September. Then there's the 11th Street Bridge Park, a plan to turn the old connection across the river into a greenway in the style of New York's High Line. The planners are about halfway to the \$55 million they say they'll need to remodel the old bridge, starting in 2019. Whether it actually mends the east/west disparity is a bigger question.

For sale now: A semidetached, renovated three-bedroom house in the historic district for \$450,000.

Ashburn



Rendering courtesy of CityLink.ai.

Loudoun County is already one of the biggest internet hubs, with most of the world's web traffic flowing through its server farms. So it's a logical spot for the next frontier of connectivity: the nation's first privately owned "smart city." Local companies 22 Capital Partners and Citylink.ai are building the Gramercy District next to the future Ashburn Metro stop. Plans include 24 acres of office buildings, luxury lofts, shops, hotels, and a co-working center for tech start-ups. Every component will "talk" to each other and constantly get smarter to create a simpler experience for workers and residents. For instance, cafes will learn customers' preferences and speed up filling their orders, a single app will allow users to do everything from pay the parking meter to reserve a conference room, and every-one will get a personalized wi-fi signal that follows that person throughout the Gramercy District. Parts of the development are projected to open as early as next year.

For sale now: A four-bedroom Colonial, built in 1997, for \$534,500.

College Park/Hyattsville



Rendering of College Park Courtesy of the Bozzuto Group.

These neighboring suburbs are Prince George's County's chance to create its answer to Arlington— young, upwardly mobile, increasingly urban. Befitting its status as a member of the Big Ten, the University of Maryland is upping its college-town game, working with planners on a \$2-billion reinvention of a stretch of Route 1 known for bars and auto shops. New apartments have gone up along the corridor, and MilkBoy, a hip artspace from Philly, has replaced dingy dives. In a few years, the Purple Line will intersect with the Green Line, making the area a transportation hub.

For sale now: A new-construction, customizable three-bedroom townhouse for \$410,000.

Columbia

The planned community in Howard County turned 50 last year—and a major refresh is under way to keep it vibrant and growing for decades to come. One piece that Columbia's original planner, James Rouse, didn't finish building was a true downtown, so developer Howard Hughes Corporation is constructing a 391-acre core of offices, shop-ping, dining, and 6,200 units of new housing, surrounding Merriweather Post Pavilion. Since the downtown Columbia master plan was adopted in 2010, Whole Foods, a new headquarters for MedStar Health, and the first mixed-use building have arrived. The entire downtown is expected to be finished in the next 20 to 30 years.

For sale now: A 1960s rancher on an acre of land for \$525,000.

H Street/Union Market



Rendering of H Street Courtesy of WC Smith.

Like 14th Street, Northeast DC's H Street was devastated by the '68 riots, but it also bears some of the same hallmarks of rebirth: Just as Studio Theatre was on 14th, the Atlas Performing Arts Center has been a pioneer of renewal on H, paving the way for restaurants and nightlife. A mixed-use project called Avec, the size of two city blocks, is slated to open next year, replacing a former strip mall. Though its timing is uncertain, a planned overhaul of Union Station at the corridor's western end promises to be transformative. It includes 14 acres of offices, residences, and hotels that will extend to K Street, Northeast—a few blocks from the burgeoning Union Market district, where a coalition of developers and Gallaudet University are constructing a new mixed-use neighborhood amid the historic warehouses.

For sale now: A three-level fixer-upper across the street from Union Market for \$699,000.

Crystal City



Rendering of Crystal City Courtesy of JBG Smith.

This pocket of Arlington has had a rough go of it in recent years, with an office vacancy rate surpassing 21 percent, largely due to an exodus of Defense Department workers. But its fortunes appear to be turning. JBG Smith, one of Washington's largest developers, controls the vast majority of the area's buildings and has declared the neighborhood's reawakening to be a top priority. It plans to convert empty buildings into housing, retail, and offices. The first phase of new development—an Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, 345 apartments, a grocery store, and other retail—should arrive by 2020, marking the first step toward converting Crystal City from a 9-to-5 office park into a 24-hour urban neighborhood.

For sale now: A 950-square-foot one-bedroom condo for \$394,000.

Hill East



Rendering

of Hill East courtesy of Donatelli Development.

Back in 2006, the federal government transferred control of 67 acres on the east side of Capitol Hill to the District. Since then, developers have eyed Reservation 13—as the plot is known—as DC’s next hot neighborhood. For the time being, it’s home to the city jail and the former DC General Hospital—now the District’s troubled homeless shelter, which Mayor Muriel Bowser says she intends to close this year. The city committed to a bid from Donatelli and Blue Sky in 2013 to start the makeover with 344 new homes and 33,000 square feet of retail, but nothing’s come of it yet. It also eyes Hill East as a potential site for Amazon, should DC prevail in the HQ2 sweepstakes. With no movement on the current redevelopment plans, Hill East’s future remains unpredictable. But as one of the last undeveloped swaths of consolidated city land—in quickly gentrifying Southeast, no less—it has more untapped potential than practically anywhere else in the District.

For sale now: A fully renovated two-bedroom rowhouse with a small yard for \$670,000.

Largo

The most famous place in town was demolished in 2002: Capital Centre, former home of the Washington Bullets and Capitals. But in a few years, Prince Georgians should start associating Largo with a trip to the doctor, when a regional hospital opens there in 2021, along with a sprawling mixed-use development of apartments, restaurants, shopping, and a movie theater next to the Largo Town Center Metro station. The project is the core of County Executive Rushern Baker’s vision to turn the community into Prince George’s downtown. Another key piece of his plan: relocating the county headquarters to Largo from remote Upper Marlboro—a transition already under way. Residential developers have taken note, with new apartments and townhouses rising around the Metro.

For sale now: A new-construction three-bedroom traditional townhouse for \$430,000.

Reston



Rendering of Reston Courtesy of Boston Properties.

The relatively dense, mixed-income town was considered cutting-edge when developer Robert Simon built it in the 1960s as an antidote to the postwar suburban sprawl consuming much of the country. With the second phase of the Silver Line inching closer to completion, a slew of new development is on track to keep Reston relevant into the future. To the north of the Reston Town Center Metro stop—slated to open in 2020—Boston Properties plans to build about 4 million square feet of residences, shops, restaurants, hotels, and offices. Directly south of the station, Brookfield Properties has plans for nearly 4 million more square feet of mixed-use development.

For sale now: A midcentury-modern townhouse with a view of Lake Anne for \$729,000.

Merrifield



Rendering of Merrifield Courtesy of Inova.

Once known only as a bland zone of light-industrial warehouses and squat office parks, Merrifield has undergone an image makeover thanks to the arrival in 2012 of the Mosaic district—a walkable development of housing, shopping, and trendy restaurants that’s slated to expand. But the real game changer for the Northern Virginia neighborhood will be Inova Health System’s 117-acre Center for Personalized Health. The facility, to be constructed atop Exxon Mobil’s former campus, will specialize in researching and treating diseases based on individual patients’ genetic makeup. Inova has submitted its plans to Fairfax County, and once the vision is realized, Merrifield could become a top global destination for medicine.

For sale now: A 704-square-foot condo close to the Mosaic district for \$335,000.

Rockville Pike



Rendering of Rockville by Bryan Zanella/Federal Realty.

Montgomery County's White Flint Sector Plan, approved in 2010, envisions that outdated strip malls and vacant property along Rockville Pike will give way to town centers and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. It's taking shape with developments such as Pike & Rose and North Bethesda Market—where housing, offices, and boutiques commingle—sprouting along the busy thoroughfare. The county's loosening liquor laws have also drawn breweries and distilleries, including True Respite, Saints Row, and 7 Locks. The next phase calls for 16,000 new homes and 22,000 additional jobs in the area over the next 30 years.

For sale now: A brand-new 631-square-foot studio at Pike & Rose for \$340,900.

Southwest/Southeast Waterfronts



Rendering of Waterfront Courtesy of The Wharf.

DC's waterfronts show no signs of slowing. The second phase of the Wharf will break ground this year, with an additional 1.2 million square feet of development by 2022. About a mile and a half east, Capitol Riverfront is the District's fastest-growing neighborhood. Within 20 years, it's projected to house 32,000 residents and more than 55,000 employees. Smack in between, you'll find Buzzard Point, where DC United's new stadium will open later this year and where Akridge intends to build millions of square feet of mixed-use development. If all goes as planned, the result will be a nearly uninterrupted string of housing and entertainment reaching from the Maine Avenue Fish Market in Southwest to the Washington Navy Yard in Southeast.

For sale now: A condo next to the Wharf, with water views, for \$1,125,000.

Upper Georgia Avenue

Neighborhoods such as Park View and Petworth became fashionable over the past decade, but farther north, Georgia Avenue has seen little growth. That's finally changing with the long-anticipated redevelopment of the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where ground broke last spring on the 66-acre plot DC purchased from the feds. Three companies—Hines, Urban Atlantic, and Triden—are building out the site over the next two decades. When it's finished, Walter Reed will comprise a totally new community, including 2,200 apartments, condos, and houses; 200,000 square feet of office and medical space; and 240,000 square feet of retail, likely including a grocery store. (Despite much public clamoring, it won't be a Wegmans.) The rest of the decommissioned hospital is being turned into a Children's National research facility and a destination for new foreign embassies.

For sale now: A four-bedroom detached house with a large back yard for \$725,000.

Tysons



Rendering of Tysons by Landdesign.

The area will be unrecognizable by 2050—the year Fairfax County says Tysons will boast 200,000 workers and 100,000 residents (up from 117,000 workers and 20,000 residents today). Already, the pace of change is breathtaking. Four new Silver Line stops and a dozen residential and commercial buildings have arrived in the last four years. Capital One Tower, the tallest building in the metropolitan area after the Washington Monument, is quickly rising by the McLean Metro, where a Wegmans is also expected to open in 2020. Four million square feet of residences, offices, and shops are destined for the acreage surrounding the Greensboro station, including a flagship Whole Foods and a 15-screen movie theater.

For sale now: A four-bedroom townhouse a half mile from the Greensboro Metro for \$750,000.

Wheaton



Rendering of Wheaton by Gensler.

The suburb on the Red Line's eastern side is probably best known as a mecca for strip malls with great ethnic food, but Montgomery County has designs on turning it into a walkable downtown. Within the next couple of years, a revitalization plan calls for remaking a huge surface parking lot at its center into a town square with offices for several county agencies. On nearby Georgia Avenue, a new recreation center and library will give neighbors state-of-the-art hangouts. Already, a major renovation at Westfield Wheaton (once Wheaton Plaza) brought Costco and a high-end AMC movie theater to the nearly 60-year-old mall. Meanwhile, the area's still-reasonable real-estate prices and proximity to Silver Spring, Bethesda, and Rockville are drawing more residents.

For sale now: An updated 1950s Cape Cod with four bedrooms for \$460,000.

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**An earlier version of this story incorrectly identified Hill East's location as Northeast DC.*

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