

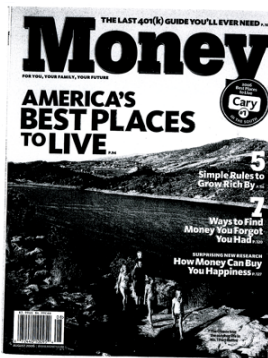
# CARY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## America's Best Places to Live

Money Magazine August, 2006

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2006/snapshots/PL3710740.html>



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flour-milling center. Almost 200 years later and not five miles down the road, legendary developer Jim Rouse began to develop Columbia as an improved alternative to cookie-cutter suburbs. Today the 160,000 residents of the neighboring communities reap the benefits of the old and new visions: Ellicott City has grand homes and a charming downtown. Columbia has park space totaling more than a third of the community's 14,000 acres, a wide selection of townhomes and apartments, and a mall that's got everything. Because the cities aren't incorporated, they share in the bounty provided by Howard County. Kids are schooled in Maryland's top-performing district, where they continually score up to 50% above average on state tests. There's a major music venue, the Merriweather Post Pavilion, in Columbia, and the county runs a 30,000-square foot arts center as well as a center for African-American culture, both located in Columbia.

There are ample employment options for residents: About a third of them work within the county at companies such as

Verizon and the Johns Hopkins-affiliated Howard County General Hospital, while the remainder commute to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. "These communities offer pretty much everything you need to create quality of life," says Marion Berman, 55, who opened her art gallery at the Mall in Columbia in 1981. When it came time to expand, she moved Gallery 44 to Ellicott City. "It's a great place to work, and an even better place to live."

Columbia, one of the most racially diverse cities on our list, is 20% African American and 10% Asian. Alma Gill, 42, says she and her husband chose to move here 10 years ago, even though their old home in Alexandria, Va. was closer to her job at USA Today. "We wanted our son to grow up in an area where there are people from everywhere," Gill says, "in a place that is accepting of everyone."

**5 Cary, N.C.**  
BEST OF THE SOUTH

POPULATION:	106,400
TYPICAL SINGLE-FAMILY HOME:	\$250,000
EST. PROPERTY TAXES:	\$2,900

- **PROS** Great schools; good arts scene
- **CON** Road crews everywhere

People come to the Research Triangle area for opportunity. They settle in Cary because they can't believe how pretty the place is. "We drove around and we loved the terrain," says Wendy Diard, 42, who moved here 12 years ago with her husband Jess and their seven-month-old baby. "It was hilly and beautifully wooded." The Diards now have four children, with a fifth on the way, and they're never at a loss for something to

**Columbia/Ellicott City, Md.**  
Columbia has 40 ponds and lakes spread throughout the city.



**Cary, N.C.** Fireworks at the Roka Booth Amphitheatre in Regency Park