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places to live

Sherwood Forest vs. Reston Clarendon/Ballston vs. Silver Spring
Avenel vs. Dominion Valley Howard vs. Loudoun Georgetown vs. Old Town
AU Park vs. Country Club Hills Bowie vs. Fairfax City Bethesda vs. McLean
Mount Pleasant vs. Takoma Park Federal Hill vs. Capitol Hill

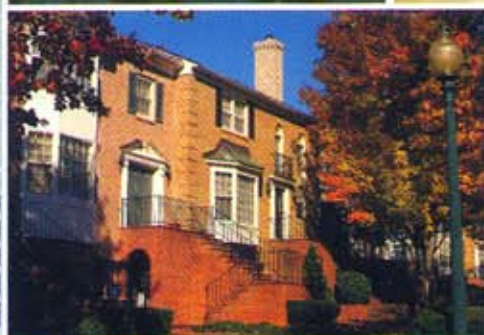
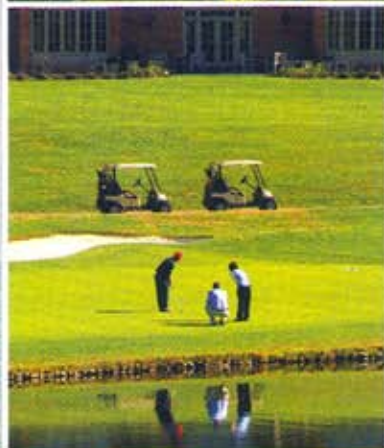


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Fairway to Heaven

Two decades and 35 miles separate Avenel and Dominion Valley, two neighborhoods built around fine golf courses. Avenel is one of Washington's prestige addresses, a Potomac development from the 1980s that has been named one of the nation's 100 best golf communities. Dominion Valley—a new planned community called Prince William County's best by the local building industry—is the exurban upstart, a gated neighborhood near Haymarket that overlooks the Bull Run Mountains.

« Avenel

Who Lives Here: Avenel draws heavy hitters—business execs, developers, diplomats, doctors, lawyers, and car dealers among them. Residents say it's a family-friendly place: "We were welcomed by our neighbors with cookies and phone numbers of potential babysitters," says Scott Becker, whose young family moved here in 2003.

Homefront: The brick, stone, and stucco homes include light-filled townhouses, Cape Cods and Colonials, and even some traditional-leaning contemporaries. Interiors often feature grand master suites and lavish media rooms. Two-acre-plus lots sit on the perimeter of the neighborhood.

For sale: Single-family homes range from about \$1.5 million to \$10 million, says real-estate agent and resident Nancy Shahin Itteilag. Townhouses start at about \$1 million. Fifty small Cape Cods sell in the mid-\$500,000s. A seven-bedroom Colonial with indoor and outdoor pools recently listed for \$4 million.

Meet you at the club: TPC Avenel, a golf club that weaves through the neighborhood, invites new residents to join as golf (\$45,000 initiation) or social (\$1,500) members and come to happy hours and family dinners. Some residents gather for sports and socials at nearby Congressional Country Club.

Big events: Backyard barbecues during the Booz Allen Classic PGA golf tournament. With the golf club starting renovations that will close the course, no tournaments are planned until 2009.

Draws: The bucolic setting and the schools. Neighborhood kids attend highly touted Whitman and Churchill high schools and nearby private schools such as Norwood, Holy Child, and Bullis.

