

The University of Maryland's Independent Student Newspaper

THE DIAMONDBACK

SPRING 2022 HOUSING GUIDE



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THE DIAMONDBACK

*Founded 1910,
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since 1971.*

ZOE PIERCE
Editor in chief

3150 S. Campus Dining Hall,
College Park, Md., 20742
(301) 314-8200

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Ethan Tuttle
Advertising Manager

WRITTEN BY:
Ella Sherman
Grace Yarrow
Shreya Vuttaluru
Victoria Stavish

COPY EDITED BY:
Ella Sherman
Gabrielle Lewis
Nataraj Shivaprasad
Devon Milley

DESIGNED BY:
Ogenna Umeozulu
Vincent Petroni
Jenna Bloom
Hanna Zakharenko

**PHOTO
EDITING BY:**
Julia Nikhinson

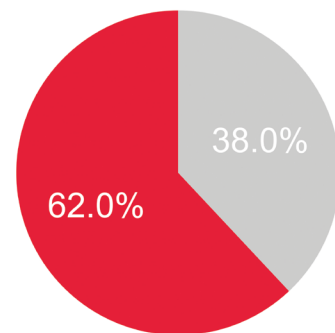
**FRONT COVER
PHOTO BY:**
Julia Nikhinson

**BACK COVER
PHOTO BY:**
Joe Ryan

We made Instagram story polls at the beginning of the semester to find out what people liked around campus — here are the results:

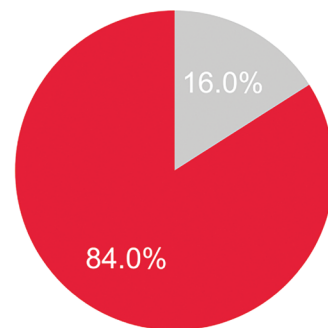
What's the better dining hall?

● 251 North ● the North Campus Dining Hall



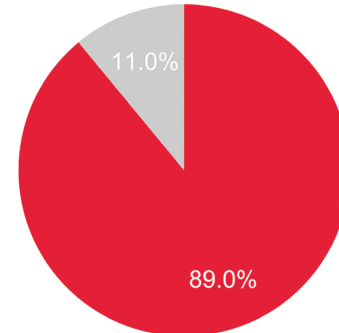
Which one do you like better being in Stamp?

● Roy Rogers ● McDonald's



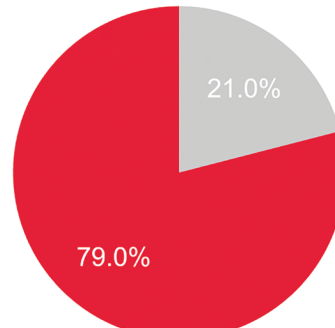
Where would you rather work out?

● Eppley Recreation Center ● Ritchie Coliseum



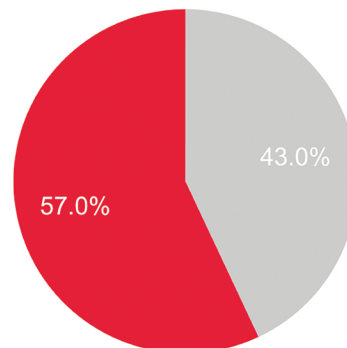
Which is the better place to study or hang out outside?

● Washington Quad ● McKeldin Mall



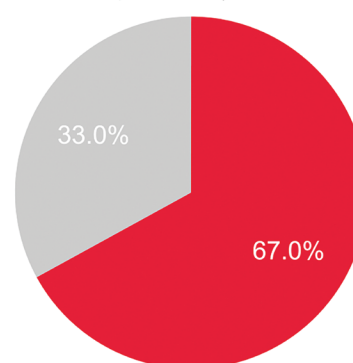
What's the better study spot?

● McKeldin Library ● ESJ



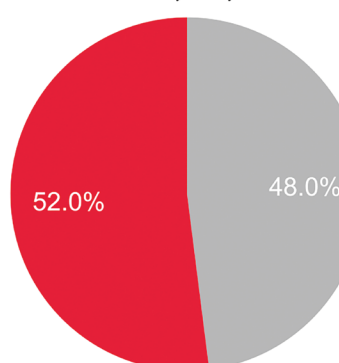
Better place to see a game?

● Xfinity Center ● Maryland Stadium



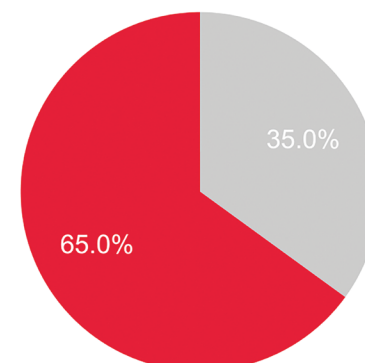
Who's the better campus horse?

● Remy ● Odyn



South Campus or North Campus?

● North Campus ● South Campus



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COMMITTEE SEEKS \$3M FROM COLLEGE PARK COUNCIL FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP PROJECT

A College Park City-University Partnership committee plans to use the funds to promote neighborhood stabilization and accessible housing.

By Grace Yarrow | @YarrowGrace | Staff writer



A ROW OF HOUSES in College Park's Old Town neighborhood on Jan. 25, 2022. A subcommittee of the College Park City-University Partnership wants to start a housing trust to promote homeownership in neighborhoods where homeownership is low. DARYL PERRY/THE DIAMONDBACK

How the shared equity will be split between the trust and homebuyer has not been decided yet, Kennedy said. The committee will present more details of the project to the College Park City Council in February or March.

The committee is actively looking for additional funding outside of the city council from the University of Maryland, Prince George's County, the state of Maryland and the federal government outside of ARPA.

However, Kennedy noted the neighborhood stabilization and housing trust does not necessarily address the need for more affordable rental housing in College Park. Megha Sevalia, the SGA College Park City Council liaison, said she hopes students are included in the neighborhood stabilization process.

"Overall, this isn't really a student housing project," Sevalia said. "But I am invested in ensuring that the parameters that are set for the project do not exclude students preemptively."

Kennedy said the College Park City Council plans to create a separate program to assist students in finding

The College Park City-University Partnership is asking for support from the city council to proceed with a neighborhood stabilization project that would create more accessible, affordable housing and increase homeownership in the city.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported the homeownership at 65.4 percent for the third quarter of 2021, 2 percent lower from 2020's third quarter. In some areas of College Park, such as Old Town, only about 20 percent of properties are owner-occupied.

"It's really important for homeowners to feel connected to the community ... the percentage of homeowners helps build a really strong community," said District 1 councilmember Kate Kennedy. Kennedy is also the chair of the College Park City-University Partnership's Neighborhood Preservation and Development committee.

The project will likely require around \$9 million or \$10 million to launch, Kennedy said during a Jan. 11 city council meeting.

To help reach that amount, Kennedy said the committee is asking for \$3 million from the College Park City Council to provide financial support for organizing the neighborhood stabilization and housing trust.

That \$3 million would come from the city's American Rescue Plan Act funding, a \$22 million COVID-19 pandemic relief check College Park received from the federal government.

Kennedy said during the meeting that the plan would allow College Park's graduate students, families, young professionals and seniors to have more access to housing.

To achieve accessibility, the housing trust will arrange shared equity with the homebuyer. This means when someone in the program buys a property, the trust buys into it as well. This way when the house is sold, both the homeowner and the trust receive a profit.

To receive financial assistance, homebuyers' total household income must be roughly under \$180,000. Kennedy said different levels of support will be offered based on participants' income levels.

After agreeing to share equity with the housing trust, homeowners must live on the property to ensure the home doesn't become another rental. When homeowners decide to sell the house, the trust has the first option to purchase and sell the house to a new qualified owner.

affordable housing, with a more long-term timeline. The hope is with a more stable market base in the community, local businesses will become stronger, Kennedy said.

Kennedy added that if professors and university employees can afford a house near the university, it will cut back on traffic and pollution.

District 4 councilmember Denise Mitchell said she was looking forward to more details about the neighborhood stabilization, reassuring residents changes to housing won't happen quickly.

"There's a lot of things we have to do internal to create and solidify what the concept will be," Mitchell said. College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn said he is supportive of allocating the \$3 million to help the project and is awaiting more details from the committee.

"I think it seems like a really intriguing tool that we could use to accomplish a lot of different city objectives," Wojahn said. "I think we're eager to hear more."

HOUSING RESOURCES

WHERE TO FIND OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING:

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING DATABASE

The university's online database for off-campus housing provides the latest house and apartment vacancies around the campus. With your student account, you can add a listing or look for a roommate while providing a roommate profile of your own.

FACEBOOK

On select University of Maryland student Facebook groups, you can find student subletters and students looking for roommates. A comment or direct message showing interest could put you in contact with the individual who's listing.

REAL ESTATE MARKETPLACES

Online real estate marketplaces offer listings for entire apartments and houses in College Park. Many allow you to filter out listings by price range, amenities and more. Some offer maps so you can figure out a property's proximity to this university's campus.

RENTER'S INSURANCE INFORMATION:

Renter's insurance can protect you from a liability lawsuit as well as your personal property when unexpected events such as fires, flooding or vandalism occur, depending on the policy.

Many major insurance companies hold renter's insurance policies.

The average cost of renter's insurance was \$14.90 per month in 2021, according to Business Insider.

You may also be covered by your parents' insurance depending on their policy.

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NEW APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION SPARKS FRUSTRATION, REKINDLES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY WORRIES

As newer housing options grow, students' concern for affordable housing does too.

By Shreya Vuttaluru | @shreyavut | Staff writer

New apartments in the works on Knox and Hartwick Road will bring businesses and housing to College Park, but some students are taking issue with disruptions the construction is causing.

Four private student housing projects have recently broken ground on Knox and Hartwick Road, including Union and Knox, The Hub, Aspen Heights and The Standard. All of them are expected to be delivered in 2023 and 2024.

Another project, the Aster by Bozzuto and Terrapin Development Company, is not specifically aimed at students, but will include a grocer on the floor, according to Ken Ulman, president of Terrapin Development Company.

The increase in housing construction is a product of the successes of Terrapin Row and South Campus Commons apartments. The city of College Park and University of Maryland want to see more students living closer to campus and within walking distance of the College Park Metro Station, Ulman said.

"It's really a part of a strategy to have more student housing on that side

of the road, so that it's easier for students to walk to campus," he said. "And frankly to take some pressure off of the Old Town and Calvert Hills neighborhoods."

But the incessant noise that starts in the early hours of the morning is exasperating for students such as Sophia Kotschoubey, who lives in Allegany Hall. The building is adjacent to construction for The Hub. There has also been an increase in the amount of dust in the air, she said, making it difficult to breathe while she walks to class.

"It's driving me nuts," the sophomore environmental science and policy major said.

Aside from complaints about noise throughout the day, other students are also concerned about overdevelopment and the sheer number of construction projects occurring at the same time.

Daniel Ben-Or, a senior computer science and finance major who lives in College Park Towers on Hartwick Road, isn't necessarily opposed to development, but is worried about the magnitude of current projects, which are dis-



FOUR PRIVATE STUDENT HOUSING PROJECTS broke ground on Knox and Hartwick Road. JULIA NIKHINSON/THE DIAMONDBACK

rupting student life, he said.

This is especially true considering the construction is happening all at the same time, and the buildings won't open for another two years.

"The people who are most affected by it — people living in off-campus housing — are the ones that constantly have to deal with noise and reap none of the benefits of lowered cost of rent, hopefully from more supply," Ben-Or said.

The idea of increased supply leveling out currently skyrocketing housing prices isn't new. Ulman, who also serves as chief strategy officer for economic development at the University of Maryland College Park Foundation — which created Terrapin Development Company — also

hopes that the injection of almost 4,000 new beds into the housing market will help moderate pricing.

"We're also very focused on finding ways to enable more affordable units," Ulman said. "We're constantly look-

ing at tools of how we can help work on affordability." Still, some students aren't sure these new additions will help address the affordable housing problem in the city. Kotschoubey thinks that prices likely won't go down even when new apartments come online, and that the businesses that come into first-floor retail units will be bigger chains.

"The last thing that College Park needs is more luxury housing. I think we need more affordable housing for students, and I kind of have a hunch that this is not going to be affordable housing," she said.

Ulman understands that the construction can feel like a lot, especially given the continued construction on Route 1.

"We're all feeling it," he said. "I think we're confident that it's in the long term interest of our vision."

But students such as Garrett Hill don't seem to be buying into that vision. The senior computer science major believes that the new housing additions won't be affordable or available for students, and that developers and landlords don't have the interests of students or small businesses at heart, pointing to the closing of Bagel Place and the movement of Marathon Deli.

"It's not just the construction issue," Hill said. "They're all symptoms of a university and a development system that puts profit over people."



UMD PLANS TO INCLUDE UNLIMITED LAUNDRY IN HOUSING COSTS NEXT FALL

The Residential Facilities Department intends to readjust its current budget to include laundry fees in housing costs for unlimited service beginning fall 2022.

By Victoria Stavish | @victoriastavis | Staff writer

A STUDENT does his laundry in the Easton Hall laundry room on Nov. 14, 2021. AUTUMN HENGEN/THE DIAMONDBACK

The University of Maryland residential facilities department is planning to include laundry fees in housing costs for unlimited service beginning fall 2022, according to Andrea Crabb, residential facilities director.

The university plans to readjust its current budget that will result in no added cost to students living on the campus.

The university's current laundry contract with CSC ServiceWorks will end at the commencement of the spring 2022 semester after 10 years, Crabb said.

Under the current program, it costs \$3 to wash and dry one load, but the new contract is set to be designed to allow on-campus students unlimited access to laundry facilities without having to pay per load, Crabb said.

"We heard loud and clear that it's really hard to pay for laundry one load at a time when you're already paying on top of your housing fee," Crabb said.

During the spring 2022 semester, residential facilities will allow new companies to submit bids to enroll in a new contract with the school, she said.

The Residential Facilities Advisory Board, a body comprised of senators from the Residence Hall Association, brought the idea to the residential facilities team in the 2019 academic year, Crabb said. The RHA also passed a resolution in May in support of an unlimited laundry program.

"I think it's just beneficial to everyone," Crabb said. "[These are] the student fees and if the students want to use the fees in this manner then absolutely, that's what

we're gonna do."

The RHA researched other Big Ten schools that had similar laundry contracts and also conducted a survey of more than 500 students on their laundry facilities use and preferences.

The survey found about 73 percent of students who do not do their laundry on the campus do so because they find it too expensive.

Jason Spizuoco, RHA vice president, helped conduct the survey of student laundry facility use and preference, and said he thinks the change to unlimited laundry service will make the process less stressful for students.

"A lot of times [students] have issues paying for laundry, like the Terrapin Express doesn't work, coin machines don't work, all that kind of stuff. And it's just a really big hassle," Spizuoco said.

Alexander Lee, a sophomore biochemistry major, agreed with Spizuoco.

"I think having to pay for laundry every single time, it's kind of a hassle, kind of annoying," Lee said. "But a one-time payment that's incorporated into housing, I think that would be beneficial."

Risa Wagner, a freshman government and politics and history major said while she knows people who have unlimited laundry service at other schools, she thinks it might be, "a little bit wasteful in terms of water."

Meanwhile, Jaime Quinn, a sophomore civil engineering major, said the unlim-

ited service could alleviate some payment concerns.

"It'd be easier because I'm always worried

about if I have enough money on my [Terrapin Express] card to pay for laundry," she said.

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