

When it's interpreted, data can produce man-bites-dog stories that jump out of their pixels, like this one for Local America's demo project covering metro Washington, D.C.

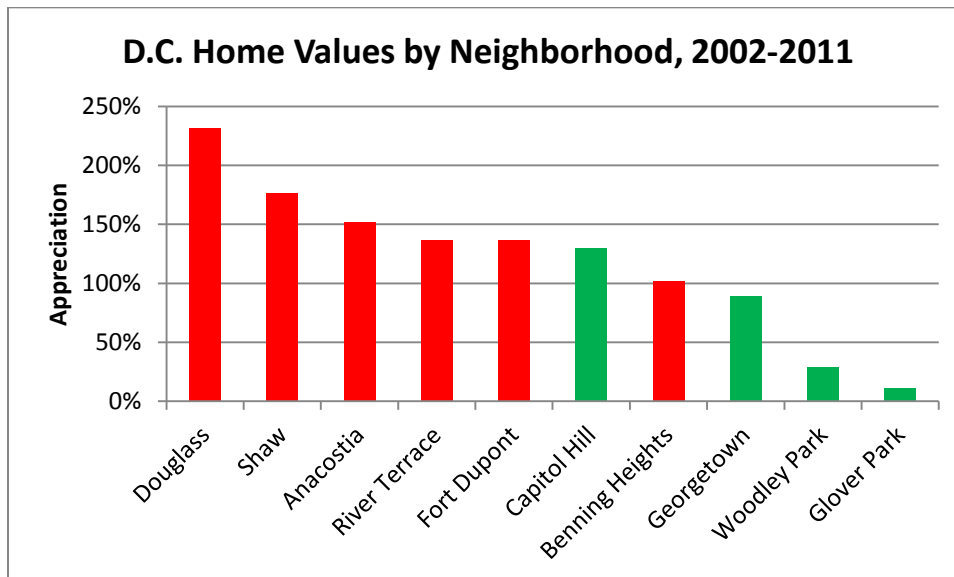
D.C.'s Poorest Wards Lead in Home Value Gains

The District of Columbia gets the highest housing grade in metro Washington – B+, and the city's poorest wards made this happen. Neighborhoods in those wards – 7 and 8 – generated the biggest increases in home values over the last 10 years.

How did Douglass, Anacostia and Fort Dupont – home to some of the District's poorest people – rank, respectively, Nos. 1, 3 and 5 in home value increases – higher than the affluent neighborhoods like Georgetown, Woodley Park and Glover Park?

To find out, Local America dug deeply into housing data covering the 10 years from 2002 to 2011. We sorted and filtered the metrics, and then cranked them, weighted by strength, into our algorithm. The end result, with feedback from the community, produced the B+. Here's the visualization that provides the comparative details neighborhood to neighborhood.

What do you think? *Grade the grade.*



Four out of five of the neighborhoods with the highest increase in home values are in Wards 7 and 8 (in the Anacostia section of the city), Local America data analysis shows. The fifth neighborhood – Shaw – is a formerly poor neighborhood west of Logan Circle that's been gentrified by mostly younger whites over the past decade.

Without the strong home value increases in Wards 7 and 8, and the weighting of those numbers, D.C.'s housing grade would have been, at best, a C+. Go to our Housing page to see their comments and stories on how their neighborhoods are being transformed.

We asked a resident of mostly affluent Hillcrest Heights in Ward 7 who happens to be District Mayor Vincent C. Gray, how it happened:

[placeholder quote] “Poverty is still the story of too many blacks in the District. But by striving, by getting educated, by finding jobs, many blacks, including especially in Wards 7 and 8, are reaching into the middle class. This helps to stabilize and improve neighborhoods, particularly in Douglass, Anacostia and Fort Dupont. River Terrace is benefiting from the recent development of middle-class condos. Now we have to work harder than ever to create opportunities for those 25% to 35% who are still the poorest.”