



THE WAKE COUNTY CITY GUIDES

A RAILROAD TOWN, ALL GROWN UP

CARY CITY GUIDE

Polished, parks-obsessed, and right in the middle of everything.

History, neighborhoods, taxes, favorite spots, and the honest stuff locals wish they'd known. Everything you need to decide if Cary is your place.



~175K

Residents, NC's 7th-largest municipality (2020 Census)

\$627,500

Median sale price, August 2026

0.9046

2026 combined tax rate per \$100 (Wake County + Town)

Rich Burghgraef, REALTOR®

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RICH'S TAKE

Why people fall for Cary

Cary is the Triangle's great in-between. It's minutes from RTP, RDU, Raleigh, and even Durham, so a lot of people pick it simply because it makes every commute easier.

Then they stay for how well it runs. The parks are beautiful, the greenways connect everything, the streets are clean, and there's always a concert, festival, or game going on somewhere in town.

People who love Cary usually want **convenience and polish**: an easy commute, great amenities, and a town that takes care of the details.

Rich Burghgraef



WHO?

How Cary got its name

Founder Frank Page named the town after Samuel Fenton Cary, an Ohio congressman and national temperance leader Page admired. That's why the town started out dry.

Cary in six moments

1750s

Travelers stop at Bradford's Ordinary, an early settlement and inn on the road to Hillsborough.

1854

Frank Page buys 300 acres along the new North Carolina Railroad for \$2,000.

1871

Cary is incorporated on April 3 with Page as its first mayor.

1907

Cary High School becomes the state's first state-funded public high school.

1964

The town's original ban on alcohol sales finally ends.

Today

Cary has grown to roughly 175,000 people, the seventh-largest municipality in NC.

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW

Six true facts to impress your new neighbors

1871

Born a dry town

Cary's 1871 charter banned the sale of whiskey in town and for two miles around it. The ban lasted until 1964.

1907

A statewide first

Cary High School became North Carolina's first state-funded public high school in 1907. Its 1913 brick building is now the Cary Arts Center.

1868

A hotel for train riders

Founder Frank Page built a hotel for railroad passengers. Today it's the Page-Walker Arts & History Center.

3

One town, three counties

Most of Cary is in Wake County, but parts reach into Chatham and Durham counties.

Carey?

The typo that stuck around

A clerical error once spelled the town "Carey." It was corrected, but the misspelling lived on for years on signs and maps.

310

A park with its own lake

Fred G. Bond Metro Park covers 310 acres, with a lake, boat rentals, trails, and ballfields.

Signature traditions

SPRING

Spring Daze

A long-running spring arts and crafts festival at Bond Park, with artists, food, and live music.

WINTER

NC Chinese Lantern Festival

Koka Booth Amphitheatre glows with giant handmade lantern displays through the holiday season.

SUMMER

Concerts at Koka Booth

An outdoor amphitheater on Symphony Lake hosting concerts, movies, and the NC Symphony's summer series.

SEASONAL

Pro soccer at WakeMed Soccer Park

Home to North Carolina FC and the NC Courage, and a regular host of major college soccer events.

WHERE TO LIVE

Cary's neighborhoods at a glance

Cary grew outward from its historic downtown, so you can often guess a home's age by how far west it sits. Here's the lay of the land.

HISTORIC

Downtown Cary

Older homes and new townhomes near Downtown Cary Park, the Cary Arts Center, the library, and a growing lineup of restaurants.

Walkable pockets Historic Events

GOLF & CLUBS

Preston

Established neighborhoods built around golf and country club living, with mature trees and larger homes.

Golf Established Larger homes

LAKESIDE

MacGregor Downs & Lochmere

Established neighborhoods with lakes, walking trails, and golf, close to shopping on the south side of town.

Lakes Trails Established

VILLAGE STYLE

Carpenter Village

A walkable, front-porch style community with its own village center of shops and restaurants.

Walkable Front porches Village center

WEST CARY

Amberly & Green Level

Newer communities with amenity centers, pools, and trails, and quick access to NC-540 and RTP.

Newer homes Amenities Near RTP

CHATHAM SIDE

Western Cary in Chatham County

Newer construction on Cary's western edge. Same town services, different county tax rate.

New construction Space Chatham County

RICH'S TIP

Part of Cary sits in Chatham County, where the county tax rate is higher than Wake's. Same town, same services, different tax bill. I'll always tell you which county a home is in before you fall for it.

Quick match: which Cary sounds like you?

Want to walk to dinner?

Start with Downtown Cary or Carpenter Village.

Love to golf?

Look at Preston and MacGregor Downs.

Want water views?

Lochmere and MacGregor Downs have lakes and trails.

Want brand new?

West Cary, Green Level, and the Chatham side.

Commute to RTP?

North and west Cary put you closest to I-40 and NC-540.

Fly a lot?

North Cary is a quick hop to RDU.

LIVING HERE

The practical stuff

\$627,500

Median sale price, Aug 2026

\$253

Median sold price per square foot

19 days

Median days on market

~\$4,091

Est. 2026 taxes on a \$450K home in Wake, incl. \$20 fee

THE MONEY

Property taxes

In Wake County: 0.5371 county plus 0.3675 town = 0.9046 per \$100 for 2026. On the Chatham County side: 0.60 county plus 0.3675 town = 0.9675. Vehicles are taxed annually too.

ROADS & TRANSIT

Getting around

I-40, US-1/US-64, NC-55, and the NC-540 Triangle Expressway (a toll road) ring the town. Amtrak stops downtown, and GoCary runs local buses.

WHO TO CALL

Utilities

Water, sewer, trash, and recycling: Town of Cary.
Electric: Duke Energy. Natural gas: Enbridge Gas North Carolina.

HOW IT WORKS

Schools

Most of Cary is served by the Wake County Public School System, and homes on the Chatham side are in Chatham County Schools. Always check the official address lookup for any home you're considering.

What locals wish they'd known

The honest bit

- ✗ Cary is car-first. Downtown and a few village-style neighborhoods are walkable, most aren't.
- ✗ Prices run higher than much of Wake County, so budgets stretch less here.
- ✗ NC-540 is a toll road. It's fast, but set up an NC Quick Pass.
- ✗ The town is careful about development, so expect rules on signs, trees, and HOAs.

Thinking of selling in Cary?

- ♥ Cary homes are moving fast right now, with a 19-day median.
- ♥ See what you'd walk away with using my free Seller Net Sheet calculator.
- ♥ Ask me for a Customized Pricing & Strategy Report.

Median price, price per square foot, and days on market for Cary from Doorify MLS (August 2026). Tax rates from Wake County Tax Administration and Chatham County (2026). Population from the 2020 Census.

LOVING IT HERE

How Cary spends a Saturday

PARKS

Downtown Cary Park

The town's newest showpiece, with gardens, a playground, a dog park, and events all year, steps from downtown restaurants.

OUTDOORS

Fred G. Bond Metro Park

310 acres with a lake, boat rentals, trails, and ballfields. A Cary classic.

OUTDOORS

The greenways

Cary's greenway network connects parks and neighborhoods across town, including trails around Lake Crabtree nearby.

SPORTS

Game day

Pro soccer at WakeMed Soccer Park, and top amateur baseball at the USA Baseball National Training Complex.

A perfect Saturday in Cary

MORNING Coffee at Rich's pick, then a walk around Downtown Cary Park.

MIDDAY Lunch downtown, then a peek into the Page-Walker Arts & History Center.

AFTERNOON Rent a paddleboat at Bond Park or ride the greenway.

EVENING A concert at Koka Booth Amphitheatre on Symphony Lake, then dinner at Rich's pick.

Rich's Picks

Coffee

Rich to add

Dinner

Rich to add

Outdoors

Rich to add

THINKING ABOUT CARY?

Let's find your place in Cary.

Historic downtown, lakeside, golf course, or brand new on the west side. I'll help you figure out which Cary fits your life, and then find the home.

We do it RIGHT the first time, in every corner of Cary.

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**SCAN TO BOOK
A CARY
STRATEGY CALL**



Figures as of September 2026 and subject to change. Neighborhood descriptions reflect housing and amenities, not the people who live there. Confirm school assignment and tax details for any address. Rich Burghgraef Realty Powered by LPT Realty.



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