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### **Region ranked No. 1 for academic research**

By Jamie Smith Hopkins

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With rising incomes, a concentration of doctors and lots of heavy-duty academic research, the Baltimore metro area continues to look more like well-off, white-collar regions than its old Rust Belt peers, says a report issued today by two local groups.

This year's State of the Region report, the fifth since 1998, is the first that did not rank the Baltimore area worst on violent crime versus the other 19 metros with which it is compared. Charlotte, N.C., took that spot, its crime rate worsening as Baltimore's improved.

The report was released by the **Greater Baltimore Committee**, a business and civic leadership group that promotes regionalism, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the organization of the region's elected officials.

The Baltimore metro area ranked first for academic research-and-development spending, almost \$1.9 billion in 2005. It was second for its 6.3 percent average annual increase in personal income per person from 2003 to 2005. And it was third for its sheer number of physicians -- more than 500 for every 100,000 residents.

But it was 18th out of 20 on a measure of traffic frustration. It takes the average Baltimore resident nearly 30 minutes to get to work, with only Atlanta and Washington requiring more time.

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