



DESTINATION DENVER COLORADO · RELOCATION GUIDE

Moving to Lakewood, Colorado

The honest version: the trade-offs, the costs that surprise people, where buyers actually land, and how to plan a move from another state.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Lakewood is Colorado's fifth-largest city, directly west of Denver in Jefferson County, where the metro meets the foothills. It suits buyers who want quick mountain access, established neighborhoods with mature trees, Jeffco schools and an easy commute to downtown by 6th Avenue or the W Line. Most homes are older, so budget for updates and inspect carefully, and expect little new construction.

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Is Lakewood the right fit for you?

The first thing to know about Lakewood is how big it is. This isn't a suburb you can understand by driving through a couple of neighborhoods. It stretches from the edge of Denver all the way to the foothills, and where you land changes everything. Up on the northeast edge, along the Edgewater line and just west of Denver's Sloan's Lake, you're in a walkable, close-to-the-city pocket with a lot to do. I own a townhome right in that area. Head farther out and you reach neighborhoods like Green Mountain, with a completely different, more spread-out feel against the hills. Same city, very different lifestyles. So when someone tells you what Lakewood is like, the honest answer is: which part?

Lakewood is Colorado's fifth-largest city, with about 157,000 people (2024 Census estimate), sitting directly west of Denver in Jefferson County. It is where the metro meets the foothills: Green Mountain rises inside the city limits, and the mountains are a short drive from almost any street. Much of it was built in the post-war boom, especially the 1960s, so it reads as established suburbia rather than new subdivisions. Mature trees, ranch homes and split-levels, a walkable town center at Belmar, and a light rail line into downtown.

It suits people who want mountain access without giving up a reasonable commute into Denver, who like an older home with a yard over a brand-new build, and who want parks and trails close to home. It suits people less well if they want the newest construction, a large lot at a lower price, or a dense, walkable urban neighborhood outside of Belmar.

Why people choose Lakewood

- Some of the fastest access to the foothills and I-70 of any large suburb
- Two huge parks inside the city: William F. Hayden Park on Green Mountain and Bear Creek Lake Park, each more than 2,400 acres
- The W Line light rail runs through the city to Union Station
- Belmar is the closest thing Lakewood has to a downtown, with shops, restaurants, a theater and housing
- Mostly established neighborhoods with mature trees and fewer HOAs than newer suburbs

What gives people pause

- Much of the housing stock dates from the post-war boom, especially the 1960s, so inspections, sewer lines and updates matter
- Not much new construction, and competition for well-kept homes near the foothills
- West Colfax and some east-side corridors are busier and grittier than the rest of the city
- Hail and insurance costs, same as the rest of the Front Range

Where is Lakewood, and how do you get around?

Lakewood runs from the Denver city line on the east to the hogback and the foothills on the west, between roughly Colfax Avenue on the north and the C-470 and Bear Creek area on the south. The city sits at about 5,650 feet.

- **Into Denver:** 6th Avenue (US-6) is the main freeway into downtown. Off-peak it's a short drive; at rush hour, plan for real traffic.
- **Light rail:** the W Line crosses the city with stations at Sheridan (on the Denver line), Lamar, Lakewood–Wadsworth, Garrison, Oak, Federal Center and Red Rocks College, then continues to Golden. Eastbound, it runs to Union Station downtown.
- **South and west:** C-470 connects Lakewood to the south metro and to I-70 at the foothills.
- **The mountains:** I-70 is minutes from west Lakewood, which is a big reason outdoor-minded buyers end up here.
- **The airport:** Denver International sits on the far east side of the metro, so from Lakewood plan on one of the longer airport drives in the metro, or take the W Line to Union Station and transfer to the A Line.

What are Lakewood's neighborhoods like?

Lakewood is big, and it changes a lot from east to west. A few areas buyers ask about most:

Belmar

Lakewood's town center, opened in 2004 on the site of the old Villa Italia Mall. Shops, restaurants, a movie theater, offices, and condos, apartments and townhomes within walking distance. The closest thing Lakewood has to an urban neighborhood.

Green Mountain

West Lakewood, on and around the slopes of Green Mountain. Mostly 1970s and 1980s homes, many with views, and the trails of William F. Hayden Park out the back door. One of the most sought-after parts of the city.

Solterra and the southwest

Newer, master-planned homes on the south side of Green Mountain near C-470, with mountain and city views. As with most newer communities, ask about HOA dues and metro district taxes.

Bear Creek area

Southern Lakewood near Bear Creek Lake Park and the Bear Creek trail. Established neighborhoods, larger lots in places, and quick access to C-470.

Central Lakewood

The area around Wadsworth, Alameda and the Federal Center. Classic post-war ranches and split-levels, close to Belmar and the W Line. Often a more attainable entry point into the city.

East Lakewood and Two Creeks

Next to the Denver line and the W Line's east-side stations. Smaller, older homes, quick access to downtown, and a neighborhood that has seen a lot of remodeling and rebuilding.

North Lakewood and West Colfax

Along the West Colfax corridor. Older homes and a mix of businesses, some of it gritty and some of it changing quickly. Look block by block.

As of 2026, the areas my buyers pick most are Green Mountain, which is a hot spot, Solterra, which is extremely popular, and the area around Belmar.

What does it cost to own a home in Lakewood?

Lakewood follows the same rules as the rest of the metro: know the whole monthly payment, not just the price. A few Lakewood-specific points:

- **Property tax** — Lakewood homes are taxed by Jefferson County. Look up the exact levy for any address on the Jefferson County Assessor's site.
- **HOA and metro district** — Many older Lakewood neighborhoods have no HOA and no metro district. Newer communities often have both, so ask on every newer home.
- **Insurance** — Hail is the big driver here, as everywhere on the Front Range. Homes near open space on the west side may also see wildfire questions from insurers. Get a quote before your offer.
- **Sales tax** — As of 2026, Lakewood's combined sales tax rate is lower than Denver's, which adds up over a year of everyday purchases.
- **Older-home costs** — With so much of the city built in the post-war boom, especially the 1960s, budget for a sewer scope, roof age, electrical panels, windows and radon mitigation.

What kinds of homes are in Lakewood?

Mostly single-family homes: post-war ranches, 1960s and 1970s split-levels and bi-levels, and some newer construction on the edges. Townhomes and condos cluster around Belmar, the W Line stations and the main corridors.

Zoning has been a live issue. In April 2026, Lakewood voters repealed a zoning overhaul that would have allowed duplexes and triplexes in many single-family neighborhoods. Most residential areas stay limited to single-family homes plus accessory dwelling units (ADUs). For buyers, that means neighborhoods are

likely to stay much as they are, and new housing supply will stay limited. If you're interested in adding an ADU, check the current city rules before you buy.

How do schools work in Lakewood?

Lakewood is served by Jeffco Public Schools, the second-largest district in Colorado. Jeffco offers neighborhood schools plus option and choice schools across the county, and families can apply to schools outside their boundary. Lakewood High School runs an International Baccalaureate program.

Like many metro districts, Jeffco has closed and consolidated schools since 2022 as enrollment has declined. Check the district's school-finder for any specific address, and check again close to your move.

What is there to do in Lakewood?

Parks and trails

William F. Hayden Park on Green Mountain covers more than 2,400 acres, with trails to the summit at about 6,800 feet and wide views of Denver and the Front Range. It's popular with hikers, runners and mountain bikers, and dogs must stay leashed. One odd bit of local history: pieces of pre-World War II artillery shells have turned up here, so the city warns visitors not to touch any suspicious metal object.

Bear Creek Lake Park covers 2,624 acres, with a reservoir for fishing and paddling, a swim beach in summer, a campground, an archery range, and miles of trails. There's a daily vehicle fee or an annual pass.

The **Bear Creek trail** runs east through the city, and Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre, Dinosaur Ridge and the foothills trailheads are just to the west.

Belmar and culture

Belmar is the hub for shopping, dining and the movie theater, with seasonal events through the year. Nearby, the Lakewood Cultural Center hosts performances and exhibits, and Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park is a 20th-century history park, museum and festival grounds with about fifteen historic buildings.

Three places I'd send you first

- **Belmar** — the easy place to start: shopping, restaurants and events in Lakewood's walkable center.
- **Green Mountain** — William Frederick Hayden Park, for the hike and the view that sells most people on living here.
- **Cafe Jordano** — family-run Italian on West Jewell Avenue that's been feeding Lakewood since the early 1990s. Old school in the best way.

Who are the big employers in and near Lakewood?

As of 2023, the **Denver Federal Center** is the city's largest employer, with thousands of federal workers, and it has its own W Line station. Other major employers include Jeffco Public Schools, the State of Colorado, St. Anthony Hospital, Terumo BCT and FirstBank, which is headquartered in Lakewood. The city is also home to Colorado Christian University, Red Rocks Community College and the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design.

For downtown Denver jobs, the W Line and 6th Avenue make Lakewood one of the easier suburban commutes. Jobs in the Denver Tech Center are a longer drive across the south metro.

How does Lakewood compare with nearby areas?

- **Lakewood vs. Denver** — More space and yard for the money, a lower sales tax, and faster mountain access, in exchange for a less urban feel outside Belmar.
- **Lakewood vs. Arvada** — Similar Jeffco schools and established neighborhoods. Arvada has Olde Town and more newer construction on its northwest edge; Lakewood is closer to the foothills and has the W Line through its center.
- **Lakewood vs. Golden** — Golden is smaller, more of a college and mountain town, and usually pricier for comparable homes. Lakewood offers more choice in housing and price.
- **Lakewood vs. Littleton** — Both are established and close to the foothills. Littleton leans south-metro, with access to the Tech Center; Lakewood leans west and toward downtown.

A native's take on Lakewood

I grew up in Lakewood, and for me it was always about the mountains, right there. We had gullies and open spaces all over to go adventure in as kids. Some of my favorite days were spent playing in the gullies behind Dunstan Middle School. A lot of those spots are housing now as the town has grown, but there's still so much to explore, and parks everywhere. The city now counts more than 110 of them. And then there's William Frederick Hayden Park on Green Mountain itself, this beautiful piece of the foothills we drive past every single day. You almost go oblivious to it, until someone visiting reminds you that you get to live where they came to vacation.

Buying in Lakewood: what to do first

1. **Get pre-approved** before you tour. Well-kept homes near the foothills and Belmar draw competition.
2. **Price the whole payment**, including Jefferson County property tax, insurance and any HOA or metro district.

3. **Inspect like it's an older home** — because it probably is. Add a sewer scope and radon test.
4. **Drive the commute at rush hour**, especially 6th Avenue into downtown or C-470 to the south metro.
5. **Check the school** on the Jeffco school-finder for the exact address.
6. **Veterans:** a VA loan works well in Lakewood, with no down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance.

Frequently asked questions

Is Lakewood part of Denver?

No. Lakewood is its own city in Jefferson County, directly west of Denver. It has its own city government, police and parks, and its schools are run by Jeffco Public Schools, not Denver Public Schools.

Is there light rail in Lakewood?

Yes. The W Line runs through Lakewood with stations including Lamar, Lakewood–Wadsworth, Garrison, Oak, Federal Center and Red Rocks College, and continues east to Union Station in downtown Denver.

What school district is Lakewood in?

Jeffco Public Schools (Jefferson County School District R-1). Check the district's school-finder for the specific address, since boundaries and school options change.

How close is Lakewood to the mountains?

Very close. Green Mountain is inside the city, and west Lakewood is minutes from the foothills, Red Rocks and I-70.

Are homes in Lakewood old?

Many are. Much of Lakewood was built in the post-war boom, especially the 1960s, with newer construction on the edges such as Solterra. Plan for a careful inspection, a sewer scope and a radon test on older homes.

Can you build duplexes or triplexes in Lakewood?

In most residential neighborhoods, no. In April 2026, voters repealed a zoning overhaul that would have allowed them, so most residential areas remain limited to single-family homes plus accessory dwelling units. Check the city's current rules for any specific lot.

What is Belmar?

Lakewood's town center, opened in 2004 on the site of the former Villa Italia Mall. It mixes shops, restaurants, a movie theater, offices and housing.

Sources

Guide reviewed October 16, 2026, and reviewed again twice a year.

- Lakewood, Colorado (2024 Census population estimate, 1960–1980 census growth, Heritage Lakewood, major employers as of the city’s 2023 annual report)
- City of Lakewood: William F. Hayden Park on Green Mountain
- City of Lakewood: Bear Creek Lake Park
- City of Lakewood: sales and use tax
- RTD W Line
- Belmar (Lakewood)
- Colorado Sun: Lakewood voters strike down pro-density zoning (April 2026)
- City of Lakewood: Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Westword: Cafe Jordano
- Sloan's Lake (in Denver, bordering Lakewood and Edgewater)
- City of Lakewood: Heritage Lakewood (20th-century history park, museum and festival grounds)
- Axios Denver: breaking down Denver's sales tax (July 2024; Denver's combined rate for comparison)
- Avalara: Denver combined sales tax rate (2026)
- Jefferson County Public Schools (second-largest district in Colorado)
- Denver7: Jeffco board votes to close 16 schools in consolidation move (November 2022)
- Lakewood High School: International Baccalaureate program
- RTD: Airport service (A Line from Union Station to Denver Airport Station)
- VA: purchase loan (no down payment, no PMI)

A note from Jimmy

I'm a mortgage loan originator with the Everetts Lending Team at Edge Home Finance, licensed across Colorado, and I make these guides because the first thing most people need isn't a loan; it's a straight answer about where they're going. When you're ready to talk numbers, or you just want a second opinion on a neighborhood, reach out.

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