



DESTINATION DENVER COLORADO · RELOCATION GUIDE

# Moving to Highlands Ranch, 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

Highlands Ranch is a master-planned community of roughly 100,000 people in unincorporated Douglas County, about 12 miles south of downtown Denver along C-470. It is not a city: there is no mayor or council, and services come from the Highlands Ranch Metro District, the Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA), the Douglas County Sheriff and South Metro Fire. It suits families who want four rec centers, 26 parks, 70-plus miles of trail and an 8,200-acre wilderness area built into the place they live, with Douglas County schools and a quick run to the Tech Center. It suits people less well if they want new construction, a walkable downtown, a light rail stop, nightlife, or a house with no HOA and no architectural review.

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## Is Highlands Ranch the right fit for you?

I'll start where I started in the video: Highlands Ranch is one of the most popular suburbs in the Denver metro, and one of the most misunderstood. A hundred thousand people live there and it isn't even a city. No mayor, no city council. It is still run by a master plan written in 1981 that controls everything right down to, in many cases, what you can do to your front door.

Here is what I tell people who want to explore it. Don't go look at a house. Go look at a Saturday. Four rec centers packed with people, pools spread out so you're always close to one, 26 parks, more than 70 miles of trail threaded between the neighborhoods. Kids bike to the pool and the ball field without crossing a busy street, because the planners set out to build a family utopia where safety, convenience and structure were the point. Doorstep to trailhead, pool or grocery store is maybe five or six minutes. Once you've experienced that, you notice how other communities, like Lakewood where I grew up, add a layer of inconvenience you never saw before. Highlands Ranch isn't selling houses. It's selling a community, and that explains every trade-off below.

The shape of it: the Mission Viejo Company bought roughly 22,000 acres of cattle ranch in the late 1970s, the first homes went up in 1981, and C-470 opened in 1985. The population went from about 10,000 in 1990 to more than 70,000 in 2000. Shea Properties bought Mission Viejo in 1997 and finished the plan. Today it's essentially built out: "99 percent full," as I put it.

### Why people choose Highlands Ranch

- The original master plan: four villages, a rec center in each, parks and trails designed in. Nothing here was by accident.
- The Backcountry Wilderness Area: 8,200 acres, about 13 square miles, owned and funded by the homeowners, not the county or state.
- Family feel and safety are the words people use most.
- Douglas County schools, generally strong, plus charter and private options in town.
- C-470 gets you to I-25 and the Tech Center quickly and west toward the foothills.
- Two hospitals in town.
- One of the more veteran-friendly communities I know in the state. I take my daughter to the Veterans Monument myself.

### What gives people pause

- An island feel. It's 30 to 40 minutes to downtown off-peak and 50 minutes to an hour or more at rush hour. Very suburban, very quiet, very "shh" by 8 or 9 at night.
- It can look cookie-cutter beige. An HRCA review committee approves exterior changes, and yes, to some extent that includes your front door.

- Rec center access is not automatic. A handful of subdivisions pay HRCA administrative fees only; check whether rec access is included.
- Essentially no new construction. The community is full, which sends value-seekers to Littleton or Castle Rock.
- A mature demographic: median age in the low 40s, and many residents have been there 30 or 40 years.
- Chains outnumber mom-and-pop restaurants by a wide margin.

## Where is Highlands Ranch, and how do you get around?

Highlands Ranch sits south of C-470 between Santa Fe Drive (US 85) on the west and I-25 and Lone Tree on the east, with Kendrick Castillo Way (Lucent Boulevard until 2024), Broadway, University Boulevard and Quebec Street as the north-south arteries. Elevation is about 5,800 feet, and the community rolls over real hills, so top-of-the-hill lots get the mountain views.

- **Into the Denver Tech Center:** C-470 east to I-25, or University Boulevard straight up. The commute Highlands Ranch does best.
- **Into downtown Denver:** Santa Fe Drive or I-25. Plan on 30 to 40 minutes off-peak and 50 minutes to an hour or more at rush hour, and know that inside Highlands Ranch you may be 2 minutes from C-470 or 12.
- **Light rail:** No station inside Highlands Ranch; RTD once planned one at C-470 and Lucent and never funded it. Nearest are Littleton-Mineral to the west, where the C Line to Union Station was restored in June 2026 and which RTD's September 2026 service change says will become permanent when downtown rail reconstruction finishes in 2027 (the D Line that used to serve it will be discontinued then), and Lincoln in Lone Tree to the east, served as of fall 2026 by the E, R and T Lines (the T Line is temporary during downtown rail reconstruction, and the R Line is temporarily extended south to RidgeGate Parkway). RTD Route 402L runs weekdays from Littleton-Mineral through the Highlands Ranch Town Center park-n-ride and Park Meadows to County Line Station (E and R Lines).
- **The airport:** C-470 east becomes E-470 at I-25, a toll road to Peña Boulevard.
- **The mountains:** C-470 west to US 285 or I-70 through Golden; from the west side this is a genuinely good mountain commute, and Chatfield State Park is minutes away on Santa Fe.
- **Express lanes:** C-470's tolled express lanes opened in 2020. They help at rush hour; they aren't free.

## What are Highlands Ranch's neighborhoods like?

Four villages, each with its own rec center, plus BackCountry on the south edge and a handful of exceptions. Many addresses carry a Littleton mailing address; don't let that throw you. They're in Highlands Ranch and unincorporated Douglas County, not the City of Littleton.

## **Northridge**

The oldest village, built roughly 1984 to 1993 on the northwest side near Santa Fe. This is where the ranch stopped being a ranch: mature trees, real shade, bigger lots, a neighborhood that looks settled in and loved. If you want established, this is it.

## **Eastridge**

Right along C-470 on the northeast side near University Boulevard. The commuters' village: if your days are about getting somewhere, downtown, the Tech Center, the airport, this is generally the most accessible way into a detached home here. The Eastridge rec center houses HRCA's offices and a climbing wall.

## **Westridge**

The west side, up against the trails and the Backcountry. If you're a 9 a.m. trailhead person, this is the premium end of the four villages. It's less about the houses, though there are great ones, and more about being toward the wilderness. It's hard not to feel outdoorsy anywhere in Highlands Ranch; Westridge gets you closest.

## **Southridge and the Town Center**

The youngest village, built around Highlands Ranch Town Center on Highlands Ranch Parkway, with the library, the Veterans Monument and Civic Green Park and its 3,000-seat lawn amphitheater. If your Saturday involves coffee, food and walking to a park, this is genuinely the most walkable pocket of Highlands Ranch. There isn't a ton of walkability here overall; Southridge is the closest you get.

## **BackCountry**

Two things share the name. BackCountry, one word, is the gated Shea Homes community on the south edge, master-planned in 2007 around the Sundial House clubhouse. The Backcountry Wilderness Area is the 8,200 acres next to it. Don't get them mixed up. The neighborhood has gorgeous houses, decent lot sizes, enough contrast that it isn't same-same-same, and higher HOA dues for the gate, security and snow removal. Properties near open space can draw wildfire questions from insurers; see the insurance note below.

## **Gleneagles Village, The Retreat, The Villages and Palomino Park**

These subdivisions (Palomino Park is listed by HRCA as Gold Peak and Silver Mesa) pay HRCA administrative fees only. If the four rec centers are part of why you want Highlands Ranch, check whether rec access is included before you write an offer here.

# **What does it cost to own a home in Highlands Ranch?**

Know the whole monthly payment, not just the price. Highlands Ranch has an unusual stack of line items:

- **Property tax** — Douglas County assesses and collects. There's no city levy, but the Metro District is funded mostly by property taxes (plus Colorado Lottery proceeds, cell-site leases and a stormwater fee),

and its mill levy is on your bill. The Douglas County Assessor's property search shows the exact list for any address.

- **HRCA assessment** — Every residential owner pays HRCA, billed quarterly. For most homes it covers all four rec centers, the Backcountry trails, covenant review and more than 80 events a year. A few subdivisions pay a smaller annual administrative-only fee instead; check whether rec access is included.
- **Sub-association HOA** — Many neighborhoods, BackCountry especially, have a second HOA on top of HRCA with its own dues and rules. Get both budgets.
- **Architectural review** — Fences, sheds, exterior colors and play structures go through HRCA's committee and its Residential Improvement Guidelines; the standard fence stain is literally called Highlands Ranch Fence Brown.
- **Water** — Highlands Ranch Water, the Centennial Water & Sanitation District under contract to the Metro District, is in Stage 1 drought restrictions as of fall 2026: watering two days a week, with drought pricing.
- **Insurance** — Hail is the biggest premium driver statewide, per the Colorado Division of Insurance, which counts wildfire risk as a smaller share of the average premium. Properties near open space can draw wildfire questions from insurers; check the address on the Colorado State Forest Service's wildfire risk viewer and get the quote before you go under contract.
- **Sales tax** — No town sales tax; state, Douglas County, RTD and cultural facilities district taxes generally apply, per the Colorado Department of Revenue's rate publication. Confirm the exact address with the department's rate lookup.
- **Housing-age costs** — Most of the stock is 1985 to 2005. Budget for roofs, furnaces and windows on their second or third cycle, and have expansive soils inspected.

## What kinds of homes are in Highlands Ranch?

Overwhelmingly single-family detached homes from the mid-1980s through the mid-2000s, built by Mission Viejo and then Shea with a roster of production builders, which is why the community has what I'd call a blanket look. You'll find 1980s homes in Northridge, 1990s production homes across Eastridge and Westridge, 2000s homes in Southridge, and the semi-custom end in BackCountry. Townhomes, condos and apartments cluster near Town Center, University Boulevard and C-470. About 31,500 homes exist and there is essentially no new single-family construction. Recent land handovers have gone mostly to parks, though the Metro District's April 2026 plan for a 2-acre park on Plaza Drive comes with affordable senior housing on the adjacent parcel. Buy here and you're almost certainly buying a resale.

## How do schools work in Highlands Ranch?

All of Highlands Ranch is in the Douglas County School District, headquartered in Castle Rock. The district calls itself Colorado's third-largest, and it enrolled 61,535 students in 2025-26, per the Colorado Department of Education. Four comprehensive high schools are in town: Highlands Ranch High School (opened 1987), ThunderRidge (1996), Mountain Vista (2001) and Rock Canyon (2003), each with its own feeders. Rock Canyon is in southeast Highlands Ranch, near Lone Tree; ThunderRidge is on the west.

The district assigns a neighborhood school by address and runs open enrollment on top of it. For 2027-28, Round 1 runs November 2 to December 1, 2026, prioritized by district preference points rather than first-come, with Round 2 from January 22 to August 2, 2027. Use the district's School Locator Map for the exact address before you write an offer, because feeder patterns don't follow village names. Charters in Highlands Ranch include STEM School Highlands Ranch (K-12, opened 2011), Ben Franklin Academy and SkyView Academy. Valor Christian High School, a private school opened in 2006 with eight state football titles between 2009 and 2018, is here too. Schools are generally strong. Do your due diligence anyway: the right school is the specific school, not the district.

## What is there to do in Highlands Ranch?

### Parks, trails and open space

The Metro District maintains 26 parks, more than 70 miles of trail and 2,644 acres of open space, and more than 4,700 homes back onto open space. Then there's the Backcountry Wilderness Area: 8,200 acres conveyed by Shea to HRCA in 2006 and 2009, with about 11 miles of private member trails in two systems, Wildcat Mountain and Highlands Point, plus the Douglas County East/West Regional Trail. You'll see elk, mule deer, bear, mountain lion, bobcat and golden eagles. Don't panic about the lions and bears; if people were routinely attacked, this place wouldn't be this popular.

Here's the detail I didn't know growing up in Colorado: every winter, January 1 through March 31, HRCA closes the Wildcat Mountain trails. The elk herd winters on that ground, the creek through it is the only live water for miles, and golden eagles court there; if they nest, which they have since 2011, that one trail stays closed into late summer. A community that pays for 8,200 acres and then closes part of it for the elk is doing something I haven't found anywhere else in the metro.

Two things are in motion as of fall 2026. In October 2025, Douglas County transferred 202 acres on the Backcountry's northeast edge to HRCA for Wildcat Regional Park, county-funded and trail-focused after residents pushed back on a sports-field plan, with an estimated late-2027 opening. And on April 30, 2026, Shea Homes conveyed 197 acres of ranchland around the Highlands Ranch Mansion to the Metro District, bringing the future Historic Park to nearly 250 acres of barns, silos and pasture; public input runs through 2026, a concept plan comes in 2027, and no construction date is set.

Highland Heritage Regional Park on South Quebec is the big-field park, with seven athletic fields and an amphitheater. Daniels Park, Denver's mountain park with a bison herd, borders Highlands Ranch to the south.

## Events

HRCA and the Highlands Ranch Cultural Affairs Association run more than 80 events a year: Fourth of July at Highland Heritage Regional Park, a summer concert series at Civic Green and Highland Heritage, Oktoberfest in Town Center in late September. The Veterans Day celebration at the library sits beside the Highlands Ranch Veterans Monument, dedicated in 2009, which carries the names of Staff Sgt. Christopher Falkel, the first Highlands Ranch resident killed in action, in Afghanistan in 2005, along with Sgt. Jon Stiles and Cpl. Max Donahue. The community's effort to honor Falkel is where the monument came from. Look his story up.

## Food and beer

Plenty of places to eat, not a lot of mom-and-pop. The one I'll name is Los Dos Potrillos, a family-owned Mexican restaurant started by Jose Ramirez in 2002 and now run by his sons. I love Los Dos. Beyond that, expect chains, big ones with a lot of seating, because people here are always out. For a dining district or a brewery crawl, you're driving to Littleton, Lone Tree or Denver.

## Three places I'd send you first

- **A rec center on a Saturday morning** — any of the four. Watch who's there and how they got there. This is what Highlands Ranch is actually selling.
- **The Backcountry Wilderness Area** — walk the Highlands Point trails, or Wildcat Mountain when it's open, and see what a third of the original land went to.
- **The Veterans Monument and Civic Green Park** — a great veterans park that we enjoy going to, in Town Center beside the library.

## Who are the big employers in and near Highlands Ranch?

Highlands Ranch has more jobs inside it than most planned suburbs. UCHealth Highlands Ranch Hospital opened in 2019 and has run near capacity most days since. UCHealth's August 31, 2026 announcement said Pavilion 2 was now open, with more services opening in the coming months, and that a new tower adding 70 inpatient beds was expected to open that fall. Children's Hospital Colorado's South Campus on Plaza Drive has a 24-hour pediatric ER and inpatient units. Visa's Operations Center Central is based here. UDR, the apartment REIT, is headquartered in Highlands Ranch; HRCA itself employs about 800 people; the school district is the big public employer. Next door in Lone Tree are Sky Ridge Medical Center, Charles Schwab's RidgeGate campus and Park Meadows, and the Tech Center is a straight shot up I-25. The flip

side is what friends and clients call the Highlands Ranch bubble: people who work here or work remote can go weeks without leaving.

## How does Highlands Ranch compare with nearby areas?

- **Highlands Ranch vs. Littleton** — Littleton is an actual city with a historic downtown and two rail stations. Highlands Ranch has the rec centers, newer housing and the master plan. People priced out of Highlands Ranch often land in Littleton.
- **Highlands Ranch vs. Lone Tree** — Lone Tree is a city of about 15,000 with light rail, Sky Ridge, Schwab and Park Meadows, and newer RidgeGate construction. Highlands Ranch has the parks and family density; Lone Tree has the jobs and the train.
- **Highlands Ranch vs. Castle Rock** — Castle Rock is a real town on I-25, 28 miles south of downtown Denver, still building. Highlands Ranch is closer, fully built and more amenity-dense.
- **Highlands Ranch vs. Parker** — Parker has Mainstreet and E-470, with a longer drive to the Tech Center. Highlands Ranch trades the main street for the rec centers and C-470.

## A lender's take on Highlands Ranch

Highlands Ranch has been the quintessential suburb people want since I was a kid watching it grow in the 1990s, and 45 years after the blueprint it still is. It doesn't try to be anything else. It is a master-planned, family-centered community, and you can feel it in the parks, the monument and the way people take care of their spot.

The trade is structure. Every residential owner pays HRCA an assessment billed quarterly, HRCA's Architectural Review Committee approves exterior changes, and many neighborhoods add a sub-association HOA with its own dues. If you're moving to Highlands Ranch, you're going to want to know the HOA rules.

Highlands Ranch fits families who want the pool, the trail and the ball field within five or six minutes, Tech Center commuters, and veterans looking for one of the more veteran-friendly communities in the state. It's a harder fit for anyone who needs new construction, nightlife (it gets very quiet by 8 or 9 at night), a light rail stop, or a house without HOA review. Everyone else: go look at a Saturday.

## Buying in Highlands Ranch: what to do first

1. **Get pre-approved** before you tour. Nearly everything here is a resale, and there's no builder to fall back on.
2. **Price the whole payment:** Douglas County property tax with the Metro District levy, the HRCA assessment, any sub-association dues, water and insurance.

3. **Confirm the HRCA assessment category** for the specific address: full assessment with rec center access, or administrative-only. Gleneagles Village, The Retreat, The Villages and Palomino Park are the known exceptions.
4. **Drive the commute at rush hour** from the actual street, not the C-470 ramp.
5. **Confirm the assigned schools for the exact address** on the School Locator Map, and note the Round 1 open-enrollment window if you want a different school.
6. **Veterans:** a VA loan works on homes with HRCA assessments, sub-HOAs and metro district levies, including BackCountry's gated resales. Get the HOA documents early so the review doesn't slow you down.

## Frequently asked questions

### Is Highlands Ranch a city?

No. Highlands Ranch is an unincorporated community and census-designated place in Douglas County, about 12 miles south of Denver. There is no mayor or city council. The Highlands Ranch Metro District (a special district with seven elected directors) handles parks, trails, open space and major roads; the Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA) handles rec centers, covenants and the Backcountry; the Douglas County Sheriff provides policing and South Metro Fire Rescue provides fire service.

### What school district is Highlands Ranch in?

Douglas County School District, which calls itself Colorado's third-largest and enrolled 61,535 students in 2025-26, per the Colorado Department of Education. The four comprehensive high schools in Highlands Ranch are Highlands Ranch, ThunderRidge, Mountain Vista and Rock Canyon. The district assigns schools by address and runs open enrollment with Round 1 each November; use the School Locator Map to confirm the assigned schools for a specific address.

### Is there light rail in Highlands Ranch?

No. The nearest stations are Littleton-Mineral to the west, served by the C Line to Union Station (restored in 2026), and Lincoln in Lone Tree to the east, served as of fall 2026 by the E, R and T Lines (the T Line is temporary during downtown rail reconstruction, and the R Line is temporarily extended to RidgeGate Parkway). RTD Route 402L runs weekdays from Littleton-Mineral through the Highlands Ranch Town Center park-n-ride and Park Meadows to County Line Station (E and R Lines).

### Do all Highlands Ranch homes have an HOA?

Every residential property pays an HRCA assessment, which for most homes includes membership at the four rec centers and the Backcountry trails plus covenant and architectural review. A few subdivisions (Gleneagles Village, The Retreat, The Villages, Palomino Park) pay HRCA administrative fees only; check whether rec access is included. Many neighborhoods, including BackCountry, also have a sub-association HOA with its own dues.

## What is the Backcountry Wilderness Area?

An 8,200-acre conservation area on the south side of Highlands Ranch, owned and managed by HRCA and funded by homeowner assessments, with about 11 miles of private member trails plus the Douglas County East/West Regional Trail. The Wildcat Mountain trails close January 1 through March 31 each year for wintering elk and nesting golden eagles. A 202-acre Wildcat Regional Park on its northeast edge is under development with an estimated late-2027 opening.

## How long is the commute from Highlands Ranch to Denver?

About 12 miles to downtown. Plan on 30 to 40 minutes off-peak and 50 minutes to an hour or more at rush hour, depending on how far you are from C-470. The Denver Tech Center via C-470 and I-25 or University Boulevard is the faster, more predictable commute.

## Is there new construction in Highlands Ranch?

Essentially no new single-family construction. The community is built out, with about 31,500 homes dating mostly from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s. Recent land handovers have gone mostly to parks, including the roughly 250-acre Historic Park around the Highlands Ranch Mansion and Wildcat Regional Park; an April 2026 Metro District plan pairs a 2-acre park on Plaza Drive with affordable senior housing on the adjacent parcel. Buyers who want new construction in Douglas County typically look at Castle Rock, Parker or Lone Tree's RidgeGate.

## Sources

Guide reviewed October 24, 2026, and reviewed again twice a year.

- Highlands Ranch, Colorado (unincorporated CDP, population, elevation, history, Mission Viejo, Shea 1997, governance, C-470 opened 1985, employers UDR and Visa Operations Center Central)
- Census Reporter: Highlands Ranch, CO (ACS 2024 population estimate, median age, commute)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: About the Metro District (22,000 acres, founded 1981, seven-member board, services, Centennial Water contract)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Celebrating National Park and Recreation Month (July 2025; 26 parks, 70-plus miles of trail, 2,644 acres of open space, first park 1982, funding sources)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Open Space and Trails (2,644 acres, 4,700 homes backing open space)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Historic Park planning (197 acres from Shea April 30, 2026; nearly 250 acres; timeline)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Metro District receives ranchland from Shea Homes (May 2026)
- Highlands Ranch Herald: Highlands Ranch reaches new milestone with Historic Park (May 2026)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Provide feedback for proposed park on Plaza Drive (April 2026; 2-acre park, affordable senior housing on the adjacent parcel)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Parks fee schedule (Civic Green Park amphitheater capacity, Central Park, Redstone Park)
- Highlands Ranch Metro District: Honor veterans at the Highlands Ranch Veterans Day Celebration (Nov. 2025; Veterans Monument, Falkel, Stiles, Donahue, dedicated 2009)
- TracesOfWar: Memorial Highlands Ranch War on Terror (three fallen soldiers, dates)

- Highlands Ranch Mansion (Springer, Phipps, Centennial filming, 2010 conveyance to Metro District, 2012 reopening)
- HRCA: About Highlands Ranch (31,510 homes, land use, four rec centers, Backcountry conveyance 2006 and 2009, trail miles, HRCA staff, Metro District funding)
- HRCA homepage (four rec centers, 8,200-acre Backcountry, 2026 events including Oktoberfest)
- HRCA: Backcountry Wilderness Area
- HRCA: Backcountry trail rules and FAQs (11 miles of private trails, Wildcat Mountain and Highlands Point systems, dogs, bikes, horses)
- HRCA: Do the trails ever close? (Wildcat Mountain closure Jan. 1 to March 31; golden eagles nesting since 2011)
- HRCA: Why the Wildcat Mountain trails close (elk wintering, only live water, Division of Wildlife recommendation)
- HRCA: Wildcat Regional Park (202 acres, Douglas County funding, trail plan, 2026-2027 timeline)
- Denver Gazette: Douglas County commissioners approve Wildcat land transfer to Highlands Ranch (Oct. 2025)
- HRCA: Assessment fees (quarterly homeowner assessment; administrative-only subdivisions Gleneagles Village, The Retreat, The Villages, Palomino Park: Gold Peak and Silver Mesa)
- HRCA: The Value of Assessments (rec centers, Backcountry, covenant programs, 80-plus events)
- HRCA: Covenants and Improvements (Architectural Review Committee, approvals, Highlands Ranch Fence Brown, Residential Improvement Guidelines)
- HRCA: Recreation Centers Overview (Northridge tennis pavilion, Southridge auditorium and pottery studio, Eastridge climbing wall and offices, Westridge indoor turf)
- HRCA: Summer Concert Series (Civic Green Park and Highland Heritage Regional Park, Fourth of July at Highland Heritage)
- Douglas County: Highland Heritage Regional Park and Trail (fields, 3 miles of trail, amphitheater, dog off-leash area)
- Daniels Park (Denver Mountain Park, bison herd, borders Highlands Ranch)
- Chatfield State Park (3,895 acres, 1,423-acre reservoir)
- Highlands Ranch Water (Stage 1 drought restrictions, two-day watering, drought pricing, fall 2026)
- Douglas County Assessor (property search, taxing authorities, mill levy information)
- Colorado Department of Revenue: DR 1002 Colorado Sales/Use Tax Rates (state, county, RTD and cultural facilities district rates; updated each Jan. 1 and July 1)
- Colorado Department of Revenue: How to look up sales and use tax rates (address lookup tools)
- Denver Gazette: Prettiest Denver suburbs see home insurance premiums soar with wildfire risk (Aug. 2026; hail as top driver, BackCountry premiums)
- Colorado Division of Insurance: Hail is the number one cost driver of insurance in Colorado (hail versus wildfire share of average premiums)
- Colorado Division of Insurance: Wildfire Resiliency Building Codes and Insurance (insurers use their own risk maps for pricing and eligibility)
- Colorado State Forest Service: Colorado Wildfire Risk Public Viewer (wildfire risk by location)
- Shea Homes: BackCountry then and now (2007 master plan, Sundial House 2009)
- Shea Properties (1997 acquisition of Mission Viejo Company and 22,000 acres in Highlands Ranch)
- Douglas County School District (Colorado) (high schools, charters, Castle Rock headquarters)
- Douglas County School District: Open Enrollment (2027-28 rounds and dates, School Locator Map)
- Colorado Department of Education SchoolView: Douglas County RE 1 enrollment (61,535 students, 2025-26)

- Douglas County School District: About DCSD (describes itself as Colorado's third-largest district)
- Highlands Ranch High School (opened 1987)
- ThunderRidge High School (opened 1996, Wildcat Reserve Parkway)
- Mountain Vista High School (opened 2001)
- Rock Canyon High School (opened 2003, McArthur Ranch Road)
- STEM School Highlands Ranch (K-12 charter, opened 2011, Ridgeline Boulevard)
- Valor Christian High School (private, opened 2006, eight state football titles 2009-2018)
- UCHHealth: UCHHealth expands healthcare services access in Highlands Ranch (Aug. 31, 2026; opened 2019, near capacity most days, Pavilion 2 now open, 70-bed tower expected to open fall 2026)
- Children's Hospital Colorado: South Campus, Highlands Ranch (Plaza Drive, 24/7 ER, inpatient, surgery)
- Lone Tree, Colorado (population, Park Meadows, Sky Ridge, RidgeGate, Schwab campus, light rail stations)
- Littleton, Colorado (Historic Downtown Littleton, Littleton-Downtown and Littleton-Mineral stations)
- Castle Rock, Colorado (home rule town on I-25, 28 miles south of downtown Denver, residential permits)
- Parker, Colorado (Mainstreet in downtown Parker)
- E-470 (passes through the north side of Parker)
- Park Meadows (Lone Tree, opened 1996, largest mall in the Denver metro)
- Colorado State Highway 470 (route, express lane tolling 2020, Highlands Ranch exits, Kendrick Castillo Way)
- RTD: Final September 2026 service changes (D Line to be discontinued and C Line permanently reinstated once downtown rail work is complete, R Line, T Line as a temporary line from Lincoln)
- RTD: Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project impacts (Aug. 2025 reroutes)
- C Line (RTD) (revived June 7, 2026; permanent in September 2026 change; Littleton-Mineral to Union Station)
- D Line (RTD) (former Littleton-Mineral service; unfunded C-470 and Lucent station)
- Littleton-Mineral station (C Line terminus, 1,227 parking spaces, Route 402L)
- Lincoln station (RTD) (E, R and T Lines; RidgeGate Parkway service restored Sept. 2026)
- RTD: Route 402L Highlands Ranch Parkway schedule (weekdays, Sept. 27, 2026 to Jan. 2, 2027; Littleton-Mineral, Highlands Ranch Town Center park-n-ride, University, S Quebec - Lincoln stop, Park Meadows, County Line Station)
- County Line station (RTD) (served by the E and R Lines)
- FSR Magazine: Los Dos Potrillos, a tale of two brothers continuing their father's American dream (Jose Ramirez, 2002, Highlands Ranch location)
- Destination Denver Colorado: Moving to Highlands Ranch | The Most Family Friendly Denver Suburb? (July 2026)
- Destination Denver Colorado: Living in Highlands Ranch Colorado (Pros and Cons to Moving Here) (Jan. 2023)

### **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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