

PIKES PEAK PLAYBOOK · RELOCATION GUIDE

# Picking a Neighborhood

Most buyers start with a price and a bedroom count. Better to start with how you want to live. This framework uses six factors — commute, elevation, lot size, budget, utilities and lifestyle — to turn fifteen communities into a short list of two or three.

Work through the factors in order. Each one eliminates areas, and by the end the right part of the region is usually obvious.

## YOUR DEAL-BREAKERS COME FIRST

Decide what you won't accept — a commute over 40 minutes, a well, a gravel road, an HOA — before you look at listings. It's much easier to rule areas out than in.

### 1 · COMMUTE

- Where will you drive most days?
- Test the drive at your real start time
- Factor in Monument Hill and Ute Pass in winter

### 2 · ELEVATION

- 5,500 ft to 9,700 ft across the region
- Higher means more snow, colder nights, shorter growing season
- Mountain views and forest come with it

### 3 · LOT SIZE

- City lots, standard suburban lots or acreage?
- Acreage means wells, septic and more upkeep
- Check zoning for animals and outbuildings

### 4 · BUDGET

- Median values range from about \$210K to \$860K
- Add taxes, insurance, HOA or metro district fees
- Mountain homes may cost more to insure

### 5 · UTILITIES

- City utilities, special districts or well and septic?
- Natural gas or propane?
- Wired internet varies by address

### 6 · LIFESTYLE

- Walkable town, planned community or privacy?
- Trails, schools, shopping and healthcare nearby
- Quiet now — and what could be built next door?

 THE DECISION MATRIX

# All fifteen areas through the six-factor lens.

Use it to cross off areas quickly. Values are Census medians, not current list prices.

| AREA                         | ELEV. (FT)   | MEDIAN VALUE | TYPICAL LOTS         | WATER / UTILITIES       | TO DOWNTOWN COS | LIFESTYLE                 |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Colorado Springs             | 6,035        | \$452,600    | City lots            | City utilities          | —               | Urban amenities           |
| Manitou Springs              | 6,412        | \$561,200    | Small, often steep   | City water              | ~15 min         | Walkable, artsy           |
| Security-Widefield           | ~5,700       | \$387,500    | Standard lots        | Water districts         | ~15 min         | Established, close-in     |
| Fountain                     | 5,546        | \$398,000    | Standard lots        | City utilities          | ~20 min         | Newer, south metro        |
| Monument                     | 6,975        | \$636,700    | Standard to large    | Water districts         | ~25 min         | Small-town, Denver access |
| Palmer Lake                  | 7,225        | \$485,700    | Mixed, wooded        | Town water / wells      | ~30 min         | Quiet foothills town      |
| Black Forest                 | ~7,400       | \$856,200    | Acreage (2.5–40 ac)  | Wells & septic          | ~30 min         | Forest privacy            |
| Falcon                       | ~6,900       | \$548,800    | Lots + acreage       | Metro districts / wells | ~30 min         | Planned communities       |
| Peyton                       | ~6,800       | \$555,200    | Acreage              | Wells & septic          | ~35–40 min      | Rural, room for animals   |
| Calhan & Ellicott            | 6,508        | \$384,000    | Town lots + acreage  | Town water / wells      | ~45 min         | Plains ranch country      |
| Cascade · GMF · Chipita Park | ~7,400–7,800 | \$514,900    | Small, steep, wooded | Mixed — by address      | ~20 min         | Mountain village          |
| Woodland Park                | 8,465        | \$549,200    | City lots + acreage  | City water / wells      | ~30 min         | Mountain town hub         |
| Divide                       | 9,165        | \$466,800    | Acreage              | Wells / small districts | ~45 min         | High-country quiet        |
| Florissant                   | ~8,200       | \$418,200    | Acreage              | Wells & septic          | ~1 hr           | Remote mountain valley    |
| Cripple Creek & Victor       | 9,494        | \$285,800    | Town lots + claims   | City water / wells      | ~1 hr+          | Historic gold camp        |

Sources: Median home value: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2020–2024 (owner-estimated). Drive times approximate, light traffic. Lot and lifestyle descriptions are general — individual properties vary.

● YOUR WORKSHEET

# Rank, then score your short list.

First rank the six factors by importance (1 = most important). Then score your top three areas from 1 to 5 on each.

| Factor              | My rank (1–6) | Area A: _____ | Area B: _____ | Area C: _____ |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Commute             |               |               |               |               |
| Elevation & climate |               |               |               |               |
| Lot size            |               |               |               |               |
| Budget              |               |               |               |               |
| Utilities           |               |               |               |               |
| Lifestyle           |               |               |               |               |
| Deal-breakers       |               |               |               |               |

HOW TO READ YOUR SCORES

- Multiply each score by the factor’s weight (rank 1 = ×6, rank 6 = ×1) if two areas are close
- A single deal-breaker outweighs a high total
- If no area scores well, revisit your budget or lot-size expectations

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Read the City Snapshot for each finalist
- ✓ Drive each area at commute time and on a weekend
- ✓ Ask Clay for live market data in your top two
- ✓ Use the Showing Checklist when you tour

STRATEGY OVER SCRIPT

Narrowed it to two or three areas? Let’s look at what’s selling in each.

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Census figures: ACS 2020–2024 5-year estimates. Elevations: published figures (~ = approximate area average). Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. This guide is general guidance, not legal, tax, inspection or financial advice; hire licensed professionals for inspections and consult an attorney or tax advisor for your situation. Clay Caldwell is a real estate broker with Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate Kenney & Company. Each franchise is independently owned and operated. Equal Housing Opportunity. © 2026 Clay Caldwell Realtor.