The Villages, Florida

2026 Independent Buyer's Guide

Bond fees explained · Lifestyle fee breakdown
North vs South of 466 · Fenney vs Eastport
True cost of ownership · District-by-district comparison
The research no developer brochure provides.

150,000+	70,000+	57 sq mi	3,000+
RESIDENTS	HOMES	COVERAGE	CLUBS

About This Guide

What you will find — and why it matters

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is written for buyers who are seriously researching The Villages as a retirement destination — not browsing, not dreaming. If you are trying to understand what you will actually pay, what nobody in the sales office will tell you, and how to make a confident decision, this guide is for you.

Nova55Living is an independent research platform. We are not affiliated with The Villages developer, any real estate brokerage, or any builder. We do not receive referral fees from The Villages. Our only interest is giving you accurate information.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- **Bond fees — the number that doesn't appear in the listing price.**

  Every home in The Villages carries a CDD bond. Bond balances range from $0 (paid off) to $80,000+ in newer Fenney sections. This guide explains how the bond works, what you pay annually, and whether paying it off at closing makes financial sense.

- **Lifestyle fee — what's included and what isn't.**

  The monthly amenity fee (~$195/mo in 2026) covers executive golf, recreation centers, pools, and most community amenities. This guide details exactly what is and is not included — including the golf cart trail pass that trips up buyers who assume golf carts are entirely free.

- **Three counties — three tax rates.**

  The Villages spans Sumter, Lake, and Marion counties. Your property tax bill depends entirely on which county your home sits in. This guide provides current effective rates and 20-year cost projections for each county.

- **North vs South of 466 — the geography that matters most.**

  Highway 466 divides the original Villages from the expanded southern sections. The two areas have different bond profiles, different access to town squares, and different price points. This guide maps what that means for buyers.

- **Fenney and Eastport — the newest expansion.**

  The newest southern sections carry the highest bond balances and the newest construction. This guide provides current price ranges, bond profiles, and what buyers gain and give up in the expansion zone.

The Numbers at a Glance

Key figures every buyer needs before touring

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW — 2026

Total residents	**150,000+**
Total homes	**70,000+ (and growing)**
Community area	**~57 square miles across 3 counties**
Counties	**Sumter (primary), Lake, Marion**
Age restriction	**55+ (80% rule — at least one resident 55+)**
Monthly lifestyle/amenity fee	**~$195/month (2026, CPI-adjusted annually)**
Annual maintenance assessment	**$350–$1,000+/yr (varies by district)**
CDD bond range	**$0 (paid off) to $80,000+ (new Fenney)**
Typical annual bond payment	**$1,400–$4,500/yr depending on balance**
Executive golf courses	**50+ (included in lifestyle fee)**
Championship golf courses	**13 (fees apply, ~$15–$45/round)**
Town squares	**4 (Spanish Springs, Lake Sumter, Brownwood, Sawgrass Grove)**
Free nightly entertainment	**365 days/year at town squares**
Clubs and social groups	**3,000+**
Hospital	**UF Health The Villages Regional Medical Center (307 beds)**
New home price range	**$250K–$650K+ depending on zone**
Resale price range	**$175K–$800K+ depending on size/location**

The CDD Bond — Explained

The cost that doesn't appear in the listing price

WHAT THE BOND IS

Every home in The Villages was built under a Community Development District (CDD) — a special-purpose local government authorized under Florida law. The CDD issued bonds to finance the infrastructure that built your neighborhood: roads, utilities, recreation centers, pools, and amenity buildings.

Your home carries a proportional share of that bond debt. The bond balance is not part of the purchase price. It does not appear in the listing. It is disclosed in a separate document called the CDD disclosure statement, which sellers are required to provide — but many buyers do not know to look for it.

The bond shows up as a non-ad valorem assessment on your annual property tax bill. It is paid in addition to your property taxes, not instead of them.

BOND BALANCES BY ZONE

ZONE	TYPICAL BOND BALANCE	NOTE
North of 466 (original area, pre-2002)	**$0–$20,000**	Many fully paid off
South of 466 — core Sumter	**$15,000–$45,000**	Most common resale zone
Brownwood corridor (2010s)	**$35,000–$55,000**	Higher lifestyle fee also
Fenney/Eastport expansion (2015–present)	**$45,000–$80,000+**	Newest, highest balances

SHOULD YOU PAY OFF THE BOND AT CLOSING?

Paying off the bond at closing eliminates the annual bond payment line from your property tax bill. Whether this makes financial sense depends on your mortgage rate, your investment return expectations, and how long you plan to stay. At a $40,000 bond balance with annual payments of ~$2,800, the payoff makes mathematical sense if your alternative use of that $40,000 earns less than 7% annually. Most buyers at The Villages are not deploying $40,000 in high-yield investments — they are holding it in savings. For most buyers, paying off the bond at closing simplifies the cost structure and is the right call.

CRITICAL STEP:
Request the CDD bond balance AND the annual amortization schedule before making an offer.
Two identical homes on the same street can have bond balances of $0 and $45,000. Always verify.

True Monthly Cost of Ownership

What you actually pay — beyond the mortgage

THE LIFESTYLE FEE — WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED (~$195/month covers):

- ✓ All executive golf courses (50+) — walk free, cart pass required (~$141/yr)
- ✓ All recreation centers, fitness centers, pools (adults-only and family)
- ✓ Pickleball, tennis, bocce, shuffleboard, softball fields
- ✓ Free nightly entertainment at all 4 town squares
- ✓ Access to 3,000+ resident clubs
- ✓ Nature trails, dog parks, fishing lakes

NOT INCLUDED (paid separately):

- — Championship golf course fees ($15–$45/round)
- — Championship golf membership (optional, separate fee)
- — Golf cart purchase or lease (~$8,000–$15,000 to buy)
- — Golf cart insurance (~$200–$400/yr)
- — Enrichment Academy courses (fee-based)
- — Restaurants and shopping

ALL-IN MONTHLY COST SCENARIOS — 2026

Scenario	Lifestyle fee	Bond/mo	Tax/mo	Ins/mo	TOTAL/mo
$300K home, bond paid off, Sumter Co.	$195	$0	~$138	~$200	**~$533/mo**
$400K home, $35K bond carried, Sumter Co.	$195	~$233	~$163	~$283	**~$874/mo**
$500K home, $55K bond carried, Marion Co.	$195	~$329	~$234	~$333	**~$1,091/mo**
$600K home, $70K bond carried, Marion Co.	$195	~$408	~$280	~$400	**~$1,283/mo**

Note: Mortgage not included. Insurance estimates only — get actual quotes. Bond payment based on 20-yr amortization. Verify all figures on specific parcel.

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North vs South of 466

The geography that defines your Villages experience

WHY HIGHWAY 466 IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LINE ON THE MAP

Florida State Road 466 runs east-west through the center of The Villages. Everything north of 466 is the original development — older homes, lower bond balances (many fully paid off), and the Spanish Springs town square. Everything south of 466 is newer construction, higher bond balances, and the Lake Sumter Landing and Brownwood town squares. The Fenney and Eastport expansion zones push further south still, with the newest construction and the highest bond balances in the community.

NORTH OF 466	SOUTH OF 466	FENNEY/EASTPORT
Era: 1983–2002	**Era:** 2000s–2015	**Era:** 2015–present
Bond profile: $0–$20K (many paid off)	**Bond profile:** $15K–$55K	**Bond profile:** $45K–$80K+
Town square: Spanish Springs	**Town square:** Lake Sumter Landing / Brownwood	**Town square:** Sawgrass Grove / Brownwood
County: Sumter / Lake	**County:** Sumter / Marion	**County:** Marion
Price range: $175K–$400K	**Price range:** $280K–$580K	**Price range:** $380K–$650K+
Pros: Lower carrying cost, established community, paid-off bonds common	**Pros:** Newer construction, larger floor plans, closer to Brownwood	**Pros:** Newest construction, golf course lots available
Cons: Older construction, smaller floor plans, farther from Brownwood	**Cons:** Higher bond balances, higher Marion Co. tax in Brownwood area	**Cons:** Highest bonds, highest taxes (Marion Co.), longest drives to Spanish Springs

County Property Tax Comparison

The county your home sits in determines what you pay

THREE COUNTIES — THREE TAX RATES

The Villages spans Sumter, Lake, and Marion Counties. The tax rate on your home depends entirely on which county it sits in — not what zip code you use, not which town square is nearest. Many buyers do not discover this until closing. The difference is real money over 20 years.

County	Eff. Rate	$300K home	$400K home	$500K home	Notes
Sumter County	~0.55% effective	~$1,650/yr	~$2,200/yr	~$2,750/yr	Lowest rate — best for budget buyers
Lake County	~0.75% effective	~$2,250/yr	~$3,000/yr	~$3,750/yr	Original southern section — moderate
Marion County	~0.85% effective	~$2,550/yr	~$3,400/yr	~$4,250/yr	Brownwood/Fenney — highest rate

20-YEAR TAX COST COMPARISON — $400K HOME

Sumter County — $400K home:
~$2,200/yr × 20 years = ~$44,000 total property tax (before Save Our Homes cap)

Marion County — $400K home:
~$3,400/yr × 20 years = ~$68,000 total property tax

Difference over 20 years: ~$24,000 — on identical $400K homes in different counties.

Florida's Save Our Homes amendment caps assessed value increases at 3% per year for primary residents after the first year. This protects long-term owners from runaway tax increases as property values rise. New buyers are assessed at purchase price — the seller's lower assessed value does not transfer.

Village Profiles — A Buyer's Shortlist

Key communities by zone and price point

Village of Buttonwood

Sumter Co. · South of 466 · Price: $320K–$480K · Bond: $25K–$40K

Established, walkable to Lake Sumter Landing. Strong resale market. Popular with active buyers who want proximity to the water square.

Village of Mallory Square

Sumter Co. · South of 466 · Price: $340K–$520K · Bond: $30K–$45K

Premium positioning near Lake Sumter Landing. Larger lots, higher price point. One of the most sought-after resale addresses.

Village of Virginia Trace

Sumter Co. · South of 466 · Price: $290K–$420K · Bond: $20K–$35K

Well-established, lower bond balances. Popular for buyers who want south-of-466 amenities without the highest bond exposure.

Village of Fenney

Marion Co. · Expansion zone · Price: $380K–$580K · Bond: $50K–$75K

Newest full-service zone with its own recreation center. Higher bonds and Marion County tax rates — but brand new construction.

Village of Eastport

Marion Co. · Expansion zone · Price: $400K–$650K+ · Bond: $55K–$80K+

Southernmost expansion. Golf course lots available. Highest price point and highest bonds in the community.

Village of Country Club Hills

Marion Co. · Fenney corridor · Price: $380K–$590K · Bond: $24K–$40K

Golf course lots with fairway views. Premium positioning in the expansion zone. Bond balances at top of Fenney range.

Village of Duval

Sumter Co. · North of 466 · Price: $200K–$380K · Bond: $0–$15K

Largest village by home count (1,550 homes). Many bonds fully paid. Best value entry point into The Villages.

Village of St. Charles

Sumter Co. · Brownwood area · Price: $350K–$550K · Bond: $35K–$55K

Brownwood corridor. Newer construction, active social scene, higher bond and Marion Co. tax exposure.

Resale vs New Construction

What the developer doesn't tell you about representation

THE DEVELOPER'S BROKERAGE — UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT

The Villages developer controls the primary new home brokerage inside the community. When you walk into a Villages sales center, you are talking to agents who represent the seller — the developer — not you. This is legal and disclosed, but many buyers do not fully process what it means: the agent's fiduciary duty is to the developer, not to your interests.

New Construction (Developer)

- Agent represents developer — not you
- Price is set by developer — limited negotiation
- Bond balance is maximum — no discount for payoff
- Closing timeline set by developer
- Design upgrades are available but often overpriced
- Newest construction, full warranty, modern floor plans
- No prior owner history to research

Resale (Independent Agent)

- Your agent represents your interests
- Price is negotiable — market dynamics apply
- Bond may be partially or fully paid off
- Standard Florida closing timeline
- Upgrades already done — often at prior owner's cost
- Older construction — inspect carefully
- Pull CDD records and tax history before offering

THE INDEPENDENT AGENT ADVANTAGE AT THE VILLAGES

An independent buyer's agent at The Villages is paid from the commission — you do not pay extra. The value is in representation: an agent who works for you can negotiate bond payoff, identify villages with favorable resale history, flag CDD assessment surprises, and represent your interests at closing. For resale purchases, independent representation is straightforward. For new construction, an independent agent can still accompany you — but must be registered with the developer before your first visit. If you visit the sales center without an agent, you may lose the ability to add representation later.

Golf at The Villages — The Real Story

What's free, what costs money, and what serious golfers need to know

EXECUTIVE GOLF — WHAT'S ACTUALLY FREE

The Villages markets 'free golf for life' to buyers. This is substantially true for executive golf — but the details matter. Executive courses (50+, all 9-hole) are free to walk. If you want to drive a golf cart on the executive trails, you need a Golf Cart Trail Pass (~$141/year or ~$106 for 6 months). Championship courses are not free and never have been — they require a per-round fee of $15–$45 depending on course and tee time.

Course Type	Walking	Cart/Additional	Notes
Executive courses (50+)	Free to walk	~$141/yr cart pass	Included in lifestyle fee
Championship courses (13)	$15–$45/round	Private membership available	Separate from lifestyle fee
Golf Academy	Fee-based	Group and private lessons	State-of-the-art facility

FOR THE SERIOUS GOLFER

If golf is the primary reason you are considering The Villages — you play 3 or 4 times a week and want the full experience — The Villages is the strongest active adult golf destination in the country. No other community has built anything close to this scale. 50+ executive courses accessible by golf cart from your front door, plus 13 championship tracks, means you will never run out of variety. Championship membership, if you want unlimited access to the top tracks, is an additional annual expense worth asking

GOLF CART OWNERSHIP — THE REAL COST

New Villages-brand golf cart	**$8,000–$12,000**
Used golf cart (resale)	**$3,500–$7,000**
Golf cart insurance (annual)	**~$200–$400/yr**
Golf cart maintenance (annual est.)	**~$200–$500/yr**
Golf Cart Trail Pass (annual)	**~$141/yr**
Total annual cart cost (est., owned)	**~$550–$1,000/yr**

Healthcare at The Villages

One of the strongest medical ecosystems in any 55+ community

THE VILLAGES HEALTH SYSTEM

UF Health The Villages Regional Medical Center

307-bed acute care hospital inside the community. Acquired by University of Florida Health in 2020. Full inpatient services, surgery, cardiac care, oncology.

UF Health Leesburg Hospital

Additional full-service hospital 10 miles south. Inpatient rehabilitation services also available.

The Villages Health (primary care)

Concierge-style primary care network designed specifically for Villagers. Smaller patient panels, longer appointments, integrated records. Not available to non-residents.

UF Health Rehabilitation Hospital

Dedicated inpatient rehab facility for post-surgical and post-injury recovery.

The Center for Advanced Healthcare at Brownwood

Ambulatory specialty outpatient center opened 2020. Comprehensive specialty services without a hospital admission.

Urgent care centers

Multiple locations throughout the community — accessible by golf cart.

WHAT NO COMPETING COMMUNITY CAN MATCH

The Villages' healthcare infrastructure is a legitimate competitive moat. Most 55+ communities — even large Del Webb developments — are within 20–30 minutes of a hospital. The Villages has a full UF Health hospital inside the community boundary, a primary care system built specifically for residents, and a rehabilitation hospital for post-surgical recovery. For buyers who are making a retirement decision with healthcare access as a priority, this is not a minor differentiator.

Is The Villages Right for You?

An honest framework — not a sales pitch

THE VILLAGES IS THE RIGHT CHOICE IF:

✓ Golf is central to your retirement — you plan to play 3+ times per week and want the deepest golf infrastructure in active adult living.

✓ You want the widest social infrastructure — 3,000+ clubs means whatever you did in your working life, there is a community of people here who share it.

✓ Self-contained living appeals to you — hospital, groceries, entertainment, and hundreds of restaurants inside the community, reachable by golf cart.

✓ Scale does not intimidate you — 150,000 residents is a city, not a neighborhood. The Villages rewards people who engage with it.

✓ You want nightly entertainment without leaving home — four town squares with free live music every night is genuinely unique.

✓ Florida's cost structure is a priority — no state income tax, Homestead exemption, and Save Our Homes cap make Florida compelling for retirees from high-tax states.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES IF:

— You want beach access as part of daily life — The Villages is inland. The Gulf is 40+ miles. This is not a beach retirement.

— Smaller-scale community appeals to you — 150,000 people is a city. Buyers who want a 500-home community with a tight-knit feel will find The Villages overwhelming.

— You need to be near specific family — The Villages' location in central Florida is its own variable. Proximity to Orlando is useful; proximity to Miami or Jacksonville requires a drive.

— Bond exposure concerns you — if $50,000–$80,000 in additional debt on top of a purchase price is a financial stretch, the Fenney/Eastport zones may not be the right entry point.

— You are comparing only on price per square foot — the lifestyle fee, bond, and county taxes add $700–$1,200/month beyond the mortgage. Total cost of ownership, not purchase price, is the right comparison.

Buyer's Due Diligence Checklist

What to verify before you make an offer

BEFORE YOU TOUR

- ■ Research which zone interests you — North of 466 (value), South of 466 (midrange), or Fenney/Eastport (new construction).
- ■ Understand the bond — know what a CDD bond is and that it varies by home before you set foot in a sales center.
- ■ If you want new construction, register with an independent buyer's agent before your first developer visit.

ON ANY SPECIFIC HOME YOU ARE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING

- ■ Request the CDD disclosure statement — confirms bond balance, annual assessment, and district.
- ■ Pull the current annual property tax bill — verify county, ad valorem amount, and all non-ad valorem CDD lines.
- ■ Get the amortization schedule from the CDD — confirms remaining bond balance and annual payment schedule.
- ■ Confirm which county the parcel sits in — Sumter, Lake, or Marion determines your effective tax rate.
- ■ Ask for the maintenance assessment amount — this never goes away, even after the bond is paid off.
- ■ Get 12 months of utility bills — water, sewer, electricity, and the combined district bill.
- ■ Order a home inspection — older Villages homes have 20+ years of Florida sun, humidity, and storm exposure.
- ■ Check the Declaration of Restrictions for the specific village — rules on rentals, exterior modifications, and parking vary.
- ■ Ask about golf cart included or separate — some resales include a golf cart; factor that into the comparison.

AT CLOSING

- ■ Confirm Homestead Exemption filing deadline — file by March 1 of your first year.
- ■ Confirm bond payoff if you elected to pay it off — get written confirmation the bond is retired.
- ■ Review the final closing disclosure line by line — all CDD assessments, taxes, and fees should be itemized.

Alternatives to The Villages

What to consider if The Villages doesn't fit your checklist

STRONG ALTERNATIVES IN THE CENTRAL FLORIDA MARKET

Plantation at Leesburg

Lake County, ~14 miles south · $175K–$320K

No CDD bond. 36 holes of golf. ~$235/mo HOA. The best value 55+ golf community in the Villages corridor for budget-focused buyers.

Arlington Ridge

Lake County, Leesburg · $225K–$380K

No CDD bond. 18-hole golf course. Beautiful lake setting. Lower price point than The Villages with independent ownership structure.

Latitude Margaritaville Daytona Beach

Volusia County, 90 min east · $275K–$480K

No CDD bond on most parcels. Beach access 20 minutes away. For buyers who want the resort feel without the bond exposure and with real ocean proximity.

Del Webb Spruce Creek

Marion County · $200K–$380K

Del Webb brand, lower price point, no Villages bond exposure. For buyers who want the Del Webb model at a more accessible cost.

On Top of the World (Ocala)

Marion County, 20 miles north · $175K–$350K

Massive amenity set, no CDD bond, lower overall cost structure. Strong social scene.

Questions to Ask Before You Buy

What to ask the agent, the developer, and the CDD

ASK THE DEVELOPER OR LISTING AGENT

? What is the current CDD bond balance on this specific parcel?
? What is the annual bond payment and when does it mature?
? What county is this parcel in — Sumter, Lake, or Marion?
? What is the current annual maintenance assessment for this district?
? Is the golf cart included in this listing?
? What is the current lifestyle/amenity fee?
? Are there any planned CDD assessments or district budget increases?

ASK YOUR INDEPENDENT BUYER'S AGENT

? What is the resale history for this village — how fast do homes move?
? How does this home's bond compare to others in the same village?
? Is there any leverage on price given the bond balance?
? What is the accurate effective property tax rate for this county?
? Are there any known CDD litigation issues in this district?
? What is the actual golf cart trail pass cost today?

VERIFY DIRECTLY WITH THE CDD

? What is the exact remaining bond balance as of today?
? What is the bond payoff figure if I pay it off at closing?
? What is the annual maintenance assessment for this district?
? Are there any upcoming special assessments planned?
? What is the amortization schedule for the bond on this parcel?

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About Nova55Living

Independent research for the 55+ buyer

WHO WE ARE

Nova55Living is an independent research platform covering 80+ active adult community markets across the United States. We publish honest cost math — HOA fees, CDD bonds, property tax projections, true cost of ownership, and 10-year financial comparisons — that the industry's lead-generation sites structurally cannot replicate without destroying their business model.

We are not affiliated with any builder, developer, HOA, or real estate brokerage. We do not accept sponsored listings. We do not sell leads to communities. Our only revenue comes from referral relationships with independent buyer's agents and from lender and builder partnerships disclosed clearly on the site.

The Villages guide you are reading is one of 80+ market research packages available at nova55living.com. Every market is covered with the same standard: what does it actually cost to live here, what does nobody tell you, and what should you verify before you buy.

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The Villages FL
nova55living.com/the-villages-fl
Hub page — all research, community guides, and cost pages

CDD Bond Explained
nova55living.com/communities/the-villages-bond-explained
Full bond mechanics, payoff math, annual cost by district

True Cost of Ownership
nova55living.com/communities/the-villages-true-cost-of-ownership
All-in annual cost calculator by district and home price

The Villages vs Del Webb
nova55living.com/communities/the-villages-vs-del-webb-communities
Side-by-side lifestyle and cost comparison

County Tax Comparison
nova55living.com/communities/the-villages-sumter-vs-marion-vs-lake-county
Sumter vs Marion vs Lake — 20-year cost math

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