

CHARLOTTESVILLE'S SURROUNDING COUNTY

Albemarle County, Virginia

A practical relocation guide for families

Schools, communities, parks, shopping, commutes and the property details that shape daily family life.

Prepared October 2026. Confirm school assignment, taxes, hours, utilities and fees before relying on them.

PREPARED FOR YOU BY

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START WITH THE MAP IN YOUR HEAD

Albemarle at a glance

The county wraps around the independent City of Charlottesville. A home can have a Charlottesville mailing address and still be in Albemarle County, with county schools, taxes and services.

$0.894
2026 REAL ESTATE TAX / $100

3
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

5
COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

29 · 250 · 64
MAJOR TRAVEL CORRIDORS

Close-in county

Pantops, Rio, Hydraulic, Barracks/Ivy Road and 5th Street put many homes near Charlottesville jobs, shopping and health care, with suburban or established-neighborhood patterns.

Village and rural county

Earlysville, Free Union, Ivy, North Garden, Scottsville and other rural areas offer more land and privacy, but may add driving, well/septic, private-road and broadband questions.

Property-tax planning example

At the adopted Calendar Year 2026 real estate rate of **$0.894 per $100**, a home assessed at $600,000 produces an estimated annual county real estate tax of **$5,364**. The adopted personal-property rate is **$4.28 per $100** of assessed value. Assessment, relief and future rates can change the actual bill.

Begin with these four questions

- Which school serves the exact address?
- What is the real commute at your travel time?
- Are water, sewer and internet public or private?
- What errands must be made by car?

The county is not one lifestyle

A five-acre home in Free Union, a townhome near Route 29 and a club community near Charlottesville can all be “Albemarle County” while delivering very different days.

EDUCATION

Public schools: verify the complete address

Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) serves the county through northern, southern and western patterns. The summary below is a planning orientation, not an address assignment.

GENERAL PATTERN	ELEMENTARY EXAMPLES	MIDDLE / HIGH	AREAS OFTEN ASSOCIATED
Northern	Agnor-Hurt, Baker-Butler, Broadus Wood, Hollymead, Stony Point	Burley, Journey or Lakeside; generally Albemarle High	Route 29 North, Hollymead, Earlysville, northern/eastern county
Southern	Mountain View, Red Hill, Scottsville, Stone-Robinson	Walton; generally Monticello High	5th Street/Avon, North Garden, Scottsville, south/east county
Western	Brownsville, Crozet, Ivy, Virginia L. Murray	Henley; generally Western Albemarle High	Ivy, Farmington, western county, Crozet

2026-27 southern-area change

Beginning in fall 2026, Mountain View operates across two buildings: a Primary School for Pre-K through grade 2 and an Upper Elementary School for grades 3-5. Confirm how this applies to the home you are considering.

Before an offer

- ✓ Enter the full property address in the ACPS locator
- ✓ Confirm directly with ACPS if the result is unclear
- ✓ Check active boundary studies
- ✓ Ask about bus stop and ride time
- ✓ Compare after-school care deadlines

Read school data carefully

Use the current ACPS profile and Virginia School Quality Profile. Ratings from real-estate portals may use older data or a different method, and they do not replace a school visit.

Important: Nearby streets can attend different schools. A neighborhood name, ZIP code or mailing address does not confirm assignment.

EDUCATION CHOICES

Preschool, private school & learning extras

The county-city area functions as one education market for many families. Travel time, waitlists and transportation often matter as much as the program itself.

ACPS preschool

ACPS offers preschool programming for eligible families and expanded seats through a partnership with United Way of Greater Charlottesville. Eligibility and placement are program-specific.

Extended-day care

Ask the assigned elementary school about Extended Day Enrichment Programs, registration windows, school-calendar coverage and waitlists before closing.

INDEPENDENT OPTION	WHAT TO VERIFY
The Covenant School	Pre-K-12 Christian program; confirm campus by grade, tuition and transportation.
Tandem Friends School	Independent school serving grades 5-12; confirm admissions calendar and commute.
Charlottesville Catholic School	Pre-K-8 Catholic school; confirm current grade offerings and parish policies.
Regents School of Charlottesville	K-12 classical Christian school; confirm tuition, admissions and transportation.
Free Union Country School	Preschool through elementary years in Free Union; ask about capacity and program schedule.
Miller School of Albemarle	Grades 8-12 day and boarding school in western Albemarle; confirm athletics and transport.
Community Lab School	ACPS lab-school option; admissions and eligibility are not the same as ordinary attendance-zone assignment.

A useful school-tour sequence

Tour the school, then drive the likely morning route, visit the after-school provider and test the trip to your most frequent evening activity. A strong program still needs to fit the household calendar.

Ask about

Arrival, bus routes, meals, special services and family communication.

Compare

Calendar, aftercare, clubs, athletics, class structure and commute.

Confirm

Waitlists, tuition, age cutoffs, transportation and yearly changes.

Choose a corridor before a neighborhood

Earlysville & Free Union

Rural-to-estate living, country roads and larger lots. Earlysville reaches Route 29 shopping through Airport Road or Earlysville Road; Free Union typically sends errands toward Charlottesville or Crozet.

Ivy, Farmington & west of town

Established neighborhoods, luxury properties, farms and wooded acreage near US-250 and I-64. Ivy and Farmington offer relatively direct access to UVA and western Charlottesville.

Route 29 North

Hollymead, Forest Lakes, North Pointe and nearby communities concentrate shopping, services and airport access. Compare traffic patterns and section-specific amenities.

Rio, Hydraulic & close-in north

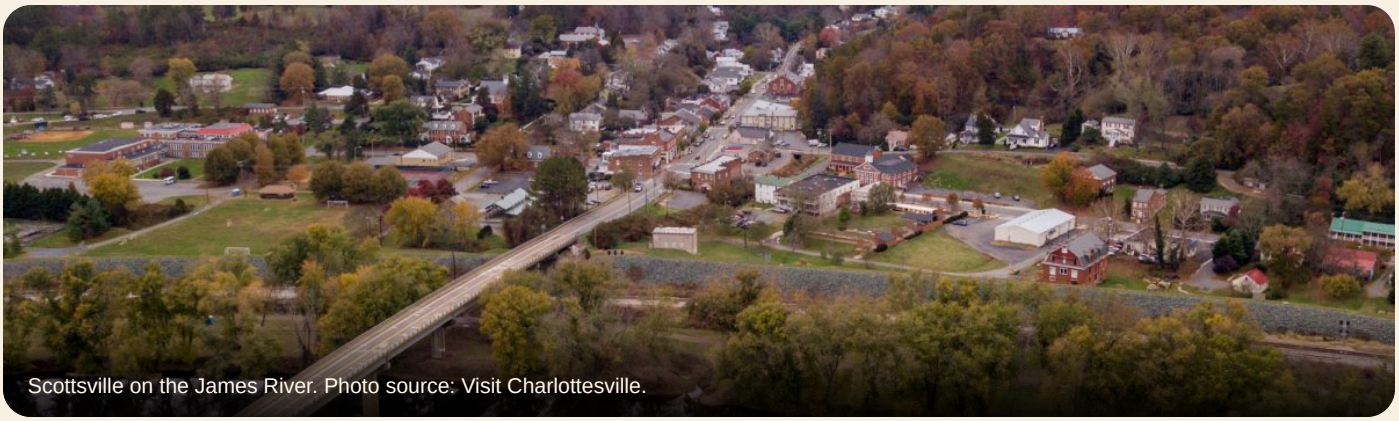
Suburban neighborhoods and townhomes near city amenities. Dunlora, Belvedere, RiverRun and nearby areas vary in age, density, trails and HOA structure.

Pantops, east & southeast

Convenient to Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital, US-250 and I-64. Glenmore is a gated club community; Rivanna Village and other developments have distinct documents and amenity plans.

South county & Scottsville

5th Street/Avon offers closer-in growth and retail access; North Garden and Scottsville feel more rural. Scottsville adds a walkable historic center and James River access.



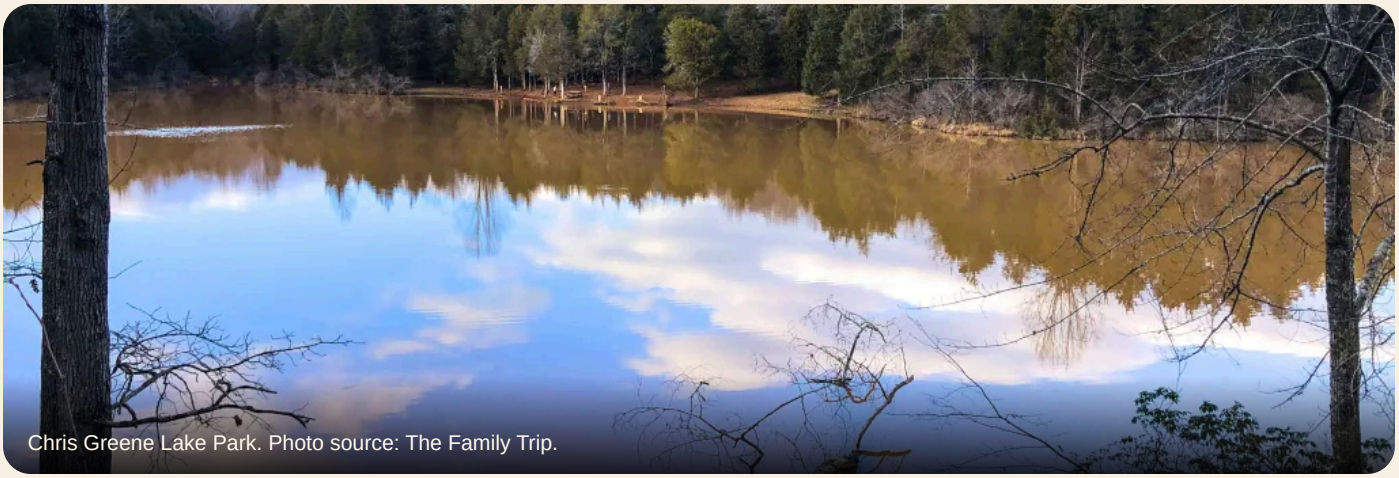
Scottsville on the James River. Photo source: Visit Charlottesville.

HOA details are address- and section-specific

Request the current resale packet, dues, reserve information, amenity rights, architectural rules, rental limits and planned phases. A community name alone does not establish what applies to a particular lot.

OUTDOOR LIFE

Lakes, rivers, fields & forest trails



Chris Greene Lake Park. Photo source: The Family Trip.

Chris Greene Lake Park

4748 Chris Greene Lake Rd

Freshwater recreation, trails, picnic space and a dog park. Seasonal swimming, rentals, fees and operating details should be checked before visiting.

Walnut Creek Park

4250 Walnut Creek Park, North Garden

A large south-county park with lake access, marked trails and disc golf. Confirm current swimming and boating rules.

Darden Towe Park

1445 Darden Towe Park

Rivanna River access, athletic fields, trails, playgrounds and a dog park close to Pantops and Charlottesville.

Ivy Creek Natural Area

A quiet trail and nature-education destination near the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. Protect sensitive areas and follow posted water-access rules.

Preddy Creek Trail Park

A trail-focused park in northeast Albemarle used for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian recreation.

Totier Creek Park

A southern-county reservoir park near Scottsville. It is a nature and fishing destination, not a swimming beach.

Also compare Beaver Creek Lake, Mint Springs Valley Park, Patricia Ann Byrom Forest Preserve Park and local school/athletic parks. Rules, seasonal access and fees change.

FAMILY WEEKENDS

Country outings, libraries & city culture



Carter Mountain Orchard with views across the Charlottesville-Albemarle area. Photo source: Visit Charlottesville.

Outdoor and seasonal

- **Carter Mountain Orchard:** pick-your-own seasons, farm market and views; check reservations and event schedules.
- **James River:** paddling and river days from the Scottsville area; check conditions and outfitter rules.
- **Monticello and Highland:** historic sites near the eastern/southern county edge; plan age-appropriate tours.
- **Wineries and farms:** family policies vary; confirm before bringing children or pets.

Indoor and learning

- **Virginia Discovery Museum:** hands-on children's museum on Charlottesville's Downtown Mall.
- **JMRL:** Northside, Gordon Avenue, Crozet and Scottsville branches serve different county corridors.
- **IX Art Park:** public art and ticketed immersive experiences in Charlottesville.
- **School and recreation programs:** compare county camps, leagues and after-school enrollment dates.

A realistic Saturday test

Drive from a candidate home to one park, one grocery store, one child activity and one restaurant. That loop reveals more about family fit than a single commute estimate.

Young children

Shade, restrooms, stroller surfaces, nap timing and indoor backup.

School age

Teams, lessons, library programs, camps and friend logistics.

Teens

School activities, jobs, driving, transit and late pickup time.

ERRANDS & LOCAL FLAVOR

Shopping and dining follow the corridors

The practical question is not whether the region has what you need. It is how often you want to cross the county to reach it.

CORRIDOR	EVERYDAY PATTERN	PLACES TO EXPLORE
Route 29 North	Major grocery, big-box, pharmacy and service concentration around Hollymead Town Center, 29th Place and Seminole Square.	Timberwood Grill / Taphouse, airport-area dining and national options.
Barracks / Ivy Road	Barracks Road Shopping Center, specialty services and quick access to UVA.	Duner's, The Ivy Inn, Vivace, Foods of All Nations and Boar's Head dining.
Pantops / US-250 East	Grocery, pharmacy, medical and service clusters near Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital.	East-of-town restaurants plus quick access to Downtown Charlottesville.
5th Street / Avon	5th Street Station and south-side groceries/services near I-64.	Casual dining, movie theater and a direct run toward downtown.
Village / rural	Scottsville, Earlysville, Ivy and other villages cover selected basics; larger runs usually go toward Charlottesville.	Small local restaurants, farm markets and destination dining.

Build a weekly errand map

Plot school, work, grocery, pediatric care, pharmacy, activities and one social destination. Count left turns and corridor crossings, not just miles.

Restaurant reality

Albemarle residents use both county and City of Charlottesville dining. The city guide covers downtown institutions and famous local stops; this guide focuses on the county living pattern.

Rural convenience check

At a rural property, confirm delivery coverage, trash/recycling plan, propane or fuel needs, winter road maintenance and how the route feels after dark.

Restaurant ownership, hours and menus change. Check directly before making plans.

COST & COMMUTE

The house price is only the first number

Property taxes

2026 real estate: $0.894 per $100 of assessed value.

2026 personal property: $4.28 per $100 of assessed value.

Use the current county assessment and applicable relief rules for a property-specific estimate.

Transportation

I-64, US-29 and US-250 are the regional spines. Charlottesville Area Transit reaches selected close-in county corridors, while JAUNT provides regional and demand-response services. Most rural households rely heavily on cars.

Monthly-cost categories buyers often miss

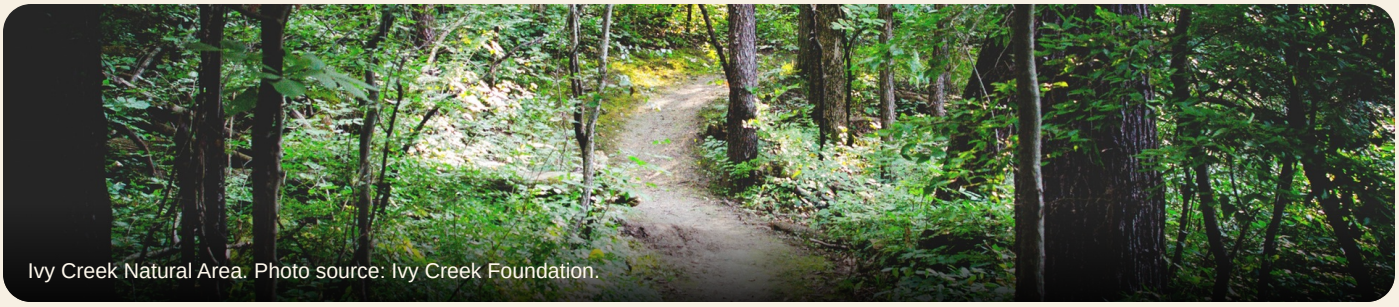
HOA or club dues; well and septic maintenance; water/sewer charges; propane or heating oil; private-road fees; internet equipment; longer fuel use; lawn, tree and driveway care; and property-specific insurance.

Commute test

- ✓ Drive at your actual morning start
- ✓ Repeat during school dismissal
- ✓ Check a rainy-day alternate route
- ✓ Time the trip to UVA, downtown or Route 29
- ✓ Test cell service along rural roads

Utility test

- ✓ Confirm public water/sewer or well/septic
- ✓ Request septic records and bedroom rating
- ✓ Verify internet at the exact address
- ✓ Identify electric and fuel providers
- ✓ Ask who maintains the road and driveway



Ivy Creek Natural Area. Photo source: Ivy Creek Foundation.

MAKE THE DECISION

Your Albemarle property-comparison scorecard

Rate every finalist using the same categories. Add facts in the blank columns rather than relying on memory after a long tour.

Category	A	B	C	D
Verified school path				
Work commute at real time				
Childcare / activity loop				
Grocery / pharmacy access				
Water, sewer, well / septic				
Internet and mobile service				
HOA / club cost and rules				
Road and driveway upkeep				
Outdoor access / yard burden				
Future development nearby				

Before an offer

- ✓ Confirm ACPS assignment
- ✓ Review HOA documents
- ✓ Estimate taxes and insurance
- ✓ Check well/septic or utility records
- ✓ Verify broadband at the address

Before closing

- ✓ Schedule utility transfers
- ✓ Plan school registration
- ✓ Confirm road/driveway responsibility
- ✓ Book movers and childcare
- ✓ Re-check final walk-through items

The right Albemarle home is the property, school path, daily route and maintenance load working together.

PLAN YOUR MOVE

Turn this overview into an address-by-address plan

BUILD YOUR SHORT LIST

Compare Albemarle homes with the facts that matter.

Request a custom tour that compares school assignment, commute, neighborhood or acreage trade-offs, taxes, utilities and family amenities.

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Schedule a Free Consultation ›

Official & primary sources

1. Albemarle County CY2026 tax-rate resolution
2. ACPS school list
3. ACPS Mountain View 2026-27 update
4. ACPS preschool update
5. Walnut Creek Park
6. Darden Towe Park

Family, library & travel sources

1. JMRL Northside Library
2. JMRL Gordon Avenue Library
3. JMRL Crozet Library
4. Virginia Discovery Museum
5. Charlottesville Area Transit strategic plan
6. JAUNT service summary

Photo sources: Piedmont Environmental Council (cover); The Family Trip (Chris Greene Lake); Visit Charlottesville (Carter Mountain and Scottsville); Ivy Creek Foundation (trail). This guide is informational and not legal, tax, school-placement, medical or HOA advice. Verify material facts with the responsible authority.