

PANAMA CITY BEACH BUYER'S GUIDE

2026-2027

Buying a Home, Condo, Second Home or Investment Property in Panama City Beach,
Florida

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**A practical guide to market conditions, property types, buyer strategy, due diligence and
ownership considerations.**

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A Buyer's Guide to Panama City Beach, Florida

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Information contained in this publication is believed accurate at the time of publication but is subject to change without notice. Market statistics, pricing, inventory, interest rates, insurance costs, HOA/COA information, and development plans change regularly. Information cited throughout this guide reflects conditions in mid-2026 and is presented for general orientation only.

Nothing in this publication constitutes legal, tax, insurance, or investment advice. Real estate decisions should be made in consultation with licensed professionals including an attorney, a certified public accountant, a licensed insurance agent, and a mortgage lender. Readers should independently verify current market data and figures relevant to their own transaction.



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A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Portions of the background research, brainstorming, and conceptual development for this guide were created with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools, including Claude® by Anthropic and ChatGPT® by OpenAI. These tools were used to help organize ideas, explore topics, and assist in the research and writing process.

This guide is intended to serve as a helpful resource for buyers gaining a better understanding of the real estate market and buying process in Panama City Beach, Florida. While every effort has been made to provide accurate and up-to-date information, market conditions, pricing, regulations, and local details can change over time.

The information contained in this guide is provided for general educational and informational purposes only. It should not be considered legal, financial, tax, investment, insurance, construction, lending, or other professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult with qualified professionals in the appropriate fields to obtain the most current information and guidance for their specific situation.

My hope is that this guide serves as a valuable starting point – helping you better understand the market, communities, and buying process in Panama City Beach while giving you ideas, insights, and confidence as you begin your own journey.

PCB Market Overview

Panama City Beach has evolved far beyond its reputation as primarily a seasonal vacation destination. Today, PCB is a growing year-round coastal community attracting permanent residents, retirees, military families, second-home owners, vacation-home buyers and real estate investors from across Florida and throughout the United States.

For buyers entering the 2026-2027 Panama City Beach real estate market, the story is increasingly about choice, negotiating power and understanding value.

Recent 2026 market reporting has characterized Panama City Beach as a buyer-favorable market, with increased inventory, longer marketing times and more opportunity to negotiate than during the highly competitive post-pandemic years. Individual buildings, neighborhoods and property types can perform very differently, so current comparable sales should always be reviewed before making an offer.

PCB Real Estate Market at a Glance

Recent June 2026 Realtor.com reporting for the broader PCB market cited a median listing price near \$499,000, a median sold price near \$446,000, approximately 87 median days on market and substantial active inventory. These figures are broad market indicators and should not be used to value a specific property.

PCB contains dramatically different real estate segments - Gulf-front condominiums, vacation rentals, traditional residential neighborhoods, gated golf communities, luxury properties and new construction - so buyers should evaluate the specific micro-market that matches their goals.

What This Means for Buyers

The 2026 market may give buyers something that was difficult to find several years ago: time and leverage. Depending on the property and seller motivation, buyers may be able to negotiate more than price alone.

- Purchase price
- Seller-paid closing costs
- Mortgage rate buydowns
- Repairs or repair credits
- Furniture packages
- Home warranties
- Closing dates
- New-construction incentives

Why Buyers Continue to Consider Panama City Beach

PCB combines a major Florida beach destination with a functioning year-round community. Buyers can choose among Gulf-front condominiums, established neighborhoods, golf-course communities, gated developments, new construction and large master-planned communities.

The area also offers convenient access to Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport, Panama City, Scenic Highway 30A and the broader Northwest Florida Gulf Coast. Continued development around the West Bay and Highway 79 corridor is expanding the residential footprint beyond the traditional Front Beach Road corridor.

Understanding the Different PCB Buyer Markets

1. Primary Residence Buyers

Permanent residents often place more emphasis on everyday livability than short-term rental potential.

- Neighborhood location and commute
- Schools and nearby services
- Garage, storage and yard space
- HOA fees and restrictions
- Flood-zone considerations
- Insurance costs
- Proximity to shopping, healthcare and less tourist-intensive areas

Residential communities buyers may explore include Breakfast Point, Breakfast Point East, Tapestry Park, Bay Point, Wild Heron, Trieste, Turtle Cove and other established or newer PCB neighborhoods.

2. Condo Buyers

PCB offers one of Northwest Florida's largest selections of beach condominiums, ranging from smaller studios and one-bedroom units to luxury Gulf-front residences. A condo purchase requires careful review beyond price and Gulf views.

- HOA/COA fees and association reserves
- Insurance coverage
- Recent and potential future assessments
- Building maintenance and major components
- Rental and pet restrictions
- Parking
- Association financial condition
- Applicable inspection and reserve requirements

A lower-priced condo is not necessarily the better value if the building faces significant assessments, deferred maintenance or unusually high ownership costs.

3. Vacation Rental & Investment Buyers

Investment buyers should analyze a vacation property as a business rather than relying on advertised gross rental revenue.

- Historical rental performance
- Projected gross revenue
- Management and booking fees
- HOA fees, taxes and insurance
- Utilities and cleaning expenses
- Maintenance and furniture replacement

- Rental restrictions
- Financing costs

Gross revenue is not net income. Two condos generating similar annual rental revenue can produce very different returns when HOA fees, insurance, management expenses and assessments are included.

4. Second-Home Buyers

Second-home buyers should first determine how often they intend to personally use the property and whether maximizing rental income is actually the primary goal. The best personal-use property is not always the highest-producing vacation rental, and the highest-producing rental may not be the property you would most enjoy owning.

5. New Construction Buyers

New construction continues to play an important role in the Panama City Beach and West Bay markets. Depending on builder programs and available inventory, buyers may encounter closing-cost contributions, interest-rate incentives, mortgage buydowns, design packages, quick-move-in homes or reduced pricing on selected inventory.

Important: The builder's sales representative represents the builder. Buyers should consider obtaining their own real estate representation and contacting their agent before visiting or registering with a builder, subject to the builder's policies.

Where Should You Buy in PCB?

West End PCB

The west end appeals to buyers who value access to Pier Park, Highway 79, Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport, 30A, West Bay and newer development. It also provides convenient access toward Walton County and the 30A corridor.

Central PCB

Central PCB offers convenient access to restaurants, entertainment, shopping, beaches and numerous established condominium developments. It can appeal to buyers seeking a traditional PCB vacation property, condo or investment location.

East End PCB

The east end provides access toward St. Andrews State Park, Grand Lagoon, marinas, Bay Point, Panama City, boating and fishing. It can be particularly attractive to buyers who prioritize water access and the boating lifestyle.

Important Questions to Ask Before Buying

- **What will the property be used for?** Primary residence, second home, vacation rental, long-term rental, retirement or investment?
- **What is my true ownership cost?** Include mortgage, taxes, insurance, HOA/COA fees and expected maintenance.
- **Is the property in a flood zone?** Flood designation can affect insurance, financing and ownership costs.
- **What insurance should I expect?** Costs can vary based on construction, roof age, elevation, property type and location.

- **Are short-term rentals permitted?** Never assume a property can legally or contractually operate as a vacation rental.
- **Does the association have pending assessments?** This can be especially important with older condominium buildings.
- **What did comparable properties actually sell for?** Closed sales help show what buyers have recently been willing to pay.

Your 2026-2027 PCB Buying Strategy

Step 1 - Establish Your Purchase Goal

Define whether the purchase is for a primary residence, vacation home, investment, retirement, relocation, military move, 1031 exchange or future retirement.

Step 2 - Determine Your Comfortable Budget

Focus on the total monthly and annual cost of ownership, not simply the purchase price or mortgage payment.

Step 3 - Obtain Financing Before Shopping

A strong preapproval establishes purchasing power and helps you move quickly. Condo buyers should discuss condominium financing requirements with their lender before making an offer.

Step 4 - Compare Micro-Markets

Instead of searching only 'Panama City Beach,' compare individual neighborhoods, condo buildings and sections of PCB.

Step 5 - Study Recent Comparable Sales

Review active listings, pending sales, recently sold properties, price per square foot, days on market, price reductions and seller concessions.

Step 6 - Negotiate Strategically

The objective is the best overall transaction, not simply the lowest offer. In some situations, seller-paid closing costs or a mortgage rate buydown can be more valuable to a buyer than an equivalent price reduction.

Step 7 - Complete Thorough Due Diligence

- Home inspection
- Condo-document and association financial review
- Insurance quotes
- Flood-zone verification
- Survey
- Rental history and projections
- Permit research
- Title review
- Financing review

Use appropriately licensed inspectors, lenders, insurance professionals, attorneys, CPAs and other specialists when their expertise is needed.

Is 2026-2027 a Good Time to Buy in Panama City Beach?

For the right buyer and property, the current market can present opportunities. Increased inventory and longer marketing times can give buyers more ability to compare options, perform due diligence and negotiate than during highly competitive periods.

That does not mean every property is undervalued or that prices will necessarily decline. Long-term buyers should focus on whether the property is right for their goals, whether the price is supported by comparable sales, whether total ownership costs are comfortable and whether the property makes sense over their intended ownership period.

The PCB Advantage

World-famous beaches + year-round living + vacation rental opportunities + new construction + established neighborhoods + boating + golf + retirement communities + proximity to 30A + airport accessibility.

For 2026-2027 buyers, increased choice and more balanced negotiating conditions may create opportunities that were difficult to find during the most competitive years of the Florida real estate boom.

Ready to Explore Panama City Beach?

Whether you're relocating to Northwest Florida, searching for a Gulf-front condo, purchasing a second home, considering new construction or evaluating a vacation-rental investment, knowledgeable local representation can help you compare the numbers and understand the differences among PCB's many micro-markets.

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Real estate market statistics, pricing, inventory, interest rates, insurance costs, rental projections, HOA/COA information, taxes, development plans and regulations can change. Market information in this guide is intended for general educational purposes and should not be considered financial, legal, tax, insurance or investment advice. Buyers should independently verify information and consult qualified real estate, lending, insurance, legal, tax, inspection and other professionals when appropriate before making purchasing or investment decisions.

Market references used in the source draft include Realtor.com Panama City Beach market reporting and Latitude Margaritaville Watersound development information, accessed in 2026.

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