HOA Costs, Buyer Resistance and Property Values at Holly Lake Ranch

A 10-Year MLS Market Analysis | September 2026

Holly Lake Ranch Real Estate Advisory

Purpose. This report examines Holly Lake Ranch (HLR) market performance before and after the $7,500 initiation fee became effective January 1, 2025. It compares HLR with Hideaway and Quitman, which were exposed to the same broad East Texas housing environment, and combines MLS results with the transaction-level experience of Realtors serving HLR.

Executive Summary

- HLR remains substantially more valuable on a price-per-square-foot basis than it was a decade ago. The recent decline in median sale price overstates the decline in underlying value because the mix and size of homes sold changed.
- The January 1, 2025 fee date provides a useful breakpoint. Comparing 2023-2024 with 2025-2026 YTD, HLR median sold price per square foot declined 5.8%, versus a 4.0% decline at Hideaway and an 8.0% increase at Quitman.
- The clearest post-fee signal is market friction. HLR median days on market doubled from 34 to 68.5 days, and its median sale-to-original-list-price ratio fell from 95.4% to 93.0%. Hideaway moved from 35 to 44.5 days and from 95.7% to 95.0%.
- Among HLR sales below $200,000, median days on market increased from 41.5 to 85.5 days and the median sale-to-original-list-price ratio fell from 94.4% to 85.9%. Hideaway did not show a comparable deterioration in this price band.
- The comparative evidence points to a meaningful HLR-specific affordability and marketability issue after January 1, 2025. The strongest resistance appears at lower price points, where the $7,500 charge represents the largest share of a buyer's acquisition cost. Advisory Realtors report repeated buyer objections and transactions lost because of the charge, reinforcing the pattern visible in the MLS data.

1. Data and Method

MLS sample. The analysis uses 2,693 closed single-family detached transactions: 943 HLR sales, 1,103 Hideaway sales, and 647 Quitman sales. The files span approximately September 2016 through September 2026. 2026 figures are year-to-date and should not be compared with full-year sales volume.

Breakpoint. The HLR initiation fee is treated as effective January 1, 2025, based on information supplied for this report. The principal comparison uses 2023-2024 as the pre-fee period and 2025-2026 YTD as the post-fee period.

Metrics. Median sold price, sold price per square foot, days on market (DOM), sale price as a percentage of original list price, and transaction counts. Medians are emphasized because they are less sensitive to unusually expensive or inexpensive sales.

2. Pre-Fee vs. Post-Fee Comparison

Market	Period	Sales	Median Price	Median $/SF	Median DOM	Sale/Orig.
HLR	2023-24	162	$254,500	$170.00	34.0	95.4%
HLR	2025-26 YTD	116	$241,000	$160.10	68.5	93.0%
Hideaway	2023-24	179	$348,250	$172.00	35.0	95.7%
Hideaway	2025-26 YTD	170	$319,500	$165.04	44.5	95.0%
Quitman	2023-24	115	$240,000	$139.48	37.0	94.9%
Quitman	2025-26 YTD	78	$220,500	$150.61	56.0	93.3%

Because HLR, Hideaway and Quitman were operating within the same broad regional market, their differing post-2025 results help separate general market slowing from HLR-specific resistance. HLR experienced weaker price-per-square-foot performance than Hideaway and materially greater deterioration in marketing time and seller negotiating position, particularly in the lower-price segment.

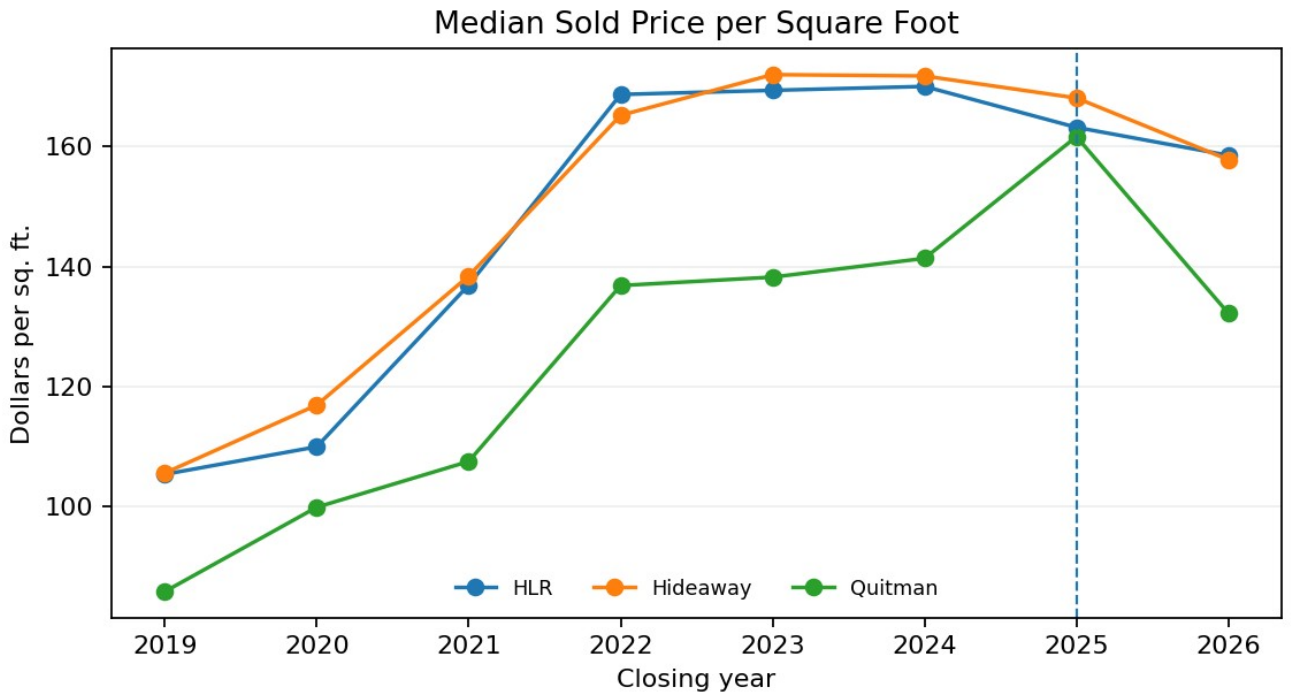


Figure 1. Median sold price per square foot. Dashed line marks 2025, the first year of the reported initiation fee.

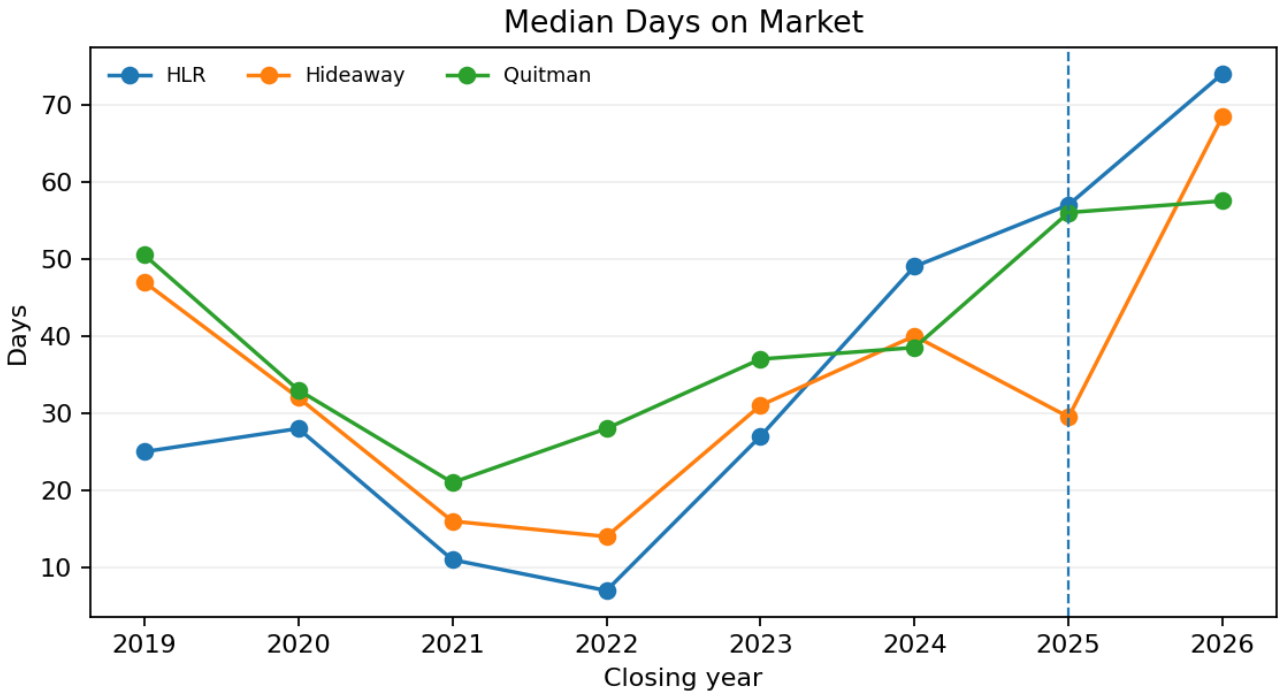


Figure 2. Median days on market. HLR marketing time increased sharply after the 2021-2022 market peak.

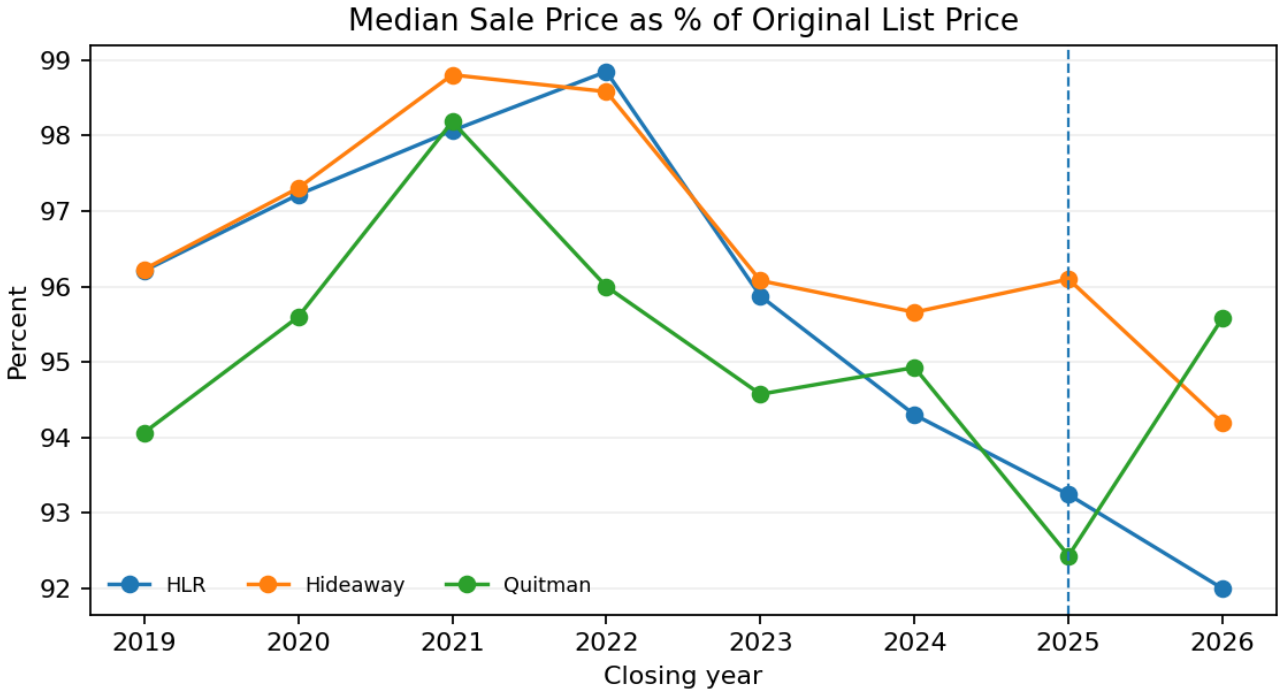


Figure 3. Median sale price as a percentage of original list price. Lower percentages indicate greater negotiation from the original asking price.

3. The Lower-Price Segment

A fixed initiation fee should, all else equal, impose a larger proportional burden on lower-priced purchases. A $7,500 fee equals 5.0% of a $150,000 purchase, 3.75% of $200,000, 3.0% of $250,000, 2.14% of $350,000, and 1.5% of $500,000.

Market	Period	Sales < $200K	Median Sale	Median $/SF	Median DOM / Sale-Orig.
HLR	2023-24	30	$175,250	$162.21	41.5 days / 94.4%
HLR	2025-26 YTD	30	$162,500	$145.85	85.5 days / 85.9%
Hideaway	2023-24	17	$172,000	$133.93	39.0 days / 92.6%
Hideaway	2025-26 YTD	20	$172,000	$125.64	45.5 days / 93.2%
Quitman	2023-24	38	$139,900	$93.47	59.5 days / 89.1%
Quitman	2025-26 YTD	34	$169,500	$125.38	37.0 days / 88.7%

Key observation. HLR sub-$200,000 sales show the clearest post-breakpoint deterioration: median DOM rose from 41.5 to 85.5 days, while the median sale/original-list ratio fell from 94.4% to 85.9%. Hideaway sub-$200,000 sales moved from 39 to 45.5 days and did not show comparable deterioration in seller negotiating position. Because both communities were exposed to the same broad regional market forces, this divergence is evidence of additional resistance specific to HLR.

4. Affordability, Buyer Experience and Competitive Value

Members of the Holly Lake Ranch Real Estate Advisory report repeated buyer objections and concerns regarding the initiation fee, including prospective buyers who declined to proceed with Holly Lake Ranch purchases because of the additional upfront cost. These transaction-level observations are not a substitute for MLS statistics, but they capture demand that closed-sale data cannot: a buyer who walks away because of the fee never appears as an HLR closing.

MLS data tell us what sold. Realtors also know what did not sell - and why.

This proportional burden matters because affordability has historically been an important part of Holly Lake Ranch's market appeal. The MLS evidence shows the strongest post-2025 deterioration in the under-$200,000 segment - precisely where a fixed $7,500 charge consumes the largest share of the purchase price.

A fixed $7,500 initiation fee is not merely an Association revenue item; it is part of the buyer's effective acquisition cost. The burden is not equal across price points. The fee equals 5.0% of a $150,000 purchase, 3.75% of a $200,000 purchase, 3.0% of a $250,000 purchase, 2.14% of a $350,000 purchase, and 1.5% of a $500,000 purchase.

A Critical Comparison: Hideaway Includes Golf; HLR Does Not

A direct comparison of initiation fees must account for what membership provides. Hideaway's official 2026 fee schedule lists an $11,500 initiation fee and $339.75 in total monthly dues for a membership lot with a house. Importantly, it states that golf-course greens fees are included in membership. Hideaway also provides 27 holes of golf, three lakes, swimming, parks and other amenities.

Holly Lake Ranch operates differently. HLRA's own financial policies define Golf Membership Fees as separate annual fees. Those fees provide fully paid greens fees and private-cart use for the year; property owners who are not golf members may use the course by paying the established charges when they play. Therefore, the fact that Hideaway's initiation fee is higher does not make the two charges economically equivalent.

Community	Initiation fee	Recurring cost	Golf treatment
Holly Lake Ranch	$7,500	HOA/maintenance dues apply	Golf is separate; annual golf membership or applicable play fees
Hideaway	$11,500	$339.75/month for house membership (2026)	Greens fees included in membership; 27 holes

The market question is therefore not simply whether another community charges an initiation fee. It is whether the total cost of entry is proportionate to local home values and whether the buyer receives a competitive package of benefits in return. At HLR, a buyer who wants golf faces costs beyond the standard property-owner membership, making golf an important distinction in any comparison with Hideaway.

The Economic Trade-Off for Existing Owners

The initiation fee produces revenue for the Association, but every resale also represents an existing homeowner attempting to sell an asset. If an additional entry cost discourages buyers, lengthens marketing time, increases price reductions or causes some purchasers to choose another community, part of the economic burden may ultimately be borne by existing owners through reduced marketability or homeowner equity.

Accordingly, the relevant policy question is not simply, “How much revenue does the initiation fee generate?” It is, “What is the net economic benefit after considering affordability, buyer demand, transaction activity, marketability, benefits received and the property values of existing homeowners?”

Sources for this section: Hideaway Lake Club, 2026 Dues Structure and Amenities; Holly Lake Ranch Association, Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (2024) and Rules and Regulations (2025).

5. Why Median Sale Price Alone Can Mislead

HLR median sale price peaked at $293,000 in 2022 and is $216,000 YTD in 2026, a decline of roughly 26%. But median sold price per square foot moved from $168.69 to $158.55, a decline of about 6%. The typical size of homes sold also changed. This indicates that transaction mix accounts for part of the headline median-price decline.

Accordingly, this report gives more weight to price per square foot, marketing time, sale-to-original-list-price ratios, price bands, and comparisons with other markets than to raw median sale price alone.

6. What the Comparative Evidence Shows

The three comparison markets were exposed to substantially the same broad East Texas housing environment, including mortgage-rate changes, inflation, insurance costs, economic uncertainty and post-pandemic normalization. Yet their post-2025 performance was not the same. HLR experienced greater market friction, and the divergence is most pronounced in the price range where a fixed $7,500 entry charge has the greatest proportional impact.

The evidence is strongest on marketability and buyer resistance. It does not assign an exact dollar amount of value loss to the initiation fee, because individual transactions are also affected by condition, pricing, location and property characteristics. That limitation should not obscure the comparative result: the broader market factors were shared, while the unusually sharp deterioration in HLR’s lower-price segment was not.

Integrated conclusion. The MLS comparison and the direct experience of HLR Realtors point in the same direction. Since the fee became effective, HLR has experienced materially greater resistance in its affordable segment than the comparable Hideaway segment, while Realtors report buyers objecting to the fee and, in some cases, choosing not to proceed with HLR purchases. Taken together, the evidence supports the conclusion that the $7,500 initiation fee has become a material factor adversely affecting affordability and marketability at Holly Lake Ranch. Continued buyer resistance of this kind creates downward pressure on seller negotiating leverage and, over time, can place pressure on property values.

7. Implications for Property Owners and Community Leaders

- Evaluate initiation fees not only as a revenue source but also as part of the buyer’s effective acquisition cost.

- Track sub-$200,000 and $200,000-$300,000 properties separately because a fixed fee has a larger proportional impact in those segments.
- Monitor DOM, price reductions, sale/original-list ratio, failed/pending transactions, and sales volume alongside sale prices.
- Compare HLR continually with Hideaway as an amenity-community benchmark and with nearby conventional markets as a broader control.
- Pair future MLS analysis with HOA dues, reserve levels, capital expenditures, assessments, and amenity investments to evaluate whether higher costs are accompanied by measurable homeowner value.

8. Conclusion

The 10-year record shows that Holly Lake Ranch remains substantially more valuable than it was earlier in the study. The issue identified in this report is not a claim that HLR values have broadly collapsed. It is a more specific and actionable finding: since January 1, 2025, HLR has developed a measurable affordability and marketability disadvantage that is most visible in its lower-priced homes.

The comparison markets help net out the broader market explanation. Hideaway and Quitman were subject to the same general East Texas market forces, yet HLR's lower-priced segment experienced a much sharper increase in marketing time and deterioration in seller negotiating position. That statistical divergence is consistent with what Realtors are hearing directly from buyers: the $7,500 initiation fee is a meaningful objection and has contributed to buyers walking away from HLR opportunities. The Advisory therefore concludes that the fee is a material source of buyer resistance and is adversely affecting HLR marketability, particularly for more affordable homes. While the analysis does not calculate an exact dollar amount of property-value impact, sustained resistance of this kind can reduce demand, weaken seller leverage and place downward pressure on homeowner equity. The appropriate policy question is therefore whether the revenue generated by the fee justifies its demonstrated affordability and marketability costs to the community and its existing property owners.

Methodology and Limitations

Source data are MLS exports supplied for Holly Lake Ranch, Hideaway, and Quitman. Calculations were performed from closed single-family detached transactions. No attempt was made in this edition to independently verify HOA fee history, classify waterfront/golf-front homes, or construct a formal causal econometric model. Results may be influenced by missing acreage values, property renovations, location differences within each market, and small samples in individual price bands. The 2016 and 2026 periods are partial years.

Public-source verification: Hideaway Lake Club 2026 Dues Structure (hideawaytexas.net); Hideaway Amenities (hideawaytexas.net); Holly Lake Ranch Association Financial Policies and Procedures Manual and 2025 Rules and Regulations (hollylakeranch.com).

This report is for market information and community discussion. It is not an appraisal, legal opinion, financial audit, or prediction of future property values.