

A DATA-DRIVEN MARKET UPDATE

Columbus Single-Family Rental Market Update 2026

An operator's view of the Columbus, Ohio metro single-family rental market — rent trends, neighborhood yields, regulatory shifts, and the 2026 investor playbook.

\$1,670

AVG 3BR RENT

Columbus apartments, Feb 2026

95%+

OCCUPANCY

Well-managed properties

+2.2–4%

YOY RENT GROWTH

Outperforming national avg

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SECTION 01

Executive Summary

Columbus remains one of the strongest single-family rental markets in the Midwest entering 2026, but the investor playbook looks different than it did in 2025. Intel's New Albany semiconductor project has delayed production start from 2025 to 2030–2031. The Columbus Rental Registry passed in April 2026, introducing new compliance requirements for every residential rental in the city. Franklin County's 2026 Triennial Update is underway, which will adjust assessed values again this summer.

Through these shifts, market fundamentals remain intact. Median home prices sit at \$335,000 across the Columbus & Central Ohio Regional MLS — roughly 33% below the national average. Year-over-year price growth has moderated to a healthy 4.7%. Rent growth continues to outperform the national average, and occupancy in well-managed properties remains above 95%. Inventory has improved meaningfully, giving disciplined investors more room to underwrite properly and negotiate from strength.

The 2026 opportunity is different from the 2021–2023 boom. This is a year that rewards careful acquisition, realistic underwriting, and operational excellence rather than momentum-driven buying.

AT A GLANCE • COLUMBUS SFR MARKET, Q1 2026

\$335K

MEDIAN HOME PRICE

MLS • March 2026

+4.7%

YOY PRICE GROWTH

Columbus REALTORS

46–49

DAYS ON MARKET

14–18% increase YoY

95%+

OCCUPANCY

Well-managed properties

7–10%

URBAN CAP RATES

Hilltop, Linden, Franklinton

\$1,670

AVG 3BR RENT

Columbus apartments

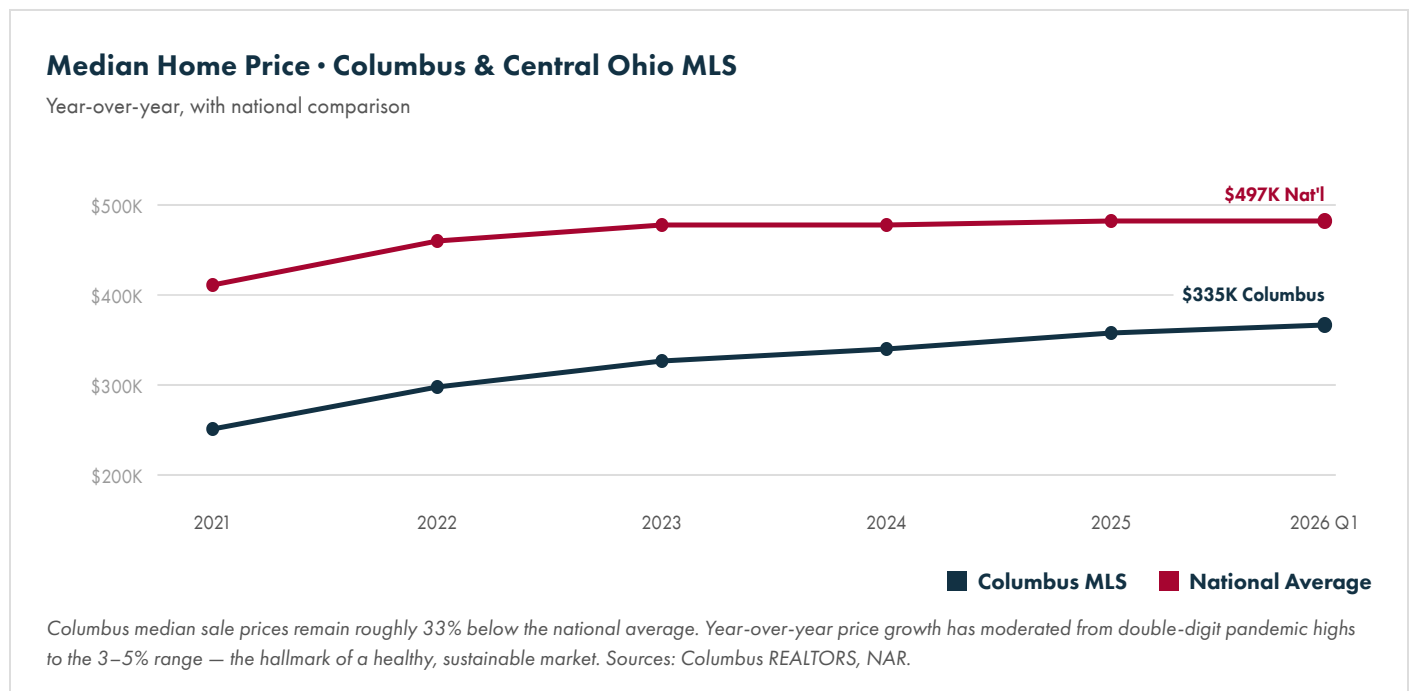
SECTION 02

Columbus Housing Market Overview

Q1 2026 Snapshot

Columbus's housing market enters 2026 in a more balanced posture than it held through most of 2024 and 2025. According to the Columbus REALTORS March 2026 Local Market Update, median sale price across the Columbus & Central Ohio Regional MLS hit **\$335,000** in March, up 4.7% year-over-year. Inventory improved to 4,067 homes for sale, but months of supply still sits at just 1.6 — well below the 6-month threshold that defines a balanced market.

Days on market have lengthened. Homes now average 46 to 49 days to sell across the metro, compared to 43 days a year earlier (a 14% to 18% increase). Buyers have more breathing room, but sellers still receive an average of 97% of their original list price.

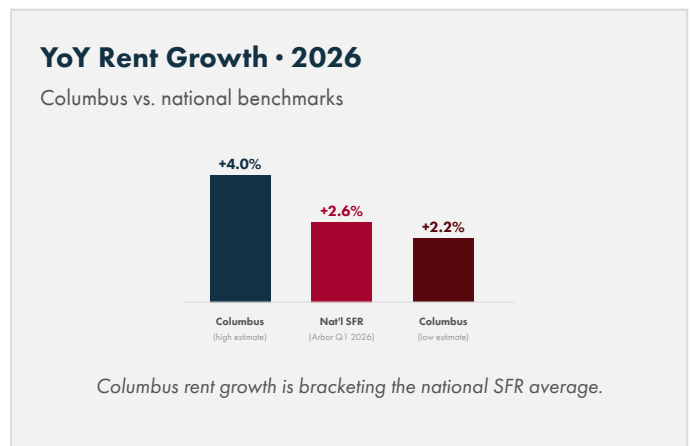
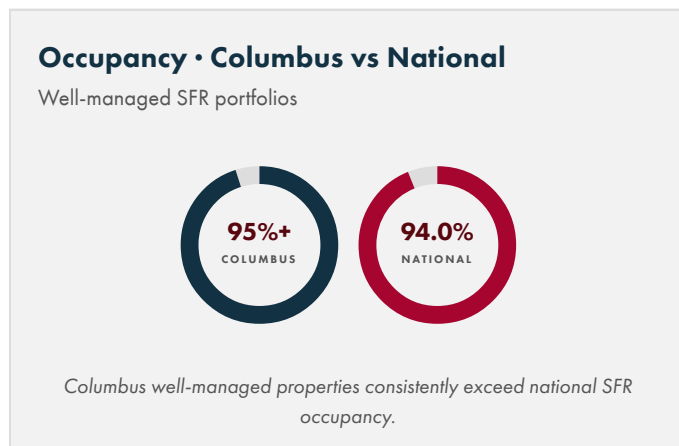
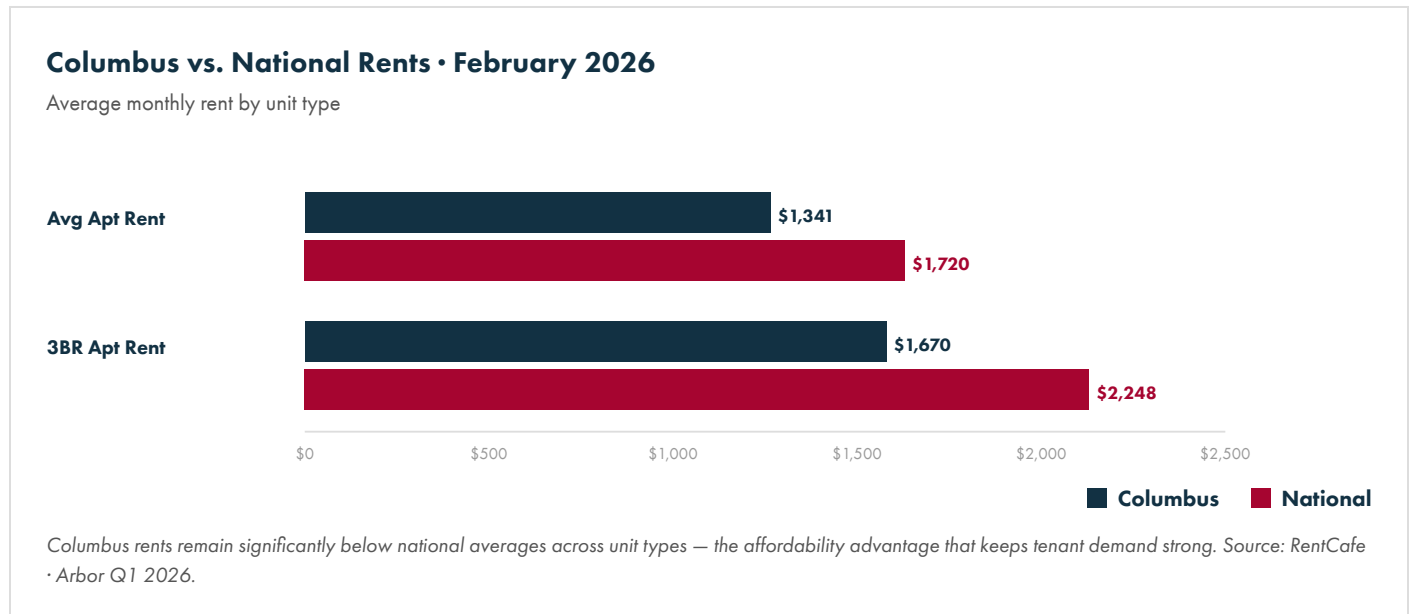


SECTION 03

Rental Market Performance

The Columbus single-family rental market continues to outperform national averages on both rent growth and occupancy. Average apartment rent in Columbus reached \$1,341 as of February 2026, up 2.24% year-over-year, while three-bedroom unit rents average \$1,670. Single-family detached rentals typically command higher rents than comparable apartments, with three-bedroom SFRs in desirable Columbus submarkets leasing in the **\$1,750 to \$2,200** range depending on condition and neighborhood.

Arbor's Q1 2026 SFR report shows national rents grew just 2.6% year-over-year in January 2026, with national occupancy at 94.0% and cap rates rising to 7.3% as home price appreciation slowed. Columbus fundamentals compare favorably on both occupancy and rent growth.



RENTAL MARKET, CONTINUED

Key Market Metrics

Columbus vs. National Context

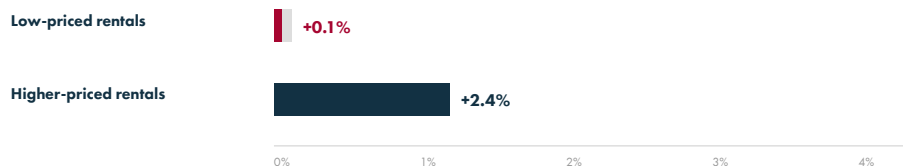
METRIC	COLUMBUS Q1 2026	NATIONAL CONTEXT
Median home sale price	\$335,000	~33% below nat'l avg
YoY price growth	+4.7%	Nat'l avg ~3% (NAR)
Median days on market	46-49 days	Similar to national norms
Months of supply	1.6 months	Balanced = 6 months
Avg apartment rent	\$1,341	~22% below nat'l avg
3BR apartment rent	\$1,670	SFR typically higher
YoY rent growth	+2.2% to +4.0%	Nat'l SFR +2.6% (Arbor)
Projected occupancy	95%+ (well-managed)	Nat'l SFR ~94.0%

Sources: Columbus REALTORS MLS (March 2026), RentCafe/Yardi Matrix (February 2026), Arbor Q1 2026 SFR Report, MMG Real Estate Advisors, Redfin, Axios Columbus Q1 2026.

The 2026 Columbus rental story is steady outperformance. Not thrilling, not disappointing. Just consistently better than the national baseline.

Rental Demand Is Bifurcating by Price Point

YoY rent growth · January 2026 · National SFR



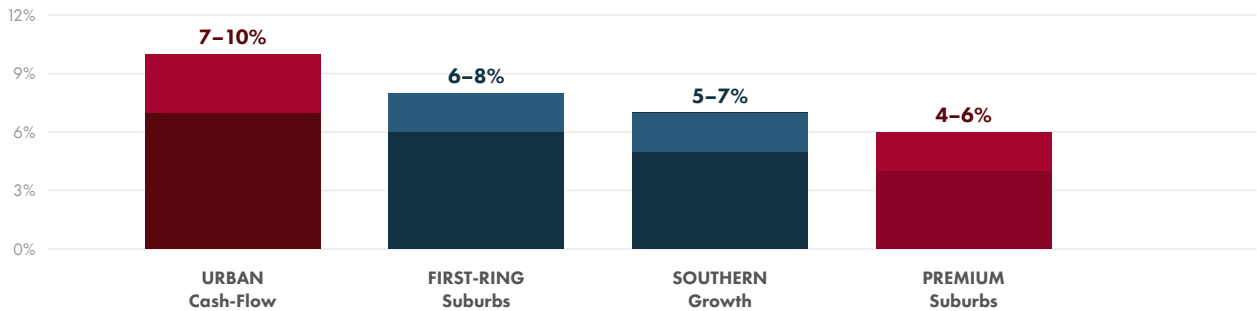
SECTION 04

Best Neighborhoods for Investment in 2026

Not every part of Columbus behaves the same way. Investor strategy should match neighborhood fundamentals. Below are the five categories to watch in 2026, with typical return profiles and operational considerations.

Typical Cap Rate Ranges by Columbus Neighborhood Category

Low / high range for each neighborhood type



Urban cash-flow neighborhoods generate the highest yields but require active management. Premium suburbs generate lower current yields but trade on appreciation.

1

High-Yield Urban Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods: Hilltop · South Linden · Franklinton · Whitehall · Eastmoor | **Best for:** Monthly cash flow, active management

For investors prioritizing monthly cash flow, these urban Columbus neighborhoods offer the strongest rent-to-price ratios in the metro. Franklinton continues its transformation with new mixed-use projects, breweries, and cultural hubs driving demand. Linden remains in the middle of the ONE Linden redevelopment initiative (a \$50+ million investment).

CAP RATE
7-10%
Highest yield

SECTION 04 • CONTINUED

Neighborhood Categories

<p>2</p>	<p>Emerging Suburban Corridors</p> <p>Neighborhoods: Morse Road / SR 161 (Northland, Gahanna, Westerville) · Hamilton Road Corridor · Lincoln Village · Reynoldsburg Best for: Entry-level, 1–5-unit portfolios</p> <p>First-ring suburbs offer the cleanest balance of affordability and rental demand. Reynoldsburg deserves particular attention in 2026: the city has seen notable year-over-year sales activity increases, and its affordable entry points combined with solid rental demand make it a sweet spot for investors building a Columbus portfolio.</p>	<p>CAP RATE</p> <p>6–8%</p> <p>Balanced</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Southern Growth Areas</p> <p>Neighborhoods: Grove City · Canal Winchester · Lancaster · Groveport · Teays Valley School District Best for: Tenant stability, long lease terms</p> <p>Columbus's southern suburbs continue to offer strong fundamentals for investors prioritizing tenant stability. Larger lots, lower property taxes than north-side suburbs, and school districts that attract family renters who stay for multiple lease terms. Proximity to Honda's EV hub in Marysville, Meta operations, and the Anduril facility near Rickenbacker all add to workforce housing demand.</p>	<p>CAP RATE</p> <p>5–7%</p> <p>Stable</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Affluent Suburbs • Appreciation Plays</p> <p>Neighborhoods: Dublin · Powell · New Albany · Upper Arlington · Lewis Center (Olentangy Schools) Best for: Long-horizon, appreciation + premium tenants</p> <p>For investors focused on long-term appreciation and premium tenants, the traditional Columbus prestige suburbs remain best-in-class. Dublin's median home price sits around \$615,000. Cash flow is thin — higher entry prices and higher property taxes compress initial yields — but lease renewal rates are the highest in the metro, vacancy is minimal, and appreciation has been steady for decades.</p>	<p>CAP RATE</p> <p>4–6%</p> <p>Appreciation</p>



SECTION 04 • CONTINUED

Employer-Driven Growth

5

Employer-Driven Growth Plays

Neighborhoods: Marysville (Honda EV hub) • Sunbury (Delaware County) • Johnstown (adjacent to Intel site)

| **Best for:** Patient capital, 5–10 year horizons

One change from last year's report: **the Licking County story has shifted.** With Intel's production start pushed to 2030–2031, the short-term speculation window on New Albany / Johnstown agricultural land has closed. Land that jumped 10x in value between 2022 and 2024 is now priced for patient capital rather than quick flips. Investors still drawn to employer-growth plays should look at Marysville, Sunbury, and Johnstown — but on multi-year horizons rather than quarterly cycles.

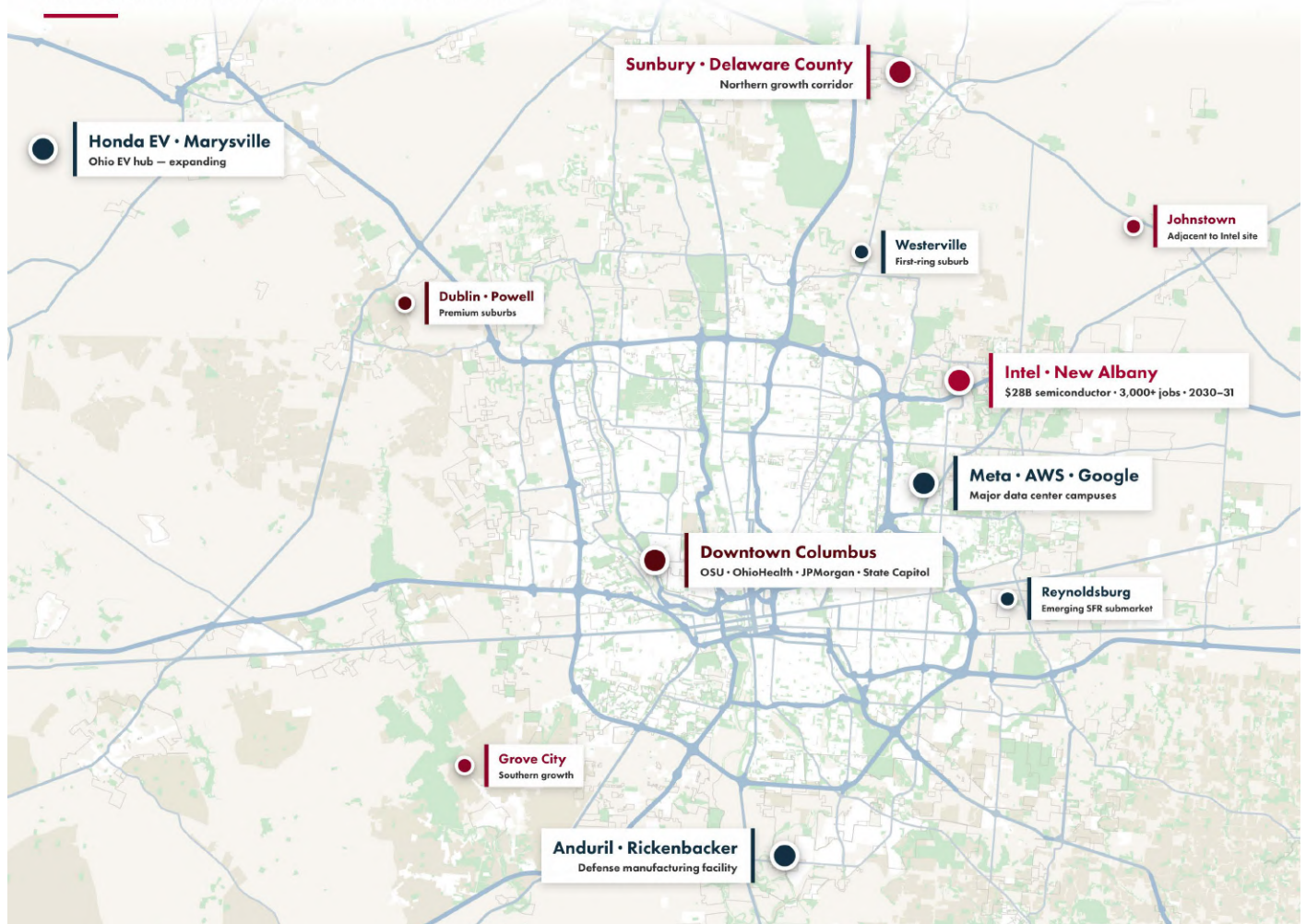
STRATEGY

Variable

5–10 yr horizon

Central Ohio Employer Map

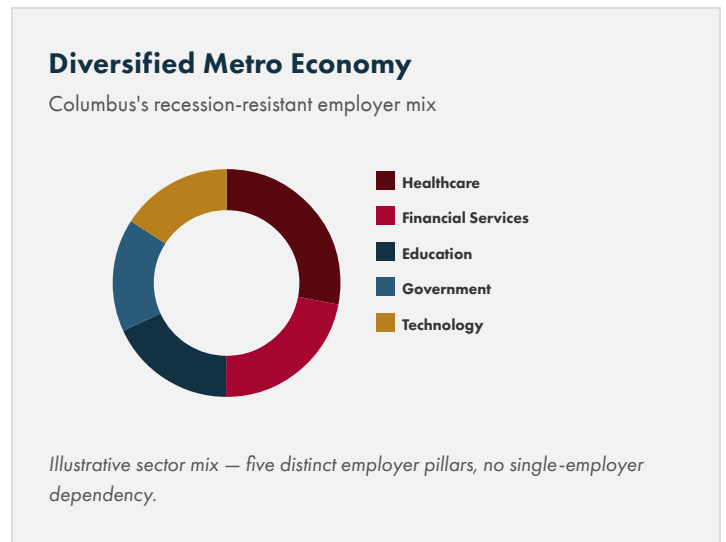
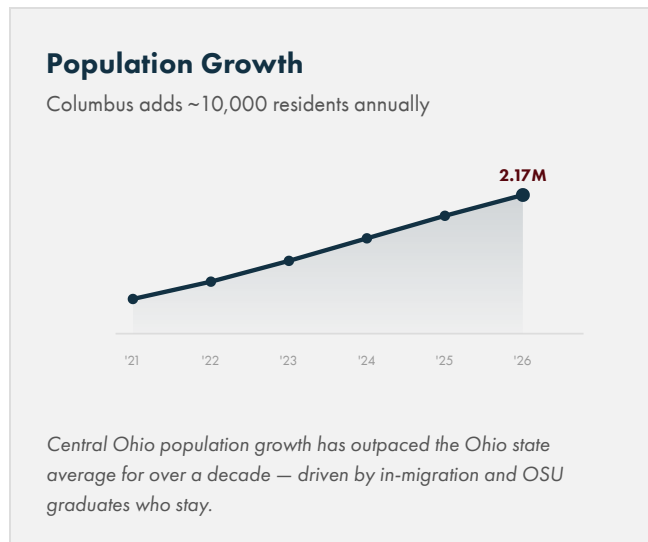
Major employment anchors shaping rental demand across the Columbus metro



SECTION 05

Economic & Employment Drivers

The fundamentals supporting Columbus rental demand remain firmly intact, even with the Intel timeline shift.



HEALTHCARE

OhioHealth • Nationwide Children's • OSU Wexner Medical Center

FINANCIAL SERVICES

JPMorgan Chase • Nationwide Insurance • Huntington Bank

EDUCATION & GOVERNMENT

The Ohio State University (largest metro employer) • Ohio state agencies

TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING

Google • Meta • AWS data centers • Honda EV hub • Anduril Industries

Intel • Patience, Not Panic

Intel's \$28 billion semiconductor project in New Albany has been delayed to a 2030–2031 production start, down from the original 2025 target. Construction continues: as of early 2025, Intel reported approximately 800 workers on site with over 1.6 million work hours completed, and the workforce is expected to grow to several thousand by year-end. Once operational, the facility is projected to create 3,000 direct jobs plus thousands of ancillary positions.

Columbus doesn't depend on any single employer. That's why it's been one of the most recession-resistant rental markets in the country.

SECTION 06

Regulatory Updates Landlords Need to Know

Four major regulatory shifts are reshaping the Columbus rental landscape in 2026. Investors who stay current on these changes protect profitability and avoid costly compliance issues.

Disclaimer. The information in this section is current as of April 2026 and is informational only. This is not legal advice. Consult a qualified Ohio attorney for specific situations.

01 Columbus Rental Registry • Passed April 2026

The biggest regulatory change of 2026. Columbus City Council passed the residential rental registry ordinance on **April 15, 2026**. Every residential rental dwelling unit within the City of Columbus must now be registered annually, with owners providing:

- Name, address, email, and telephone number of the owner (or ownership entity)
- Number of rental dwelling units and average rent
- A local operator and named emergency contact
- An annual affidavit affirming that critical building systems comply with local housing, building, health, and fire codes
- Any inspection documentation from the past year

An annual registration fee applies. The final ordinance dropped proactive individual-unit inspections (which faced constitutional concerns), but maintained the annual registration and accountability framework. Implementation details including exact effective date, fee schedule, and enforcement protocols are still being finalized by the city.

02 Franklin County 2026 Triennial Update

Three years after the 2023 Sexennial Reappraisal drove residential values up 41% on average (with some school districts seeing 60%+ increases), the 2026 Triennial Update is now underway. Assessment notices are typically mailed in June, with informal review sessions held July through September. **Final values take effect for Tax Year 2026 bills paid in 2027.**

Unlike the 2023 sexennial, which was a full reappraisal, the triennial update uses mass appraisal methods based on sales from the past three years. Investors who acquired properties post-2023 should pay particular attention to the new valuations and file Board of Revision complaints by **March 31, 2027** if values appear overstated.

SECTION 06 · CONTINUED

Regulatory Updates, continued

03 Source-of-Income Protection

Columbus's source-of-income discrimination ordinance (in effect since 2024) prohibits landlords from refusing to rent to applicants based on a legal source of income — most notably Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8). Screening criteria must apply consistently across all applicants regardless of income source. Investors who have not updated their screening protocols since 2023 should review them against current Columbus requirements.

04 Security Deposits & Short-Term Rentals

New Columbus tenants have the right to pay security deposits in installments over three or six months, which affects initial cash flow planning. Short-term rental operators continue to face increased scrutiny: a City of Columbus STR permit is required, lodging excise taxes apply (combined rates commonly fall between 9% and 15%), and several suburbs including Upper Arlington and Westerville have significantly limited or banned Airbnb operations.

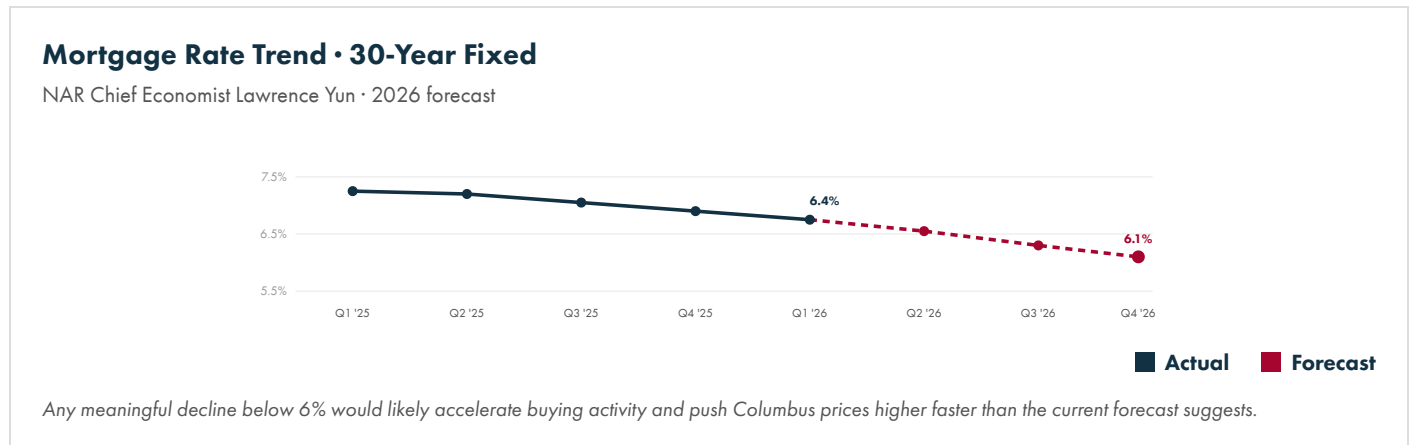
2026 Compliance Quick Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Register every rental unit on the Columbus Rental Registry (new, 2026)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide annual affidavit of code compliance with registry submission
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review 2026 triennial assessment notices when mailed in June 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	File Board of Revision complaints by March 31, 2027 if values appear overstated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update screening criteria to comply with source-of-income ordinance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply screening criteria consistently across all applicants regardless of income source
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer security deposit installment option (3 or 6 months) to new tenants
<input type="checkbox"/>	If operating STR: verify City of Columbus permit, BCI background check, lodging tax compliance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review lease agreements against 2026 Columbus ordinances and Ohio Revised Code Chapter 5321
<input type="checkbox"/>	Document quarterly property inspections (supports registry compliance affidavits)

SECTION 07

2026 Investment Outlook

Columbus enters 2026 as one of the most stable real estate markets in the Midwest. Home values are projected to rise 2% to 5% through the year, driven by steady population growth, low construction starts (limiting new supply), and continued in-migration from higher-cost metros. MMG Real Estate Advisors projects Columbus rent growth to approach 4% in 2026, continuing to outperform the national average.



The 2026 Investor Playbook

STRATEGY	TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS	PROFILE
Emerging cash-flow	Franklinton · South Linden · Reynoldsburg · Hilltop	Attractive entry points before prices fully reflect demand
Workforce housing	Groveport · Hilltop · Canal Winchester	Strong rents, reliable tenant demand, attractive yields
Long-term appreciation	Marysville · Sunbury · Johnstown	Employer-driven growth on multi-year horizons
Premium hold assets	Dublin · Powell · New Albany · Upper Arlington · Lewis Center	Low-volatility appreciation for decade-plus horizons

2026 rewards disciplined acquisition. The days of paying 2022 prices and trusting momentum to bail you out are over.

SECTION 08

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Is Columbus a good market for single-family rental investors in 2026?

Yes, with the understanding that 2026 rewards disciplined acquisition rather than momentum-driven buying. Columbus continues to outperform the national average on rent growth and occupancy, median home prices are ~33% below national averages, and the metro's diversified economy provides recession resilience. Returns are more moderate than the 2021–2023 boom years but sustainable.

Q How did Intel's delay affect the Columbus real estate market?

The production start was pushed from 2025 to 2030–2031, which removed a near-term catalyst but did not change long-term fundamentals. Land speculation near New Albany and Johnstown has cooled significantly, but construction at the Intel site continues and the employment impact (3,000+ direct jobs once operational) remains on track on a longer timeline.

Q What's the typical cap rate for Columbus single-family rentals in 2026?

Urban cash-flow neighborhoods (Hilltop, South Linden, Franklinton) typically generate 7% to 10% cap rates. First-ring suburbs (Reynoldsburg, Gahanna, Westerville) typically generate 6% to 8%. Premium suburbs (Dublin, Powell, New Albany) typically generate 4% to 6% and are purchased primarily for appreciation. National SFR cap rates averaged 7.3% in Q4 2025 per Arbor.

Q Are property taxes in Columbus higher than the national average?

Yes. Franklin County's effective property tax rate is approximately 1.67% of market value, ranked 252nd of 3,143 U.S. counties. The median property tax bill is around \$2,592 annually on a home valued at the county median. Investors underwriting Columbus properties should account for property tax carrying costs meaningfully higher than Sun Belt markets.

Q How will the 2026 Franklin County Triennial Update affect property taxes?

The triennial update adjusts assessed values based on sales from the past three years. Assessment notices mail in June 2026, with informal review July through September and final values taking effect for Tax Year 2026 bills paid in 2027. Review new valuations carefully and file Board of Revision complaints by March 31, 2027 if values appear overstated.

SECTION 08 · CONTINUED

FAQ, continued

Q How quickly do single-family homes lease in Columbus in 2026?

Well-priced single-family rentals in desirable Columbus submarkets lease in 14 to 21 days on average once rent-ready. Homes priced above market or in poor condition can sit 45+ days. RLPM tracks current days-on-market data in real time on its live KPI scorecard at rlpmg.com/key-performance-indicators.

Q How much cash reserve should I have for a Columbus rental property?

Most experienced Columbus investors target a reserve of roughly six months of rent per property to cover maintenance, turnover costs, and unexpected capital expenses. RLPM requires a maintenance reserve of \$350 to \$1,500 per unit depending on the service plan, which sits on top of the owner's broader liquidity cushion. Reserves matter most in the first year of ownership, when surprise repairs and initial turns tend to cluster.

Q Should I accept Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher) tenants in Columbus?

Columbus's source-of-income protection ordinance (in effect since 2024) means landlords cannot refuse applicants solely because they use a Housing Choice Voucher. Voucher tenants must still meet consistent, non-discriminatory screening criteria. Many investors find that voucher tenants produce reliable, government-backed rent payments once properly screened, though the program adds inspection and paperwork requirements that benefit from professional management.

Q What's the difference between managing a Columbus property yourself versus hiring a PM company?

Self-management can work for hands-on investors with one or two nearby properties, time to handle tenant calls, and familiarity with Ohio landlord-tenant law. Professional management becomes valuable at scale (3+ units), for out-of-state investors, for owners who want to reclaim their time, or when dealing with evictions, Fair Housing compliance, and the new rental registry. The real cost comparison isn't fees versus free; it's what your time is worth and what a missed lease-up week or bad tenant placement actually costs.

SECTION 09

Ready to Invest in Columbus?

Serving Columbus investors since 2013.

~750 UNITS MANAGED • 30+ NEIGHBORHOODS
GAHANNA-BASED TEAM

Our clients include long-term investors, accidental landlords, first-time buyers, and out-of-state owners managing Columbus portfolios remotely. We specialize in single-family homes and small multifamily properties under 100 units across the Columbus metro.

What Makes RLPM Different

- **\$0 Leasing Fees** across all three pricing plans. Most Columbus PM companies charge 50% to 100% of the first month's rent every time a tenant turns over. RLPM charges nothing.
- **Flat-Rate Pricing.** Three tiers (Passive \$117/mo • Standard \$137/mo • Premium \$184/mo per unit) with transparent line-item fees.
- **Live KPI Scorecard.** Published publicly at rlpmg.com/key-performance-indicators — days on market, renewal rate, occupancy, and rent collection updated in real time.
- **In-House Maintenance** with quarterly property inspections included in every plan.
- **Local Depth.** Based in Gahanna, managing 750+ units across 30+ Columbus neighborhoods.

Schedule a Consultation

Discuss your property, your goals, and whether RLPM is the right fit for your portfolio.

[FREE CONSULTATION →](#)

Get a Rent Estimate

Get a data-driven rent estimate based on current Columbus market conditions.

[FREE RENT EVALUATION →](#)

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SECTION 10

Methodology & Sources

This report synthesizes publicly available market data, government-source statistics, and industry research current as of April 2026. All figures reflect the most recent data available at time of publication. Market conditions change; investors should verify current metrics before making acquisition decisions.

Primary Data Sources

Columbus REALTORS. Monthly MLS data for Columbus and Central Ohio region including sales, median prices, inventory, and days on market.

RentCafe / Yardi Matrix. Columbus rental market trends including unit-level rent averages and year-over-year growth.

Arbor Realty Trust • Q1 2026 SFR Report (via CRE Daily). National single-family rental metrics: cap rates, occupancy, rent growth, and investor trends.

MMG Real Estate Advisors. Columbus multifamily market forecast, construction pipeline, and rent growth projections.

Redfin. Columbus city-proper median sale prices and market competitiveness data.

Axios Columbus. Q1 2026 Columbus market updates including vacancy and rent trends.

Franklin County Auditor. Property assessment data, triennial update schedules, and Board of Revision procedures.

Franklin County Law Library. Columbus landlord-tenant ordinances and current regulatory framework.

WOSU Public Media. Columbus City Council coverage including April 2026 Rental Registry passage.

Engineering News-Record • CNBC • Manufacturing Dive. Intel New Albany semiconductor project timeline updates.

RL Property Management Live KPI Scorecard. Real-time performance metrics for RLPM-managed properties at rlpmg.com/key-performance-indicators.

SECTION 11

About RL Property Management



RL Property Management Group (RLPM) is a Columbus, Ohio-based residential property management company founded in 2013. The firm manages approximately **750 single-family homes and small multifamily properties** across the Columbus metro area, with a team of 33 employees and a specialization in serving intentional, long-term investors.

RLPM is headquartered in Gahanna at 750 Cross Pointe Rd, STE B, and can be reached at **614.725.3059** or **info@rlpmg.com**.

FOUNDED

2013 · Columbus, Ohio

PORTFOLIO

~750 units · 30+ neighborhoods

TEAM

33 employees · In-house maintenance

SPECIALTY

Single-family + small multifamily (<100 units)

Report Disclaimer

This report is for informational purposes only and does not constitute investment, legal, tax, or financial advice. Real estate investments carry risk, including the potential loss of principal. Market data reflects conditions as of April 2026 and is subject to change. Regulatory information is informational only; consult a qualified Ohio attorney for specific compliance questions. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Investors should conduct independent due diligence and consult qualified professionals before making any investment decisions.

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