Meridian — #1 of 10: Annual Rent Against Local Pay

Meridian leads Denver in rent burden

Based on 2024 ACS data, published November 16, 2026

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THE DATA

26.6%

Annual Rent Against Local Pay (2024)

Meridian’s rent burden is the highest in the Denver metro, surpassing even high-cost suburbs.

This figure represents the share of median household income spent annually on rent in Meridian, a metric that signals growing strain on middle- and low-income residents. With 26.6% of income going toward rent, Meridian is approaching the threshold where housing becomes unaffordable for many, even as job growth continues in the region. The data underscores a widening gap between wage growth and housing costs.



Photo: Colorado Senate GOP · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-16-denver-rent-to-income-place-mkt

01

Affordability is concentrated, not universal

The fact that Meridian leads the metro in rent-to-income burden—while other areas like Denver city, Lakewood, and Golden fall below 24%—reveals that affordability pressures are not evenly distributed. This suggests that policy and investment responses must be hyper-localized, targeting specific neighborhoods rather than treating the entire metro as a single economic zone. The data challenges the narrative of a monolithic 'Denver housing crisis' and instead points to deep inequities within the region.

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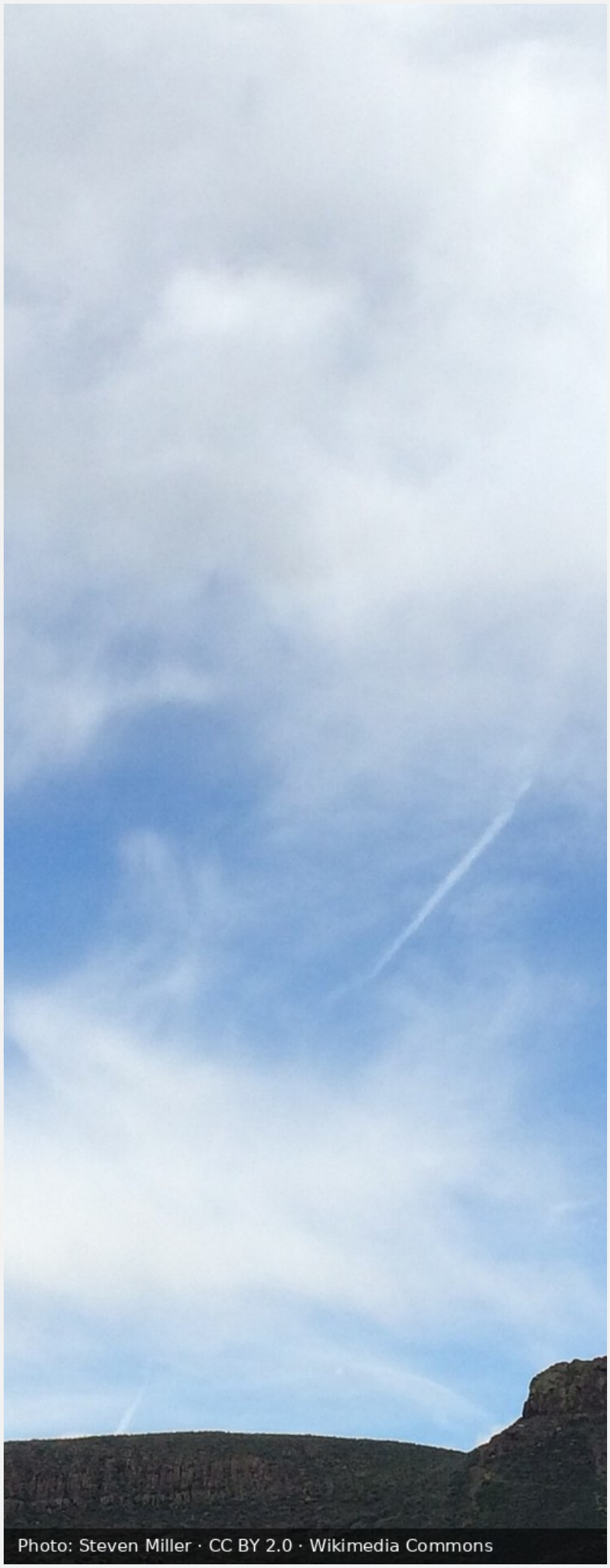


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02

Rent burden correlates with transit access

Meridian's high rent-to-income ratio coincides with proximity to major transit corridors, including the upcoming Federal Boulevard BRT. As transit infrastructure improves, property values and rents rise faster than wages—especially in areas with limited affordable housing stock. This feedback loop risks displacing long-term residents before new transit benefits can be realized. The data implies that transit investments must be paired with enforceable affordability mandates to avoid exacerbating inequality.

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