

2026-5-18

Sky-high home prices narrow pool of buyers in Douglas County,

Editor's Note: This is the second part of a series that explores affordability woes in Colorado.

The Denver Gazette · 18 May 2026 · A12 · BY NICHOLAS FOGLEMAN The Denver Gazette

Douglas County has one of the highest median incomes in the state, but home prices can rival some of the most exclusive communities in Colorado.



As the population grows, these demographics, combined with limited housing diversity, have made affordability an ongoing challenge.

With a median listing price of \$757,810 as of February, according to figures from Realtor.com, the county's elevated housing costs significantly narrow the pool of potential buyers, reinforcing its status as one of the most expensive markets in the metro Denver area.

“When you have pricing that’s 10%, 20% or 30% higher than the rest of the metro area, on average, that really shapes who can afford to buy,” said Cooper Thayer, a real estate broker in Douglas County. That price gap is largely driven by the lack of diverse housing stock. In March, only about 15% of sales in the county were condominium or townhouse units, housing types that often serve as entry points to homeownership for first-time buyers and hourly workers, according to Thayer.

Note

“I think that this county is one of the more supply-constrained areas of the metro when it comes to the number of housing stock units that we have that would be considered at an entry level or attainable

price point,” Thayer said.

These constraints are especially visible among people who work in the county but cannot afford to live there. As a result, Douglas County’s homeownership base skews more affluent than much of the Denver metro area.

“Teachers, EMTs, police officers, firefighters, many of those people have struggled being priced out of the communities that they serve,” Thayer said.

Newer, planned developments are expected to add more multifamily and mixed-use housing, Thayer said, as shifting demographic trends begin to influence development patterns aimed at serving a broader range of buyers.

According to Thayer, those trends are being shaped by two distinct groups: workers who want to live in the communities where they are employed but cannot find attainable housing, and older adults who are choosing to remain in their homes or communities as they age.

“A lot of times, people just want to live in the market that they work in, and Douglas County is one of those examples where it can be prohibitive for employees within the county to actually live within Douglas County because of the price points,” Thayer said. “And older residents are going to be looking for different products as they age out of larger homes, and look for smaller, albeit luxury, condominiums.”

Thayer said whether affordability improves will largely depend on future developments meaningfully expanding access to homeownership, rather than reinforcing existing price barriers.

“We need to create those opportunities for those people to have homeownership,” Thayer said. “I think that the demand has changed a little bit from everybody wanting a big, single-family home to other ends of the spectrum, with a beginning-of-life and an end-of-life desire for housing, too.”