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Commercial Real Estate Sentiment Steady in Q1 2026 as Debt Availability Improves

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — The Real Estate Roundtable (RER) today released its [First Quarter 2026 Sentiment Index](#), a quarterly measure of confidence among senior commercial real estate (CRE) executives. The overall index registered 66, down one point from Q4 2025, as respondents described a market in the early stages of a tentative, uneven recovery. Tariffs and interest-rate uncertainty continue to widen buyer-seller spreads and slow price discovery.

The Current Index rose two points to 66, while the Future Index decreased two points to 67, reflecting cautious optimism for improved conditions in 2026 despite ongoing volatility.

“This quarter’s survey shows the market is stabilizing, with improving debt availability and growing optimism about the year ahead—even as uncertainty continues to keep transaction volume below potential,” said **Jeffrey DeBoer, RER President and CEO**.

“The industry is positioned for a more constructive 2026, but sustained momentum will depend on a stable policy environment,” DeBoer added. “That stability supports investment decisions that drive jobs, housing, and economic activity in communities nationwide.”

The [Q1 Sentiment Index topline findings](#) include:

- The Q1 2026 Real Estate Roundtable Sentiment Index **registered an overall score of 66, a decrease of one point from the previous quarter**. The Current Index registered 66, a two-point increase over Q4 2025. The Future Index posted a score of 67 points, a decrease of two points from the previous quarter, reflecting a prevailing sentiment that the market is in the early stages of a tentative, uneven recovery. Political, tariff, and interest rate uncertainty is contributing to wide spreads between buyers and sellers. Amid the uncertainty around pricing clarity and geopolitical stability, participants are cautiously optimistic for an improved 2026.
- Although perspectives vary by asset class, overall market sentiment trends positive. **Less than 10% of respondents believe that general market conditions are worse than this time last year, and 63% of respondents believe that general market conditions are better than this time last year**. Furthermore, 64% of participants expect general market conditions to show improvement one year from now. Leaders reported strength in data centers and industrial, while returns in the multifamily and office sectors remain heavily location-dependent.
- **Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents believe asset values are roughly unchanged** compared to a year ago. Nearly half of participants are seeing green shoots, as 48% believe asset prices have increased while only 9% believe they have declined. Looking ahead, the outlook is optimistic: 67% expect asset prices to rise over the next year, 30% believe asset values will remain stable, and only 3% anticipate a slight decline.

- Perceptions on the availability of equity capital are muted relative to last quarter, although about **four in ten respondents (42%) still believe equity availability is better compared to a year ago**. On the other hand, sentiment around debt capital has risen significantly, as 78% said the availability of debt capital has improved from last year. Looking forward, 65% of respondents believe that equity capital availability will be better in one year, and 49% believe debt capital availability will be better.

Sample responses from participants in the [Sentiment Index's Q1 survey](#) include:

“The market is stagnant but promising; there's a lot of pent-up demand and capital that needs to be deployed. Banks that were previously on the sidelines are looking to replenish balance sheets.”

“The real estate sector is in the early stages of a new cycle: Debt and equity are open, people have accepted the higher-for-longer interest rate environment, and now the focus is on relative value and income across all asset classes.”

“The real estate market is largely still locked up. People need certainty; when certainty returns, transaction volume will skyrocket.”

Data for the Q1 survey was gathered by Chicago-based Ferguson Partners on RER's behalf in January. See the [full Q1 report](#).

The Real Estate Roundtable (RER) brings together leaders of the nation's top publicly-held and privately-owned real estate ownership, development, lending and management firms with the leaders of [major national real estate trade associations](#) to jointly address key national policy issues relating to real estate and the overall economy.

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