



ORLANDO
ECONOMIC
PARTNERSHIP

Orlando MSA Market Update

Q1 2026

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

EVERYWHERE IS WAITING.



*All data represent most recent available as of April 28, 2026
Pictured: Travel + Leisure Co. Ribbon Cutting, January 2026
Credit: Travel + Leisure Co.*

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel + Leisure Co. opens new global headquarters in Downtown Orlando.
- Consumer spending stumbles at start of 2026.
- Labor market continues to soften in first quarter.
- Region again leads state in job growth in 2025.
- Office vacancy inches down.
- Orlando International Airport repeats as Florida's busiest passenger airport in 2025.

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OUTLOOK

FIVE EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE QUARTER

Travel + Leisure Co. opened its new global headquarters in Downtown Orlando in January, relocating more than 900 associates. The move marks one of the most significant corporate headquarters wins for the region in recent years and reinforces Downtown's emergence as a destination for global operations.

Novartis announced plans in January to build its fourth U.S. radioligand therapy manufacturing facility in Winter Park, representing an investment of approximately \$70 million. The announcement validates the Orlando region's growing life sciences manufacturing credentials.

On March 31, NFL owners unanimously approved a temporary lease for the **Jacksonville Jaguars** to play the entire 2027 season at Camping World Stadium. The arrangement coincides with the stadium's ongoing \$400 million modernization, further cementing Camping World as a premier large-event asset.

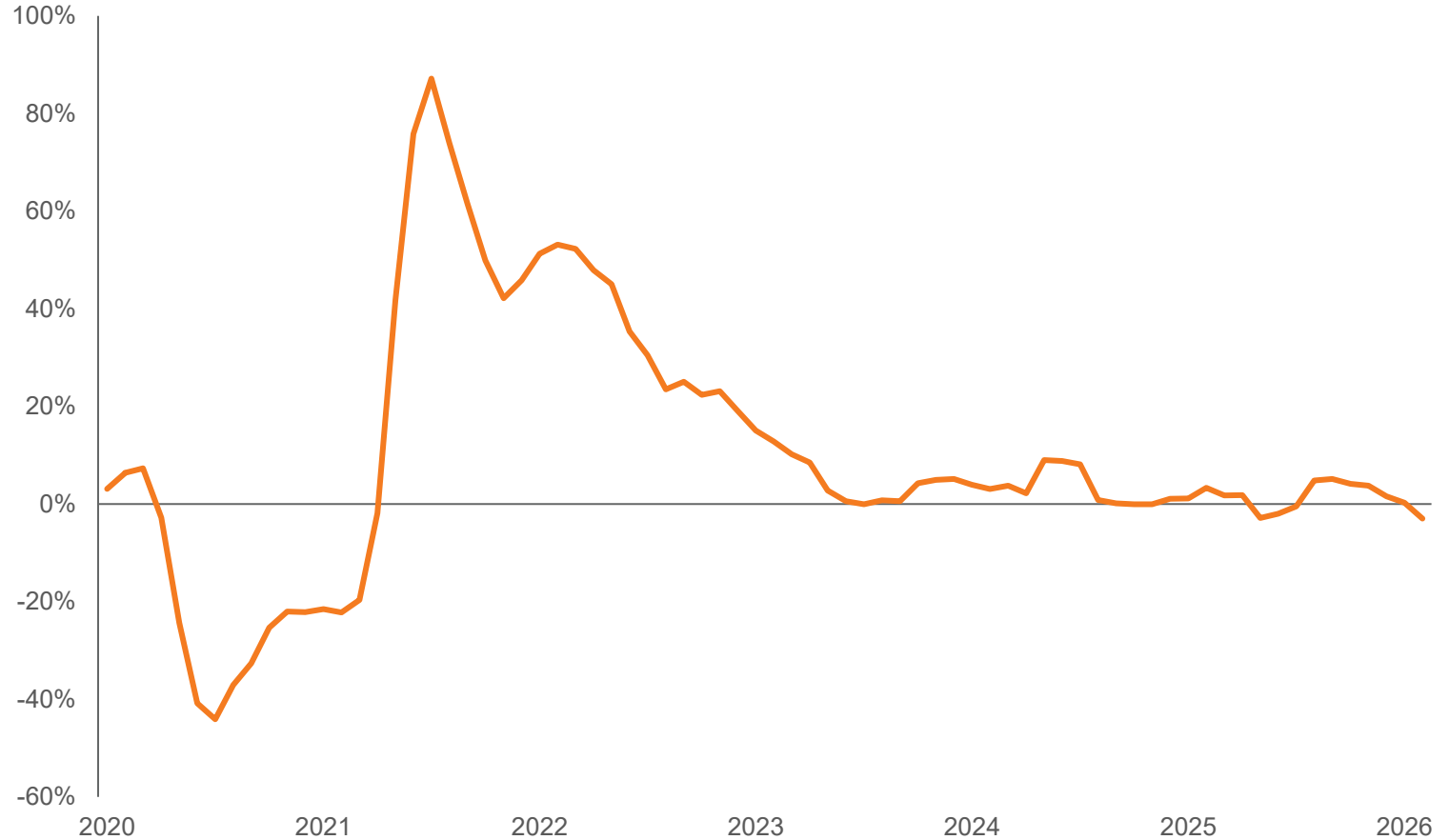
Waymo launched commercial autonomous ride-hailing service in Orlando on February 24, making the region one of only 10 U.S. markets where the Alphabet-owned company operates. The initial 60-square-mile service area covers the tourist corridor, Universal Orlando Resort, and portions of Walt Disney World.

The National Science Foundation's **Florida Semiconductor Engine** advanced to Phase 2 in March, unlocking additional funding of up to \$45 million over three years. The award represents significant Federal validation of the region's emerging role in a strategically critical national industry.

Consumer spending falters.

- [Total sales](#) in the region reached \$226.9 billion in 2025, an increase of 2.2% from a year earlier. Although slightly below the rate of inflation over the same period, the growth is consistent with results from the Partnership's [Orlando MSA Business Conditions Survey](#), which suggested revenue proved volatile but resilient through 2025.
- Widespread economic and political uncertainty appears to be impacting consumer-facing sectors in early 2026, however. Consumer spending declined year-over-year in each of the first two months of 2026 as sales weakened for the first time since the expansion of tariffs in mid-2025.
- The slowdown is consistent with a drop in [consumer sentiment](#) in Florida, which declined in both March and April amid conflict in Iran and growing concerns about the national economy. Local business confidence in the national economy also fell during the quarter amid ongoing policy uncertainty.

Consumer Spending, Orlando MSA
Y/Y % Change, 3-MMA, Through Feb 2026



Total Sales
\$17.3 billion (Feb 2026)



Business Confidence
73.7



Consumer Spending
\$8.8 billion (Feb 2026)



Florida Consumer Sentiment Index
74.6 (Apr 2026)

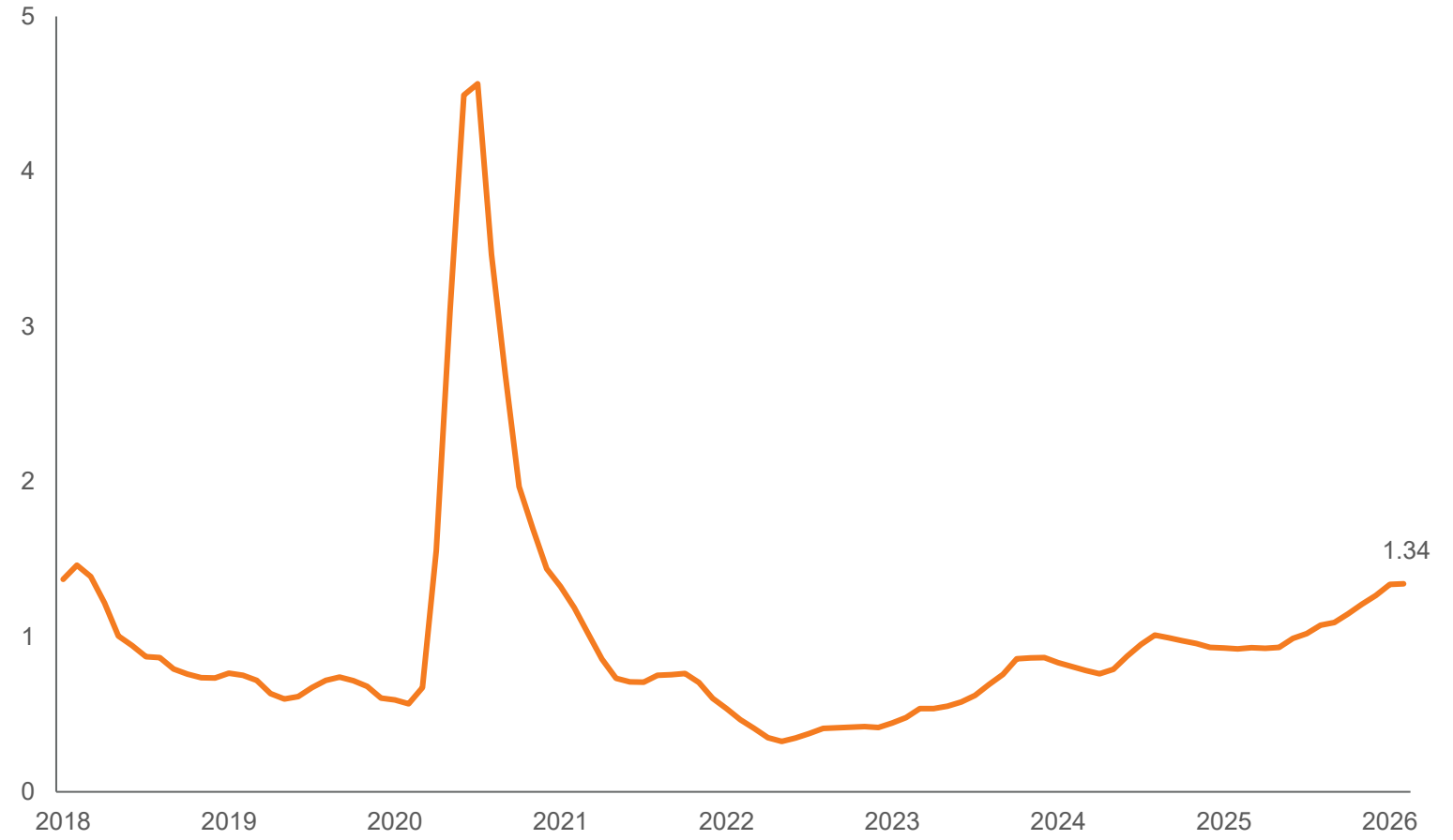
Arrows indicate change from previous year. Data for Q1 2026 unless otherwise specified.

Labor market remains subdued.

- The region’s [labor market](#) has eased considerably in the last year. Unemployment in February reached 4.7%, up from 3.5% a year earlier with approximately 20,000 more residents unemployed than in February 2025.
- An increase in the ratio of unemployed workers to open positions confirms the labor market has become more balanced. There were approximately 1.3 unemployed workers for every job opening in early 2026, up from just 0.3 in mid-2022 and above the current [U.S. ratio](#). The softening comes as job postings remain resilient but employment flat – raising questions about whether companies are opting not to fill open roles.
- Where hiring *is* taking place, employers appear to be taking less time to fill vacancies as more candidates hit the market. The median [job posting](#) duration in the first quarter dropped to 22 days, down from 29 a year earlier.

Number of Unemployed Individuals Per Job Opening, Orlando MSA

Not Seasonally Adjusted, 3-Month Moving Averages



Labor Force
1,523,246 (Feb 2026)

Employment
1,450,942 (Feb 2026)

Unemployment Rate
4.7% (Feb 2026)

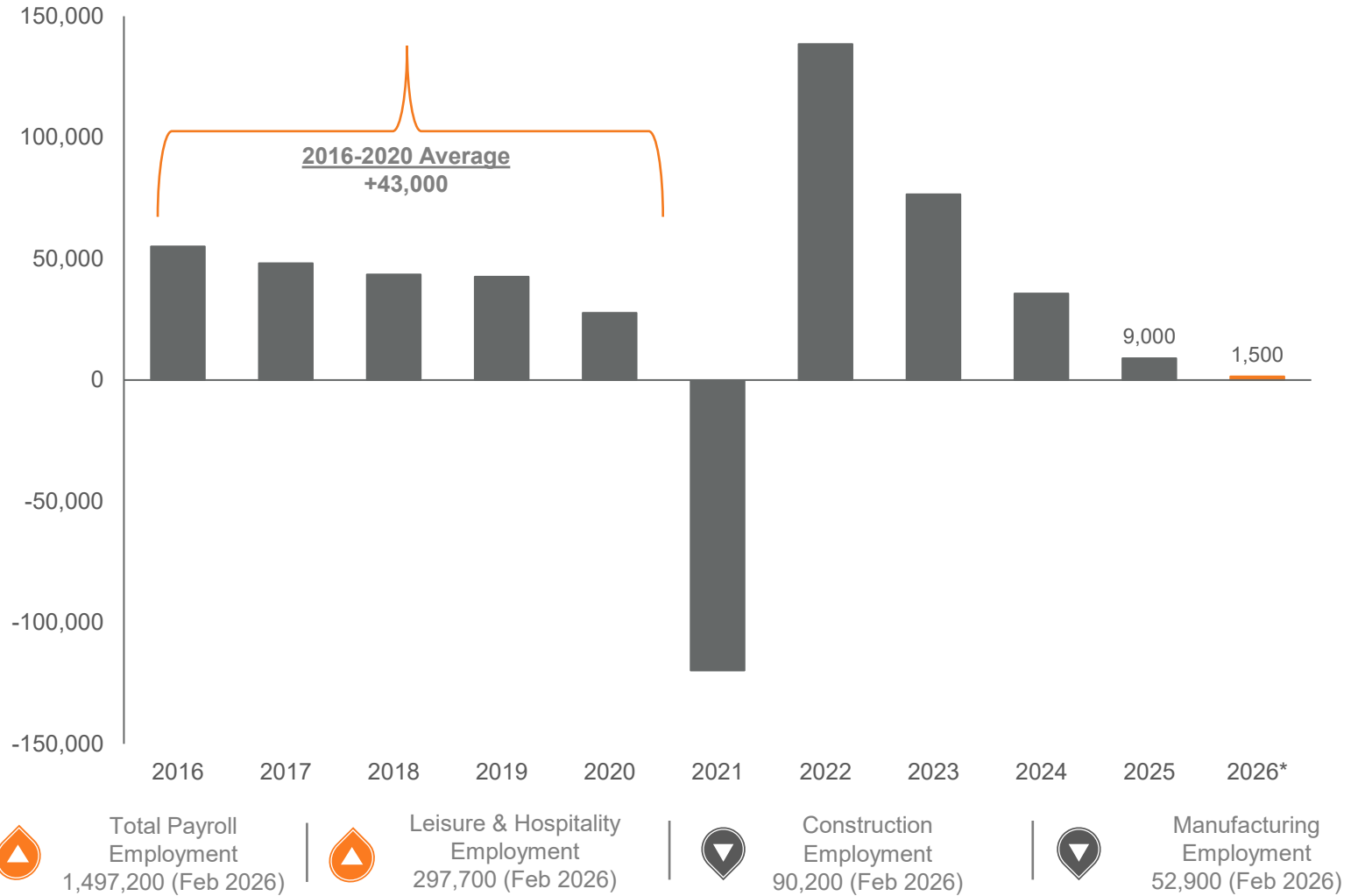
Job Postings
58,751 (Mar 2026)

Arrows indicate change from previous year. Data for Q1 2026 unless otherwise specified.

Job growth slows.

- Late March brought a considerable upward revision to the region’s job growth in 2025. The Orlando MSA added 8,800 jobs in 2025 – 5,100 more than previously estimated – as [Florida’s fastest-growing employment center](#). Job growth slowed from 2024 in all but three of the country’s 30 most populous regions.
- Weaker local job growth has continued into 2026. The region added just 1,500 jobs in the 12 months ending February 2026, a considerable slowdown from both the corresponding period a year earlier (+9,000 jobs) and pre-pandemic trends (+43,000).
- Much of the slowdown can be attributed to job losses in just three sectors: employment services (as companies appear to pull back on temporary labor), construction (which is sensitive to both higher interest rates and uncertainty), and retail (where fragile demand has collided with cost pressures). Companies also report continuing to explore AI-related productivity gains.

Net Gain in Payroll Employment, Orlando MSA
Not Seasonally Adjusted, Feb to Feb of Each Year



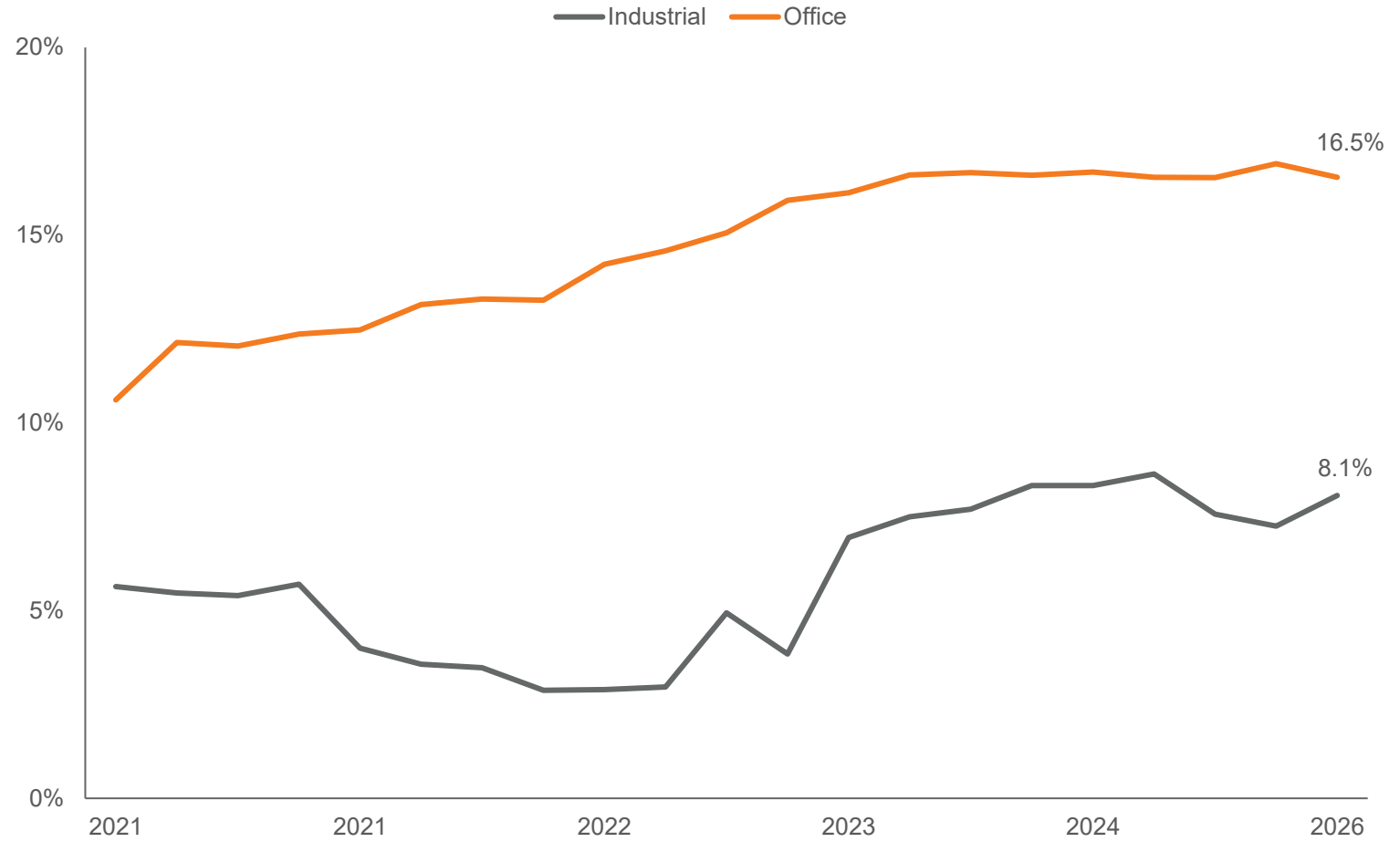
*preliminary

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Office market posts positive absorption.

- [Office vacancy](#) dropped to 16.5% in the first quarter on 131,000 square feet of positive net absorption, driven in part by ThreatLocker occupying 96,000 square feet at 1901 Summit Tower Boulevard in Maitland. Leasing activity fell 14.9% from a year earlier but underlined an ongoing flight to quality and amenity-rich locations, with Class A space attracting 60.7% of total activity and the Central Business District accounting for 32.2% of all new leases.
- [Industrial vacancy](#) rose to 8.1% after 1.3 million square feet of largely speculative product was delivered during the quarter. The quarter saw 187,000 square feet of positive absorption but a 70.5% decline in leasing activity from a year earlier.
- The region's [housing market](#) continues to labor under affordability challenges. Sales fell 2.0% in March from a year earlier after mortgage rates rose back above 6.0%; the median sales price was largely unchanged from a year earlier at \$385,000.

Commercial Real Estate Vacancy Rates, Orlando MSA



Office Vacancy
16.5%



Industrial Vacancy
8.1%



Home Sales
2,360 (Mar 2026)



Median Sales Price
\$385,000 (Mar 2026)

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International passenger volume through MCO hits record high.

- [Orlando International Airport](#) welcomed 57.7 million total passengers in 2025, a 0.8% increase from 2024 and the second highest volume on record. Orlando International was again Florida’s busiest passenger airport in 2025, edging out Miami by over 2 million passengers.
- Growth in international passengers was the key driver of the increase, driven both by new carriers entering the market (Air France, Iberia) and by existing carriers expanding their international presence. The total volume of international passengers in 2025 rose 8.2% to an all-time high of 8.5 million; domestic passengers declined nominally from 2024 to 49.2 million.
- Area [hotels](#) reported a strong first quarter. Year-to-date occupancy through March was 78.4%, 1.3 percentage points higher than during the same period in 2025, while average daily rates were up 4.6%.



Orlando International Airport, Total Passengers 5,471,298 (Mar 2026)



Orlando Sanford International Airport, Total Passengers 233,462 (Feb 2026)



Hotel Occupancy 79.2% (Mar 2026)

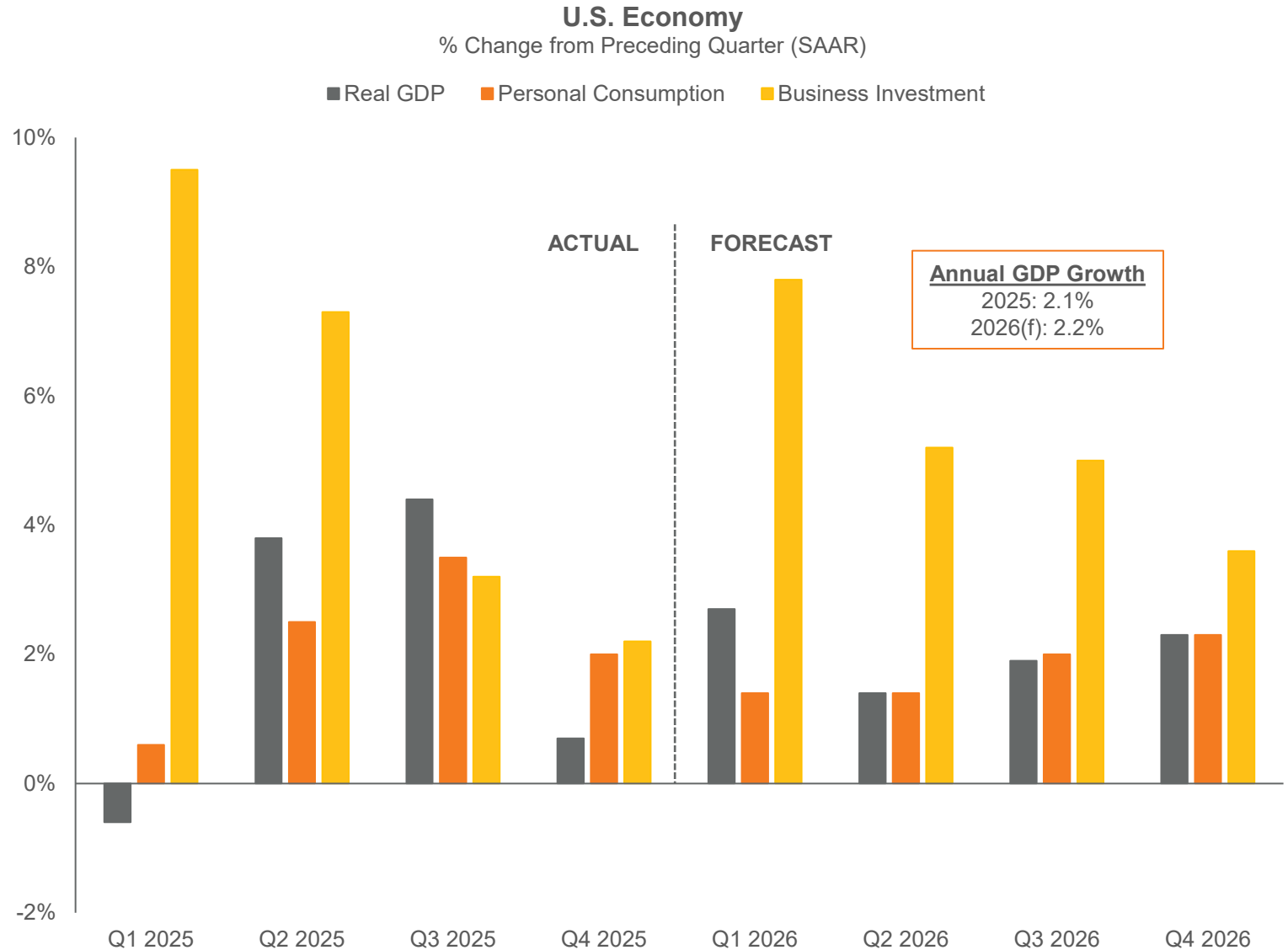


Average Daily Rate \$241.35 (Mar 2026)

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U.S. growth to prove resilient in 2026.

- U.S. economic growth in 2026 is [forecast](#) to moderately surpass the 2.1% recorded in 2025 as increased business investment offsets a projected slowdown in consumer spending.
- Conflict in Iran is expected to result in households spending more on both gas and food, reducing discretionary purchases and slowing overall consumption. However, business investment is anticipated to accelerate as companies continue to prioritize high-tech and AI-related investment spending to realize productivity gains.
- For the first time in several years, economic growth in [Florida](#) could ease to a similar pace as the nation as the state confronts several headwinds – weaker job growth, housing market challenges, and slowing migration that has constrained population growth.



ABOUT RESEARCH & STRATEGY AT THE ORLANDO ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

The OEP's award-winning Research & Strategy team combines economic data and local intelligence to understand the key trends impacting Orlando's economy. We do this by engaging with local businesses and by assessing the local impact of wider economic events – publishing updates on the regional economy, highlighting competitive advantages that help drive new investment into Orlando, and addressing areas of future strategic opportunity for the region. Our work helps companies, site selectors, and civic leaders make well-informed decisions about Orlando's growth and allows the OEP to be evidence-led and insight-driven in its pursuit of Broad-based Prosperity®.



ADD YOUR VOICE

Improve your understanding of the Orlando economy by participating in the **Orlando MSA Business Conditions Survey**.
www.orlando.org/survey

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