

From the Columbus Business First:

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Equitable Mortgage Corp. to sell Columbus office, relocate to Dublin's Metro Center

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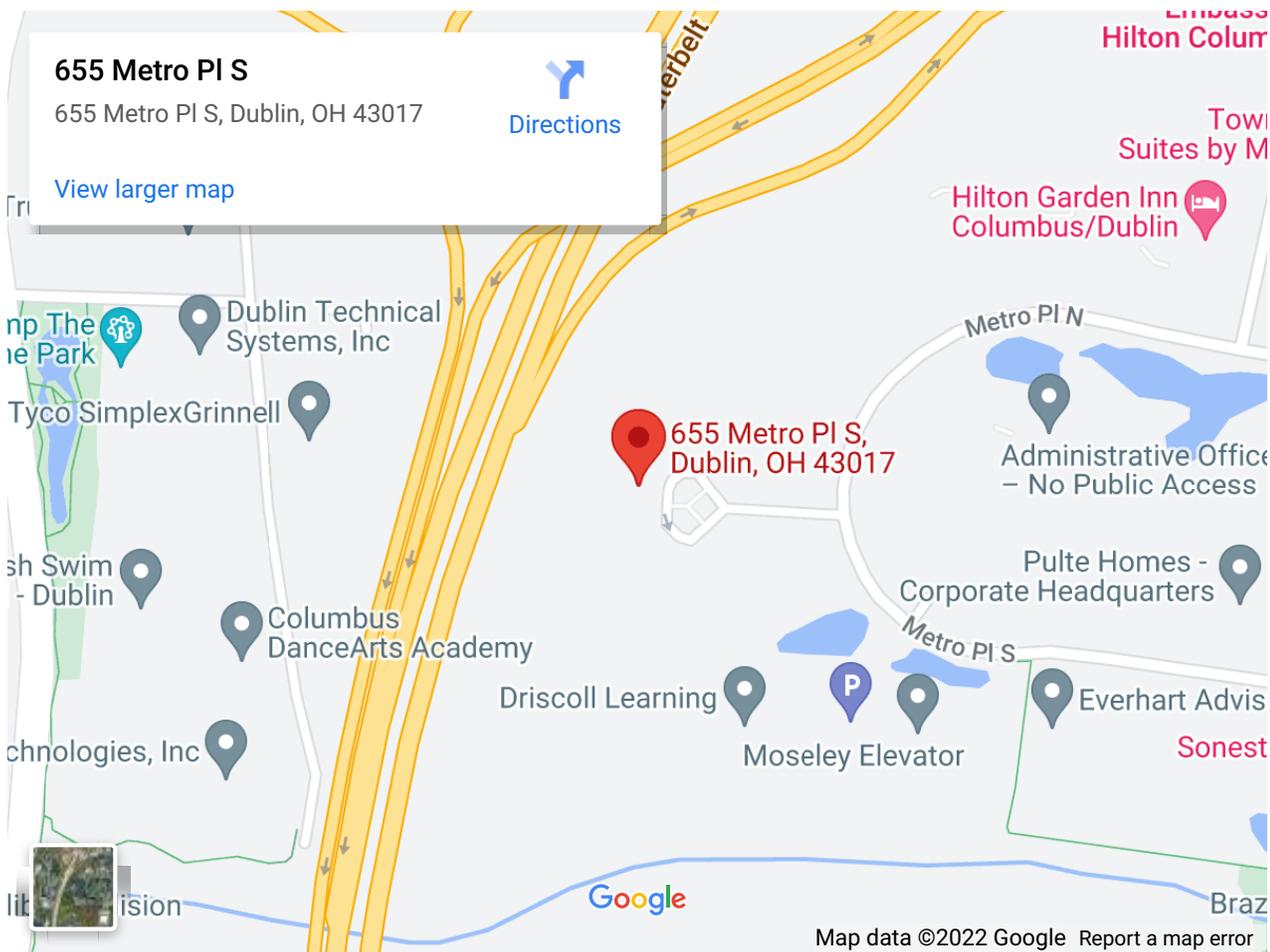
One of Central Ohio's largest home mortgage lenders is moving from the original location it opened nearly 30 years ago into a new office nearby.

Equitable Mortgage Corp., which launched out of a 500-square-foot suite in 1995 before expanding in the years since, will relocate from 3530 Snouffer Road in Columbus to 655 S. Metro Place in Dublin's Metro Center office park. Though the firm's current location lists a Columbus address, it's only about 5 miles from the new office in Dublin.



COURTESY OF ZACH APPLEBY; EQUITABLE MORTGAGE CORP.

A home mortgage lender with a nearly 30-year history in Central Ohio is moving to a new office at Metro Center in Dublin, shown here.



Ahead of the move, Equitable Mortgage is selling its flagship office to a new buyer. Zach Appleby, executive vice president of Equitable Mortgage, said he couldn't disclose the buyer or their plans for the building.

What he could say is the firm pumping about \$250,000 into its new office. That entails removing some existing cubicles to create a more open environment, adding five offices, redesigning the lobby and kitchen, and making some aesthetic changes like new carpet, paint, ceiling tiles and lighting.

The move was spurred by the desire to have a more modern office that better suits the company's current needs. Though it's smaller — 7,000 square feet compared to 10,000 square feet — Appleby said they're gaining more "usable space," given that the utility rooms and restrooms are in a common area and not taking up space in their suite.

In addition to having a more effective workspace, the new office will feature a modern look that was designed with younger workers in mind. That's especially important when it comes to recruiting and retaining young talent, who Appleby believes care more about their work environment than previous generations of workers. It's also a ploy to get the company's roughly 50 local employees back into the office after

working mostly remote these last two years.

"The new space is going to bring us all back together," Appleby said. "We're hoping the nicer workspace, better facilities and a new location will hopefully bring people back together so they can better collaborate and work as a team as opposed to just being remote. We also have a lot of younger employees who prefer neat office spaces instead of the cubicle farms of the past."

Appleby added those who did come into the office were siloed due to the current building's layout. Instead of two floors spread across five or six suites, the new location will be more centralized.

"In the building we have now, sometimes people would go upstairs into their office and you may not see them the rest of the day," he said. "We were scattered all over, but now everything will be in the same place. You'll actually get to see everybody in the office."

The Metro Center location also will have what Appleby calls "drop-in workspaces" for people who only come in one day a week and do not need a dedicated office. There will be multiple drop-ins at the new office, along with a conference room and other areas where people can work and collaborate.

Appleby said renovations on the Dublin office will begin in the next few weeks, and buildout is likely to take a couple months. The hope is to be fully operational in the new office by Nov. 1.

Matt Gregory of NAI Ohio Equities represented Equitable Mortgage on the Metro Center deal, and Michelle Fude of Colliers represented the landlord.

John Bush

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