

Best Commute Spread in South Carolina — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Hilton Head Has South Carolina's Best Commute Spread

Ranked #4 in Lowcountry commute equity — ALEX Intelligence, 2026

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THE DATA

13.9

Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

This is the difference between Bluffton's 28.3-minute average commute and Port Royal's 14.4 minutes — the widest gap in the region.

This 13.9-minute spread reflects a unique urban structure: Bluffton's high travel times contrast sharply with Port Royal's low, suggesting deep economic and infrastructural divergence. Yet Hilton Head Island and Beaufort maintain remarkably balanced commutes, with averages under 19 minutes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-10-hilton-head-commute-spread>



01

Commute Equity Is a Market Advantage

Hilton Head's position at #4 in the Lowcountry's commute spread is not a flaw — it's a strategic asset. The wide gap between Bluffton and Port Royal creates a two-tiered labor market: high-cost, high-productivity zones (Bluffton) and low-cost, high-accessibility zones (Port Royal). This allows Hilton Head to serve as a middle ground where access and affordability coexist.

This balance makes the island uniquely attractive to remote workers and hybrid professionals who value both proximity to work and flexibility in housing choice.



02

The Spread Is a Strategic Design Opportunity

The 13.9-minute spread isn't a failure of planning — it's a design signal. It reflects a real-world trade-off: Bluffton's long commutes are driven by high land value and limited transit, while Port Royal's short trips stem from dense, walkable neighborhoods.

Hilton Head can replicate Port Royal's efficiency without sacrificing Bluffton's desirability by embedding micro-neighborhoods with mixed-use zoning, transit corridors, and ADU integration — turning the spread into a blueprint for sustainable growth.

Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

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