

11.9-Minute Commute Spread in Charleston Tri-County — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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Hollywood vs. James Island: A Hidden Equity Divide — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

11.9

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

This is the difference between the longest and shortest average commute times among cities in the Charleston tri-county.

The 11.9-minute gap between Hollywood (34.5 minutes) and James Island (22.5 minutes) is not just a travel statistic—it reflects a structural imbalance in urban access. Hollywood, with the longest average commute, is also the only city in the top seven without a major employer or transit corridor. This disparity reveals that infrastructure investment and economic opportunity are not distributed evenly across the tri-county.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-16-charleston-sc-commute-spread>



01

Commute Time Is a Proxy for Equity

This imbalance undermines the promise of regional growth. If a city's workforce must travel over 30 minutes to work, even with high wages, real purchasing power diminishes. The data implies that policy must shift from simply building roads to designing equitable access—linking housing, jobs, and transit in a single strategy.



02

James Island's Advantage Is Structural

This creates a feedback loop: shorter commutes attract higher-income workers, which in turn justifies further public investment. Meanwhile, places like Hollywood are left behind, reinforcing a divide where access to time—perhaps the most valuable commodity—becomes a privilege, not a right.

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