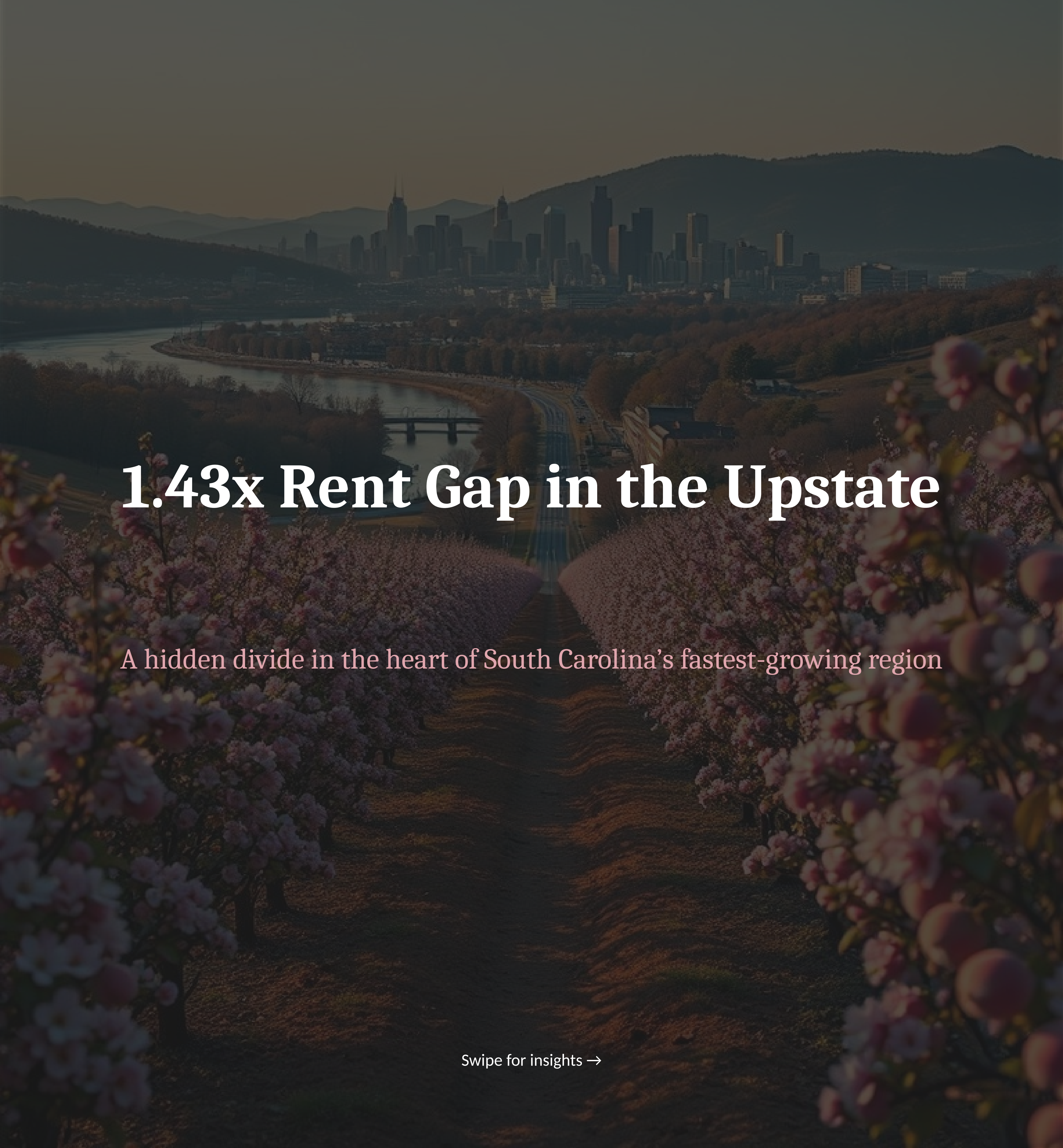
1.43x Rent Gap in the Upstate — ALEX Intelligence 2026



1.43x Rent Gap in the Upstate

A hidden divide in the heart of South Carolina’s fastest-growing region

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THE DATA

1.43x

Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Median Rent in the Market (2024)

Greenville County’s median rent is 43% higher than Laurens County’s, revealing deep within-county disparities.

This 1.43x spread is not a typo — it reflects a structural divergence in economic opportunity, infrastructure access, and development intensity across just six counties. Greenville, the regional anchor, commands premium rents, while Laurens, despite its proximity, remains a more affordable outlier. This gap is not a flaw, but a feature of a market where urbanization and investment are concentrated, not distributed.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-18-upstate-sc-within-county-gross-rent

01

Affordability Is a County-Level Reality

The Upstate is not a monolith. Rent in Greenville is nearly 50% higher than in Laurens — a gap wider than in most major metros. This means that for workers, affordability is not just about income, but about which county they choose to live in. A job in Greenville may require a commute from Laurens, but the cost of living remains dramatically lower there. This creates a two-tiered labor market: high-wage, high-rent jobs in the core, and lower-cost, often less accessible housing in the periphery.

02

The Rent Gap Fuels Strategic Investment

This 1.43x divide is not a barrier — it's a signal. Investors and developers see the gap as a frontier: high returns in Greenville, but untapped potential in lower-rent counties. The Nature Conservancy's expansion in Laurens County, for example, is not just environmental — it's a long-term land-use signal. As green space grows, so does the premium on adjacent developable land. The rent gap may be widening, but it also reveals where the next wave of value will emerge — not in the center, but in the edges where affordability meets scarcity.

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

Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902

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