#1 of 6: Share of the Market's Large Apartment Stock in Its Top Three Cities

95.1% of Large Apartments in the Lowcountry Are in 3 Cities

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published November 02, 2026

Swipe for insights →

THE DATA

95.1%

Share of the Market's Large Apartment Stock in Its Top Three Cities (2024)

This concentration is unprecedented in South Carolina's coastal real estate landscape.

The data reveals that 95.1% of the Lowcountry's large apartment units—those with 50+ units—are located in just three cities: Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, and Port Royal. This level of aggregation signals a profound imbalance in development density and infrastructure investment, with the remaining cities and counties effectively sidelined in the regional housing supply chain.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-02-hilton-head-concentration-apartment-units-place

01

Supply Is Not Distribution

The 95.1% concentration does not reflect a lack of demand elsewhere—it reflects a structural failure to distribute new housing across the Lowcountry. Beaufort, Burton, and Laurel Bay, despite being within the same metro area, have zero large apartment units. This suggests that development incentives, zoning, and infrastructure planning are favoring a narrow corridor, not market need.

The result is a false scarcity: demand is not absent in other areas, but supply is artificially constrained by geographic exclusivity in permitting and utility access.

02

The 3-City Monopoly Is a Long-Term Risk

Hilton Head Island's dominance in large apartment stock creates a systemic vulnerability. A single shock—economic downturn, climate event, or regulatory shift—could destabilize the entire regional rental market, since 95.1% of capacity is concentrated in a few locations.

This also limits tenant mobility and affordability across the metro. With no alternative large-scale rental supply, even moderate price increases in the top three cities ripple through the entire Lowcountry, accelerating the affordability gap in Beaufort and Jasper counties.

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

ALEX

ALEX Intelligence
deep intelligence

ALEX Real Estate
genius real estate

ALEX Advisory
uncontested strategy

ALEX Cares
purposeful philanthropy