Black Mountain — #1 of 10: Renters Over the 50% Rent Threshold

Black Mountain leads NC in severe rent burden

40.2% of renters spend over half their income on rent

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THE DATA

40.2%

Renters Over the 50% Rent Threshold (2024)

Black Mountain ranks first among cities in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties in North Carolina.

This figure—40.2% of renters spending more than half their income on rent—signals a deep affordability crisis in Black Mountain, despite its reputation as a desirable mountain community. The data reveals that even in a high-demand, high-income region, housing costs are outpacing income growth, especially for renters. This is not a national trend but a local structural imbalance, where demand from remote workers and retirees has pushed rents beyond what many residents can afford.



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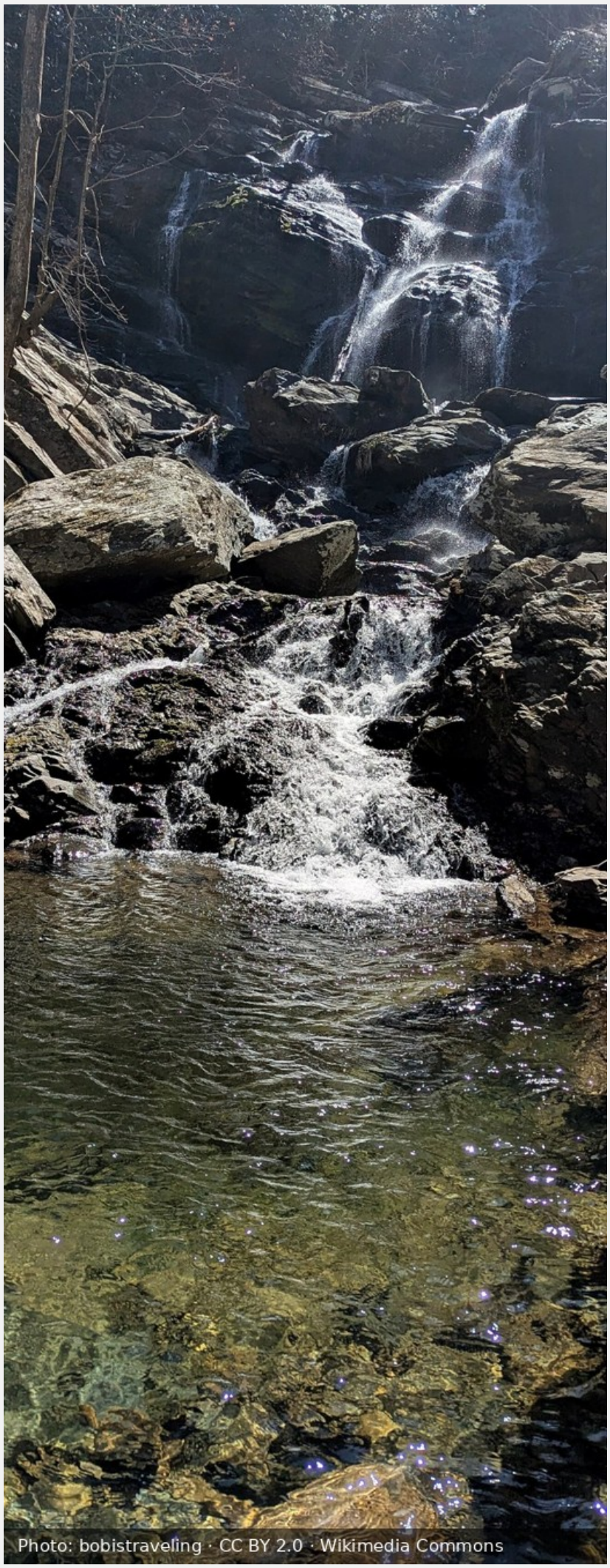
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-11-asheville-severe-rent-burden-place-mkt

01

Affordability is a driver of migration

The extreme rent burden in Black Mountain is not a sign of failure—it’s a signal of demand. As remote workers and professionals seek access to mountain living without the full cost of Asheville’s urban core, they are gravitating to Black Mountain, even at the expense of housing affordability. This migration pattern suggests that affordability stress is not deterring people; it’s shaping where they choose to live. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle: high demand drives up rents, which attracts more remote workers, which further inflates prices—creating a new kind of 'premium' affordability crisis.

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02

The cost of being desirable

Black Mountain's ranking as the most severe rent burden in the region reflects a paradox: the very qualities that make it desirable—proximity to nature, walkability, and a strong sense of community—are now priced out of reach for many. This suggests that the market is not just experiencing inflation—it is undergoing a revaluation of place. The premium isn't just for location; it's for lifestyle. As more residents are priced out, the cultural fabric of the town risks shifting from a balanced mix of long-term locals and newcomers to a transient, high-income cohort, altering the community's character in ways that are difficult to reverse.

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