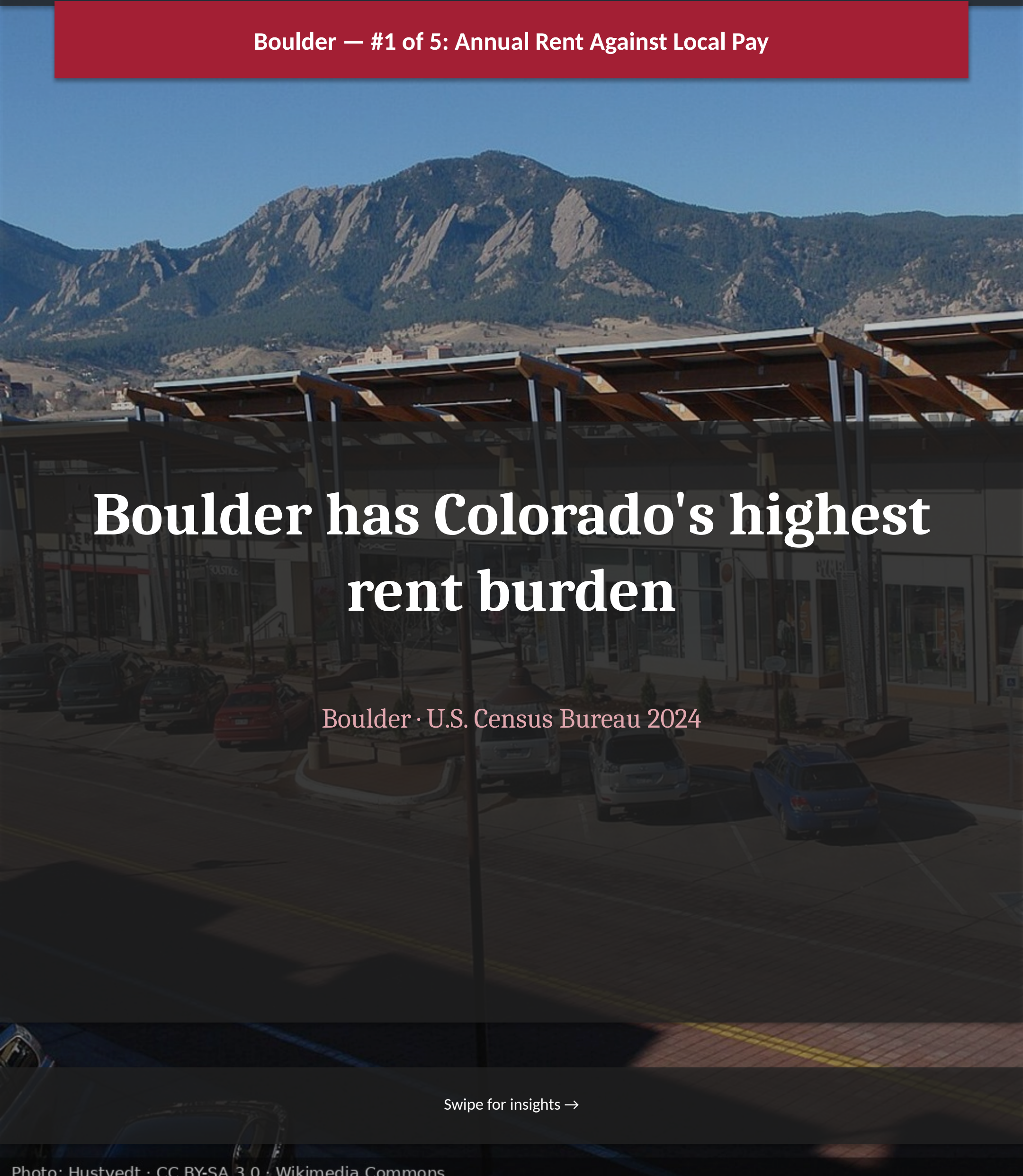
Boulder — #1 of 5: Annual Rent Against Local Pay



Boulder has Colorado's highest rent burden

Boulder · U.S. Census Bureau 2024

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THE DATA

27.7%

Annual Rent Against Local Pay (2024)

Boulder leads Colorado in rent burden relative to local income, according to the latest ALEX Intelligence data.

This figure reflects how much of a household’s annual income is spent on rent in Boulder. At 27.7%, it is the highest among all Colorado cities with available data, signaling intense housing pressure despite high local wages. The data is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024.



Photo: Kvng · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-13-boulder-rent-to-income-place-mkt

01

High burden, not high exit

Despite the 27.7% rent-to-income ratio, Boulder’s market remains stable. The fact that the highest burden city also leads in inventory growth (Resiclub Analytics, Nov 12, 2026) suggests that affordability pressure is not triggering mass departures. Instead, the city is absorbing strain through supply expansion, particularly in high-income zones, indicating resilience rather than collapse.

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02

Affordability as a signal, not a flaw

The elevated rent burden is not a sign of market failure but of deep economic anchoring. With low poverty rates (below 8%) and strong wage growth in tech and research sectors (Kansas City Fed, Nov 13, 2026), the high cost is driven by demand from high-earning professionals. This suggests the burden is not a barrier to entry, but a marker of premium economic positioning — a sign of strength, not weakness.

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

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