Laurel Bay — #1 of 6: Annual Rent Against Local Pay

Laurel Bay leads SC in rent-to-income ratio

Source: ALEX Intelligence, November 14, 2026

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THE DATA

32.1%

Annual Rent Against Local Pay (2024)

Laurel Bay has the highest rent burden in the Lowcountry, where housing costs consume 32.1% of median local income.

This figure reflects a structural imbalance where rental prices have outpaced income growth, particularly in high-demand coastal zones. The data reveals that even among cities with strong economic activity, income gains have not kept pace with shelter costs. This trend is not unique to Laurel Bay but is most acute there, signaling a deepening affordability challenge.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-14-hilton-head-rent-to-income-place-mkt

01

Rent burden is a proxy for market saturation

This dynamic may be accelerating the shift toward ownership as a long-term strategy, even for those who previously intended to rent — a trend that could further tighten the rental market.

02

Affordability is a regional paradox

As such, the most resilient communities may not be those with the lowest rent burdens, but those with the strongest social and cultural infrastructure — a lesson for developers and policymakers alike.

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