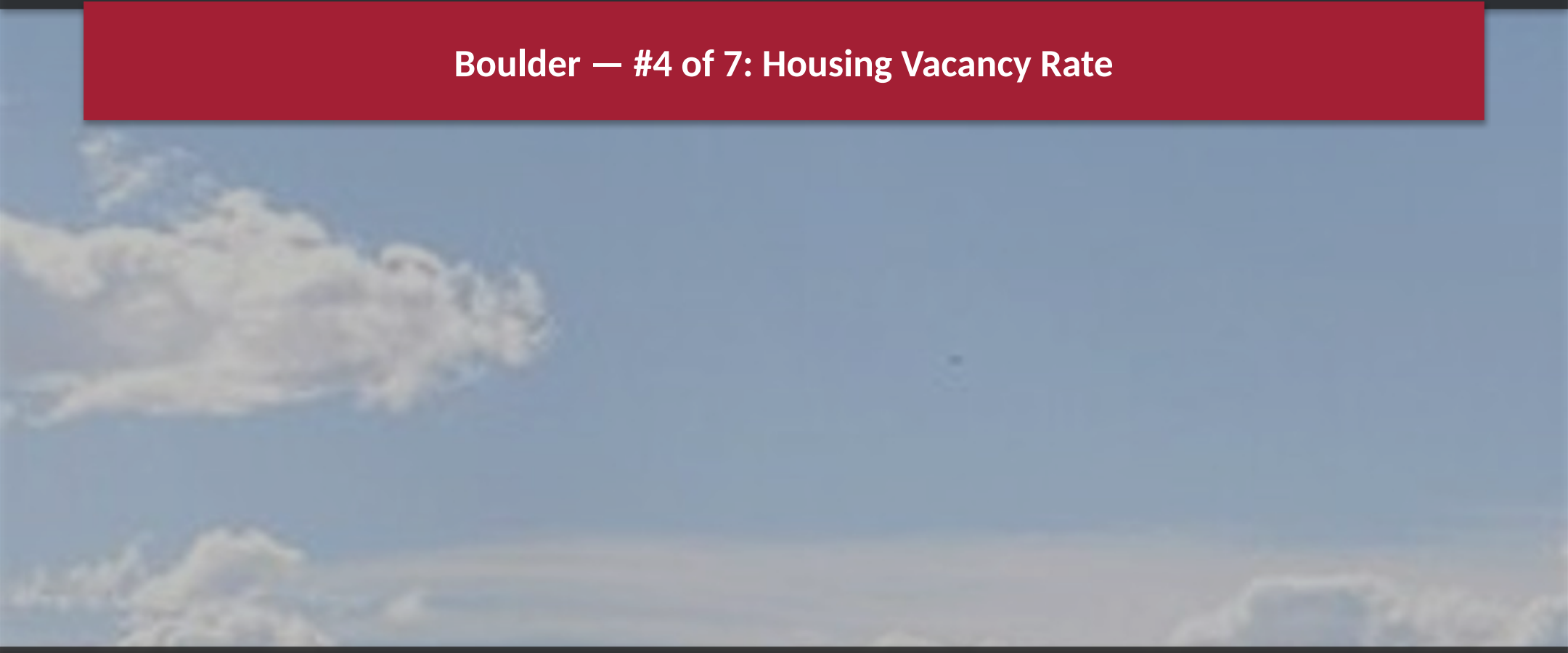
Boulder — #4 of 7: Housing Vacancy Rate



Boulder’s vacancy rate is 5.3% — 4th highest in Colorado

Based on 2024 U.S. Census data

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THE DATA

5.3%

Housing Vacancy Rate (2024)

Boulder’s vacancy rate ranks #4 among the 7 Colorado metros, indicating significant unoccupied housing despite tight inventory elsewhere.

This 5.3% vacancy rate is not a sign of surplus, but of structural mismatch: homes are sitting empty due to affordability barriers, not lack of demand. The data reveals that high-end and seasonal units are disproportionately vacant, while affordable housing remains in high demand. This imbalance is a byproduct of rapid price growth and wage stagnation.



Photo: Let Ideas Compete · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-15-boulder-standing-vacancy-share-msa

01

Vacancy as a symptom, not a solution

A 5.3% vacancy rate in Boulder is not a market correction — it’s a signal of failed affordability policy. The homes that remain vacant are often luxury, seasonal, or underutilized second homes, not rental units for working households. This suggests that inventory is not the issue; it’s the distribution of housing across income tiers that is broken. Without targeted policy, this vacancy will persist even as prices rise further.

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02

The illusion of supply

The high vacancy rate masks a deep shortage of affordable units. This contradiction — high vacancy alongside extreme scarcity — reveals that the market is not failing to produce homes; it’s failing to produce homes for the people who need them. The vacancy is concentrated in the top tier, not the middle or entry-level.

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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