Little River — #1 of 10: Mean Commute to Work by City, in Minutes (2024)

Little River has the longest commute in SC

Based on 2024 ACS data

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THE DATA

25.3

Mean Commute to Work by City, in Minutes (2024)

Little River leads all cities in the Grand Strand and South Carolina in average commute time.

This 25.3-minute average is not a mid-point estimate but a true mean travel time to work, derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2024. It reflects the growing spatial disconnect between where people live and where they work, particularly in rapidly expanding suburban and exurban areas of the Grand Strand.



Photo: Nheyob · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-26-grand-strand-commute-place-long

01

Commuting is a market signal

The fact that Little River leads South Carolina in commute time is not a flaw—it’s a strategic indicator. It reflects deep residential investment in areas with lower land costs and higher long-term appreciation potential, where buyers accept longer commutes for better value. This pattern suggests that capital is flowing into areas where infrastructure has not yet caught up, signaling early-stage growth with high upside.

This is not a sign of dysfunction but of forward-looking demand: people are betting on future connectivity, not present convenience.

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02

Affordability drives spatial divergence

The top-ranked cities in commute time are also the most affordable in the Grand Strand. Little River, Forestbrook, and Conway are among the lowest-cost entry points for homebuyers, particularly for remote workers and retirees. As these areas attract more residents, pressure on local infrastructure increases—but so does the incentive for developers and public agencies to upgrade roads, transit, and broadband.

This divergence between commute time and housing cost reveals a core tension: affordability is creating sprawl, but sprawl is now the engine of market growth. The Grand Strand's future is not in reducing commute time—it's in managing it through strategic investment.

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