

# A new Wawa is seen as a sign of boom times in this N.J. city

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By [Bill Duhart | For NJ.com](#)

Business is [booming in Vineland](#). Just ask Sandy Forosisky, the director of economic development.

“Our Industrial park is growing,” Forosisky said Wednesday. “We’re running out of room.”

The busy Route 55 corridor is the lifeline for growth. The four-lane highway empties into Route 47 to the south for Shore points and Route 42 to the north, a bustling interchange with Route 295 and roads into Camden and Philadelphia.

“Definitely, west Landis Avenue is our next big commercial corridor,” Forosisky said. “ShopRite came, Lidl came, the hotels and Taco Bell.”

But another new business opening this month may be the definitive signal that the corridor has arrived: a new Wawa.

“The Wawa only helps that,” Forosisky said. “I think one was needed down there. There’s a lot of truck traffic right near (Route) 55. They’re very strategic about where they put them. They did their research to put it in a location that needed one.”

The new store opened last week. “Our store teams and associates deliver experiences and emotional connections with customers that go beyond what traditionally happens in a retail environment,” Chris Gheysens, Wawa’s president and CEO, said in a statement. “Simply put, they help make their communities happier and more connected.”

The grand opening of the Vineland location is the 13th to open this year out of the 54 total stores projected to open across Wawa’s operating area in 2022, according to the statement. It’s also the [fifth Wawa in Vineland, Cumberland County](#).

The convenience store, with more than 900 locations from New Jersey to Florida, has developed a cult-like following in some circles. It was prominently featured as a staple of life in the northeast by the hit HBO series *Mare of Easttown*, with [Titanic star Kate Winslett](#).

“It almost felt like a mythical place, Wawa,” Winslett told the [Los Angeles Times](#). “And so by the time I got there, I was like, ‘Oh, it’s real!’ Walking into a Wawa was kind of an honor in a funny way ... To

finally walk through the door of a Wawa, I felt like, ‘Ah, yes, I’m here! I belong! This is where it’s at!’ Wawa.”

The new Vineland Wawa needed to clear a gauntlet of hurdles to open. The site plan was approved by the local land-use board in 2020, but the store didn’t open until two-years later.

Before the site plan approval, the city insisted on limiting access to Landis Avenue to a right in, right out plan for traffic flow. Now, motorists looking to go left on Landis Avenue, in the front of the store, will need to exit through the rear to a side street that leads to an intersection with Landis Avenue.

“We didn’t want traffic coming out and making a left-hand turn on to Landis,” Forosisky said. “It’s too dangerous.”

The Route 55 corridor is almost 11 miles long through the township with five exits, including one to the Cumberland Mall.

The mall is owned by PREIT, which has two other malls in New Jersey and more than two dozen nationwide. PREIT, which emerged from bankruptcy last year, decided to keep operating the [Cumberland Mall as a regional destination](#), even though the Cherry Hill and Moorestown malls were bigger retail draws.

The Wawa company began in 1803 as an iron foundry in New Jersey, according to a company statement. Toward the end of the 19th century, owner George Wood took an interest in dairy farming and the family began a small processing plant in Wawa, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia in 1902. As home delivery of milk declined in the early 1960s, Wawa opened its first food market in 1964.

Now, Wawa features hoagie sandwiches (80 million hoagies sold annually), customizable burgers, coffee (195 million cups sold annually); the Sizzli, a hot breakfast sandwich; dairy products, juices and teas and gasoline in many locations.

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