



## Why Vineland Is considered an economic bellwether for New Jersey

Joseph P. Smith, Cherry Hill Courier-Post  
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VINELAND — Vineland is the state's largest city by square miles, and it now has another ranking — one of three communities in New Jersey to watch for early indications that the economy is changing.

"They're not just towns on a map — they're the places where new trends, pressures, and recoveries start to show themselves first," MarketBeat founder Matt Paulson said. "For anyone watching what's next, this is where to look."

Marjetbeat.com, a financial media company, developed this top-three list based on a first-time survey of 3,021 people that it identified as business leaders. The question for all of them was: "Where does change happen first?"

Bayonne and Parsippany were rated Nos. 1 and 2, respectively, as signal cities.

### **Bayonne, Hudson County**

Population: 71,600, approximately. Located "between the industrial edge of New Jersey and the gravity of New York City."

"When retail foot traffic slows or housing turnover dips, it tends to reflect tightening wallets among working-class commuters," MarketBeat wrote.

Bayonne also highlights how transportation costs, credit conditions, and housing pressure are landing on families squeezed between metro expenses and stagnant wages — often signaling broader shifts in urban economic health across the state."



Vineland, NJ

## **Parsippany, Morris County.**

Population: 56,200, approximately. Actually a township rather than a city, it's notable for the number of corporate offices, distribution centers and commuters.

"When commercial leases shrink or hiring stalls, Parsippany often feels it early," MarketBeat wrote. "It also reflects how families balancing long commutes and high housing costs respond to inflation."

## **Vineland, Cumberland County**

Population: 69,800, approximately. Centrally located in a farming area and with many local growers of its own, not to mention a major produce auction. It also has significant health care and retail sectors.

"If grocery store traffic slows or farm hiring dips, it's often a sign that broader economic pressure is building among working-class families," MarketBeat wrote. "Vineland also mirrors state-level changes in wages, fuel prices, and home affordability."

"Because it sits outside the state's major metros, it offers a clearer look at how lower-income and rural populations are managing financial strain."

MarketBeat also noted the differences in what business people try to observe versus what economists might focus on. The survey found that 46% of those interviewed said the clearest warning is layoffs at a major local employer, and then businesses closing or cutting hours.

“Only 8% paid close attention to changing patterns in community events or public transit use — the subtler signs that economists often track,” MarketBeat wrote.

Most respondents also said they watch what regular people are doing, with 43% saying factors such as shopping habits and restaurant traffic are the best indicators of what's happening in the economy.

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