

# TOP 100 TOWNS

# New Jersey

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MONTHLY

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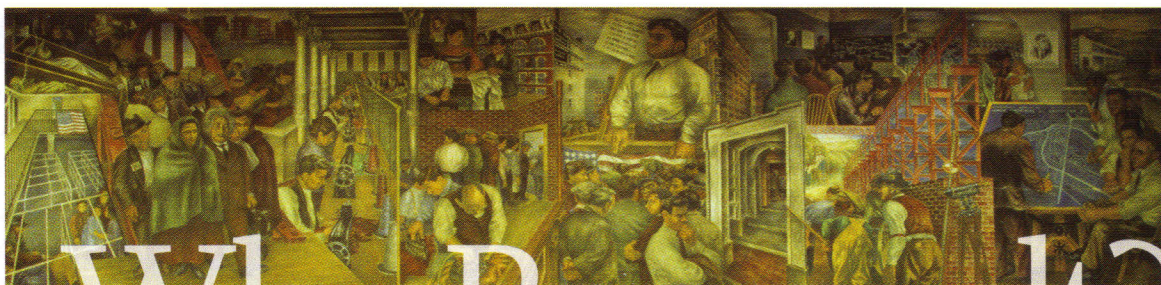
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The Garden State crams 8.7 million people into 566 towns, and we're crazy enough to try to rank them. To be fair, we asked Monmouth University's Polling Institute to do the heavy lifting. After the numbers were crunched, the little town of Roosevelt, founded during the Depression as a utopian community in the state's agrarian belly, came out on top.

**TURN THE PAGE**  
to view our chart of New Jersey's **Top 100** towns (see the complete list at [njmonthly.com](http://njmonthly.com)). The results just might surprise you.



# Why Roosevelt?

ROOSEVELT MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE THE SORT OF PLACE that would top a list of best towns. It has no real Main Street, no industry, not much in the way of nightlife. But for the mostly European Jewish immigrants who built the town during the Depression, and for the subsequent generations who nurtured the ideals on which Roosevelt was founded, therein lies the appeal.

"When I moved here, it felt like a combination of graduate school and summer camp," says Ralph Seligman, a resident since 1951. "There were a lot of very smart people around. It was very communal, the way summer camp becomes. If you had your light on, someone would stop by to talk, and that would last until ten or eleven o'clock."

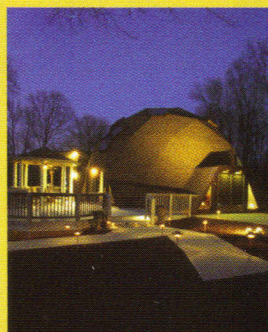
Roosevelt scored high marks on most of our ranking factors. Its population of 930 is essentially unchanged since 2000, property taxes are below average, the selling price of homes has jumped significantly since 2000, and crime is essentially nonexistent. "Roosevelt just has that mix that brings it right to the top," says Monmouth University institute director Patrick Murray.

Created under the New Deal, the borough was designed as a planned community, with a garment factory at its center and a farm at its edge. Several hundred houses were built, mostly one-story concrete homes with flat roofs and floor-to-ceiling windows. Originally called Jersey Homesteads, the town was renamed in 1945 for the President who had made it all possible.

From time to time the town's "communality," as Seligman calls it, is tested, such as when Rooseveltians recalled their mayor in February. At issue was the mayor's support of a plan to run a private Orthodox Jewish High School at the local synagogue, Roosevelt's only house of worship. "In a way," Seligman says, "this vote against the mayor was the expression of that communality. This business against the mayor was led by secular Jews—old-timers. We have co-existed and we have welcomed everybody."

BY CHRISTOPHER HANN

FROM TOP: Ben Shahn's 45-foot-long fresco mural in the local elementary school depicts Roosevelt's founding; Several geodesic domes survive from the days when a dome manufacturer occupied the site of the original garment factory; Longtime Roosevelt residents Ralph and Pearl Seligman.





# TOP 100 PLACES TO LIVE IN NEW JERSEY

Rank	MUNICIPALITY	County	Population (2004)	Population Growth, % (2000-04)	Median Home Sales Price 2005	(increase since 2000)	Median Property Tax (2005)	Open Space (% of total land, 2004)	ASK4 avg	GEPA avg	HSPA avg	Crime Rate (per 1,000 people, 2004)	Jobless Rate, % (2004)	Hospitals within 10 miles	Theater or PAC within 10 miles
1	ROOSEVELT	Monmouth	931	▼ 0.2	\$215,000	235%	\$4,556	23	75	79	78	0.0	2.9	2	✓
2	CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	Morris	10,162	0.8	\$625,000	176%	\$8,707	36	96	94	97	5.0	2.8	10	✓
3	ESSEX FELLS	Essex	2,130	▼ 1.5	\$960,000	192%	\$11,689	16	95	84	91	7.0	1.4	20	✓
4	ROCKLEIGH	Bergen	396	1.3	\$1,776,250	253%	\$8,565	41	78	89	95	22.7	0.0	6	✓
5	DENNIS	Cape May	6,225	▼ 4.1	\$244,000	212%	\$2,554	56	85	89	77	19.6	4.8	1	
6	SANDYSTON	Sussex	1,905	4.4	\$210,000	179%	\$3,510	73	99	87	95	8.4	3.5	2	
7	WEST CALDWELL	Essex	11,096	▼ 1.2	\$421,075	165%	\$7,038	8	91	84	94	9.9	1.3	19	✓
8	MADISON	Morris	16,005	▼ 3.2	\$550,000	161%	\$6,729	6	94	87	95	9.4	3.6	9	✓
9	SEA GIRT	Monmouth	2,097	▼ 2.4	\$1,312,500	236%	\$8,773	n/a	98	97	93	8.2	3.0	3	✓
10	SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS	Monmouth	5,190	▼ 0.7	\$433,000	201%	\$4,761	3	83	83	93	8.8	5.1	4	✓
11	CHATHAM	Morris	8,428	▼ 0.4	\$550,000	148%	\$7,961	13	96	94	97	11.1	2.2	14	✓
12	CRANFORD	Union	22,617	0.2	\$410,000	179%	\$6,755	16	93	90	89	11.9	2.1	16	✓
13	HADDONFIELD	Camden	11,596	▼ 0.5	\$365,000	174%	\$8,460	11	96	95	95	13.9	1.6	9	✓
14	MOUNTAINSIDE	Union	6,660	0.9	\$575,000	178%	\$6,592	39*	93	88	93	10.2	3.2	15	✓
15	BEDMINSTER	Somerset	8,392	0.1	\$320,000	181%	\$3,348	8	92	90	95	6.2	3.0	2	✓
16	OGDENSBURG	Sussex	2,643	0.2	\$250,000	187%	\$5,506	28	86	82	90	3.4	3.1	2	
17	INTERLAKEN	Monmouth	895	▼ 0.6	\$601,950	225%	\$5,524	26	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.5	2.0	3	✓
18	CAPE MAY	Cape May	3,856	▼ 4.4	\$495,000	268%	\$3,191	>75	90	67	78	55.6	5.8	1	✓
19	SECAUCUS	Hudson	15,663	▼ 1.7	\$354,500	193%	\$4,399	6	94	75	89	46.1	2.6	24	✓
20	SHAMONG	Burlington	6,827	0.5	\$344,900	193%	\$6,056	59	90	86	91	5.6	3.1	4	
21	LINCOLN PARK	Morris	10,894	▼ 0.3	\$327,500	202%	\$5,705	20	87	85	77	9.1	3.8	11	✓
22	NEW PROVIDENCE	Union	11,981	0.6	\$515,000	172%	\$8,703	12	93	96	94	8.9	2.2	11	✓
23	UPPER TOWNSHIP	Cape May	11,985	▼ 1.1	\$279,900	185%	\$3,687	51	86	85	86	15.0	4.4	3	✓
24	WALPACK	Sussex	41	0	n/a	n/a	\$812	>75	99	87	95	n/a	0.0	1	
25	BRIGANTINE	Atlantic	12,769	1.4	\$360,000	267%	\$4,031	>75	91	75	57	19.2	4.4	2	✓
26	HO-HO-KUS	Bergen	4,095	0.9	\$690,000	160%	\$8,895	3	95	97	94	4.9	1.9	11	✓
27	LEONIA	Bergen	8,911	0	\$485,000	195%	\$8,342	30	91	79	85	11.8	2.7	16	✓
28	ALPINE	Bergen	2,340	7.2	\$1,780,000	197%	\$10,910	48	n/a	83	96	8.3	1.3	7	✓
29	BERKELEY HEIGHTS	Union	13,619	1.6	\$528,000	169%	\$7,646	14	93	91	93	7.1	2.2	12	✓
30	VERONA	Essex	13,315	▼ 1.6	\$390,000	186%	\$7,413	1	94	86	90	14.5	1.7	20	✓
31	COLTS NECK	Monmouth	11,701	▼ 5.1	\$765,000	180%	\$9,780	8	92	92	90	11.7	2.4	6	✓
32	MAHWAH	Bergen	24,682	0.2	\$400,000	182%	\$5,095	50	91	82	94	10.0	3.7	7	✓
33	HADDON HEIGHTS	Camden	7,453	▼ 1.3	\$239,900	192%	\$6,042	7	95	77	86	21.7	2.1	9	✓
34	WEST WILDWOOD	Cape May	420	▼ 6.3	\$258,000	349%	\$2,444	69	88	63	56	53.5	10.1	1	✓
35	SHREWSBURY	Monmouth	1,090	▼ 0.7	\$192,950	228%	\$3,868	4	84	83	82	9.2	4.0	4	✓
36	LYNDHURST	Bergen	19,540	0.8	\$350,000	194%	\$4,960	11	87	78	85	18.4	4.3	27	✓
37	TENAFLY	Bergen	14,214	0.3	\$675,000	184%	\$10,758	30	95	90	96	9.1	2.5	12	✓
38	MILLBURN	Essex	19,585	▼ 0.9	\$894,500	177%	\$12,757	18	96	93	96	34.4	1.5	17	✓
39	MAPLEWOOD	Essex	23,450	▼ 1.8	\$405,000	196%	\$9,541	21	81	77	87	31.0	2.3	21	✓
40	CLARK	Union	14,709	0.8	\$410,500	205%	\$7,366	14	92	84	91	12.8	3.4	17	✓
41	HARDING	Morris	3,292	0.5	\$975,000	125%	\$8,315	44	92	90	95	3.1	2.1	7	✓
42	EDISON	Essex	2,253	12.7	\$245,000	202%	\$5,573	15	84	87	85	2.5	2.4	2	