



Building Permit Activity in Built-Out Towns, 1990s vs. 2000s December 2010

A municipality's build-out percentage indicates what percent of the municipality's total developable land has actually been developed. Developable land, in turn, refers to land that can actually be built on; it excludes lands that have been permanently preserved as open space, as well as lands (like wetlands or steep slopes) on which building is prohibited by environmental regulations. "Percent built-out" is computed as developed (or "urbanized") land divided by the sum of developed land and land that is undeveloped but still developable. Permanently preserved or environmentally constrained lands are excluded from both the numerator and the denominator of the calculation.

On rare occasions, as with Walpack Township in Sussex County, this can lead to counterintuitive results. Walpack is located entirely within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, where future development is prohibited. So although Walpack is mostly undeveloped, it will remain that way because its open spaces have effectively been permanently preserved; it has no developable land remaining and is thus technically "built-out," albeit at a very low density and with a very high proportion of open space.

But Walpack is the exception; by and large, places that are mostly built-out are also places that look mostly built-out. Their remaining open spaces tend to be parks, small parcels or relatively inaccessible lands that cannot be built upon.

The table below contains data on the issuance of building permits in municipalities that were at least 90 percent built-out as of 2002 (the closest year to the beginning of the decade of the 2000s for which land development data are available). The build-out percentages are based on unpublished estimates, produced by researchers at Rowan and Rutgers universities, of the land areas in each municipality that fall into one of three categories: 1) already developed/urbanized, 2) permanently preserved or environmentally constrained ("undevelopable") and 3) undeveloped but still developable ("available").

county	municipality name	2002 percent built-out	total building permits issued:			
			1990s	2000s	change	% change
Atlantic	Brigantine	93.4%	367	667	300	82%
Atlantic	Linwood	94.5%	210	216	6	3%
Atlantic	Longport	97.7%	118	184	66	56%
Atlantic	Margate City	98.4%	321	845	524	163%
Atlantic	Somers Point	94.3%	78	267	189	242%
Atlantic	Ventnor City	93.3%	151	96	-55	-36%
Bergen	Bergenfield	97.1%	27	221	194	719%
Bergen	Bogota	98.6%	24	23	-1	-4%
Bergen	Carlstadt	92.2%	98	194	96	98%
Bergen	Cliffside Park	99.8%	194	460	266	137%
Bergen	Cresskill	93.0%	115	443	328	285%

county	municipality name	2002 percent built-out	total building permits issued:			
			1990s	2000s	change	% change
Bergen	Dumont	98.6%	84	101	17	20%
Bergen	Edgewater	96.1%	1,279	1,144	-135	-11%
Bergen	Elmwood Park	93.8%	151	214	63	42%
Bergen	Emerson	93.6%	59	216	157	266%
Bergen	Englewood	93.6%	94	1,787	1,693	1801%
Bergen	Englewood Cliffs	92.7%	144	284	140	97%
Bergen	Fair Lawn	98.0%	290	104	-186	-64%
Bergen	Fairview	96.8%	73	368	295	404%
Bergen	Fort Lee	97.2%	719	1,003	284	39%
Bergen	Garfield	98.7%	134	199	65	49%
Bergen	Glen Rock	97.0%	41	47	6	15%
Bergen	Hackensack	97.2%	149	775	626	420%
Bergen	Harrington Park	90.4%	42	128	86	205%
Bergen	Hasbrouck Heights	97.7%	31	124	93	300%
Bergen	Hillsdale	92.6%	91	67	-24	-26%
Bergen	Leonia	94.4%	55	21	-34	-62%
Bergen	Little Ferry	94.5%	3	31	28	933%
Bergen	Lodi	96.3%	81	323	242	299%
Bergen	Maywood	97.1%	4	20	16	400%
Bergen	Midland Park	96.2%	27	45	18	67%
Bergen	Moonachie	95.8%	16	37	21	131%
Bergen	New Milford	95.5%	44	114	70	159%
Bergen	Northvale	96.2%	28	229	201	718%
Bergen	Oradell	96.7%	18	43	25	139%
Bergen	Palisades Park	95.3%	296	1,193	897	303%
Bergen	Paramus	93.7%	342	499	157	46%
Bergen	Park Ridge	94.0%	195	245	50	26%
Bergen	Ridgefield	94.8%	73	218	145	199%
Bergen	Ridgefield Park	91.3%	7	19	12	171%
Bergen	Ridgewood	95.1%	60	138	78	130%
Bergen	River Edge	96.8%	63	105	42	67%
Bergen	River Vale	92.7%	152	188	36	24%
Bergen	Rochelle Park	96.3%	15	330	315	2100%
Bergen	Saddle Brook	95.1%	89	700	611	687%
Bergen	South Hackensack	97.4%	24	60	36	150%
Bergen	Teaneck	94.7%	119	416	297	250%
Bergen	Teterboro	96.7%	12	6	-6	-50%
Bergen	Waldwick	93.6%	64	164	100	156%
Bergen	Wallington	97.4%	45	142	97	216%
Bergen	Westwood	93.5%	255	68	-187	-73%
Bergen	Wood-Ridge	94.9%	27	67	40	148%
Bergen	Wyckoff	90.2%	404	382	-22	-5%
Burlington	Beverly	90.1%	17	27	10	59%
Burlington	Bordentown city	90.2%	35	35	0	0%
Burlington	Maple Shade	93.6%	108	561	453	419%
Burlington	Medford Lakes	96.6%	25	68	43	172%
Burlington	Riverside	94.4%	81	90	9	11%
Burlington	Riverton	95.9%	10	29	19	190%
Burlington	Willingboro	93.2%	51	1,815	1,764	3459%
Camden	Audubon	98.9%	16	36	20	125%
Camden	Audubon Park	97.8%	0	0	0	NA
Camden	Brooklawn	95.8%	6	3	-3	-50%

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Camden	Camden	92.8%	44	1,355	1,311	2980%
Camden	Collingswood	98.8%	13	5	-8	-62%
Camden	Gloucester City	93.4%	25	210	185	740%
Camden	Haddon Heights	94.8%	16	218	202	1263%
Camden	Haddon township	95.4%	172	186	14	8%
Camden	Haddonfield	95.1%	55	126	71	129%
Camden	Laurel Springs	96.8%	19	8	-11	-58%
Camden	Magnolia	91.7%	48	58	10	21%
Camden	Merchantville	99.7%	17	72	55	324%
Camden	Mount Ephraim	95.7%	42	63	21	50%
Camden	Oaklyn	97.7%	20	2	-18	-90%
Camden	Stratford	92.5%	26	6	-20	-77%
Camden	Woodlynne	99.2%	1	1	0	0%
Cape May	Avalon	94.1%	541	1,027	486	90%
Cape May	Cape May	98.2%	108	193	85	79%
Cape May	Cape May Point	96.1%	60	66	6	10%
Cape May	North Wildwood	93.6%	187	1,335	1,148	614%
Cape May	Ocean City	97.1%	1,876	3,345	1,469	78%
Cape May	Sea Isle City	92.2%	950	1,681	731	77%
Cape May	Stone Harbor	93.5%	199	331	132	66%
Cape May	Wildwood	91.0%	103	1,164	1,061	1030%
Cape May	Wildwood Crest	97.1%	71	1,096	1,025	1444%
Essex	Belleville	96.9%	68	467	399	587%
Essex	Bloomfield	96.7%	156	179	23	15%
Essex	Caldwell	93.3%	21	70	49	233%
Essex	East Orange	98.7%	75	606	531	708%
Essex	Glen Ridge	98.4%	20	7	-13	-65%
Essex	Irvington	98.6%	84	301	217	258%
Essex	Maplewood	97.4%	14	114	100	714%
Essex	Millburn	91.7%	64	241	177	277%
Essex	Montclair	97.9%	232	990	758	327%
Essex	Newark	94.9%	3,853	12,335	8,482	220%
Essex	Nutley	96.9%	165	523	358	217%
Essex	Orange	98.9%	285	478	193	68%
Essex	South Orange	96.3%	307	150	-157	-51%
Gloucester	Paulsboro	93.5%	42	20	-22	-52%
Gloucester	Westville	94.0%	23	22	-1	-4%
Gloucester	Woodbury	96.2%	39	137	98	251%
Hudson	East Newark	100.0%	3	4	1	33%
Hudson	Guttenberg	100.0%	140	467	327	234%
Hudson	Harrison	94.2%	41	993	952	2322%
Hudson	Hoboken	96.6%	909	4,008	3,099	341%
Hudson	Jersey City	91.0%	3,428	13,717	10,289	300%
Hudson	North Bergen	93.3%	505	1,233	728	144%
Hudson	Union City	99.7%	61	946	885	1451%
Hudson	Weehawken	93.5%	17	229	212	1247%
Hudson	West New York	94.6%	1,249	2,506	1,257	101%
Hunterdon	Flemington	95.3%	15	191	176	1173%
Mercer	Hightstown	93.2%	20	120	100	500%
Mercer	Pennington	90.5%	4	21	17	425%
Mercer	Princeton borough	96.5%	24	119	95	396%
Mercer	Trenton	95.0%	153	219	66	43%

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Middlesex	Carteret	91.4%	61	1,391	1,330	2180%
Middlesex	Dunellen	98.9%	47	179	132	281%
Middlesex	Jamesburg	91.3%	207	161	-46	-22%
Middlesex	Metuchen	91.9%	255	214	-41	-16%
Middlesex	Middlesex	94.3%	125	82	-43	-34%
Middlesex	Milltown	94.3%	36	41	5	14%
Middlesex	New Brunswick	91.3%	379	1,553	1,174	310%
Middlesex	South Plainfield	95.0%	626	452	-174	-28%
Middlesex	South River	90.7%	316	254	-62	-20%
Monmouth	Allenhurst	96.8%	12	7	-5	-42%
Monmouth	Asbury Park	99.4%	26	584	558	2146%
Monmouth	Atlantic Highlands	92.9%	114	32	-82	-72%
Monmouth	Avon-by-the-Sea	96.1%	39	126	87	223%
Monmouth	Belmar	93.8%	53	144	91	172%
Monmouth	Bradley Beach	95.7%	35	421	386	1103%
Monmouth	Brielle	92.9%	146	208	62	42%
Monmouth	Deal	96.4%	62	58	-4	-6%
Monmouth	Fair Haven	95.9%	89	124	35	39%
Monmouth	Farmingdale	96.7%	16	17	1	6%
Monmouth	Freehold borough	95.5%	41	159	118	288%
Monmouth	Highlands	90.8%	33	99	66	200%
Monmouth	Interlaken	100.0%	15	24	9	60%
Monmouth	Keansburg	93.7%	35	70	35	100%
Monmouth	Lake Como	99.3%	44	56	12	27%
Monmouth	Little Silver	96.5%	208	116	-92	-44%
Monmouth	Loch Arbour	92.6%	1	1	0	0%
Monmouth	Long Branch	96.6%	252	912	660	262%
Monmouth	Manasquan	93.8%	156	345	189	121%
Monmouth	Monmouth Beach	94.8%	102	108	6	6%
Monmouth	Neptune City	96.9%	25	52	27	108%
Monmouth	Oceanport	97.1%	188	148	-40	-21%
Monmouth	Red Bank	97.6%	187	245	58	31%
Monmouth	Rumson	93.3%	100	307	207	207%
Monmouth	Sea Girt	90.4%	87	206	119	137%
Monmouth	Shrewsbury borough	93.5%	75	204	129	172%
Monmouth	Shrewsbury township	95.2%	2	0	-2	-100%
Monmouth	Spring Lake	95.2%	115	239	124	108%
Monmouth	Spring Lake Heights	96.0%	75	170	95	127%
Monmouth	West Long Branch	96.1%	59	72	13	22%
Morris	Butler	90.0%	151	378	227	150%
Morris	Chatham borough	94.0%	67	95	28	42%
Morris	Dover	92.8%	142	184	42	30%
Morris	Netcong	91.6%	20	62	42	210%
Morris	Victory Gardens	97.6%	33	0	-33	-100%
Ocean	Barnegat Light	94.9%	139	134	-5	-4%
Ocean	Beach Haven	94.2%	138	270	132	96%
Ocean	Island Heights	93.0%	76	90	14	18%
Ocean	Lavallette	98.9%	112	186	74	66%
Ocean	Long Beach township	90.8%	645	803	158	24%
Ocean	Ocean Gate	97.1%	31	54	23	74%
Ocean	Pine Beach	92.4%	45	73	28	62%
Ocean	Point Pleasant	99.0%	355	512	157	44%

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Ocean	Point Pleasant Beach	91.8%	123	137	14	11%
Ocean	Seaside Heights	97.6%	0	214	214	NA
Ocean	Seaside Park	90.7%	52	118	66	127%
Ocean	Ship Bottom	92.5%	98	146	48	49%
Ocean	Surf City	94.2%	160	248	88	55%
Passaic	Clifton	95.0%	322	725	403	125%
Passaic	Hawthorne	95.0%	169	153	-16	-9%
Passaic	Little Falls	90.7%	141	86	-55	-39%
Passaic	Passaic	98.2%	25	454	429	1716%
Passaic	Paterson	98.2%	344	414	70	20%
Salem	Penns Grove	97.9%	13	13	0	0%
Somerset	Bound Brook	96.4%	53	256	203	383%
Somerset	Manville	96.6%	101	70	-31	-31%
Somerset	North Plainfield	97.0%	31	18	-13	-42%
Somerset	Somerville	92.3%	28	52	24	86%
Somerset	South Bound Brook	98.6%	11	497	486	4418%
Sussex	Sussex	93.3%	19	68	49	258%
Sussex	Walpack township	100.0%	0	0	0	NA
Union	Clark	93.1%	58	156	98	169%
Union	Cranford	92.0%	131	166	35	27%
Union	Elizabeth	95.5%	598	3,548	2,950	493%
Union	Fanwood	97.0%	14	96	82	586%
Union	Garwood	97.1%	11	289	278	2527%
Union	Hillside	97.6%	49	135	86	176%
Union	Kenilworth	95.7%	73	119	46	63%
Union	Linden	90.8%	405	654	249	61%
Union	Mountainside	91.1%	12	106	94	783%
Union	New Providence	91.2%	187	248	61	33%
Union	Plainfield	98.9%	94	122	28	30%
Union	Rahway	96.8%	88	1,621	1,533	1742%
Union	Roselle	96.1%	49	74	25	51%
Union	Roselle Park	98.7%	22	63	41	186%
Union	Scotch Plains	92.6%	861	446	-415	-48%
Union	Summit	92.8%	54	171	117	217%
Union	Union	93.6%	503	550	47	9%
Union	Westfield	93.5%	282	494	212	75%
Union	Winfield	99.1%	0	0	0	NA