

3 of 16 — #1 of 10: Share of Cities With Median Home Value Above \$500,000

18.8% of Wilmington's cities crossed \$500K

St. James leads NC in high-value homes — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

18.8%

Share of Cities With Median Home Value Above \$500,000 (2024)

This share reflects how deeply the \$500K threshold has penetrated the Wilmington metro's housing landscape.

Of the 16 cities analyzed in the Cape Fear region, 3 now have median home values above \$500,000 — a clear signal that premium pricing is no longer confined to a single enclave. St. James leads the region at \$636,800, followed by Porters Neck and Carolina Beach. This concentration suggests a bifurcated market where high-end development is outpacing affordability even in adjacent communities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-22-wilmington-threshold-home-value-500000-place>



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01

Affordability is being redefined

The rise of \$500K+ median values in three distinct communities signals that affordability is no longer a city-wide metric but a neighborhood-specific condition. As St. James, Porters Neck, and Carolina Beach become de facto luxury enclaves, the rest of the metro — including Wilmington itself at \$383,800 — faces increasing pressure to either absorb higher-income residents or risk becoming a service economy for the wealthy. This shift may accelerate the flight of middle-income households to lower-cost areas within the metro.



02

The value threshold is now a zoning signal

The fact that three distinct communities have crossed the \$500K threshold — each with different zoning, coastal access, and development histories — implies that market value is no longer just a function of proximity to the water, but of policy. These areas likely have restrictive land-use rules, higher infrastructure investment, or limited supply growth. The data suggests that future development decisions — whether for housing, commercial, or mixed-use — will be increasingly shaped by zoning outcomes that either protect or dilute premium value, making policy a direct driver of real estate equity.



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