RECENT LAND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN THE TUG HILL REGION

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INTRODUCTION

Purposes

The purposes of this report are threefold: to identify recent land development trends within the Tug Hill Region, to forecast likely future trends, and to discuss planning issues associated with the trends.

Identification of recent land development activities includes examination of the types of activities which have been occurring, their magnitude, their location, and whether there has been an appreciable increase in land sales and development within the past couple of years due to an improving economy and lower interest rates. The focus of the report is upon subdivision activity - for a variety of reasons. Reasonably consistent data is available for subdivisions from county real property tax offices, subdivision regulation has posed problems for communities in the past, and there is the prospect of large land subdividers (e.g. Patten Realty) operating within the region.

Information Sources

Most of the information for this report was obtained (1) through interviews with selected persons and (2) by collecting data from county real property tax offices. A complete record of the interviews is contained in Appendix A.

Due to time and budget constraints it was impossible to obtain detailed data for all towns within the Tug Hill Region. Therefore, detailed data collection was limited to the core towns (members of the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board).

Data Available for the Whole Region

It was possible to obtain data for all or most towns within the region for the following items: total number of parcels by year, and number of land transfers (mostly sales) by year.

By noting the total number of parcels each year it is possible to derive increase in the number of parcels, and thus have a reasonably good measure of the number of additonal lots created by land subdivision annually. The data is not perfect, however, because new parcels, as listed on the tax roles, are sometimes created for other reasons than land subdivision, but such instances are not common (such as splitting up a lot so that each portion is assessed separately although it is all one lot). Also, there have been instances of several smaller state owned parcels being consolidated into one larger one. Such instances may result in the data being an inaccurate reflection of land subdivision activity for a particular town in a particular year, but for overall trends it provides a

sufficiently accurate measure.

The number of land transfers per year was easily obtained for Oswego and Oneida Counties, and parts of Lewis County, but was unavailable for Jefferson County without tedious tabulation, and therefore the data was not obtained for certain towns (see maps for omitted areas). Land transfers are mostly sales, although inheritance and gifts between relatives are also counted. Land transfer data was available for six months in 1986. Based upon the six month totals, and applying the proportion of sales which normally occur within the January to June period within the Tug Hill Region (approximately 40% of yearly transfers), projected totals for the entire 1986 year were derived.

Data Collected for the Core Towns

Detailed data on subdivision and land development activity was obtained for all core towns except two (Boylston and Worth) by examination of tax maps, tax roles, and other information available in county real property tax offices. Boylston and Worth were omitted solely due to time and budget constraints. Most counties in the region initially had their tax maps prepared in 1977, which happens to coincide with the approximate date which the communities began to adopt land use codes. By virtue of the mapping system used in the real property tax offices it is possible to identify each land subdivision which had occurred since the initial date of map preparation. For each map sheet land parcels were originally numbered consecutively using whole numbers. Each time a subdivision occurred, a lot number such as 3 would be split into components such as 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. Later, lot 3.3 might be further subdivided into lots 3.31 and 3.32.

By using other data available in the county offices, such as tax roles and card filing systems (each county has a somewhat different system) it was possible to track down detailed data on the date of subdivision, date of land sale, address of lot purchsers, size of lots created, current land use of subdivided lots, size and dimension of lots, and their location. However, it was not always straightforward and clear exactly what took place on a particular property due to inconsistencies and omissions in the data, especially in regard to the exact year of land subdivision. The information shown of the tables, graphs, and maps must therefore be taken with a grain of salt. There may be inaccuracies in particular instances, but they are not numerous enough to effect the general conclusions reached.

Also note that 1986 data in the tables and graphs was collected for only a portion of the year.

RECENT TRENDS - ENTIRE TUG HILL REGION

Land Subdivision Activity

Trends in land subdivision activity, or parcelization, are shown on tables 1 and 2, graphs 1 through 3, and maps 1 through 5.

1. There has been a significant and steady increase in the number of land parcels from 1980 thorugh 1986, as illustrated by Graph 1. About 2619 additional land parcels were created in that period, representing a 5.8% increase. One additional parcel was created for each 1.3 square miles of land area.

2. There has been an increase in land subdivision activity since 1983, corresponding with an improving economy and lower interest rates, as shown on Graph 2. There has been a slight increase in the first six months of 1986 (1985-1986 figures are yearly totals estimated from 6 month data) compared to the previous two years.

3. Spatially, land subdivision pressure has shifted from the south to the north (Graph 3 and Maps 1 through 5). Before the Ft. Drum expansion land parcelization was concentrated in the southern portion of the region, primarily originating from the Syracuse metropolitan area (Maps 3 and 4, Graph 3). Since 1985, however, the traditional pattern has reversed somewhat with towns in the Watertown region showing substantial increases in number of parcels added yearly (Map 2, Graph 3). The most recent spatial trend, shown on Map 5, shows the combined influence of the Syracuse region to the south and the Ft. Drum expansion area to the north.

4. Land subdivision activity in the core towns has lagged behind the rest of the region (Maps 3, 4 and 5). However, some increase has occurred in the past couple of years in particular towns (Map 2).

Number of Land Transfers

Data for the number of land transfers, most of which are land sales, are presented on Table 3, Graph 4, and Maps 6 and 7. Keeping in mind that data for the Ft. Drum expansion area is lacking, it is apparent that trends in the number of land transfers have been similar to those noted above for land subdivision activity.

Graph 4 shows that the rate of land sales has increased steadily during the 1980's. The 1986 figure is about the same as the 1985 figure which would indicate a levelling off in the trend were the data representative of the entire region and not lacking northern municipalities. Were data for the Ft. Drum

expansion area available, the graph would show a steady rate of increase in the number of land sales since 1982. The maps again show the influence of the Syracuse metropolitan area upon land development pressures in the Tug Hill Region, with sales in the core towns lagging behind sales in the north shore area and in towns closer to Syracuse.

The most important conclusion drawn from the land transfer data is that land sales have been increasing significantly.

Activities of Large Land Subdividers

Patten Realty Corp. and a spinoff company, Volksragan Inc., have been operating just outside the boundaries of the Tug Hill Region since 1983, and have more recently begun to buy and subdivide land within the region.

The methods of operation used by these firms has been well documented by the Catskill Center in a report entitled "The Catskills for Sale," published in April 1984. In the past, this firm has tended to avoid regulations by choosing municipalities lacking subdivision regulations and avoiding state review by creating lots of 5 or more acres in size. Subdivisions are typically poorly designed, consisting of so called "bacon strip," or "spaghetti" lots - long narrow parcels created to provide road frontage and insure lot sizes of at least 5 acres. Also, the land has in many instances been poor for development, consisting of wet soils, steep slopes, or near high voltage power lines. Purchasers have paid high prices for lots of sometimes questionable value. New roads, if provided for in the design at all, were constructed crudely.

The Black River Forest Subdivision located in the Town of Foresport, the earliest subdivision created by Patten Realty near the Tug Hill Region (at least as discovered by the author of this report), is illustrative. As revealed in records available to the public in Oneida County offices, Patten Realty purchased a tract of land approximately 660 acres in size for about $33,000 in June 1983. It was subdivided into about 52 lots. Ths lots were all sold within a year at prices ranging from $5000 to over $15,000 per lot, with median price about $8000. Patten Realty brought it for about $50 an acre, and sold it for roughly $1000 an acre. Prices paid appeared to bear little relation to the value of the lot purchased. In one instance of nearly identical lots side by side, one party paid $13,000 for one of the lots while the other was purchased for $8000. Investigation of the most recent tax rolls and a field inspection of the site revealed that all but about 4 of the lots remain vacant. The four lots which were developed do contain nice homes which would be a benefit to the local community. These homes were built upon lots which had frontage on the existing public road. Most of the lots however, are accessible only by internal roads, the condition of which the author was

unable to observe due to the fact that the entrance to the subdividision was restricted to landowners only (there is a locked gate). Physical characteristics of the land were not able to be ascertained due to the absence of appropriate information on the subdivision plat maps. (Subdivision plat maps filed by Patten Realty typically omit any contour lines or other environmental information.)

The Patten and Volksragan firms have been very active in Oswego County just to the west of the Tug Hill Region since the fall of 1984. Examination of subdivision plat maps filed in the Oswego County Clerk's Office revealed that in the 22 month period from October 1984 to July 1986 these firms created 15 subdivisions consisting of a total 167 new lots (see Table 4). Lot sizes ranged from about 5 to 20 acres. Lot design and layout was similar to that reported in the Catskills, i.e. long narrow lots were common, and apparently little attention had been paid to environmental features (although this is unable to be confirmed due to the lack of any land contours or other land characteristics on the maps). Only one of the subdivisions required planning board approval.

It was ascertained through interviews (see Appendix A) that these two firms are now operating within the Tug Hill Region. Betty Adler reported that one of the three subdivision proposals in Osceola was prepared by Patten Realty, but because a resident of a nearby town was the principal individual involved it was not recognized right away as a Patten subdivision. There is reportedly an agent of Patten Realty working out of Camden. Paul Baxter reported that there have been three recent subdivision proposals by Volksragan and Patten in his area. In one case, Volksragan backed out due to SEQR requirements. In the Town of West Monroe Patten put up a substantial sum of money for road improvements in a subdivision they proposed. In the third case, Patten took over a failed subdivision of 12 lots. Interviews also revealed that there have been inquiries by agents of Patten Realty into land in the Town of Vienna, the north shore area in general, and the Town of Lewis. In addition, there have been advertisements in local papers by Patten Realty seeking to buy land, some of which specifically mentioned Osceola.

It is apparent that Patten Realty no longer confines its activities to unregulated towns. Recent subdivisions in Hastings and Osceloa are a case in point. The same situation is reported in the Catskills - although many of the earlier subdivisions were in unregulated towns, they are no longer confined to such municipalities. It was also learned that Patten Realty has just this year opened an office in Lake Placid in the heart of the Adirondacks. Subdivisions in the Adirondack Park are of course subject to thorough review by the Adirondack Park Agency. All of this suggests that Patten Realty is becoming much more sophisticated in its operations, and that the mere presence of local subdivision regulations will not

discourage them from operating in an area.

RECENT SUBDIVISION TRENDS - CORE TOWNS

Data showing recent subdivision trends in the core towns is shown on Tables 5 through 19 and Maps 8 - 10. Detailed year by year data was not collected for Boyston and Worth due to time constraints. 1986 figures are for only a portion of the year.

Number of Subdivisions (Tables 5 and 18)

In a period of a bit more that 8 years (1978 through part of 1986) a total of about 456 subdivisions were created in the core towns, including Boylston and Worth. This is about one subdivision per each one and one-half square miles of land area. Year by year trends are similar to those of the region as a whole, 1982 and 1983 being slow years, followed by a marked increase in activity during the past two years. The Towns of West Turin and Martinsburg stand out as having the most subdivision activity, while Worth, Montague and Pinckney had the least.

Number of Additional Lots Created (Tables 6 and 18, Map 8)

Including Boyston and Worth about 609 additional lots were created during the 1978 - 1986 period, additional lots meaning that, for example, in a three lot subdivision only two of the lots would be considered additional lots. This represents a little less that one new lot per each square mile, or 640 acres, of land area. Map 8 shows that Boyston, Turin, Florence and Lewis had the most lots ceated per land area, while Montague, Redfield and Osceola had the least.

Size of Lots Created (Tables 7 and 8)

About 44% of all new lots created were large (over 5 acres in size), 37% were medium size (1 to 5 acres), and 20% were small (less than 1 acre). Towns with a high proportion of small lots were the farming communities of Turin and Martinsburg, the unregulated municipalities of Redfield and Boylston, and the Town of Worth. Towns which are primarily forested, i.e. Osceola, Montague, Lewis and Redfield, had a high proportion of large lots.

Number of Lots per Subdivision (Tables 9 and 10)

The vast majority of subdivisions within the core towns have been two lot subdivisions. Table 9 shows that 84% of all subdivisions have been 2 lot divisions, 15% have been 3 or 4 lot subdivisions, and only about 1% have been 5 or more lots, at the time of subdivision. However, it has been common practice to create one lot at a time from a larger parcel, resulting over a period of time to what amounts to a multi-lot subdivision.

Thus, Table 10 shows the result of subsequent subdivisions over a 9 to 10 year period. For example, a 4 lot subdivision as shown in this table may have been created by three successive 2 lot subdivisions. Counting the effect of cumulatively dividing a piece of property, the number of medium or large subdivisions (3 or more lots each) is significant, amounting to about 34% of all subdivisons.

Land use of New Lots (Table 11)

Close to one-half of all lots created in the 1978 - 1986 period remain vacant. Residential uses, including mobile homes, occupy about 30% of the lots created. A further 13% have been used for camps. Altogether, a little less than one-half of all lots have been built upon. Assuming one principle structure per lot, this would represent one new structure per each 1750 acres of land within the 8+ year period.

Type of Area New Lots were Located In (Tables 12 and 19, Map 10)

Approximately one-half of all subdivisions and new lots created were located on land best described as Rural Residential in character. These are areas containing a mixture of abandoned agricultural land, brushland, some forest, some agriculture, and scattered residential development. (Specifically for Table 12 this includes all RR districts in adopted or proposed land use codes, and for Table 18 includes all areas on the Resource Management Plan designated R4, R5, A5, and F5.) An additional one-third of all subdivision activity occurred on agricultural land. Forested areas accounted for about 10 percent of the lots and subdivisions, while hamlets or designated growth areas accounted for less than 10 percent.

Location of Lot Purchasers (Tables 13 and 14)

As shown by Table 14, about one-half of all lot sales in larger subdivisions (3+ lots) were accounted for by residents within the Tug Hill Region. Another one-third of the lots were purchased by residents of upstate New York areas, primarily the Syracuse, Utica-Rome and Rochester metropolitan areas. The remaining 12 percent of lots were purchased by out-of-state and New York City metropolitan area residents.

Although location of lot purchasers was not systematically tabulated for two lot subdivisions, it was apparent from examination of county records that a much higher proportion of these small subdivision lots were purchased locally, many times by relatives of the subdivider.

Lots Inconsistent with Regulations (Tables 15, 16 and 17)

Tables 15, 16 and 17 show the number of lots created which were inconsistent with existing or proposed land use code regulations for lot size or frontage. The figures in these

tables no not show the number illegal lots. The lots may have been perfectly legal at the time of their creation, and as long as they have remained vacant of sturctures. Also, variances may have been obtained before construction occurred on them. Inconsistencies occurred for one of three reasons: (1) insufficient lot size, (2) insufficient lot frontage, or (3) no lot frontage.

Inconsistent lots are illustrated on Map 9, which shows an original lot (lot number 47) which was subsequently divided into 15 parcels at various points in time. Some of the lots lack frontage entirely. The inconsistent lots were created from 1978 to 1983, and most remain vacant. One lot does contain a camp. This example, however, is not typical of subdivision activity within the region, as most subdivisions are of much smaller size.

About 19% of all lots created in towns which had adopted land use codes were inconsistent with those codes. Although about 200 inconsistent lots were created since 1978, about one-half of these occurred in towns with no regulations in effect at the time. A total of 94 inconsistent lots were created in towns which had an adopted land use code. Towns with the lowest number and proportion of inconsistent lots were Osceola, Turin, and Florence. Towns with the highest numbers and proportions were West Turin and Martinsburg. Data for the Town of Worth was not collected due to time constraints of the study.

Of the 94 inconsistent lots, probably over one-half occurred in predominately farming areas where a landowner would split off a small parcel to sell to a relative or local resident. (Because an exact tabulation of the nature of the inconsistencies was not made the one-half figure represents an estimate.)

Also, probably about one-half of the deficiencies were of a relatively minor nature, such as lot frontage being 170 feet rather than 200 feet, or lot size being 3/4 of an acre rather than 1 acre.

In addition, the 94 lot figure includes those lots which were not intended to be built upon, such as agricultural fields (which may have lacked frontage) and recreation land or woodlots.

OTHER RECENT TRENDS - CORE TOWNS

Building Permits (Table 20, Graphs 5 and 6)

Building permit data is available for seven core towns for the five year period 1981 through 1985. During that period 342 permits were issued, 212 of which were for principal (as opposed to accessory) structures. The time series trend shown on Graph

6 is similar to those noted previously, 1982-83 being slow years with activity increasing in subsequent years.

The graph shows that the increase was accounted for by year round housing rather than construction of camps. Camps had accounted for a low proportion of all new development anyway. This data suggests that recent construction activty has primarily been related to suburbanization rather than to the recreation/seasonal home market.

Deforestation

Interviews with local representatives from the core towns indicated that substantial forest clearing has been taking place in parts of the Tug Hill Plateau (see Appendix A), most notably in Redfield. The extent of the clearance activity, and its environmental consequences, are unknown at this time.

SUMMARY OF RECENT TRENDS - CORE TOWNS

1. There has been an increase in subdivision and land development activity beginning in 1984 corresponding to an improving economy and lower interest rates.

2. The amount of activity relative to land area remains small. On the average, only one new lot per square mile was created per decade, and only about one-half the new lots have been built upon.

3. At least three distinct patterns of subdivision activity have occurred in the Tug Hill core region:

(a) In farming areas, such as Martinsburg, Turin and West Turin, much land development activty consists of subdividing one lot at a time from a larger parcel, and selling it, oftentimes to a relative, as a building lot. Mobile homes are common on such lots. It has been apparent that many of the lots with insufficient lot size or frontage according to code requirements have been of this type.

(b) Particularly in the more central and forested areas of the Tug Hill core region there has been a pattern of recreational land/seasonal camp land sales and development. In the past this activity took place two or three lots at a time, sometimes resulting in what amounts to a large subdivision over a period of years. Lot sizes have usually been large, but small lots used for camps have been created in Redfield, Boyston and other towns. There have been few 5+ lot subdivisions created in the past, but recently this picture has changed as evidenced by the three larger subdivisions recently reported in Osceola.

(c) Land development activity in some areas has been

related to fringe suburbanization. Such has been the case in southern core towns such as Florence, and more recently in the northern towns due to the Ft. Drum expansion. Subdivision activity has usually been one lot at a time, followed by residential development, including mobile homes.

4. Large land subdividers are now operating within the region (see Appendix A), which may change the one lot a time nature of land development that characterized the past.

5. A significant number of lots have been created which were inconsistent with adopted land use codes (about 20% of all lots created). Due to the sparcity of development within the region, it is doubtful that this has created any significant problems of area-wide significance such as loss of rural character, loss of prime farmland, parcelization of commercial forest land and so forth. However, it may have, or will in the future, create localized problems in particular cases such as adversely affecting surrounding properties or the creation of landlocked parcels.

LIKELY FUTURE TRENDS

All evidence suggests that land subdivision and development activity within the Tug Hill Region will increase in the future, barring a downturn in the regional economy or rising inflation and interest rates. The question is not whether an increase will occur, but what its magnitude will be.

The following factors are suggestive of a future increase in land devlopment pressures.

1. Subsequent to 1983 there has been a steady increase in land sales, land subdivision and land development activity as shown by the data collected for this study. These trends corresponded with an economic upswing and lowering of interest rates. Projection of these trends into the future suggests steadily increasing land development pressures.

2. Fringe suburbanization pressures from the north will increase as the Ft. Drum expansion takes place. These have already begun as evidenced by the regional land parcelization data (Maps 1 through 5). Demand for land for recreation and camps will probably follow.

3. The recreational land/seasonal camp market should remain good as long as the regional economy remains healthy and interest rates stay low.

4. A significant amount ofland has been cleared of timber, which may be available for sale in the future (see interview with Betty Adler).

5. The big question is how active large subdividers such as Patten Realty will be within the region. They have already established an office within the region, and there is every reason to expect increased activity.

In summary, all the elements for an increase in land subdivision and development activity are in place. The demand is present due to the condition of the regional economy, lower interest rates, and the Ft. Drum expansion. There seems to be a potential supply of land available due to timber clearance, although the amount of land for sale by individuals appears to be relatively slight at the present time in some of the core towns. (However, a scarcity of land for sale by individuals could actually encourage Patten Realty and similar firms to operate within the region since it would make it easier for them to market their lots.) And finally, a land broker is on the scene in the form of Patten Realty.

Discounting the effects of large subdivisions, there is likely to be a steady but unspectacular increase in land subdivision and development activity in future years. If large subdividers become active within the region, there could be a dramatic increase similar to what has happened in the Catskills over the past three or four years (see interview with Tom Miner).

PLANNING ISSUES

Several planning issues and concerns arise as a result of the growth trends identified above.

Preparing for Large Subdividers

Clearly, towns within the region must be prepared to deal with activities of large subdividers such as Patten Realty. Enforceable subdivision regulations must be in place, and subdivision plats must be carefully reviewed to avoid the typical problems of poor lot design, poor access, lots on unbuildable land, and poorly constructed internal roads.

Creation of Lots Inconsistent With Regulations

In some parts of the Tug Hill core area there have been numerous lots created which are either too small or lack the road frontage required in the local land use code. As discussed previously, the overall impact of this upon regional concerns, such as loss of rural character and farmland, is probably minimal due to the sparcity of development in the area. Problems posed by these undersized lots are local in nature, such as impacting neighboring properties or creating landlocked parcels.

Because most regulations in the core towns require only

that subdivision plats of five or more lots be reviewed, inconsistent lots created one at a time are not illegal at the time of their creation. It is only when one wishes to build upon them at a later date that they are legally too small or lack necessary frontage. But of course by this time it is too late to effectively deal with the problem.

The major problem with the large number of inconsistent lots in some communities is that it indicates a pattern of disrespect for the local land use laws. Once a pattern of neglecting the law is established in dealing with small one lot at a time development, it will be extremely difficult to deal with larger developments once they occur.

Unrealistic Regulations

One of the reasons for the large number of inconsistent lots is probably that some of the land use regulations are too restrictive and otherwise unrealistic for the core towns. The Town of Pinckney recently went through a code revision which made their requirements less restrictive. Perhaps it is time for other towns to do likewise. It is preferable to have weaker regulations which are taken seriously and enforced, than to have tough standards which aren't.

Some of the specific instances where standards might be relaxed are as follows: (a) Road standards are too high for some towns. In Montague for example, if subdivision roads were built to the specified standards, they would be far and away the best roads in the town. The only conceivable reason for attempting to enforce such standards would be to try to discourage a developer from operating within the town, something most core towns would probably not want to do. Standards which are too restricitve are not consistent with the goal of controlled growth. (b) Some submission standards for subdivisions require contour lines at two foot intervals, a huge and unnecessary expense in most cases. (c) Lot size and frontage requirements for certain zones appear to be unrealistic, such as the 2 acre minimum lot size and 300 feet frontage required in the Agricultural district in West Turin. (d) Perhaps in agricultural areas, a farmer ought to be able to sell off one small building lot (the rationale being to house a farmhand), and have the larger lot size and frontage requirements apply to any remaining lots created.

Subdivision Regulation Enforcement Problems

Two subdivision regulation enforcement problems surfaced in the course of this study.

First, County Clerk Offices within the region do not assist the local municipalities in enforcement of their subdivision regulations. According to the way the law was designed to work, counties should refuse to accept subdivision plats which aren't

properly reviewed at the local level, and refuse to accept property transfers unless a properly approved plat has been filed. Most counties within the region don't do this, and don't appear willing to do this. In Oswego County, however, Marty Weiss reported that a system has been developed. In Clinton County N.Y. the county doesn't always enforce local subdivision regulations, but it does send a copy of all the property transfer forms to the towns that request them.

The present lack of communication between the towns and the county may lead to serious enforcement difficulties. Without the county's assistance in at least informing the localities that subdivision activty is occurring, subdividers may operate illegally (either intentionally or unintentionally) without the town's knowledge. Once lots have been sold from the illegal subdivision, the situation becomes extremely difficult to deal with.

The second problem is not nearly so widespread. There have been instances within the region of lots being sold by land contract, which by some definitions are not subdivisions since the land title remains in the hands of the seller for a number of years. Thus, what amounts to land subdivision is not subject to regulation.

<u>The Resource Management Plan (core towns) is Not a Relevant Document</u>

Some of the local land use codes make reference to the Resource Management Plan, which has little meaning to local citizens. The Resource Management Plan, perhaps useful originally, is now an irrelevant and dated document. Either all reference to the plan should be eliminated from the local land use codes or it should be revised into a more meaningful and useful document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Undertake an awareness program to prepare communities for large subdividers.

Localities should be made aware that large subdividers may may now or in the near future be buying, subdividing and selling land within their borders. They should be made aware of the usual problems associated with poorly designed subdivisions, and reacquainted with principles of good design. Procedures should be reviewed, such as the proper use of SEQR. Such an awareness program might be accomplished (1) informally through Betty Adler with communities requesting assistance from professional planning staff as the need arises, (2) through the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board, (3) through regionwide activities such as conducting seminars or publishing informational material, or (4) some combination of the above.

2. Tighten-up local subdivision regulations to insure that they can be enforced, in communities that have not already done so.

This would include (a) passing subdivision regulations as a local law so that local enforcement provisions can be included, (b) insuring that adoption procedures were followed correctly, and (c) including provisions for dealing with land contract sales.

3. Redefine subdivisions to include all divisions of land into 2 or more parcels.

This would help to avoid the problems of creating lots inconsistent with land use code requirements. The vast majority of all subdivision activity in the region now occurs one or two lots at a time. Application submission requirements and review requirements, however, should be minimal for two lot subdivisions. If they are not, there is a good possibility that they will be ignored in some communities.

4. Loosen-up land use code and subdivision requirements for small developments.

The large number of lots inconsistent with regulations indicates that code requirements are unrealistic in some instances. Some of the subdivision regulation requirements also appear to be unrealistic, and not likely to be enforced. The idea of requiring large lot sizes and lengthy frontages might be questioned in areas which are likely to receive only slight growth pressures anyway. They probably make more sense in portions of the Tug Hill Core area likely to experience the most growth pressures.

5. Develop some system of communication between County Clerk offices and localities for dealing with subdivision enforcement problems.

Given the adverse reaction of counties to earlier proposals advanced by the regional planning staff, the best solution to this problem might be to have county real property tax offices furnish compies of all property transfer forms to the municipalities. The locality could then determine if a subdivision as they define it, has occurred, and proceeed to enforce their law.

6. Consider the possibility of redoing the Resource Management Plan for the core towns.

It may be useful to prepare a policies plan which addresses current land use planning issues within the core region. There could be an accompanying land use plan map with such a document, but it is not essential. One idea for such a plan would be to develop a set of planning objectives for each of four land use

districts: Hamlet, Rural Residential, Agricultural, and Forest. A fifth district, resource protection, could be added. Issues to be addressed could include policies for dealing with large subdivisions (like Patten Realty), policies for dealing with the tendency for small lots to be created in agricultural areas, and policies for dealing with forest clearance and future use of the forest lands.

The CTHPB could serve as the vehicle for initially developing the plan, or for at least providing a framework from which individual towns could then prepare their own plans. Such plans could serve as the "comprehensive plan" upon which the land use codes are based, and provide the basis for code revisions.

7. Undertake a study to determine the extent and consequences of recent timber clearance activities, including examination of recent air photos.

Table 1

NUMBER OF PARCELS (LOTS) PER TOWN PER YEAR, TUG HILL REGION

County	Town	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986 (a)
Jefferson	Adams	1978	2011	1982	1997	2011	2038	2076
	Champion	1580	1592	1611	1632	1645	1668	1706
	Lorraine	428	428	425	417	419	421	439
	Rodman	475	480	485	490	496	513	535
	Rutland	1113	1126	1134	1149	1156	1170	1186
	Watertown	1374	1389	1412	1421	1449	1487	1528
	Worth	339	339	337	343	345	344	346
Lewis	Denmark	1195	1198	1208	1218	1218	1234	1252
	Harrisburg	432	438	438	440	439	437	438
	Lewis	616	631	639	650	663	683	682
	Leyden	895	909	913	919	929	936	944
	Lowville	1826	1856	1863	1867	1872	1877	1884
	Martinsburg	895	906	918	925	934	939	944
	Montague	446	449	451	453	456	462	461
	Osceola	704	705	704	709	712	738	742
	Pinckney	497	496	500	502	500	500	501
	Turin	592	601	607	605	607	613	613
	West Turin	1443	1454	1447	1456	1463	1478	1484
Oneida	Annsville	1081	1098	1070	1074	1090	1106	1111
	Ava	376	381	367	369	375	381	391
	Boonville	2225	2257	2279	2291	2247	2254	2258
	Camden	1850	1900	1918	1934	1955	1995	2037
	Florence	568	580	584	589	603	611	621
	Floyd	1223	1237	1246	1250	1262	1260	1289
	Lee	2356	2402	2428	2462	2494	2497	2535
	Steuben	518	524	530	523	531	537	541
	Trenton	1938	1943	1959	1939	2008	2002	1992
	Vienna	3407	3448	3478	3497	3565	3571	3557
	Western	989	1010	1024	974	990	995	1005
Oswego	Albion	944	945	954	965	970	975	1001
	Amboy	765	777	790	802	810	817	825
	Boylston	531	529	541	543	549	553	560
	Constantia	2148	2185	2209	2224	2237	2268	2262
	Hastings	2618	2646	2693	2739	2778	2807	2884
	Orwell	883	889	893	894	903	918	916
	Parish	1058	1078	1101	1113	1136	1144	1167
	Redfield	915	916	922	933	926	929	930
	West Monroe	1229	1248	1285	1297	1307	1324	1371
	Williamstown	849	853	868	872	883	896	906
	Total	45299	45854	46213	46477	46933	47378	47918
Change from preceding year:			555	359	264	456	445	540

(a) The date of the parcel count was changed from May 1 to March 1 beginning in 1986. Figures in this column represent totals adjusted to estimate the parcel count as if it had been taken May 1 in order to be consistent with the other years.

Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

Table 2: CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PARCELS 1980 - 1986

County	Town	Increase in Number Parcels	Percent Increase	Increase per square mile
Jefferson	Adams	98	5.0	2.3
	Champion	126	8.0	2.8
	Lorraine	11	2.6	0.3
	Rodman	60	12.5	1.4
	Rutland	73	6.5	1.6
	Watertown	154	11.2	4.3
	Worth	7	2.2	0.2
Lewis	Denmark	57	4.8	1.1
	Harrisburg	6	1.4	0.2
	Lewis	66	10.7	1.0
	Leyden	49	5.5	1.5
	Lowville	58	3.2	1.5
	Martinsburg	49	5.5	0.6
	Montague	15	3.3	0.2
	Osceola	38	5.3	0.4
	Pinckney	4	0.8	0.2
	Turin	21	3.5	0.7
	West Turin	41	2.8	0.4
Oneida	Annsville	30	2.8	0.5
	Ava	15	3.9	0.4
	Boonville	33	1.5	0.4
	Camden	187	10.1	3.5
	Florence	53	9.3	1.0
	Floyd	66	5.4	1.9
	Lee	179	7.6	4.0
	Steuben	23	4.4	0.5
	Trenton	54	2.8	1.2
	Vienna	150	4.4	1.6
	Western	16	1.6	0.3
Oswego	Albion	57	6.1	1.2
	Amboy	60	7.9	1.6
	Boylston	29	5.5	0.7
	Constantia	114	5.3	1.2
	Hastings	266	10.2	5.8
	Orwell	33	3.7	0.8
	Parish	109	10.3	2.6
	Redfield	15	1.7	0.2
	West Monroe	142	11.5	3.5
	Williamstown	57	6.7	1.4
	TOTAL	2619	5.8	1.3

(a) Based upon 1986 estimates.

Table 3: NUMBER OF REAL PROPERTY TRANSFERS PER TOWN PER YEAR
(Excludes Jefferson County - data not available)

County	Town	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986 (a) Projection	Change 1984-85	Change 1985-86
Lewis (core towns only)	Lewis	30	21	36	36	46	29	10	-17
	Martinsburg	56	39	46	43	36	49	-7	13
	Montague	15	9	28	16	14	11	-2	-3
	Osceola	30	24	31	31	39	51	8	12
	Pinckney	21	33	15	14	29	20	15	-9
	Turin	27	28	30	21	28	36	7	8
	West Turin	42	63	73	55	76	87	21	11
Oneida	Annsville	62	57	71	92	82	93	-10	11
	Ava	21	30	19	23	35	29	12	-6
	Boonville	129	107	135	150	165	207	15	42
	Camden	130	113	158	180	152	164	-28	12
	Florence	29	34	29	50	58	49	8	-9
	Floyd	79	81	85	98	96	82	-2	-14
	Lee	173	137	268	203	175	193	-28	18
	Steuben	40	33	39	32	25	69	-7	44
	Trenton	97	96	108	144	158	156	14	-2
	Vienna	261	296	302	342	403	427	61	24
	Western	62	54	50	65	60	71	-5	11
Oswego	Albion	48	33	32	87	74	89	-13	15
	Amboy	43	35	43	48	59	44	11	-15
	Boylston	36	36	22	18	39	20	21	-19
	Constantia	180	178	172	198	266	200	68	-66
	Hastings	248	217	227	267	327	284	60	-43
	Orwell	61	47	80	80	45	60	-35	15
	Parish	73	79	75	101	133	100	32	-33
	Redfield	53	49	65	97	67	44	-30	-23
	West Monroe	121	88	84	130	113	158	-17	45
	Williamstown	66	52	62	54	80	64	26	-16
	Total	2233	2069	2385	2675	2880	2886	205	6
	Change from preceding year:		-164	316	290	205	6		

(a) Yearly total estimated from January through June data. Based upon available data for the Tug Hill Region it was estimated that about 45% of annual transfers typically occur during this period.

Table 4: SUBDIVISION PLATS FILED IN OSWEGO COUNTY CLERKS OFFICE BY PATTEN REALTY AND VOLKSRAGAN INC.

Date	Town	Number of Lots	Total Acres	Planning Bd. Approval?
Oct 84	New Haven	15	156	no
Oct 84	Albion	6	108	no
Mar 85	Palermo	6	22	no
Mar 85	Mexico	11	?	no
Jun 85	Palermo	15	?	no
Jun 85	Mexico	17	?	no
Jul 85	Parish	11	?	no
Aug 85	Palermo and New Haven	14	?	no
Oct 85	Palermo	20	?	no
Nov 85	Mexico	9	73	no
Dec 85	Hannibal	17	242	no
Mar 86	Palermo	5	?	no
Apr 86	Hastings	6	?	yes
May 86	Palermo	4	?	no
Jul 86	Mexico	11	?	no

Total number of subdivisions since October 1984 = 15
Total number of new lots created = 167
Typical lot size = 5 to 20 acres

SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY BY OTHERS IN OSWEGO COUNTY

Sep 77	?	7 lots	about 1/3 acre each
Jun 81	Albion	24 lots	1 to 2 acres each
Sep 85	West Monroe	15 lots	1 to 10 acres each
May 86	Hastings	6 lots	1/2 acre each

Table 5:

NUMBER OF SUBDIVISIONS

Town	Year 78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	Tota
Florence (a)	2	4	4	5	6	3	9	5	6	4
Lewis	8	8	7	11	3	2	12	3	0	[illegible]
Martinsburg	7	9	7	7	12	1	10	4	5	6
Montague	2	2	1	2	2	2	5	4	1	[illegible]
Osceola	2	8	5	4	2	2	1	1	3	[illegible]
Pinckney	8	0	6	2	4	0	2	2	0	[illegible]
Redfield	5	4	2	1	3	5	13	8	1	4
Turin	6	5	3	6	2	2	4	8	1	[illegible]
West Turin	10	8	8	4	6	5	5	18	8	[illegible]
Total	50	48	43	42	40	22	61	53	25	3[illegible]

Table 6:

NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL LOTS CREATED

Town	Year 78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	Tota
Florence (a)	2	7	4	5	8	4	13	8	8	[illegible]
Lewis	14	18	7	14	3	2	17	3	0	[illegible]
Martinsburg	8	9	7	9	15	2	13	4	6	[illegible]
Montague	2	2	1	2	3	3	5	7	1	[illegible]
Osceola	2	9	5	4	2	2	1	26	3	[illegible]
Pinckney	10	0	8	2	4	0	2	2	0	[illegible]
Redfield	5	4	3	1	3	6	14	8	1	[illegible]
Turin	7	5	3	8	2	2	5	10	1	[illegible]
West Turin	16	9	8	9	6	9	6	18	9	[illegible]
Total	66	63	46	54	46	30	76	86	29	4[illegible]

(a) Date of subdivision unavailable for the Town of Florence. Date of lot sale is substituted.

Table 7:

NUMBER OF NEW LOTS CREATED, BY SIZE (Acres), 1978 - 1986

Town	Under 1.0 Acre	1.0 to 4.9	Over 5.0 Acres	Total
Florence	7	26	23	56
Lewis	7	22	44	73
Martinsburg	26	31	19	76
Montague	4	6	15	25
Osceola	3	14	37	54
Pinckney	4	15	8	27
Redfield	11	14	22	47
Turin	17	7	19	43
West Turin	17	45	27	89
Total	96	180	214	490

Table 8:

PERCENT OF NEW LOTS CREATED, BY SIZE

Town	Under 1.0 Acre	1.0 to 4.9	Over 5.0 Acres	Total
Florence	12.5	46.4	41.1	100
Lewis	9.6	30.1	60.3	100
Martinsburg	34.2	40.8	25.0	100
Montague	16.0	24.0	60.0	100
Osceola	5.6	25.9	68.5	100
Pinckney	14.8	55.6	29.6	100
Redfield	23.4	29.8	46.8	100
Turin	39.5	16.3	44.2	100
West Turin	19.1	50.6	30.3	100
Total	19.6	36.7	43.7	100

Table 9:

NUMBER OF LOTS PER SUBDIVISION
AT THE TIME OF SUBDIVISION (1978-1986)

Number of subdivisions:

Town	2 lots	3-4 lots	5+ lots
Florence	63	10	0
Lewis	41	13	0
Martinsburg	49	9	1
Montague	17	4	0
Osceola	22	3	1
Pinckney	29	3	0
Redfield	38	4	0
Turin	30	7	0
West Turin	60	8	2
Total	349	61	4
Percent	84.3	14.7	1.0

Table 10:

NUMBER OF LOTS ULTIMATELY CREATED FROM
ORIGINAL PARCEL EXISTING IN 1976 (a)

Number of subdivisions:

Town	2 lots	3-4 lots	5+ lots
Florence	23	7	4
Lewis	23	16	5
Martinsburg	40	11	2
Montague	9	8	1
Osceola	15	4	4
Pinckney	24	2	2
Redfield	23	17	1
Turin	21	10	1
West Turin	44	14	4
Total	222	89	24
Percent	66.3	26.6	7.2

(a) The number of lots a single parcel existing in 1977 was split into as of 1986. For example, a four lot subdivision may have been created by three successive 2 lot subdivisions.

Table 11:

LAND USE OF NEW LOTS (created 1978 - 1986)

Town	Agr	Res	Camp	M H	Com	Vac	Other	Total
Florence	0	13	3	10	1	26	0	53
Lewis	0	12	7	3	2	39	3	66
Martinsburg	8	22	2	7	3	30	2	74
Montague	0	1	10	1	1	10	0	23
Osceola	0	4	9	1	0	38	2	54
Pinckney	6	2	1	5	1	1	0	16
Redfield	0	8	4	2	2	15	1	32
Turin	7	12	5	4	2	12	0	42
West Turin	8	16	16	13	0	33	2	88
Total	29	90	57	46	12	204	10	448
Percent	6.5	20.1	12.7	10.3	2.7	45.5	2.2	100.0

Agr = Agriculture
Res = Year Round Residential
Camp = Seasonal Camp
M H = Mobile Home
Com = Commercial
Vac = Vacant

Table 12:

LAND USE DISTRICT WHERE NEW LOTS ARE LOCATED (1978 - 1986)

Town	H	F	A	RR	Total
Florence	5	6	18	37	66
Lewis (a)					
Martinsburg	10	9	45	18	82
Montague	0	4	0	20	24
Osceola	2	14	4	38	58
Pinckney	1	1	0	38	40
Redfield (b)	2	5	0	32	39
Turin (c)	7	17	27	4	55
West Turin	14	7	55	12	88
Total	41	63	149	199	452
Percent of Total	9.1	13.9	33.0	44.0	100.0

H = Hamlet
F = Forest
A = Agriculture
RR = Rural Residential

(a) Not applicable. Only one zone.
(b) Proposed land use districts. Code not adopted.
(c) No RR zone exists. Figure for CC zone shown instead.

Table 13:

ADDRESS OF LOT PURCHASERS FOR SUBDIVISIONS OF 3+ LOTS
(Towns for which data is unavailable are excluded)

	Number of Purchasers:							
Town	Local	Regional	Syracuse Area	Utica-Rome Area	Rochester Area	Other Upstate New York	Other	Total
Lewis	8	11	3	8	0	4	9	43
Martinsburg	30	1	6	0	0	1	2	40
Montague	0	15	2	1	2	3	1	24
Osceola	4	12	6	1	5	10	5	43
Pinckney	0	1	6	0	0	3	4	14
Redfield	4	2	10	0	3	2	0	21
Turin	20	2	0	0	0	0	6	28
W. Turin	22	5	4	2	0	3	4	40
Total	88	49	37	12	10	26	31	253

Table 14:

Percent of Lot Purchasers:

Town	Local	Regional	Total Upstate N.Y.	Other	Total
Lewis	18.6	25.6	34.9	20.9	100.0
Martinsburg	75.0	2.5	17.5	5.0	100.0
Montague	0.0	62.5	33.3	4.2	100.0
Osceola	9.3	27.9	51.2	11.6	100.0
Pinckney	0.0	7.1	64.3	28.6	100.0
Redfield	19.0	9.5	71.4	0.0	100.0
Turin	71.4	7.1	0.0	21.4	100.0
W. Turin	55.0	12.5	22.5	10.0	100.0
Total	34.8	19.4	33.6	12.3	100.0

Local = Within the same town, or a bordering town
Regional = Within the Tug Hill Region

Table 15:

NUMBER OF LOTS CREATED WHICH WERE INCONSISTENT WITH THE LOT SIZE OR FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TOWN'S LAND USE CODE, OR PROPOSED CODE

Town	Year 78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	Total
Florence	0	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	8
Lewis	1	5	6	6	2	1	7	2	0	30
Martinsburg	4	5	1	3	7	1	8	1	4	34
Montague	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	9
Osceola (a)	0	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
Pinckney	9	0	4	1	2	0	2	2	0	20
Redfield	2	3	2	1	1	2	8	7	0	26
Turin	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	13
West Turin	8	2	6	2	4	6	3	7	8	46
Worth (b)										10
Total	29	24	22	18	21	11	32	22	14	203

Table 16:

NUMBER OF LOTS WHICH WERE INCONSISTENT WITH CODE REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AT THE TIME OF LOT CREATION.

Town	Year 78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	Total
Florence		2	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	8
Lewis										0
Martinsburg				3	7	1	8	1	4	24
Montague		1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	7
Osceola (a)			1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Pinckney		0	4	1	2	0	2	2	0	11
Redfield										0
Turin							1	2	0	3
West Turin		2	6	2	4	6	3	7	8	38
Worth (b)										?
Total	0	5	12	9	17	7	17	13	14	94

(a) Excludes lots in the Portville subdivision which did not meet the 40 acre size requirement in Forest zones.

(b) Yearly data unavailable for Worth.

Table 17:
PERCENT OF LOTS WHICH WERE INCONSISTENT WITH CODE REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AT THE TIME OF LOT CREATION

Town	Year 78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	Total
Florence		29	25	0	25	0	15	0	13	14
Lewis										
Martinsburg				33	47	50	62	25	67	33
Montague		50	0	50	67	0	20	14	100	27
Osceola (a)		0	20	50	0	0	0	0	0	6
Pinckney		0	50	50	50	0	100	100	0	39
Redfield										
Turin							20	20	0	7
West Turin		22	75	22	67	67	50	39	89	42
Worth (b)										
Total		8	26	17	37	23	22	15	48	19

(a) Excludes lots in the Portville subdivision which did not met the 40 acre size requirement in Forest zones.

Table 18:

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA FOR WORTH AND BOYLSTON, 1977 - 1986
(data unavailable for individual years)

		Boylston	Worth
Total number of additional lots created:		71	42
Number of subdivisions by number of lots ultimately created from original parcel.	2 lots:	38	15
	3-4 lots:	15	3
	5+ lots:	0	1
Number of lots created under 1 acre in size:		17	20
	Percent:	23.9%	47.6%
Number of lots inconsistent with regulations or proposed regulations:		N\A	10
	Percent:		23.8%

Table 19:

NUMBER OF SUBDIVISIONS BY LAND USE CATEGORY
OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

	Number of Subdivisions					
	Developed or Partially Developed		Vacant			
	Small	Large	Small	Large	Total	Percent
Forest	11	4	4	3	22	8.8
Agriculture	48	15	20	2	85	34.1
Rural Residential	58	25	25	13	121	48.6
Hamlet	12	4	2	3	21	8.4
Total	129	48	51	21	249	100.0

Small subdivision = 2 lots
Large subdivision = 3 or more lots

Forest = Categories F6 and F7 from the Resource Management Plan
Agriculture = Categories A6 and A7
Rural Residential = Categories R4, R5, A5 and F5
Hamlet = Categories R1, R2 and R3

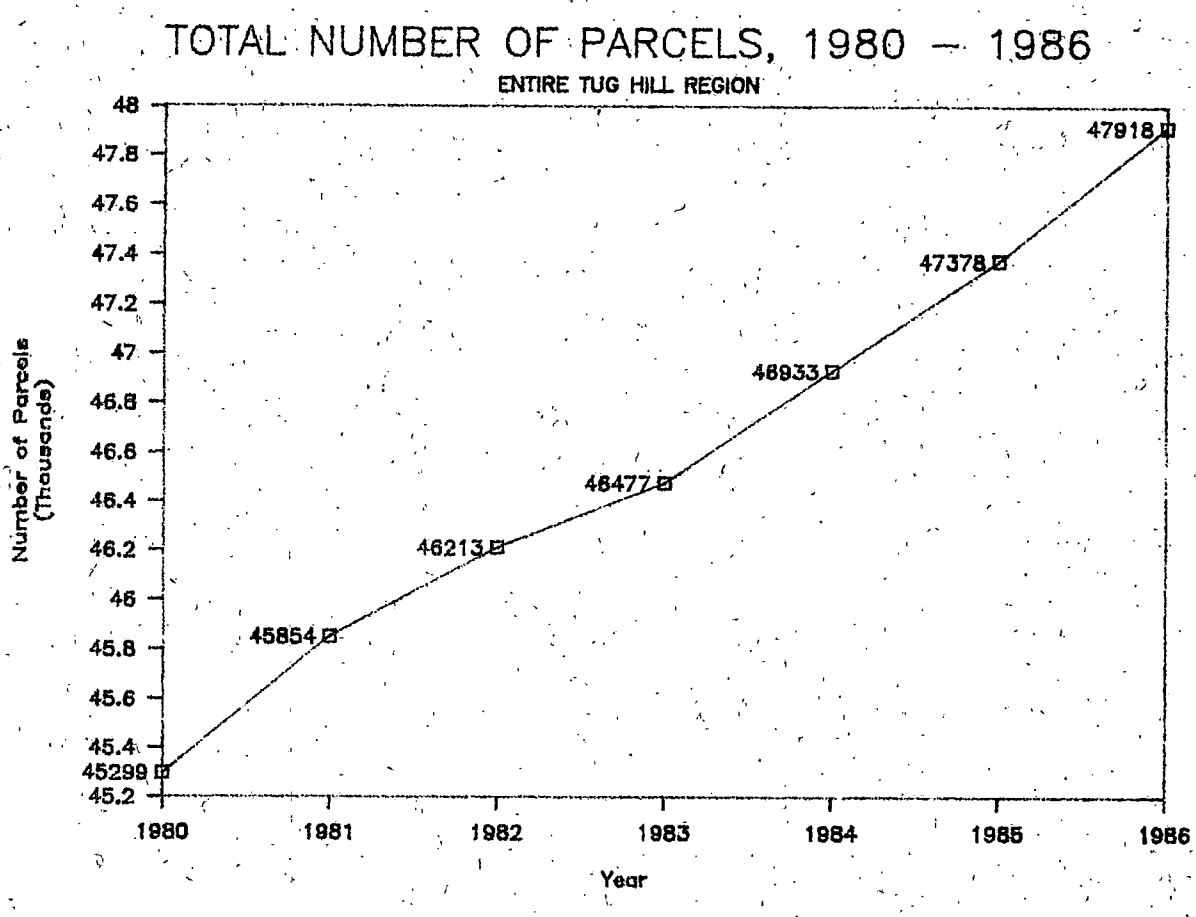
Table 20: NUMBER OF BUILDING PERMITS
Selected Core Towns

Type of Structure	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	Total
Commercial	0	0	2	5	2	9
Conventional Homes	18	9	8	16	11	62
Mobile Homes	29	11	14	26	19	99
Camps	7	13	7	6	9	42
Accessory structures, septic and other	23	27	17	25	38	130
Total	77	60	48	78	79	342
Total excluding accessory structures and other	54	33	31	53	41	212

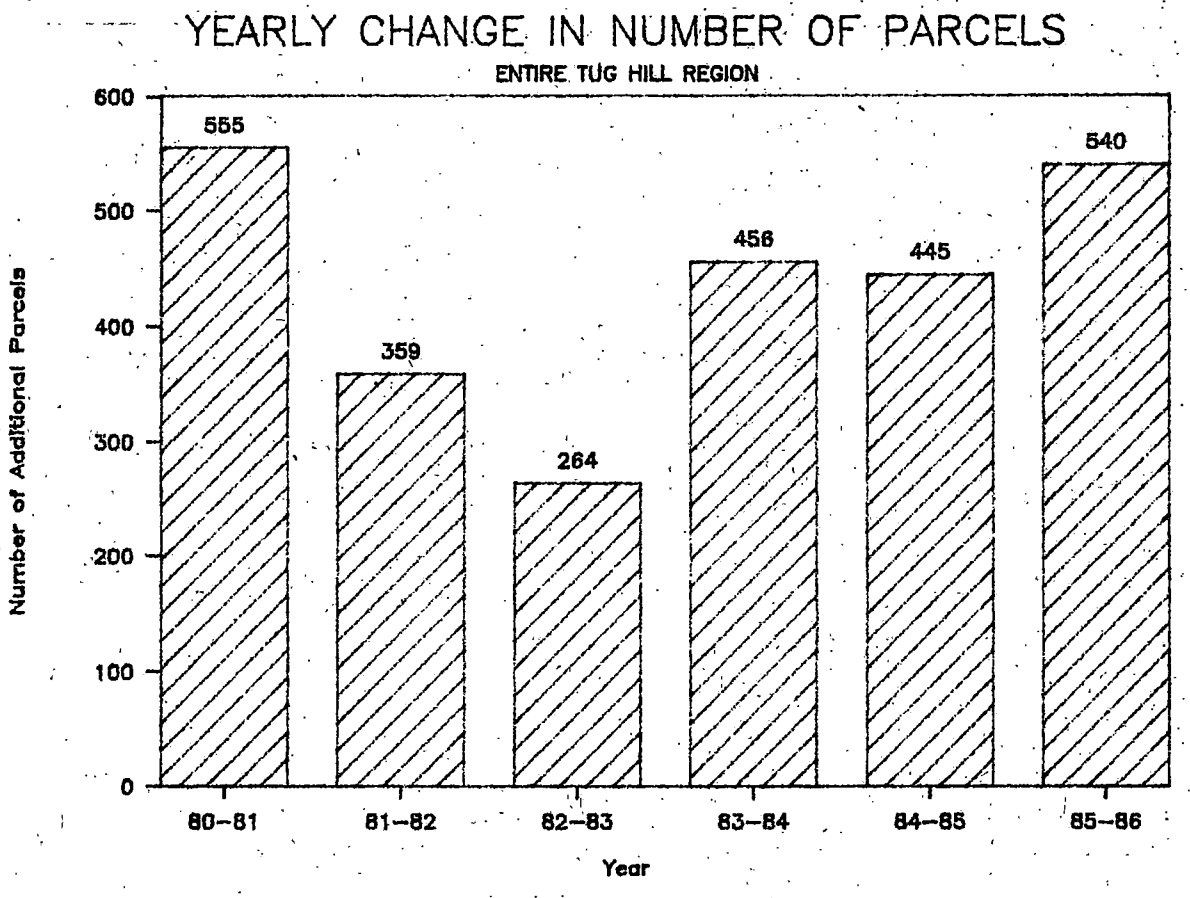
(a) Includes the seven towns with building permit data available 1981-1985: Florence, Lewis, Montague, Osceola, Pinckney, West Turin and Worth.

Source: Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board annual reviews

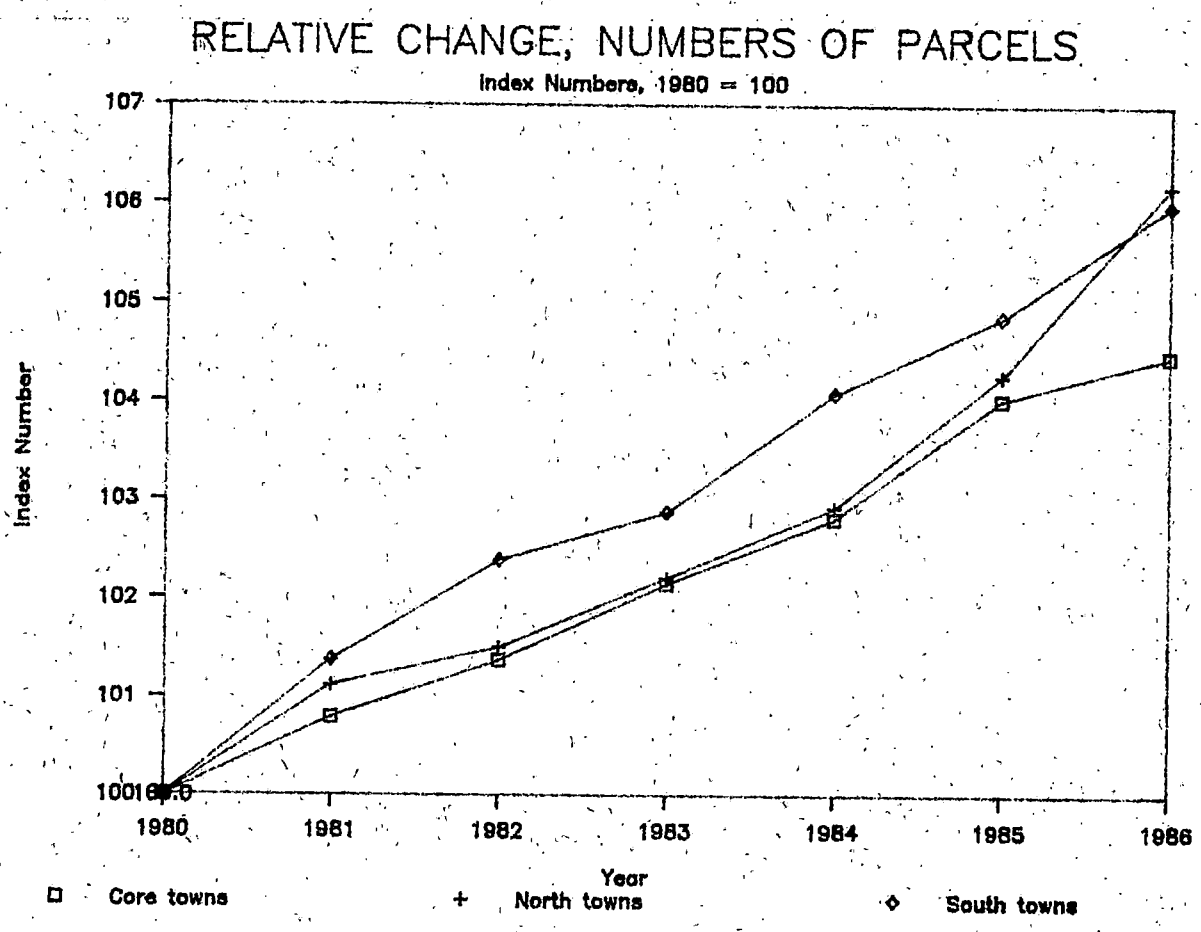
Graph 1


TOTAL NUMBER OF PARCELS, 1980 – 1986
ENTIRE TUG HILL REGION
Number of Parcels (Thousands)
48
47.8
47.6
47.4
47.2
47
46.8
46.6
46.4
46.2
46
45.8
45.6
45.4
45.2
45299
45854
46213
46477
46933
47378
47918
1980
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
Year

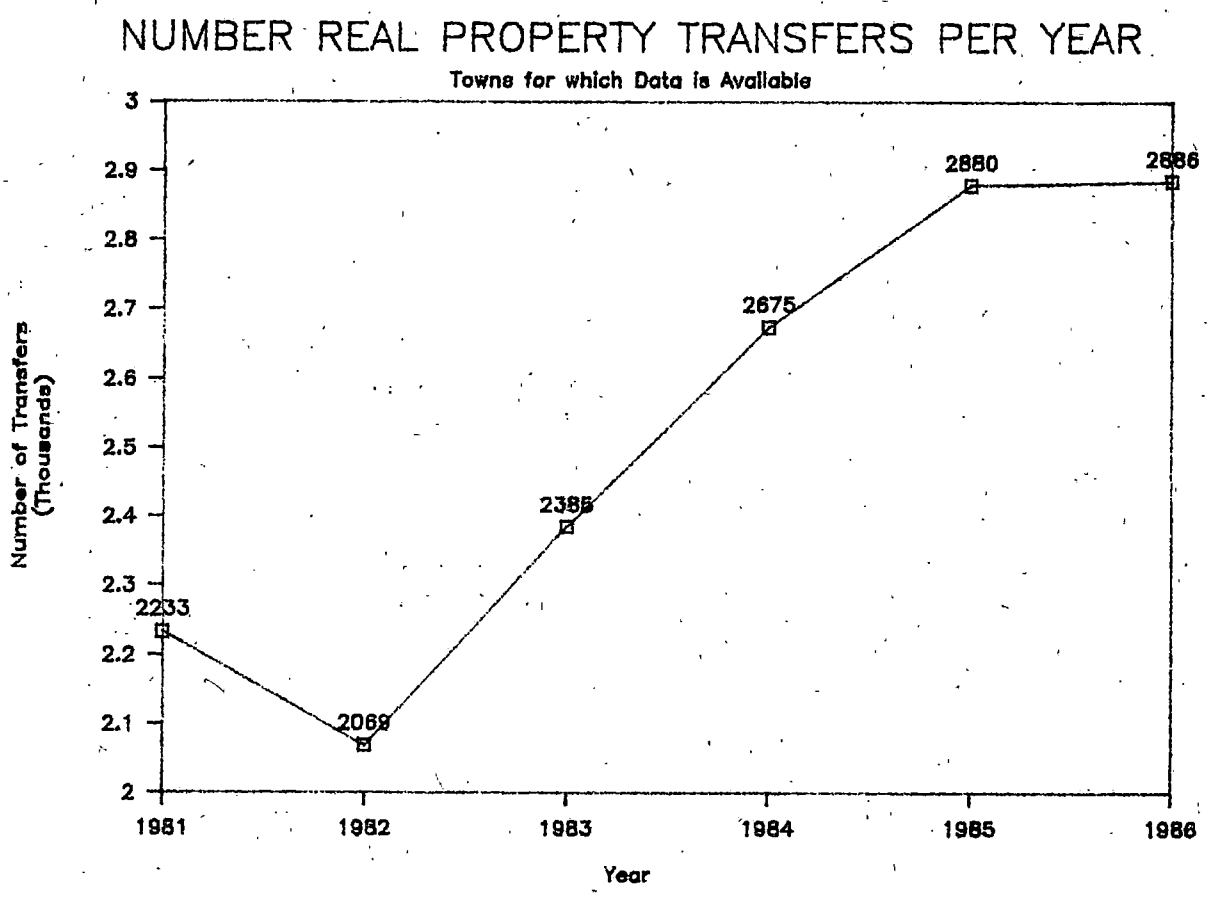
Graph 2


YEARLY CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PARCELS
ENTIRE TUG HILL REGION
Number of Additional Parcels
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
555
359
264
456
445
540
80-81
81-82
82-83
83-84
84-85
85-86
Year

Graph 3


RELATIVE CHANGE, NUMBERS OF PARCELS
Index Numbers, 1980 = 100
Index Number
107
106
105
104
103
102
101
100
1980
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
Year
Core towns
North towns
South towns

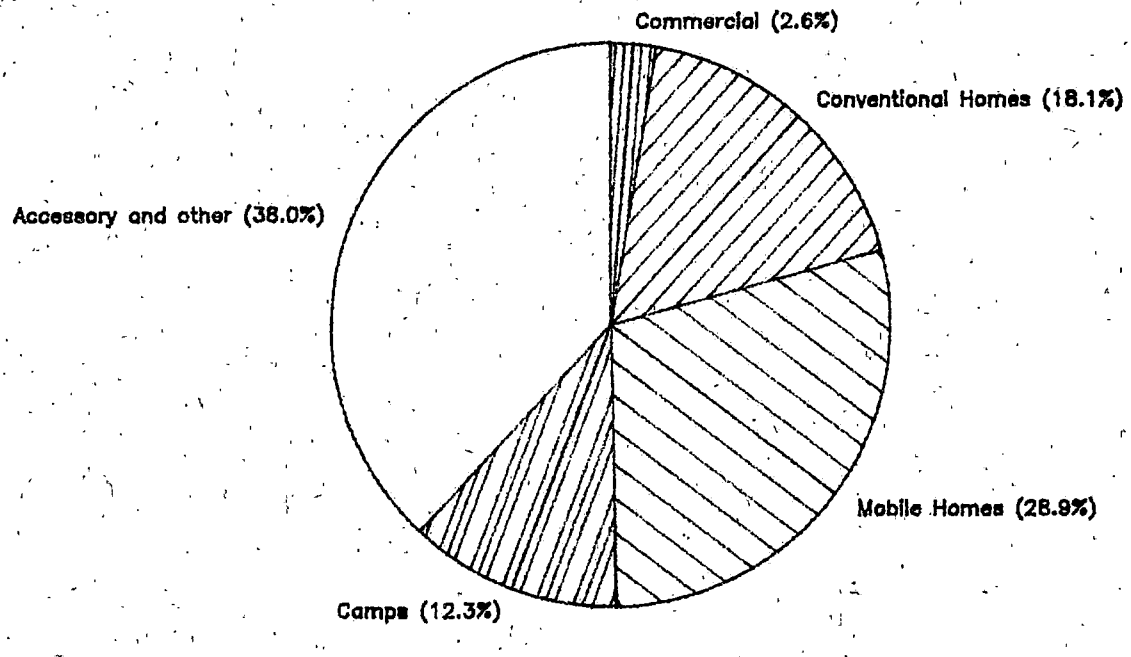
Graph 4


NUMBER REAL PROPERTY TRANSFERS PER YEAR
Towns for which Data is Available
Number of Transfers (Thousands)
3
2.9
2.8
2.7
2.6
2.5
2.4
2.3
2.2
2.1
2
2233
2069
2385
2675
2880
2886
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
Year

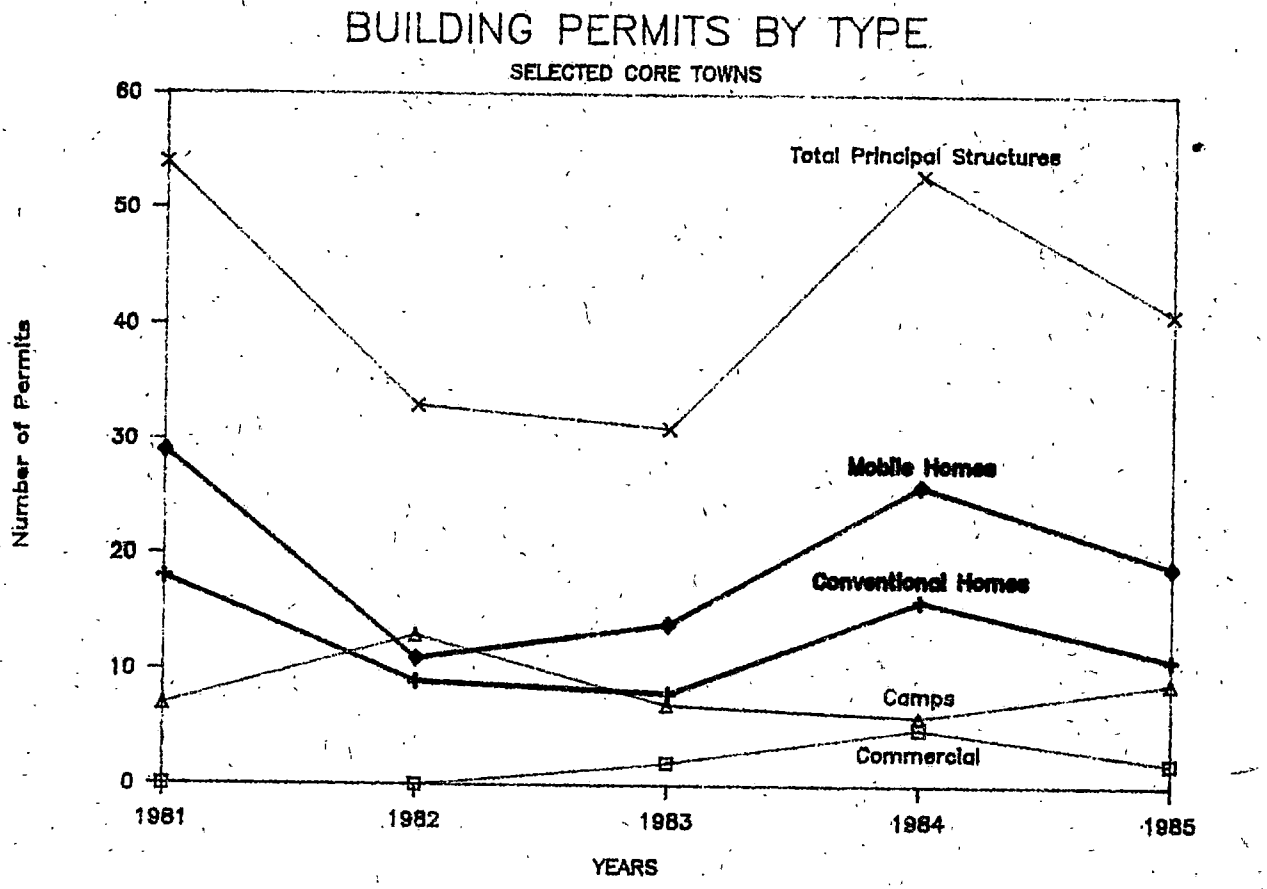
Graph 5

TOTAL BUILDING PERMITS, 1981–1985

Selected Core Towns

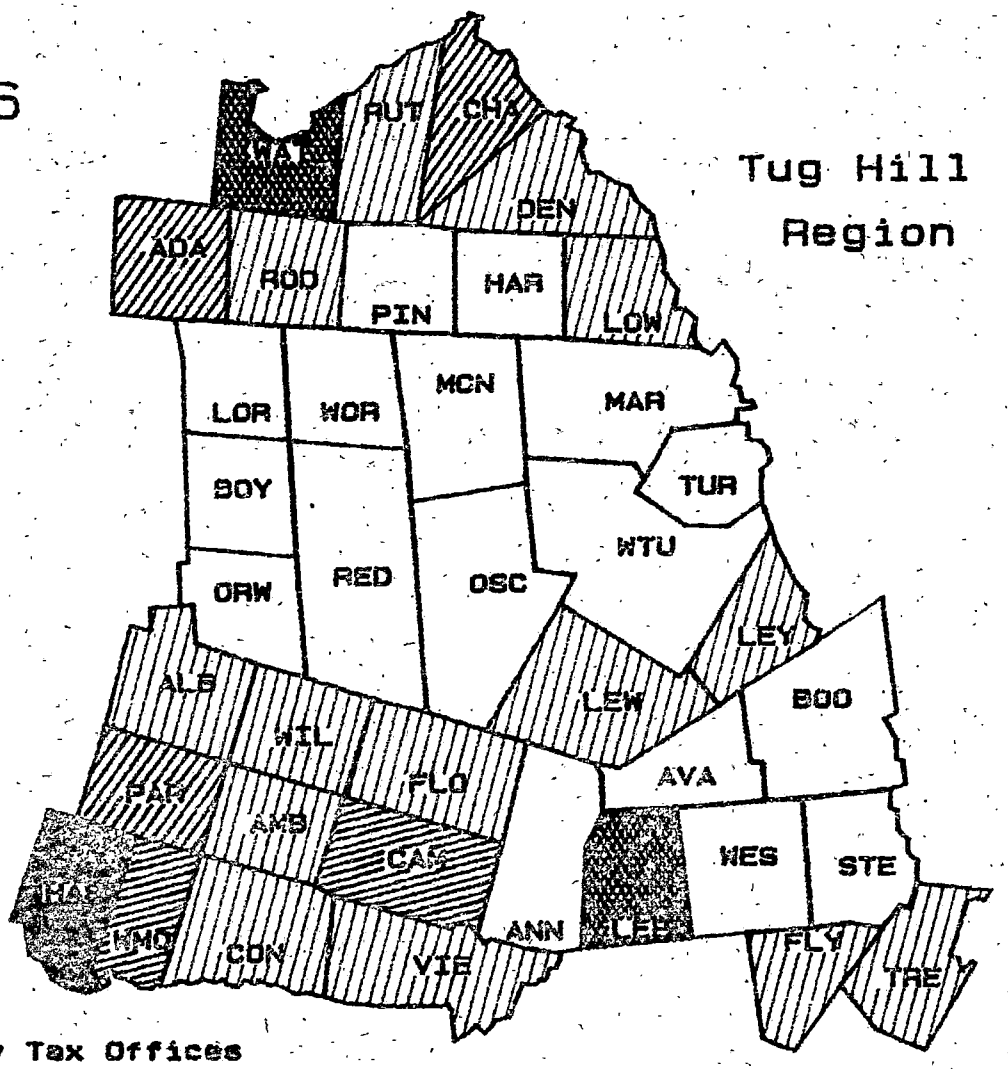


Graph 6


BUILDING PERMITS BY TYPE
SELECTED CORE TOWNS
Number of Permits
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Total Principal Structures
Mobile Homes
Conventional Homes
Camps
Commercial
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
YEARS

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF LAND PARCELS

1980 - 1986



Number per square mile

- 5.0 or more
- 4.0 to 4.9
- 3.0 to 3.9
- 2.0 to 2.9
- 1.0 to 1.9
- 0.2 or less

Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

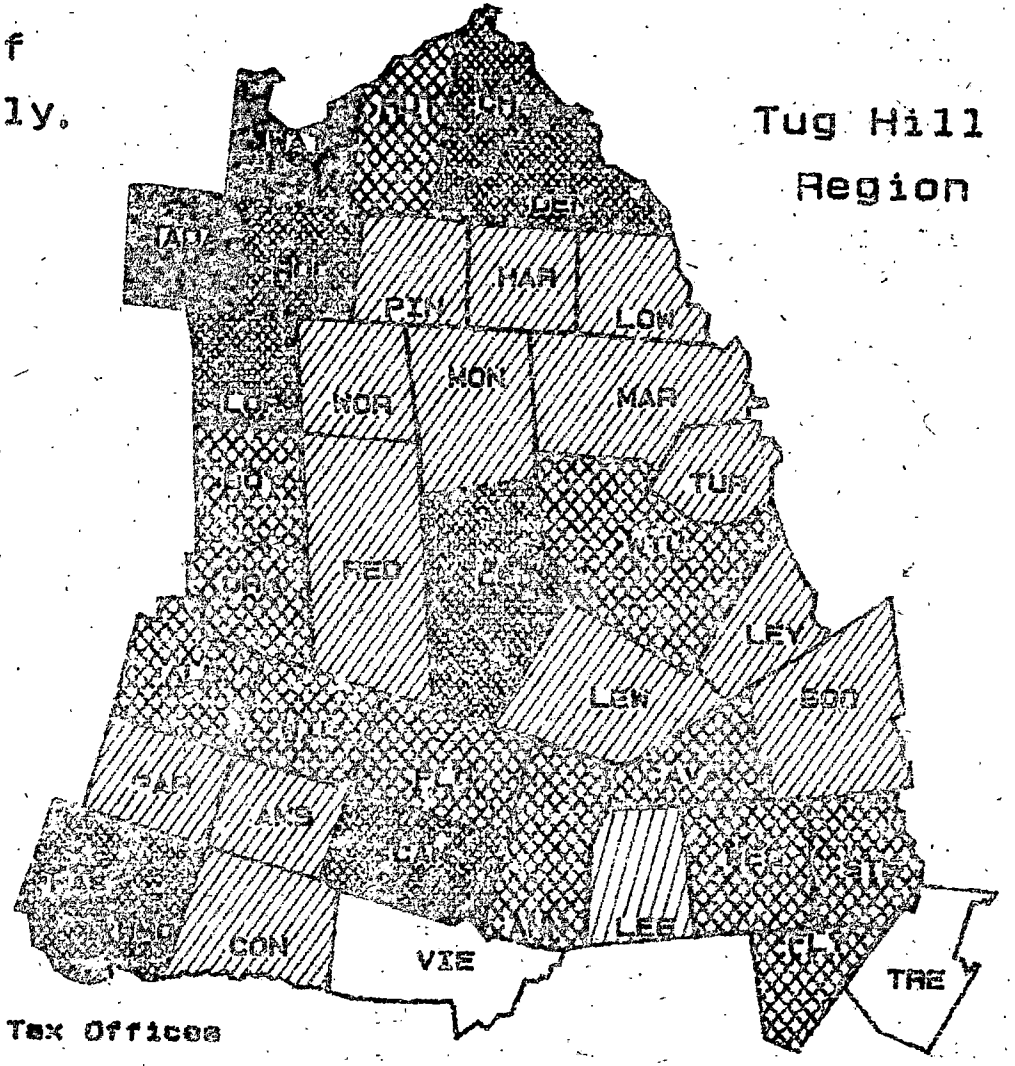
R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1986

Map 1

RECENT TREND IN LAND SUBDIVISION

Change in Number of Parcels Added Yearly, 1985 and 1986 Compared to 1980 through 1984

Change in Annual Average	
	PLUS 20 or more
	PLUS 10 to 19
	0 to PLUS 9
	MINUS 1 TO -10
	MINUS 11 to -20
	MINUS 21 or less

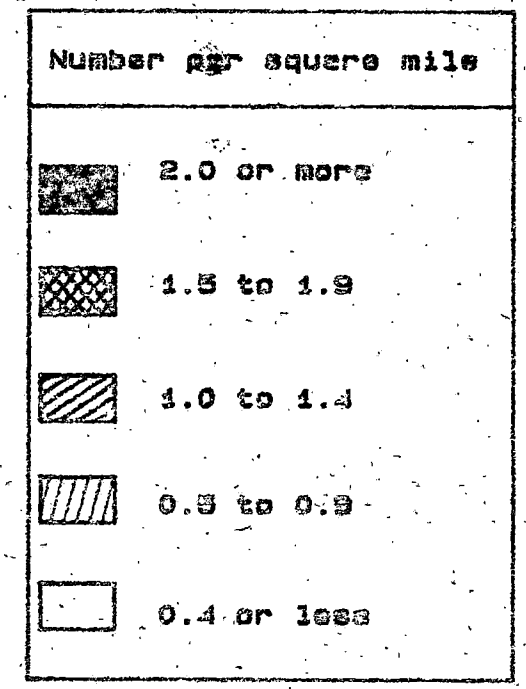


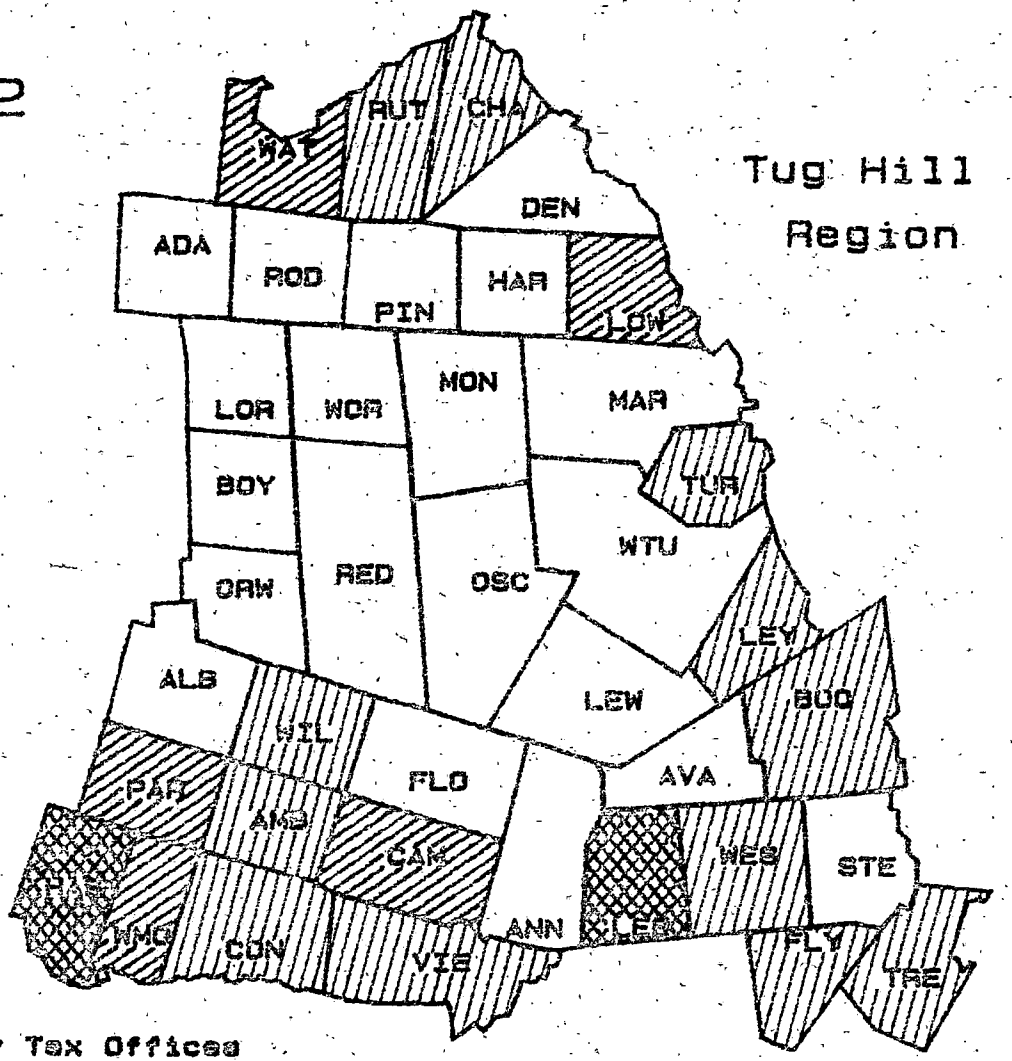
Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, Aug 1988

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF LAND PARCELS

1980 – 1982





Tug Hill Region

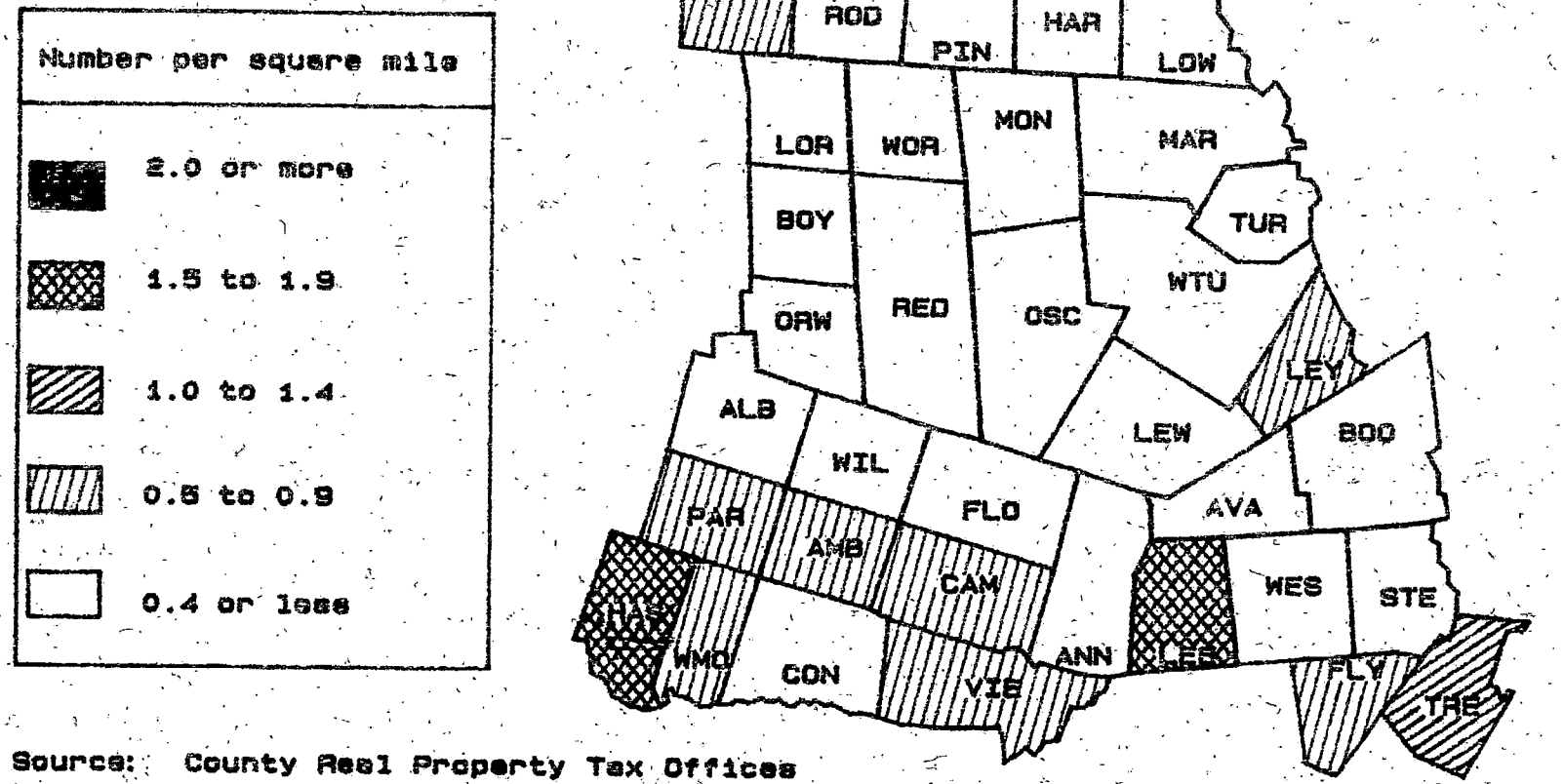
Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

B. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1988

Map 3

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF LAND PARCELS

1982 - 1984



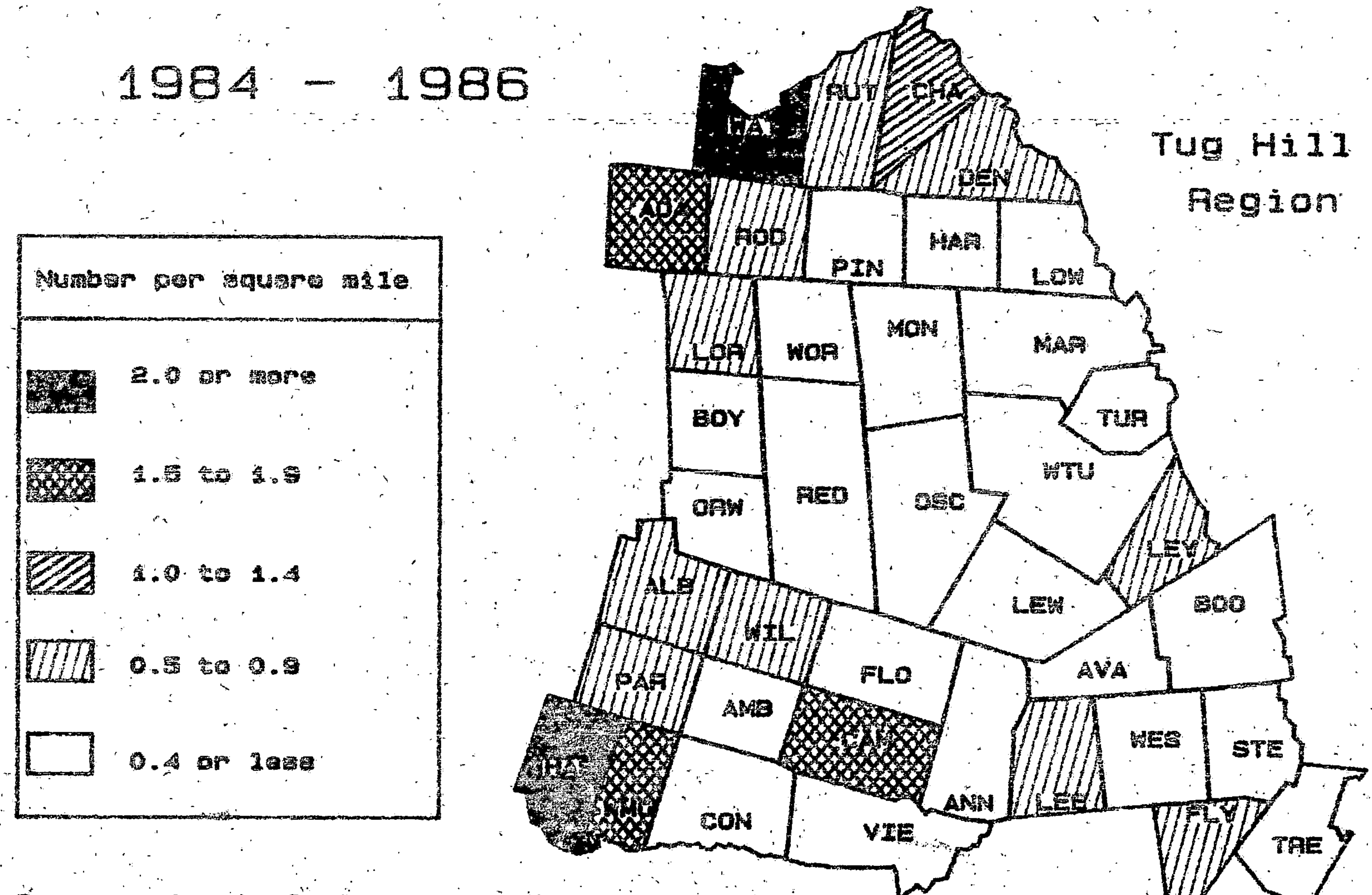
Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1986

Map 4

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF LAND PARCELS

1984 - 1986

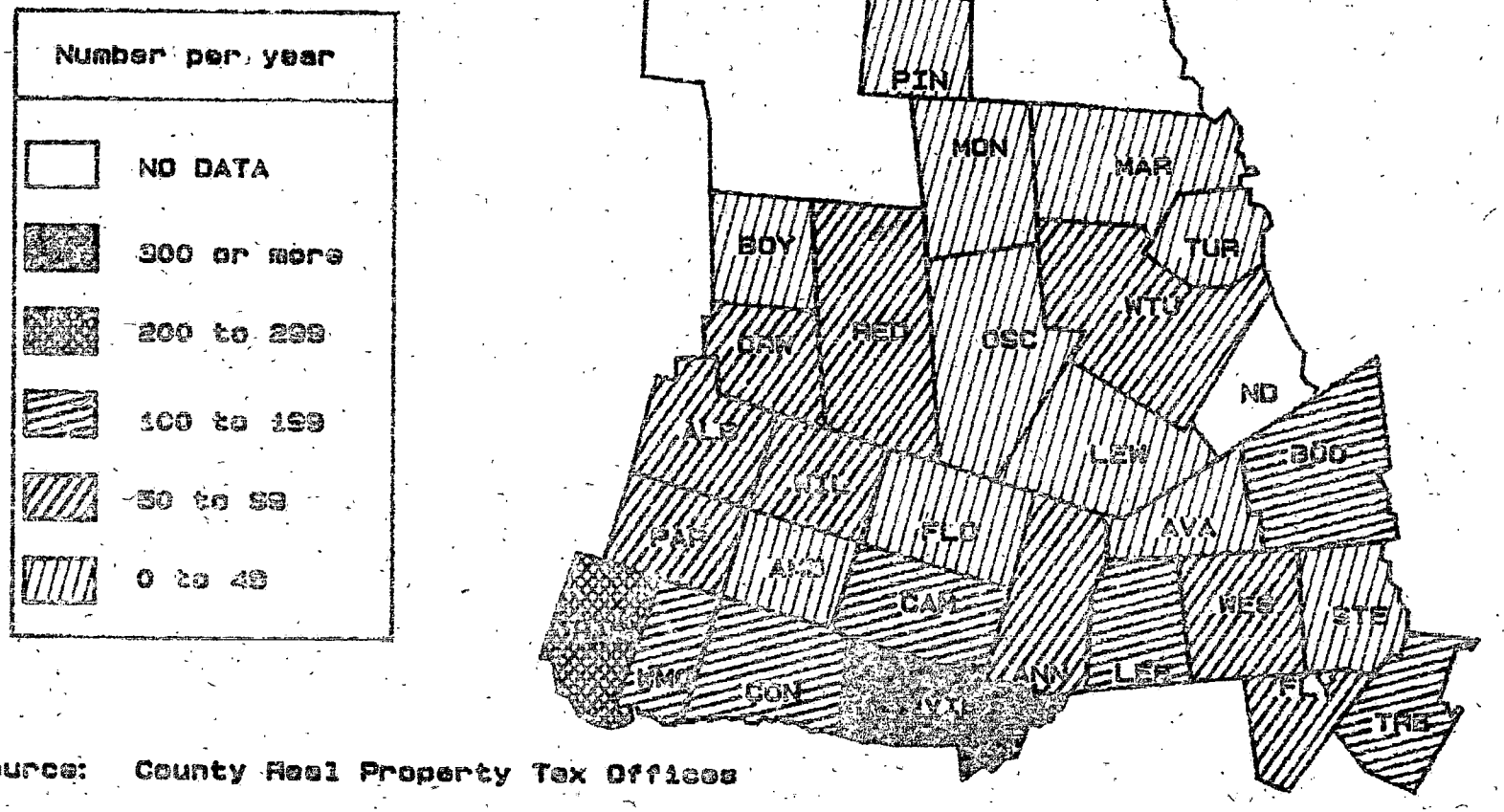


Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1986

NUMBER OF LAND TRANSFERS

Yearly Average, 1981 - 1986



Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

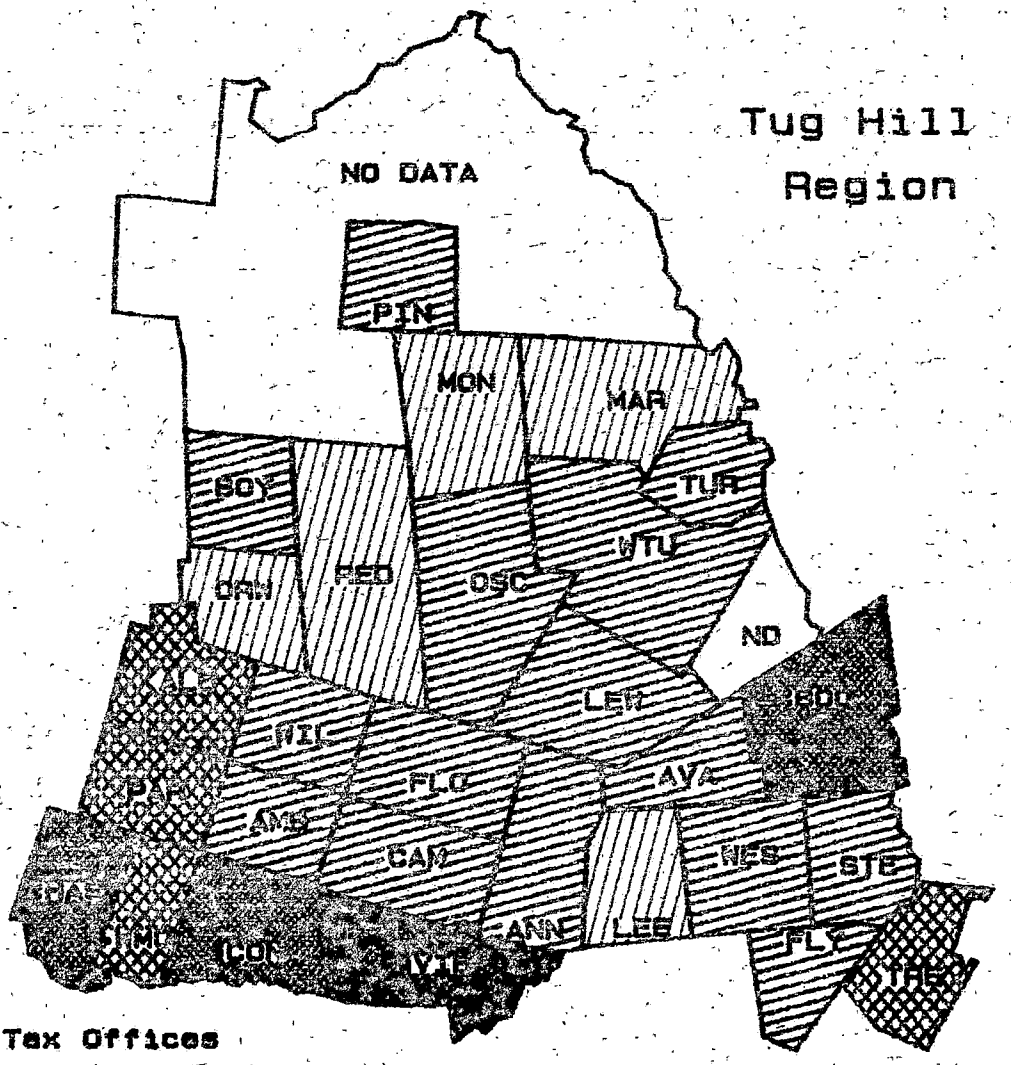
R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1988

Map 6

RECENT TREND IN LAND TRANSFERS

1985 and 1986
Yearly Average
Compared to
1981 through 1984

Tug Hill
Region



Change in Annual Average
NO DATA
PLUS 100 or more
PLUS 50 to 99
PLUS 25 to 49
0 to PLUS 24
DECLINE

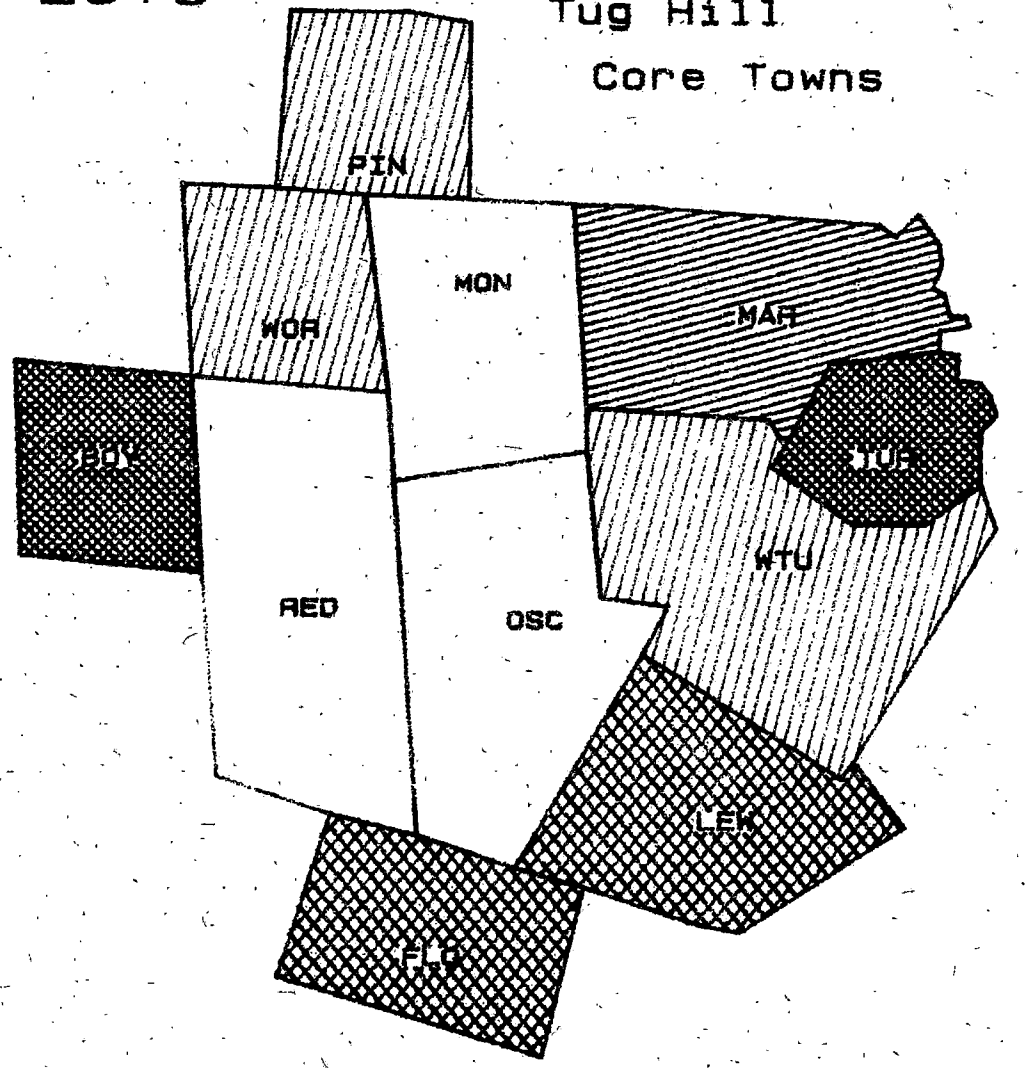
Source: County Real Property Tax Offices

R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, Aug 1988

Map 7

NUMBER OF NEW LOTS CREATED 1977 - 1986

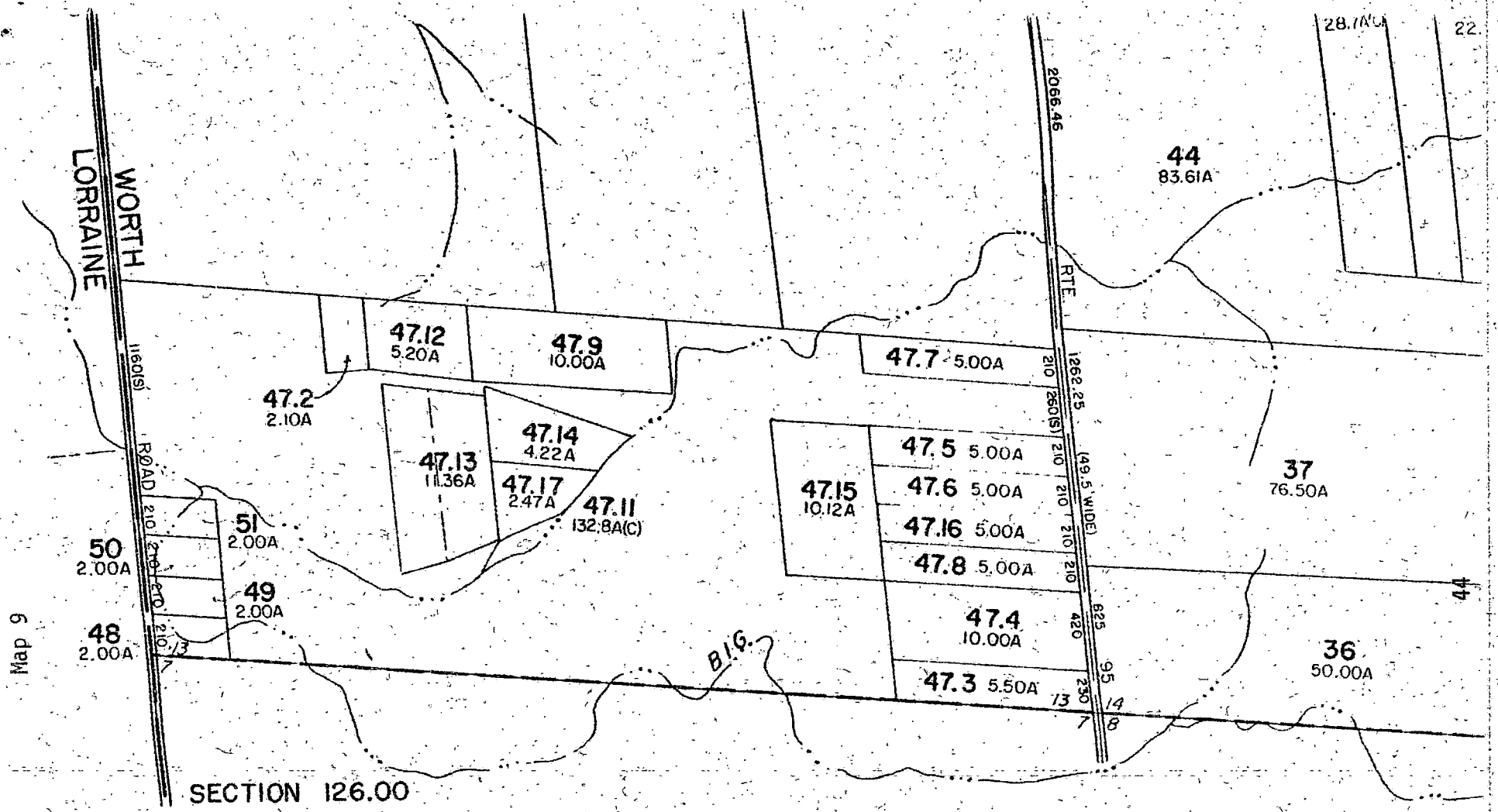
(per square mile)



Number psm
1.554-1.82
1.288-1.554
1.022-1.288
.756-1.022
.49-.756

Source: Tax Maps

R. Lamb, SUNY Plattsburgh, Aug 1986


WORTH
LORRAINE
ROAD
1160(S)
2066.46
RTE.
1262.25
260(S)
(49.5' WIDE)
210
44
83.61A
28.1(N)
22
47.12
5.20A
47.9
10.00A
47.7 5.00A
47.2
2.10A
47.14
4.22A
47.13
11.36A
47.17
2.47A
47.11
132.8A(C)
47.15
10.12A
47.5 5.00A
47.6 5.00A
47.16 5.00A
47.8 5.00A
37
76.50A
51
2.00A
50
2.00A
49
2.00A
48
2.00A
47.4
10.00A
47.3 5.50A
420
625
95
230
13
14
8
B.I.G.
36
50.00A
SECTION 126.00
Map 6

INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEWS

All the following interviews were conducted during the months of July and August, 1986.

A. Interview with Betty Adler

1. Large subdivision activity

- There are currently three larger subdivisions under way in Osceola. Patten Realty is the developer of one of them. There is a local agent working for Patten Realty located in Camden.

- The town clerk of Lewis had an inquiry concerning land some land parcels from the Patten Realty agent in Camden, but nothing apparently came of it.

- There have been several advertisements in local papers by Patten Realty seeking to buy land, some of which specifically mentioned Osceola.

- The Portville subdivision, once owned by Portville Corp. sold the timber off the land, then split it up into lots to sell it.

- There is no other large subdivision activity that she is aware of.

2. Increase in Land Development Activity

- There has been a significant increase in logged over land, which may lead to increased land sales and development activity in the future.

- Development on such lands will likely be camps and travel trailers.

- There has been alot of heavy cutting of timber.

3. Enforcement Difficulties

- There is probably about one or two lots per year in each town, on the average, which are created by subdivision but do not meet the frontage and/or acreage requirements of the town's land use code. (Such lots would not violate code requirements until a structure is built upon them.)

- A major problem is turnover of local Enforcement Officers, which hinders follow-up enforcement activities.

- Camps in the woods, such as in Osceola, are a problem because EOs have a very difficult time getting in to inspect the property and contacting the owners.

- Trailers are moved in, and additions put on them, which often escape notice by EOs. The difficulty is in finding them in the woods. This is believed to be a fairly widespread problem.

- The counties' role in subdivision regulation enforcement ought to be strengthened. The commission ought to follow up on earlier work, and attempt to establish a workable system.

- If a major subdivision is proposed, some towns will handle it well and/or ask for professional assistance, but others won't.

- Some comunities don't enforce the land use code strictly.

3. Revisions of the Resource Management Plan and/or local land use codes

- It might be a good idea to go through a Resource Managment Plan Revision.

- The interviewer (R. Lamb) asked whether the cooperative planning board could prepare a draft plan, which would be a much briefer and more useable document than the original, and then have the individual towns use it as a starting point to prepare their own plan. The response to this suggestion was favorable.

B. Interview with Paul Baxter

1. There have been three recent large subdivision proposals in his area.

- Town of Hastings, about 30 lots, by Volksragan. The developer backed off due to SEQR requirements.

- Town of West Monroe, by Patten. Developer took over a failed subdivision on Rt. 11 consisting of about 12 lots.

- Town of West Monroe, Beaver Acres Subdivision, by Patten. The developer put up alot of money for the town to make road improvements.

2. Interest in the area by large subdividers

- An agent of Patten Realty expressed an interest in the Town of Vienna.

- Volksragan has also expressed an interest in the north shore area.

- Most of the past activity by larger subdividers in the north shore area has been geared to conventional housing subdivisions rather than recreational lots.

- In response to a question of whether Patten and Volksragan wuld move into the Tug Hill Core Towns, the response was that he "wouldn't be surprised."

3. The following problems may be created by poor subdivision design:

- landlocked lots

- panhandle lots (located a great distance from roads, making electrical service extremely costly, and access by emergency vehicles difficult)

- poor site distance at driveways, creating traffic hazards

- creation of lots too small to meet other town regulations, such as zoning requirements, mobile home regulations, or on-site sewerage disposal design standards.

- lots which are unuseable due to poor environmental conditions such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slope, etc.

- proliferation of individual driveways abutting upon major roads, rather that provision of an interior access road

- many lots are sold sight unseen by the buyer

4. Subdivision regulation enforcement problems

- There have been some instances in the past of companies selling off subdivided lots before a required subdivision review had taken place.

- An improved system in county clerks' offices is needed.

- In the absence of a better system in the county offices, towns should follow all the recommendations of the "Illegal subdivisions: - how to prevent them " report prepared in June 1986 by P. Baxter and M. Weiss.

5. Recent trends in sales and development activity

- There has been a lot of land changing hands recently. Rapid growth continues.

C. Interview with Joan Manzelman

1. Larger subdivisions

- Patten Realty contacted farmers in the Town of Ava two years ago seeking land. The land was marginal farmland with a fragipan soil layer.

- There is a proposed subdivision in the T. of Floyd, by Venture Tech, of 10 lots, on wet soils.

- There is one subdivision in the T. of Western and three in the T. of Trenton.

- A couple of developers have been reported as looking for land in the Towns of Vienna and Lee.

2. Recent trend in land sales and development

- There has been a definite increase in land sales and development activity in the past year, mostly residential lots related to suburbanization. Also alot of mobile homes in Vienna.

3. Subdivision enforcement difficulties

- There has been an increase in lots sold by land contract, which means that they often escape subdivision regulations at the time of sale because the title to the land remains with the original owner. Lots created in this manner may not meet the definition of a subdivision. Land contracts have become more popular because financing is often easier than by conventional means.

- The main enforcement problem is that towns sometimes don't know when subdivisions are occurring. The County Clerk is not notifying the planning boards.

- She has submitted a TA request to the Commission to look into the enforcement question.

D. Interview with Marty Weiss, Oswego County Planning Director

1. Large subdividers

- Patten Realty and a spinoff company, Volksragan, have been operating extensively in Oswego County.

- Most subdivisions have been in unregulated towns, but the firms have gone into regulated areas.

- All the subdivisions have been poorly designed. Bacon strip lots are common.

- Perhaps the only reason that Patten Realty and Volksragan have not been operating in the Tug Hill Core communities yet is that they have been too busy elsewhere.

2. Recent trends in land sales and development

- There should be an increase in land sales and development activity in the future due to lower interest rates and pent up demand.

3. Subdivision regulation and enforcement

- The ability of towns to cope with larger subdividers varies widely.

- The best solution for dealing with subdivision regulation problems is constant education of planning boards.

- After some effort, the Oswego County Clerk's Office does now have a system for dealing with the filing of subdivision plats which must have local review and approval

E. Interview with Tom Miner, The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Inc., Arkville, NY

1. Recent trend in land sales and development

- The Catskills are going through a boom period remniscent of the late 1960's and early 1970's due to the lower interest rates and improved economy.

- Most subdivisions are for second homes and recreational lots.

- Patten Realty accounts for the bulk of the subdivision activity and is still operating at full tilt, just as before.

2. Large subdividers (Patten Realty)

- These developers are now going into towns with regulations. They are becoming more sophisticated.

- Developers often subdivide land which others view as undesireable, such as being near power lines, etc. This is probably because such land is available and cheaper. Abandoned farmland is also popular with subdividers.

3. Problems with the subdivisions

- Lots may be unuseable. There have been instances of lots on rock outcrops or on wetlands. "Bacon strip lots" are

common.

- Both internal and external road improvements may be necessary. In the absence of effective local subdivision controls, towns may foot the bill for such improvements.

- The fiscal impact of the Patten Realty type subdivision has not been studied.

- Lots are often advertised as hunting land. What happens after homes are built on some lots, and a rural residential neighborhood develops?

- No one really knows what effect these subdivisions will have on the future landscape. What will they look like? What uses will be on them - homes, camps, open land?

4. Subdivision regulation

- With some exceptions, most towns are not equipped to do good site plan rviews. They need training, and they need to ask for professional help.

- There have been instances where towns got tough, and were able to effectively deal with large subdividers. The Town of Lexington enacted regulations just in time, and required the developer to do the roads to proper standards, and changed the lot designs.

F. Interview with Adirondack Park Agency Staff (John Banta and Bill Curran)

1. Patten Realty

- Patten Realty has just this year opened an office in Lake Placid.

- There have been probably three of four subdivisions by Patten over the past four or five years.

- The Adirondack Park Agency's review has probably scared off Patten so far. The Agency requires that all lots have a buildable area on them.

2. Recent trends in land development

- There has been an increase during the past year, not in the number of projects but in the size of projects.

- There has been a definite increase in the number of medium to large subdivisions proposed.

- The Adirondacks are not yet in a boom period like the Catskills. However, land is relatively cheap which may lead to increased demand.

G. Interview with Joe Pfieffer

- Most of the Tug Hill core towns seem to be doing a good job of code enforcement, and appear to be on top of things, especially Osceola, Pinckney and Harrisburg. He hasn't heard much from Turin though.

- He sends a copy of his inspections to the town clerks, and they do what they want with them.

- He does not receive any documents from the town clerks, but does try to keep in touch with them.

H. Interviews with local officials regarding recent trends in land sales and development in their towns.

(A representative from all towns was not able to be contacted due to time constraints of the study and difficulty in finding people at home.)

1. Town of Lewis

- The Town Clerk was contacted by the agent of Patten Realty located in Camden concerning some properties, totaling about 700 acres. She hasn't heard anything about it since.

- During the 1970's alot of abandoned farmland was sold for recreational land, but now no one is selling.

- Development has been proceeding at about the same pace as in the past, consisting of a few trailers, homes and mobile homes - nothing spectacular.

- Alot of the development occurs on abandoned farmland, but some in hamlets. Mostly it is on good roads.

2. Town of West Turin

- Development during the past couple of years has been at about the same pace as in previous years, about half and half seasonal camps and year round homes.

- There has been alot of griping about cutting off too much timber, but this is a matter of opinion.

- Most new development has been in settled areas, or where camps have burned down.

3. Town of Redfield

- Residential lot sales have gone up. There have been five permits issued for new construction.

- An increase in land sales and development activity is anticipated in the future, primarily for seasonal properties as in the past.

- There has been a great increase in forest clearing activity. "The town is being cut to pieces." This is due to the use of a chipper to provide fuel for a fuel burning boiler at one of the paper companies. In addition, a wetlands was drained, with the consequence that a stream dried up.

- There ought to be a study done of the impact of the forest clearing activity. Air photos ought to be taken.

4. Town of Pickney

- There has been a recent increase in land sales, but not development. The sales have been Ft. Drum related. People from the Watertown area are looking for land for homesites.

- Land development has been both seasonal camps and year round homes. Some land has been purchased for woodlots.

- Development has been occurring on abandoned farmland. Some of the farms went bankrupt.

5. Town of Boylston

- There has been some increase in land sales and development activity recently, mostly Ft. Drum related.

- Land development activity has been a mix of a little bit of everything: camps, homes, recreational land, woodlots, travel trailers.

- Not much land is for sale.

- There has been alot of logging activity going on. A 350 acre parcel has been logged, which will probably be subdivided and sold.

- There has been some development on poor roads which is leading to a problem.

6. Town of Turin

- There has not been a noticeable increase in land sales or development activity over the past couple of years.

- Development has been occurring on less valuable land and abandoned farmland.

- Development has been mostly year round housing.