Commission on Act 250: The Next 50 Years

Brian Shupe Vermont Natural Resources Council October 26, 2018



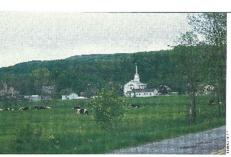
C) An examination of the criteria and jurisdiction of Act 250, ncluding:

v) Whether Act 250 promotes compact centers of mixed use nd residential development surrounded by rural lands?

/)Whether Act 250 applies to the type and scale of evelopment that provides adequate protection for important atural resources as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2791.

No, and No

ploringSprawl



ONT FORUM ON SPRAWI, has conducted a poll of over 3,300 Vermonters on community values and sprawl. The poll provided information on the relationship tritudes and development patterns through a series of questions on quality of life, community, choice of residence, shopping patterns, and sprawl.

ults of the poll show that Vermonters value community life, agricultural heritage, a ont and opportunity for a good education. They believe communities should consist ments with good access to preserved open land and a nearby working landscape. At ey often make personal choices that work against this vision. Nevertheless, they believe th without surawl and that there is a need to take action to address speakl in Vergeont.

nal polling firm. Macro International, undertook the poll for the Vermont Forum on 25 interviews were conducted by telephone with randomly sampled Vermonters 24 and October 6, 1998. The telephone numbers were obtained using the Random que. This method generates telephone numbers randomly from the set of ell possible dualbers, insuring that the sample accurately represents all Vermoniters with teleroximately equal number of interviews were conducted in each of six regions of up on page 2) The sample size was designed so that percentages reported within each te to within 15% with 95% confidence. Readly based on data for the state as a whole ithin +1.36% at 9.5% confidence.³ The overall response rate was 76% which provides confidence in the representativeness of this sample.

A PUBLICATION OF THE VALUETT FORMATION SPRAME 4 Praiser of the Orton Family Foundation

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Vermonters' Attitudes on Spraw

Key Findings on Sprawl

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ExploringSprawl



CONCERN ABOUT THE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT THAT IS OFTEN CALLED

SPRAWI has come to the forefront in Vermont. Over the past year, more and more Vermonters have

called this issue one of the most pressing that we face. Governor Howard Dean recently cautioned: "If

we dissolve into the totorymity of the great suburban rings around our eities, then we are also going to

dissolve our sense of corrorantity, our sense of who we are, our sense of neighbors caring for neighbors,"

Concern over this issue, of course, is not new. For the past 30 years, Vermonters have struggled to encourage growth in jobs and economic opportunity while protecting the pattern of compact settlements and open, productive land that is this state's historic and distinctive feature. Today, with develop ment pressures continuing and 65 million people living less than six hours' drive from Vermont, a key question is still the one that former Governor Deane Davis asked in 1970: "How can we have economic growth and help our people improve their economic situation without destroying the secret of our success. our environment?"

Most Vermonters today appear to believe this question can have positive answers. A recent poll of over 2,300 Vermonters, conducted by Macro International for the Vermont Forum on Sprawl, found that 72% of those polled helieve sprawl and growth are not the same. Among those who see a difference, 90% believe it is possible to have growth without sprawl.

The Vermont Forum on Sprawl is working with a broad cross-section of Vermonters to develor strategies and solutions that can respond to these hopes and concerns. First, though, it is vital to define what sprawl is to Vermont — and to examine closely what has been happening in Vermont communities. Only when we clearly understand the issue can we frame workable, practical solutions.

ExploringSprawl

VILMONT DORLM ON SPEAKE A Project of the

Economic, Social,

Related to Sprawl

in Vermont

& Land Use Trends



WI MOVES ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE, IT CREATES PATTERNS OF IMPACT.

de quite visible changes in land use and in vehicle traffic on our roads, along with subtler

economies and the social composition of our cities and towns.

next is, overall, more than a phenomenon of road and building development. Its long-term more from lengthening the distances that many Vermonters travel to reach their jobs, to c physical separation between people of lower and higher incomes. These and other effects ring the social and economic character of many

munities, and of our state as a whole. is sixth and concluding publication in a series of arts by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl presents idicators that begin, at least, to suggest the wider sprawl brings to Vermont's land and communities.

G DATA BY COMMUNITY ND REGIONS

A PERLICATION OF THE

A Project of the Orton Family Foundation

Number 2

VERMONT FORUM ON SPRANT

What is Sprawl

Building & Street Pattern-

Dover/Mt. Snow area 1992

in Vermont?

e Vermont Forum on Sprawl organized informa database, assembled by the Center for Rural the University of Vermont, in order to look at nd social trends that relate to sprawl in these of communities raditional Centers - cities, regional centers,

own centers and some villages that are home to moentrations of residential population, and offer services to surrounding communities. Phese are the primary "downtowns" of Vermont. New Growth Towns - communities that have shown tigh shares of their counties' population growth over he past 30 years. Lying mostly near traditional ceners, these also can be called the suburbs or "bedroom mmunities" of Vermont.

httlying Towns the small towns and rural villages Vermont. These are generally some distance away rom the regional centers, have lower population rowth rates and are without significant resort evelopment. In number, although not in popula-

on, this remains the largest group of Vermont communities sort Towns - the homes of major ski areas and large concentrations of seasonal homes

Regions and Town Types of Vermont

Champlain Valley

- Chittenden County Northeast Kingdom
- Northcentral Highlands
- Taconic Southwest

Connecticut Hiver Valley

Traditional Centers New Growth Towns Outlying Towns Report Towns

"Revisilization of our communities and downtowns and dealing effectively with sprawl are among the most urgent and citricuit Issues facing Vermenters." Humand Dean MD. Governov of Vermond

What is Sprawl?

- Excessive land consumption
- Low densities in comparison with older centers
- Lack of transportation options
- •Fragmented open space, wide gaps between development and a scattered appearance
- Lack of choice in housing types and prices
- Separation of uses into distinct areas
- •Repetitive one story development
- •Commercial buildings surrounded by expansive parking
- Lack of public spaces and community centers

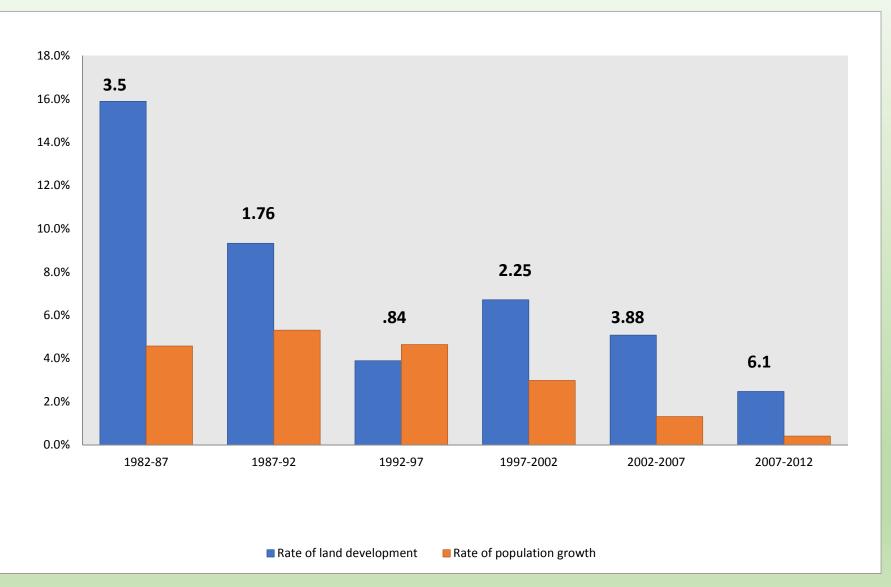


Changes in Vermont Land Use 1982-2012



U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015. Summary Report: 2012 National Resources

Land Development Relative to Population Growth

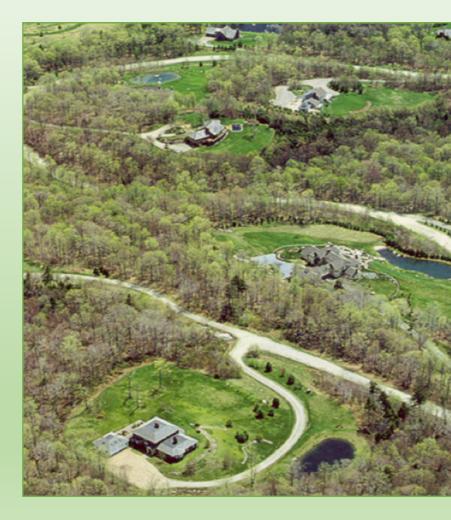


U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015. Summary Report: 2012 National Resources

Parcelization & Forest Loss

breaking up of land into smaller and iller parcels, usually through subdivision. economic, ecological and cultural acts are well documented.

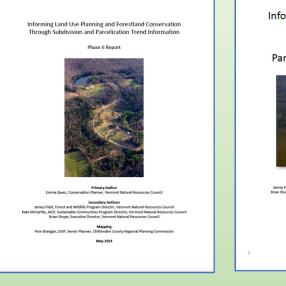
ile close to 80% of Vermont is forested, est cover is actually declining. According to Forest Service, Vermont may have lost ,000 acres of forestland from 2012 to 7 (Morin et al (2017)).



A. Blake Gardner

Background on VNRC Research

- 1 (2010) Statewide parcelization trends, 2003-2009.
- 2 (2014) Subdivisions in 22 case study towns.
- 3 (2018) Parcelization trends, 2004-2016 (state, regional planning commission, county, & town levels)



Informing Land Use Forestland Con Through Subdiv Parcelization Trenc



Authors: Deb Brighton, Vermont Fa Jamey Fidel, Forest and Biodiversity Program Direct Brian Shupe, Sustainable Communities Program Direct

> John Austin, Vermont Fish and V Funded By: Northeastern States Resear Vermont Natural Resour September 201

d by Northeastern States Research Cooperative (NSRC), a partnership of Northern Forest states (New Hampsh Vermont, Maine, and New York) in coordination with the USDA Forest Service

Phase I and Phase II Findings

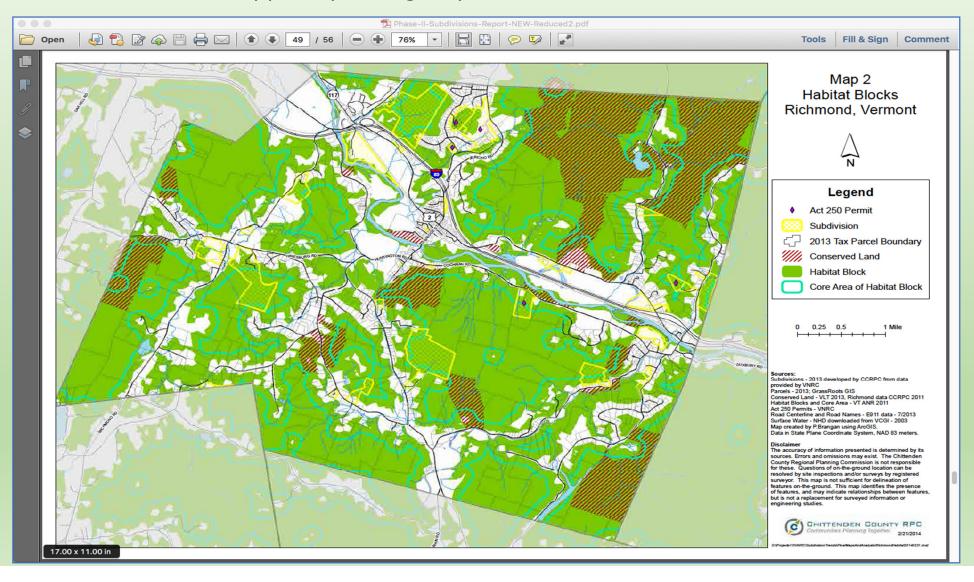
- Phase I Report: Regulatory oversight over land subdivision is argely a municipal responsibility because only 4 of the 381 ubdivisions reviewed in the 8 towns (creating 1,269 lots) would ndependently trigger Act 250.
- **Confirmed.** In the 14 Phase II towns (which involved 555 ubdivisions between 2002 and 2010 creating 1,662 lots): 7 ubdivisions (approximately 1% of all subdivisions/7% of lots) were reviewed under Act 250 because of an independent trigger only. Additionally, 6 more subdivisions (approximately 1%) were eviewed because of prior jurisdiction; however, these would not have independently triggered Act 250 if there had not been a previous Act 250 permit.

Phase I Report: Subdivision is incremental but steady; the average subdivision resulted in the creation of between 2.3 and 3.7 lots (including parent parcel) in the eight case study communities.

Confir Rease thand Rease Unfindings erage subdivision resulted in between 2.1 - 3.9 lots (including parent parcel).

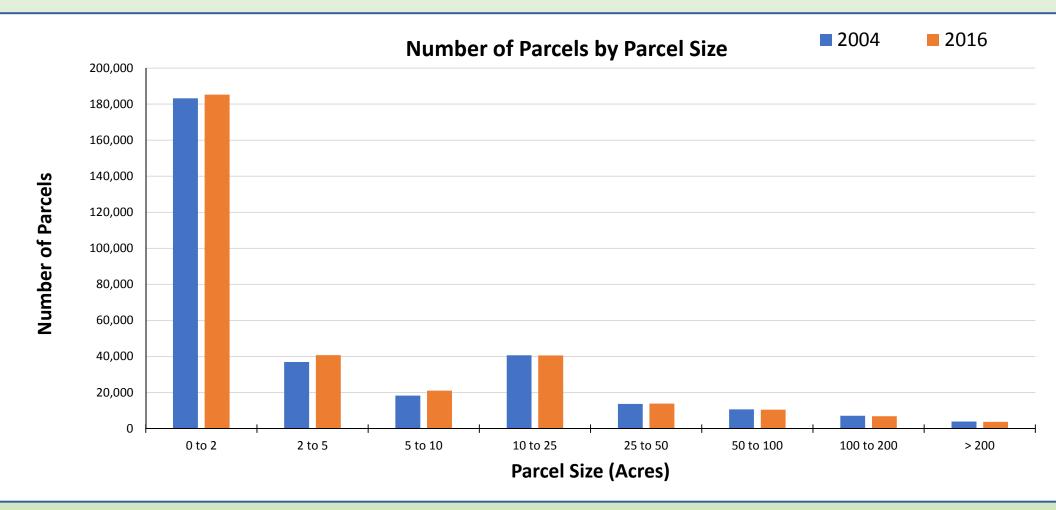
Where are lots being created?

on spatial analysis in four communities, between 50% and 68.8% of the subdivided acres were loc forest/habitat blocks mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources.



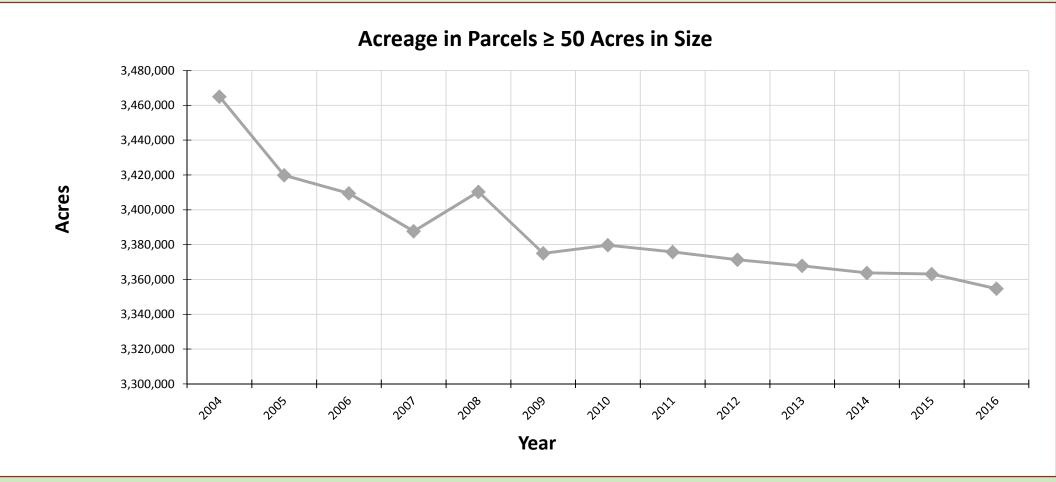
Phase III: Number of Parcels by Parcel Size

all parcels are increasing, especially in the 2-5 and 5-10 acre categories, a size commonly used for Iral residential" house lots.



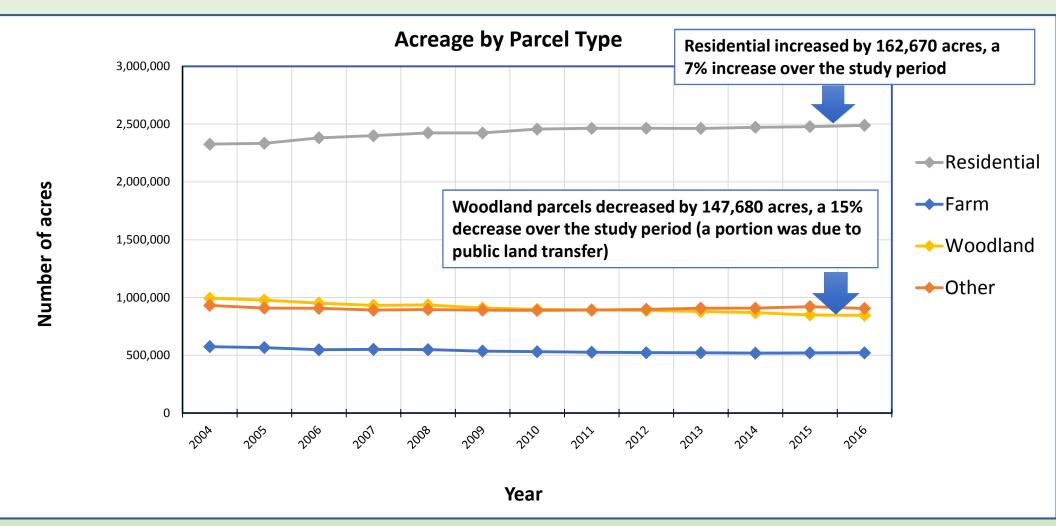
Acreage in Parcels ≥ 50 Acres in Size

tween 2004 and 2016, the amount of land in parcels 50 acres or larger declined by about 0,300 acres, or roughly 8,485 acres per year.



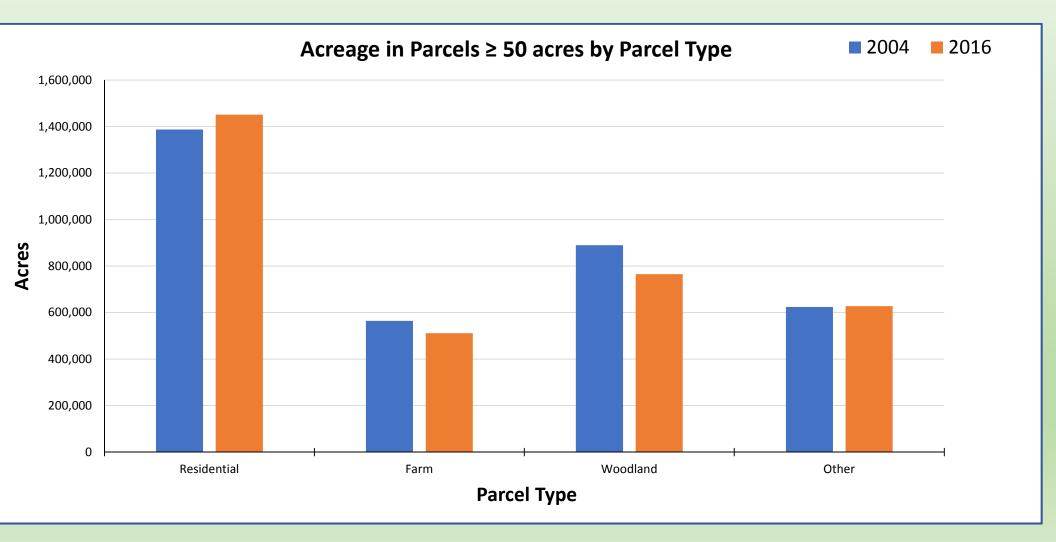
Acreage by Parcel Type

e number of acres in the "residential" category is increasing, while "farm" and "woodland" acreag creasing, with "woodland" acreage decreasing the fastest.



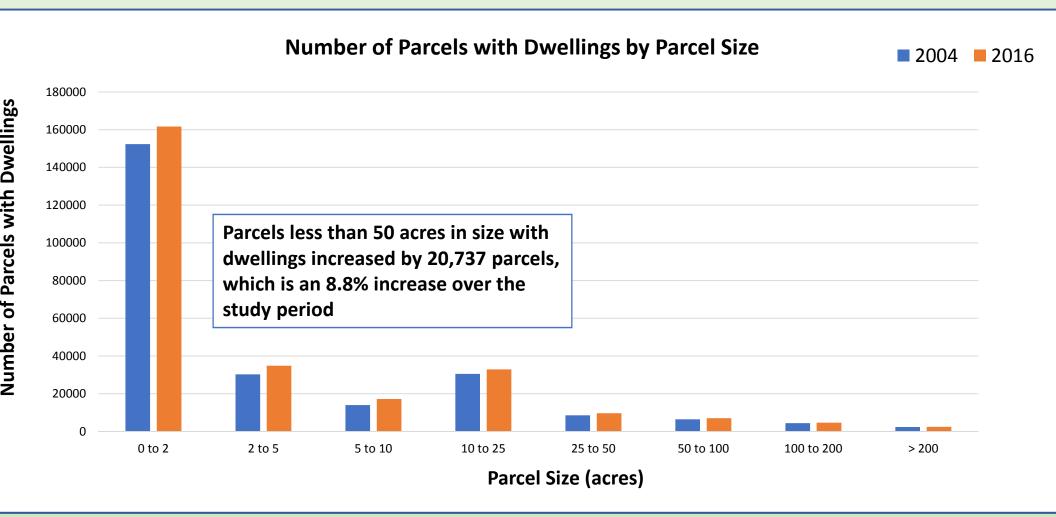
Acreage in Parcels ≥ 50 Acres by Parcel Type

e loss of large (50+ acre) woodland parcels outpaced the loss of large parcels in general.

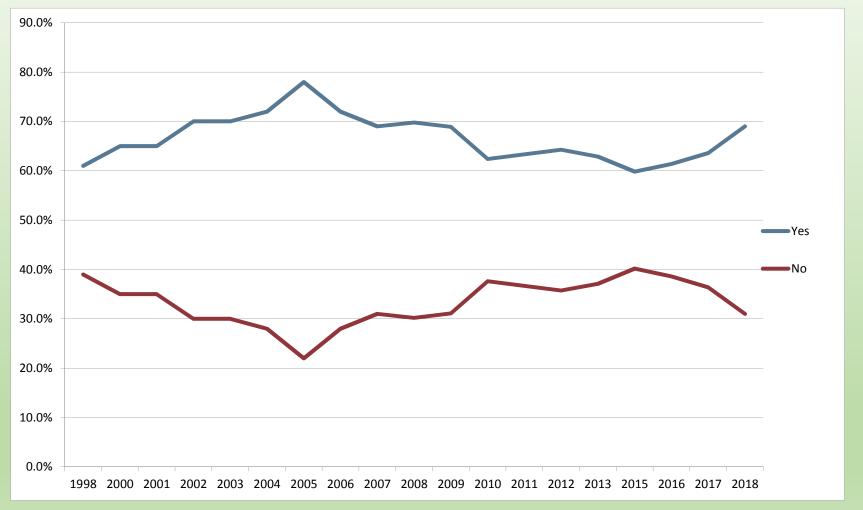


Number of Parcels with Dwellings by Parcel Size

ost dwellings are built on smaller parcels compared to larger parcels.

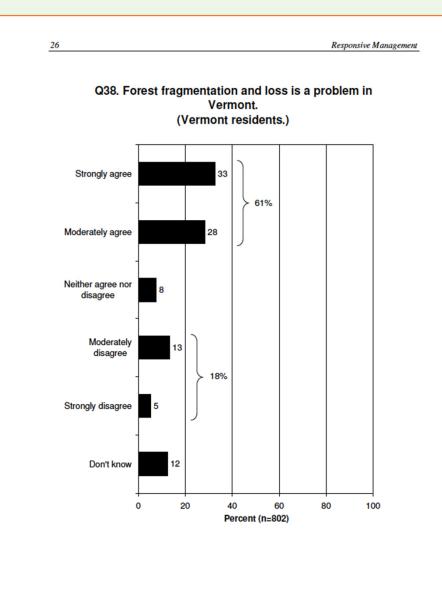


Do you feel that action should be taken to stop sprawl in Vermont?



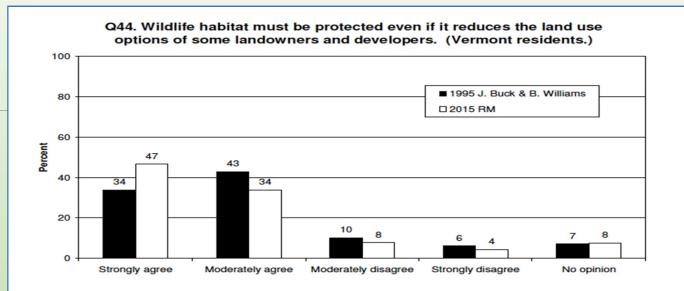
Vermonter Poll, Center for Rural Studies, University of Ver

Forest/Habitat Fragmentation

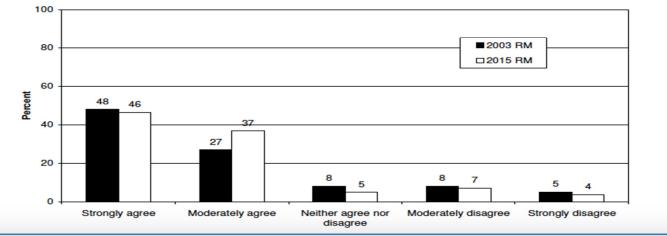


OPINIONS ON FISH, WILDI AND LAND USE AMONG VERMONT RESIDENTS, HU AND ANGLERS Conducted for the Vermon and Wildlife Department & Responsive Management Based on 802 interview w Vermont residents

Forest/Habitat Fragmentation



Q45. The use and development of land should be restricted to protect fish and wildlife. (Vermont residents.)



Conclusions

- /ermont is losing forestland, and undeveloped forest parcels at a teady rate due to increasing parcelization and development. Working ands and natural areas are affected by this trend.
- Vhile this presentation focused on forest land, other important atural resources (e.g., floodplains and river corridors) are also seeing ngoing development.
- ermont's development patterns are very land consumptive, a patter hat has gotten worse in recent years despite low population growth.
- he vast majority of rural, residential development is not subject to A 50 oversight.
- ommercial sprawl and strip development have occurred throughout
- he state, often times with the approval of Act 250.