Revisions to the Five-Year Report on the 2019 Adjacency and Subdivision Rulemaking

Tim Carr, Acting Chief Planner
April 8, 2026

DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture Conservation & Forestry

LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION

Benjamin Godsoe
Acting Executive Director

18 Elkins Lane
Augusta, ME 04333

(207) 287-2631
www.maine.gov/dacf

Overview

- Staff is seeking additional comment from Commissioners

- Report will be finalized and posted to the Adjacency webpage

- Provides data, analyses, and conclusions relevant to the CLUP update process

Presentation

- Further reporting

- Case studies of lot buy out and new dwelling permitting in Commission approved subdivisions

- Revisions to the Subdivision section

Future Reporting

- Report in 2030
  - 2019-2029
  - Improved data tracking and management implemented
  - CLUP update process
    - Continue analysis of development patterns and rules
    - Provide additional framework for the next report

Lot Buy Out and New Dwelling Permitting in Commission Approved Subdivisions

Table 7. Qualifying Subdivision Activity in the LUPC Service Area from 1999 through August 2025

	1999- 2003	2004-2008	2009-2013	2014-2019	2019-2025
Number of approved SP actions	19	31	11	5	2
Number of approved DP actions	0	4	1	0	0
Number of new land lots created (land-based) for residential development	200	367	100	23	10
Number of new dwelling units (dwelling unit-based)	0	143	6	28	0

An Unanswered Question

Why didn't subdivision permitting activity increase in the early 2020's coinciding with the explosion of residential permitting activity that occurred?

In fact, it reached the lowest level of activity in the 2019-2025 period since at least 1999.

Potential Answer: The explosion of residential permitting activity was taking place, at least in part, on existing, undeveloped subdivision lots permitted largely in the period before the 2008 financial crisis.

Prediction: As these lots are bought and built out, subdivision permitting activity will increase

- Unable to provide a sufficiently accurate analysis for the service area at this time
- Case studies of individual Commission approved subdivisions

Case Studies of Subdivision Lot Buy Out and New Dwelling Permitting

Chose 3 Subdivisions as Case Studies:

- Geographic variation
- Permitted between 1999 and 2010
- Digital parcel data available
- 20 or fewer lots

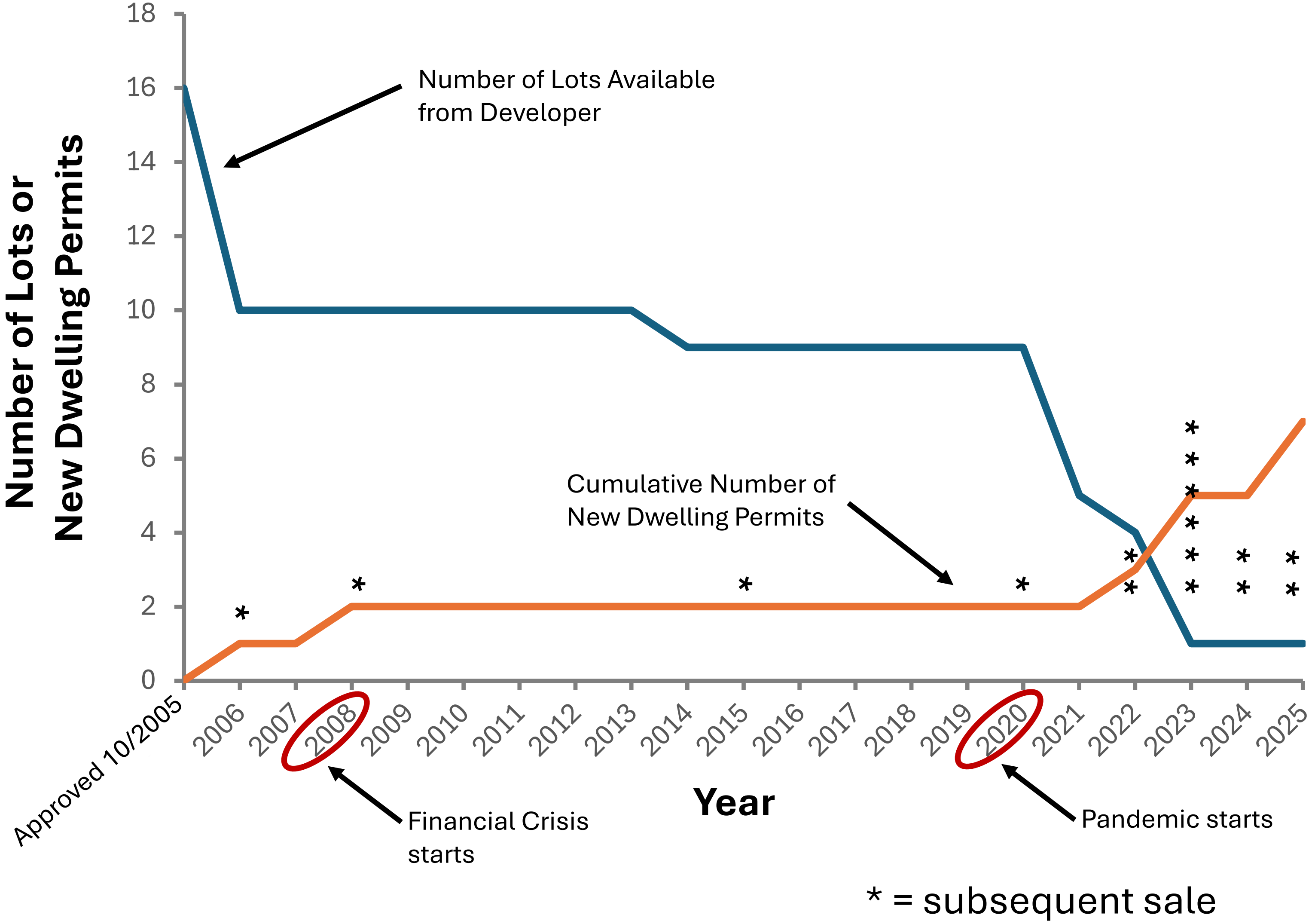
Methods:

- Deed Registry research to track buy out of lots over time
- Permitting history research in GOAT to track permitting of new dwellings over time

SP 3150-C – Blueberry Hill Acres, Phase 2, Dallas Plantation

- Franklin County
- No shoreland
- 16 residential lots
- Approved 10-11-2005

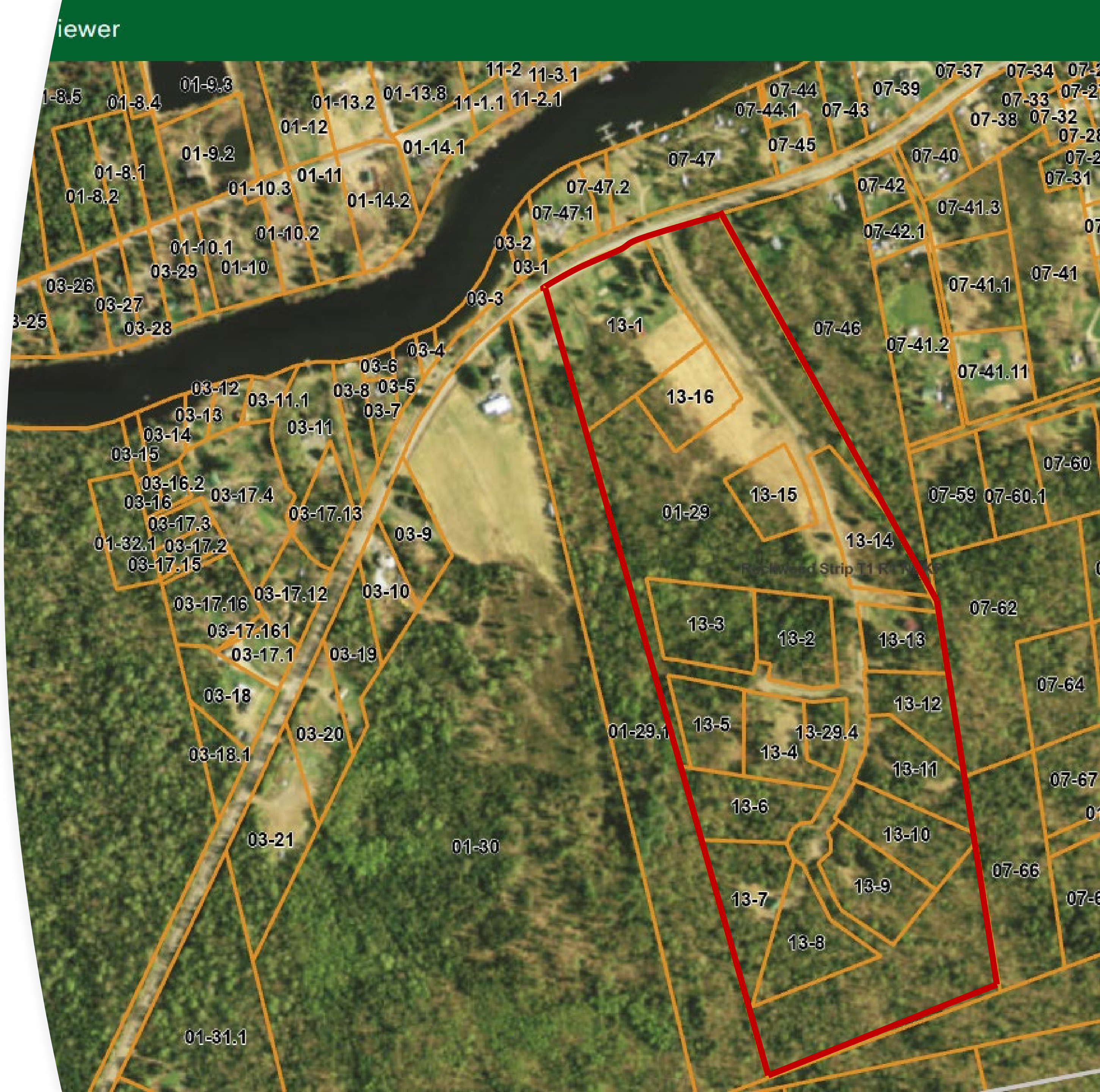
Blueberry Hill Acres, Phase 2 - Result



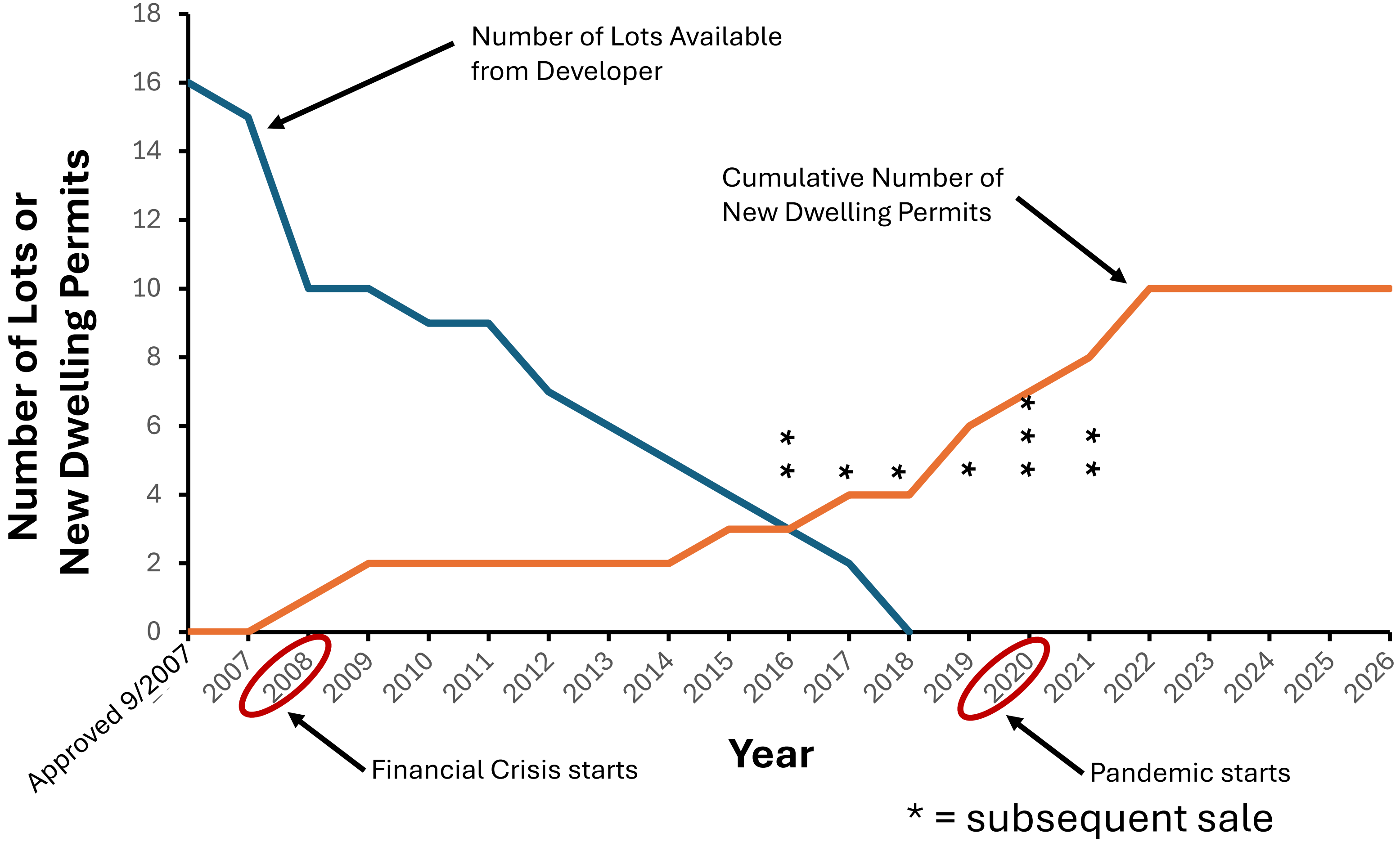
- Initial sales characterized by individuals purchasing multiple lots and not developing them
- Lots then sold during or post- pandemic
- Subsequent sales do not appear to be to family members and neighbors
- 9 lots remain available for new dwelling permits

SP 4074 – Blue Ridge Woods Subdivision in Rockwood Strip, T1 R1 NBKP

- Somerset County
- No shoreland
- 16 residential lots
- Approved 9-24-2007



Blue Ridge Woods Subdivision - Result

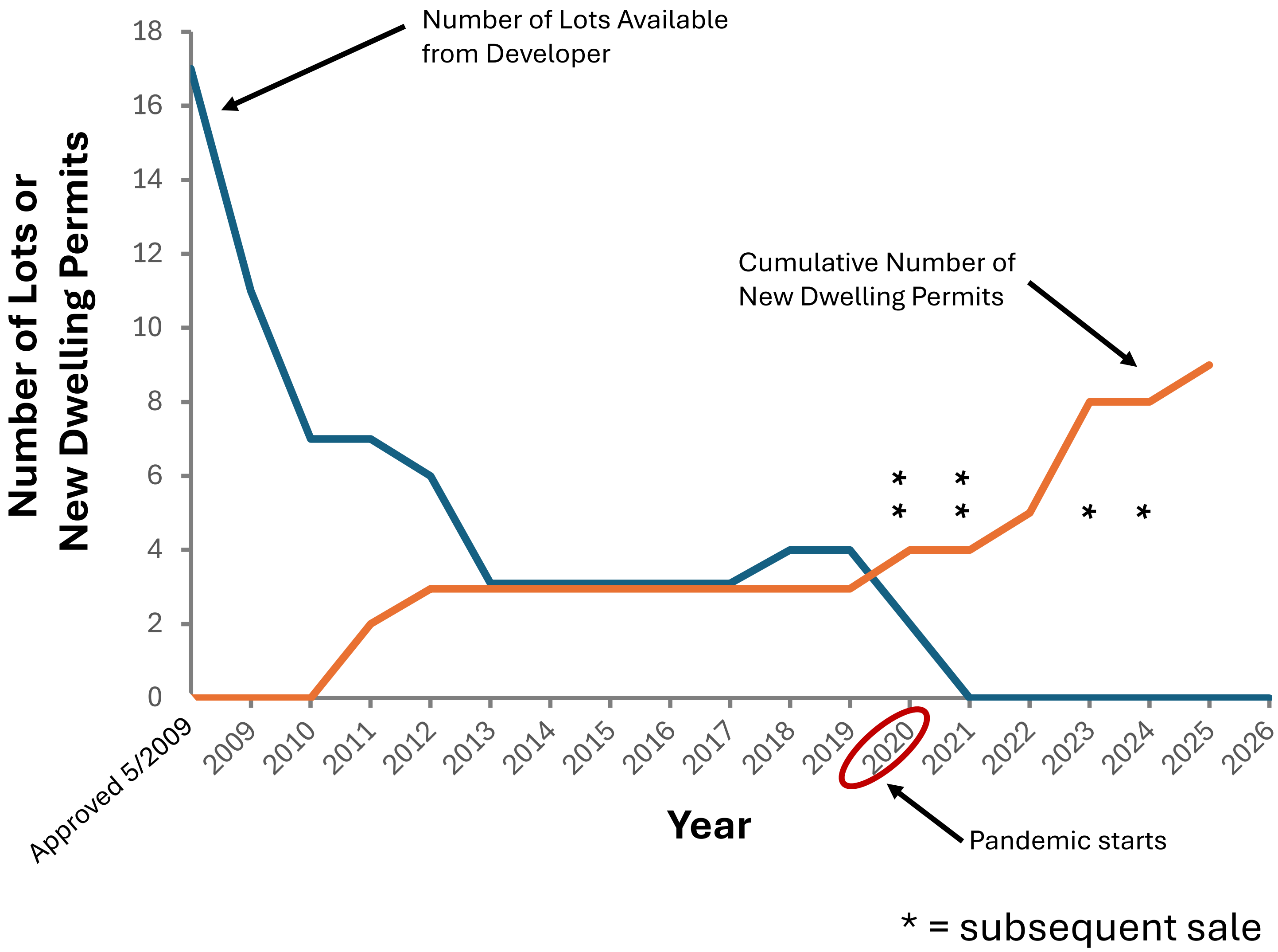


- Not characterized by individuals purchasing multiple lots and holding them undeveloped
- Initial lot sales pre-date the pandemic and were relatively steady over time after a burst in 2008
- Most permits for new dwellings up to the pandemic were for the original lot owners; those lots were generally held through the pandemic
- Permits for new dwellings during the pandemic were for subsequent lot owners
- 5 lots remain available for new dwellings (one had an existing dwelling in 2007)

SP 4083 – Bill Green Pond Subdivision in T3 R1 NBPP

- Penobscot County
- Includes shoreland development
- 17 residential lots
- Approved 5-5-2009

Bill Green Pond Subdivision - Result



- Initial sales characterized by individuals purchasing multiple lots and not developing them
- Lots then sold during pandemic
- Individuals that purchased lots by 2012 and received a permit for a new dwelling have held those lots
- Many subsequent sales appear to be to family members and neighbors
- 8 lots remain available for dwellings

Conclusions from Buy Out and Permitting Patterns

- Buy out and permitting patterns support the explanation for limited subdivision activity in 2019-2024
  - There was an extended recovery period with few or no permits for new dwellings
  - Sale of new lots varied across the case studies, but appeared affected by the 2008 financial crisis or lack of a significant recovery post-crisis
  - Sales of lots and permitting of new dwellings intensified during the pandemic
  - 48 out of the 49 lots available for the developers to sell were sold by 2023
- However, none of the subdivisions examined are fully built-out with new dwellings
- As part of the overall picture, the LUPC is seeing a significant uptick in applications for new subdivision permits in 2025-2026
  - Detailed in revisions to the report

Limitations

- Analysis does not answer the question of whether there was more residential development permitted outside of approved subdivisions in the period since 2020 than in earlier periods
    - Public preferences for being in or out of a subdivision are unknown

- Analysis does not provide a service area wide perspective

Revisions to the Subdivision Section

- Addition of a conclusion based on comparison of subdivision activity in the LUPC's service area with subdivision activity in the rural hubs as a whole
- Discussion of factors contributing to the complexity of LUPC regulations and processes
- Discussion of factors that may contribute to greater subdivision activity in municipalities
- Updated information on subdivision actions permitted and subdivision applications received since the prior draft of the report
- Modification of conclusions to include consideration of a subdivision rulemaking following the CLUP update process

Thank You*

*Thanks to Tim Beaucage for compiling and checking GOAT records

DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture Conservation & Forestry

LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION