

## SECTION 11: OGUNQUIT LAND USE 1990 - 2001 (Revised October 8, 2004)

The number of housing units changed dramatically in the 1990s. While changes in commercial land uses were less extraordinary (excluding changes in the number of seasonal lodging units), they were almost exclusively confined to the seasonal tourist industry on which Ogunquit depends.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

According to the US Census, Ogunquit had 2,114 housing units in 2000. Two-thirds of these housing units were located east of Route One. While the units west of Route One accounted for one-third of the total, they tended to be clustered near Route 1 and on the Berwick Road and Captain Thomas Road. Of these, 731 housing units (roughly 33%) are year-round and the remaining two-thirds for seasonal use.

### Housing Unit Changes 1990 - 2000<sup>1</sup>

Between 1990 and 2000, Ogunquit was one of the faster growing communities in Maine.<sup>2</sup> Planning Decisions estimates that the number of new housing units increased by 314 units, or 17 percent. The rate of growth on the west side of Route One outpaced the east side of Route One. This was primarily due to the availability of land (especially subdivided lots) and the relatively inexpensive price of residential lots to the west of Route One. Overall, growth was similar to that of York County.

**TABLE 11-1  
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS, 1990 - 2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
Ogunquit	1,800	2,114	314	17.4%
East of Route 1	1,300	1,404	104	8.0%
West of Route 1	500	710	210	42.0%
York County	79,941	94,234	14,293	17.9%

*Source: US Census; Town Records; Planning Decisions, Inc.*

<sup>1</sup> According to the US Census, a housing unit is (a) a separate living quarter in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which (b) have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. Ogunquit has an inordinate number of lodging rooms in motels, inns, and other establishments. Under the definition of the US Census, some of these units are counted as housing units, while others are not. Any discussion of housing in Ogunquit must keep in mind that some of these lodging rooms are considered to be housing units by the US Census.

<sup>2</sup> Difficulties with past US Census counts make decennial comparisons challenging. The Census reported 1,759 housing units in 1980. Town documents suggest this figure was too high – likely the result of miscounting Wells housing units as Ogunquit housing units in Ogunquit’s first ever census count. In addition, town documents suggest that the 1990 Census count of 1,469 housing units was unusually low.

**TABLE 11-2  
HOUSING UNITS: YEAR-ROUND COMPARED TO SEASONAL**

	East of Rte 1		West of Rte 1		Ogunquit	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Year-round Units	406	28.9%	325	45.8%	731	34.6%
Seasonal Units	998	71.1%	385	54.2%	1,383	65.4%
Total	1,404	100.0%	710	100.0%	2,114	100.0%

*Source: US Census*

A higher proportion of seasonal housing units are located east of Route One, closer to the ocean and cultural amenities in Ogunquit. Nearly three-quarters of the housing units east of Route One are seasonal, while roughly half of the units west of Route One are seasonal.

Three quarters of the housing units in Ogunquit are single-family. Multi-unit housing accounts for another 20%. Areas west of Route 1 are more likely to be single-family units and the majority of the multi-unit housing is located east of Route 1.

**TABLE 11-3  
UNITS IN STRUCTURE, 2000**

	East of Rte 1		West of Rte 1		Ogunquit	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single	984	70.1%	621	87.5%	1,605	75.9%
Duplex	64	4.6%	23	3.2%	87	4.1%
3 - 9 units	122	8.7%	46	6.5%	168	7.9%
More than 9 units	234	16.7%	0	0.0%	234	11.1%
Mobile/other	0	0.0%	20	2.8%	20	0.9%

*Source: US Census*

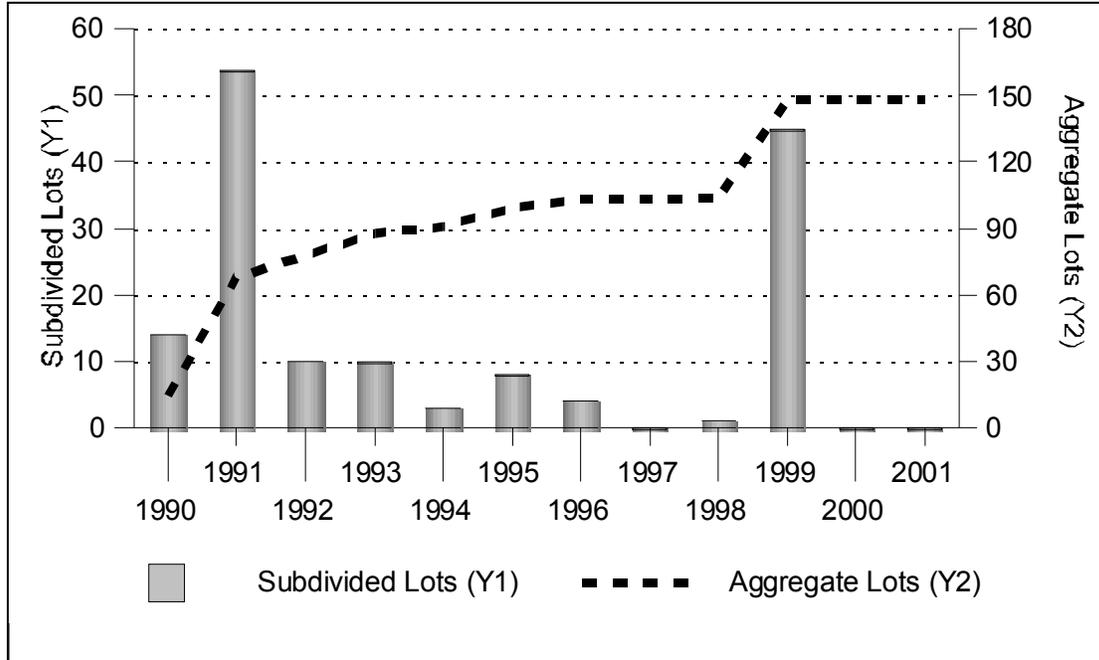
### **Subdivision Approvals by the Planning Board 1990 - 2001**

Between 1990 and 2001, the Planning board approved 149 subdivided lots for residential construction. In most years, subdivision approvals were modest – between 5 and 15 new lots. The number of subdivided lots in 1991 and 1999 (54 and 37 lots respectively) stand out as unusually large for Ogunquit. In 1991, the modular home park, Riverbrook Park, located west of Route One behind the Ogunquit Motel was approved. In 1999, the Windward subdivision was approved. No new subdivision activity was recorded in 2000 or 2001.

Nearly all of the 149 approved lots are located on the west side of Route 1. Three lots were created at the intersection of Bourne Lane and Shore Road on the east side of Route 1. The

remaining lots were created primarily in the Captain Thomas Road area and the Berwick Road area.

**FIGURE 11-1**



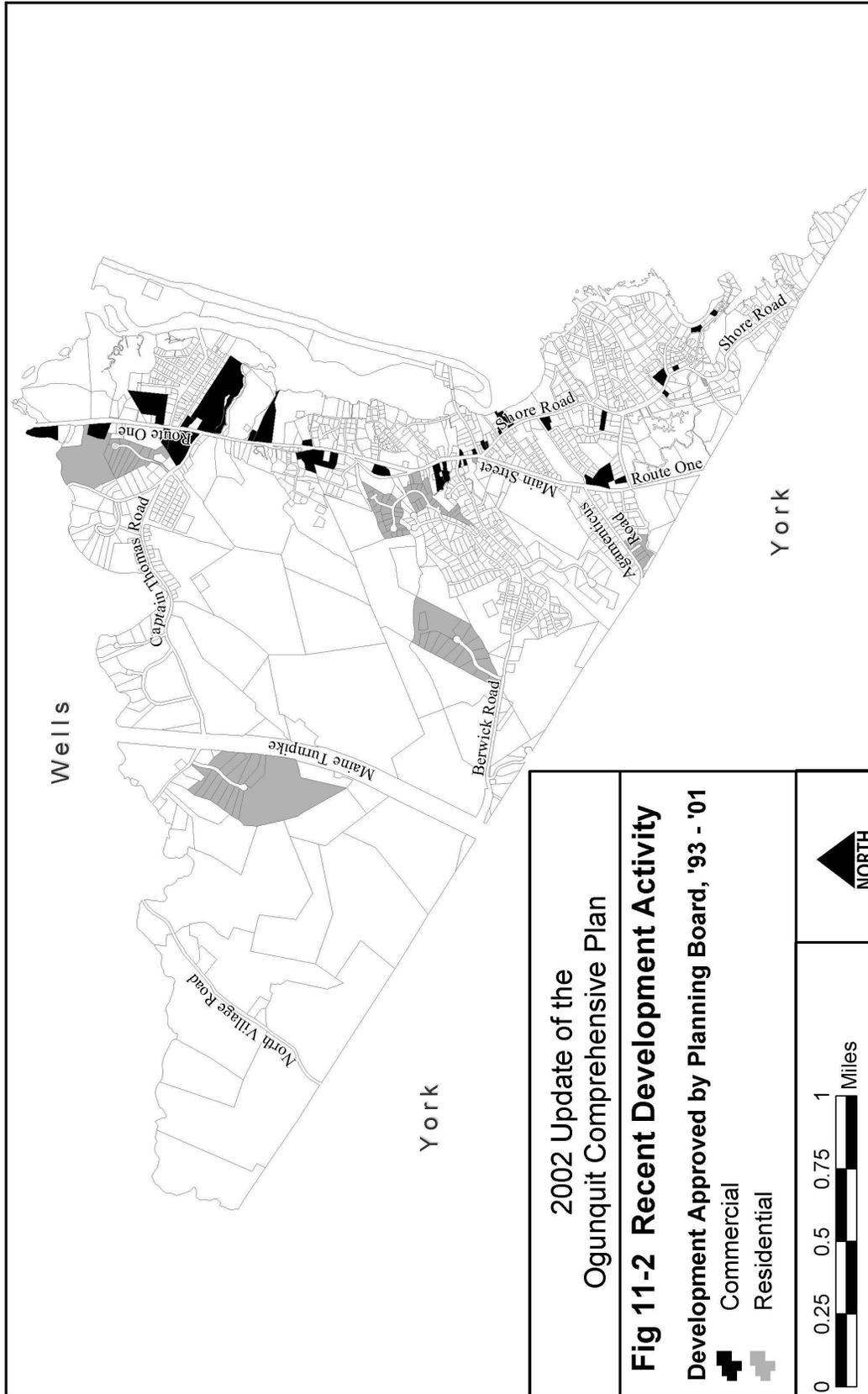
Source: Town Records

**Subdivision Activity, 1990 - 2001**

Residential growth patterns between 1990 and 2000 suggest a changing pattern of land use in Ogunquit. Most of the residential development and nearly all of the subdivision activity occurred to the west of Route One. Available land east of Route One is becoming more scarce and more expensive. These two factors, coupled with relatively available land to the west of Route One suggest that future residential development will be more likely to the west of Route One. This changing pattern of housing could impact the manner in which the town delivers services and locates facilities.

**Commercial Agriculture and Commercial Forestry Uses**

Because of Ogunquit’s small geographic extent, it contains little land area outside of the historic village and the Route 1 commercial corridor. Blocks of vacant, forested acreage can be found west of Route 1. However, any recent forestry activity has been incidental, or only as a one-time venture prior to converting such land to new residential uses. River Lily Farm on North Village Road sells fir trees and produce, and is the only known significant instance of ongoing commercial farming and forestry in the Town.



## **COMMERCIAL LAND USE CHANGES APPROVED BY THE PLANNING BOARD**

Most approved changes in commercial activity between 1990 and 2001 were in and around the tourist industry. The most changes occurred in the restaurant and lodging industry. The Planning Board approved four new restaurants/cafes, twelve that were enlarged, and another three structures to be changed into restaurants. In lodging, at least 142 rooms/units were created, most of which were expansions or changes of use.

In the retail industry, nine retail shops were approved and two spaces became retail shops from another use. In addition, new office space was created in two separate structures, and one theater was changed into retail space.

Nearly all of the changes in commercial activity occurred either on Route 1 or on Shore Road. A handful of changes occurred in Perkins Cove.

## **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS FROM LAND USE TREND**

The land use trends of the 1990s are likely to continue during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The east side of Route One is mostly built-out and, therefore, new houses and other new dwelling-units are much more likely to be built on the west side of Route One where land is available and cheaper. During the 1990s, fully 2/3 of new dwellings were built on the west side of Route One. A major portion, probably more than half, of the 210 new houses west of Route One were constructed on recent subdivision lots created since 1990 (150 new house-lots). There has been no large residential subdivision of land on the east side of Route One since at least 1990.

The modest rate of new dwelling-unit construction is likely to continue. While Ogunquit had about a 17% increase in dwelling-units during the 90s (similar to York County as a whole), the Town had a 26% increase in population, considerably faster than the County. This is certainly due to the fact that 71% of the dwelling-units east of Route One were seasonal homes as were 58% west of Route One. The aging median age of Ogunquit residents suggests that a significant portion of the additional people in Town during the 90s were retiree who had made their seasonal homes into their primary residences.

Whether the retiree seasonal home converters actually live in their new primary home in Ogunquit year-round or only part of the year, the effect is still the same. These new members of the year-round Ogunquit community did not need to build a new house to become primary-home residents of Ogunquit.

The rising median income of Ogunquit households during the 90s also reflects the higher income level of many of the new retirees in Town but also of the new homebuyers. The cost of either purchasing an existing home east of Route One or buying a new subdivision lot and building a new house requires a higher income. It is difficult for moderate or lower income households to afford a new house in Ogunquit. Middle and lower income households in Town are likely to be either natives from way back who still own some of the family's ancestral land or retirees who converted a modest summer cottage they had purchased before 1980.

The land use pattern emerging in Ogunquit (and to a greater or lesser extent along the entire southern Maine coast) is characterized by four strips of land parallel to the shore. The first strip of land in Ogunquit along the shoreline east of Route One is characterized by very expensive year-round and seasonal homes. Along Shore Road and in Perkins Cove it is also characterized by historic or historic-influenced tourist lodgings, restaurants and retail shops. The second strip is the land on either side of Route One in which the contemporary motel strip, tourist-oriented restaurants and retail shops are located. The third strip is land west of Route One over to the Turnpike in which there is a mixture of year-round and seasonal homes, mostly single-family houses. Beyond the Turnpike to the west is traditional rural Maine supporting fields and forestland with few roads and only scattered houses. This area is likely to remain rural because it is hard to get to, has only one road accessed from Ogunquit through either Wells or York and new subdivision lots would need to be very large thus new subdivision roads very long and expensive.

The strip between Route One and the Turnpike continues to be in transition from rural to urban and is where the most land use activity may be expected. With the continued availability of public water and sewer, this area is certain to continue to receive development pressure for residential subdivisions and for multi-family site plans. From high income housing, such as in the Windward Subdivision (1999), to more modestly-priced housing, as in the Riverbrook Manufactured Home Park (1990), a range of housing prices responding to the market may be expected. Interestingly, the moderate price of the initial manufactured house in Riverbrook Park are reportedly considerably higher at resale reflecting the continued strong demand for retirement housing in Town. The market will continue to attract retirees, from moderate to high incomes, seeking retirement condominiums, as well as higher income families seeking second homes.

Ogunquit will continue to be challenged on how best to respond to the continuing market pressures for high cost houses as well as moderate to high cost retirement housing. In order for the Town to effectively address the housing needs of its dwindling lower income natives, especially new families starting out, the Town will need to formulate and implement realistic measures to provide affordable housing within - or in spite of - the existing land use and housing trends along the coast. If the Town is to continue to accommodate its tourist economy, the Town will need to formulate and implement measures to house the increasing number of seasonal workers in its hospitality industry.

The Town is challenged by the developing area immediately west of Route One. What needs to be resolved is what the townspeople want with respect to all or a portion of this area becoming an extension of the existing village with an inter-connected road pattern and village-scale density of development. There is an option for a portion of this area to become a suburban area with large lot single-family housing. There is an option for multi-family housing in this area, including retiree condominiums or moderate-income apartments. There is still opportunity for parks, open space and public trails in the developing area between Route One and the Turnpike before development, either planned or unplanned, overtakes the area.