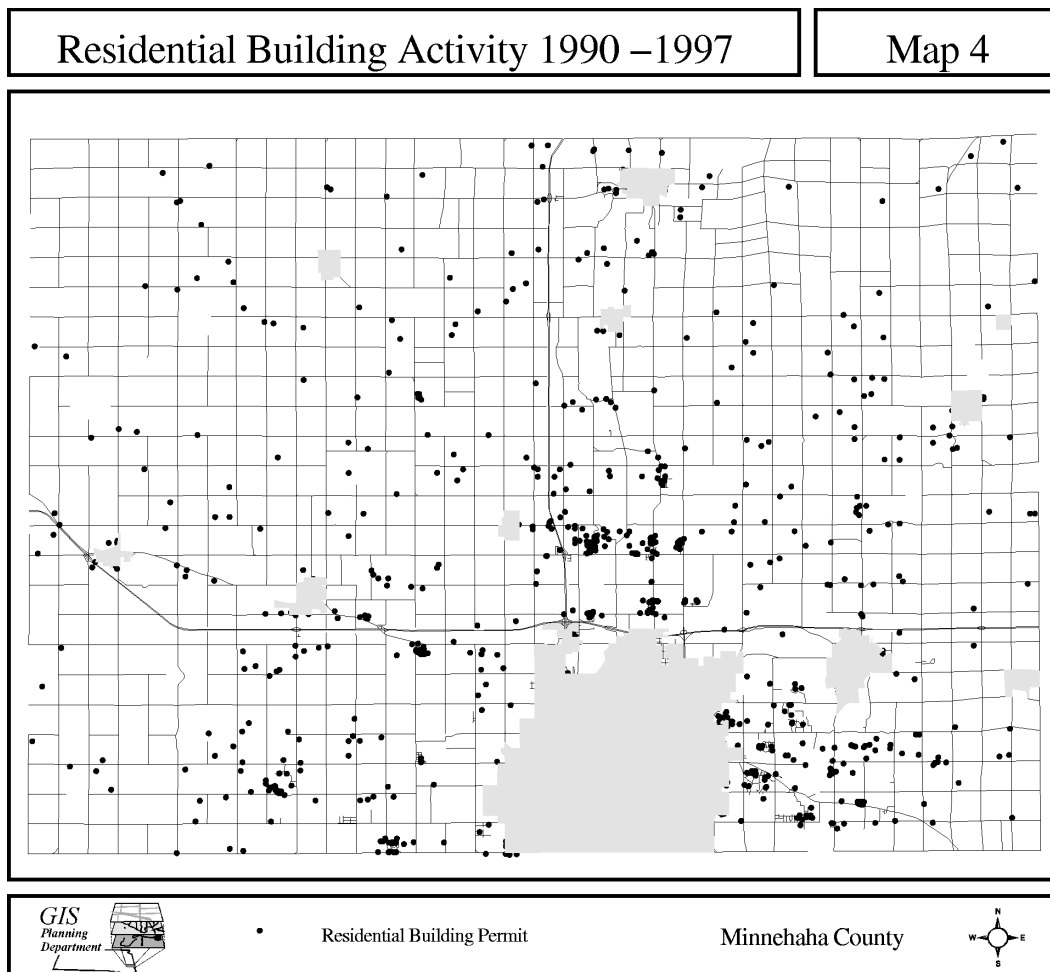


## Residential Land Use

The total number of housing units in Minnehaha County exceeded 59,000 in 1997. Over 5,400 housing units were located in the rural area. The distribution of rural single-family dwellings is shown on Map 3.

Municipalities collectively added 8,500 units to the county's housing supply between 1990 and 1997. Although 77 percent of these new units were constructed in Sioux Falls, building activity in the smaller cities accounted for 1,265 new units during the period.

While most residential construction occurred within municipal service areas, over 900 housing units were built in the unincorporated area where urban services do not exist. Almost half of the units were built in the townships bordering Sioux Falls - Split Rock, Mapleton and Wayne. Map 4 displays the location of single-family residential building permits for the period 1990-1997.



Split Rock Township, located east of Sioux Falls, is the fastest growing and most heavily populated township in the county. The rolling hills and scenic beauty of the Big Sioux River valley and the short driving distance to work places in Sioux Falls have enticed residents to move into the township. Developers capitalized on this market and created several large rural subdivisions during the 1970's. Scattered acreages are also prevalent throughout the township. Since 1990, 251 houses have been built in Split Rock Township, raising the total number of units to 966.

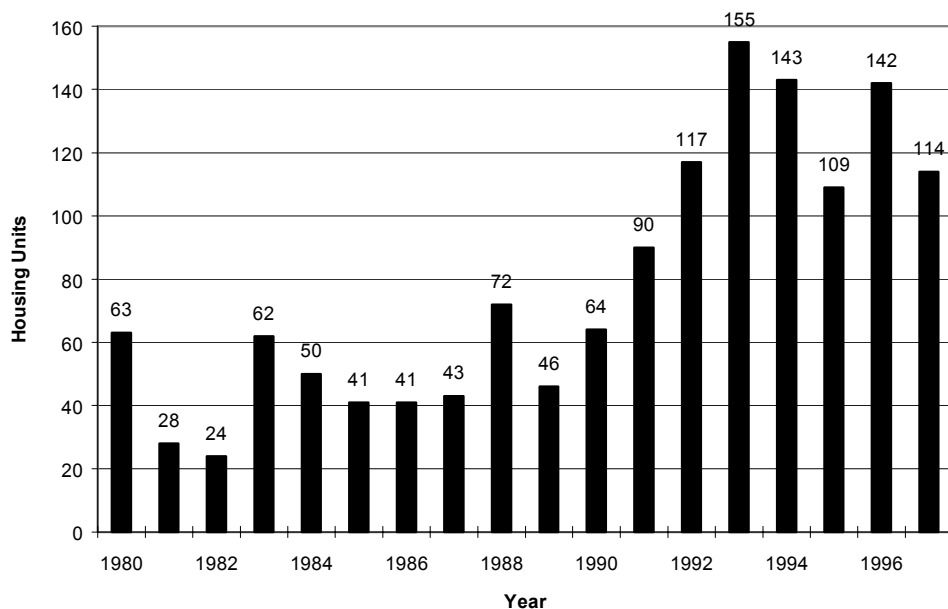
The townships of Mapleton and Wayne, located north and west respectively of Sioux Falls, together added 192 new housing units during this same period. In contrast to Split Rock, fringe developments which occurred in these two townships during the 1970's have been annexed into Sioux Falls. A majority of the 749 housing units in Mapleton Township are concentrated along the State Highway 115 (Cliff Avenue) corridor between Sioux Falls and Renner. A few large subdivisions have developed in Wayne Township but overall the 500 total housing units are more dispersed than in the other two townships.

Outlying townships have maintained more of a rural character due in part to greater commuting distances into Sioux Falls and the adoption of stronger zoning controls prior to development pressures. Farmers in these areas also appear to be more committed to the preservation of agricultural land and are not as likely to sell property for nonfarm use. Fourteen of the 23 townships in Minnehaha County have less than 200 housing units each and nonfarm dwellings are generally located on isolated acreages rather than in subdivision developments. Farm consolidations have resulted in the conversion of farmsteads for nonfarm residential use.

Minnehaha County amended its zoning ordinance in 1988 to limit residential density on agriculturally zoned property to one dwelling per quarter quarter section of land. A review of permit statistics (Figure 2) would imply that the density standard has not curtailed but rather led to

**FIGURE 2**

**Residential Building Permits  
1980-1997  
Rural Minnehaha County**



increased residential construction. While there has been a steady increase in building activity since 1988, other factors have played a significant role in lessening the immediate impact of density controls.

Density zoning recognizes previously recorded property descriptions and as such allows building eligibility based on legal descriptions which existed at the time of the ordinance change. A substantial amount of agricultural land was split into subdivisions and acreages in the 1970's, but the supply of lots far exceeded demand and the land remained undeveloped. As the regional economy expanded, gasoline prices stabilized and mortgage interest rates dropped, the rural housing market strengthened. Some of this demand was absorbed by previously vacant rural properties unaffected by density zoning standards. It is expected that density zoning will have a greater impact over the long term as existing parcels are developed.