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Commodification of the landscape around Ushiku City

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Ushiku City has approximately 80,000 people and is located approximately 60 km from Ueno train station in Tokyo on the Joban line. It is an amalgamation of smaller towns and village. The city functions as a bedroom community of Tokyo with a large proportion of the working population working in Tokyo or surrounding communities. Ushiku has transformed itself from a group of agrarian towns to a commuter city. This paper will describe this transformation from its agrarian roots to its present status as a commuter city of Tokyo as well as a retirement community. Commodification of resources has occurred while this transformation has taken place. As Perkins (2006) states "restructuring" has taken place. This paper will first define and describe commodification. Second, I will apply this concept to changes that have occurred in Ushiku, in particular the abandonment of agriculture and the growing importance of recreation and culture in the landscape.

Keywords: agriculture, newcomers, fallow, recreation trails, culture