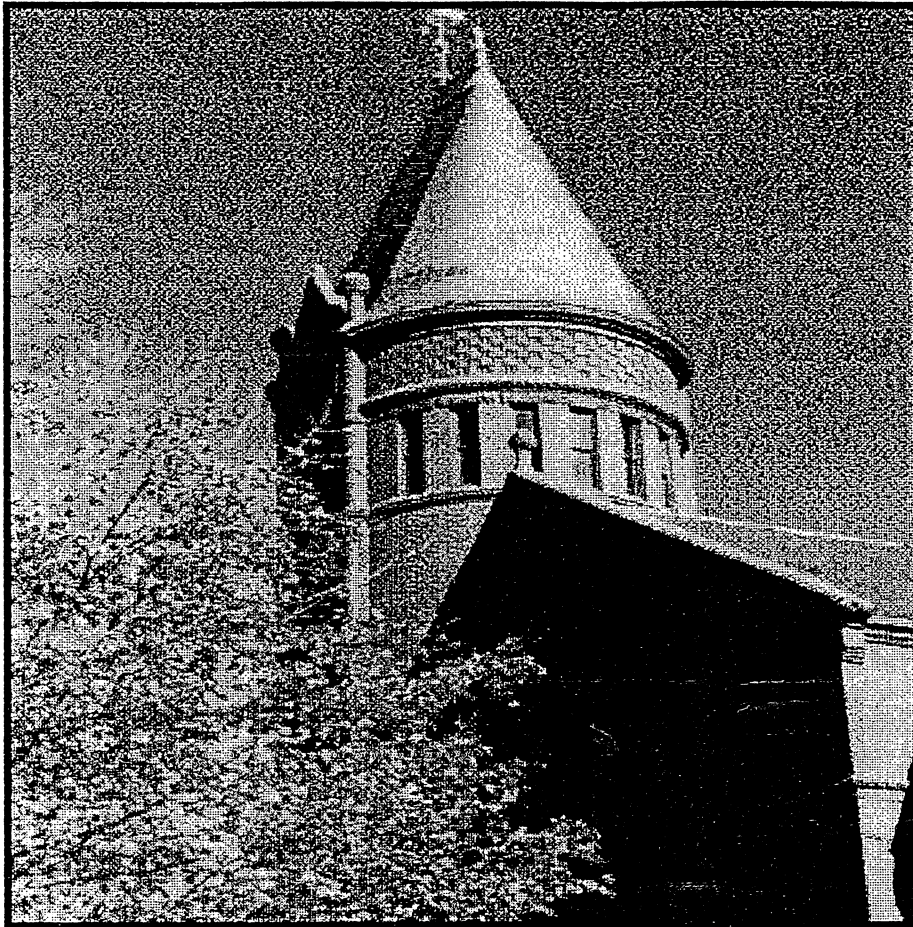


Town of Southbridge 107 Local Partnership

Economic Development Action Plan



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November 22, 1995

Southbridge Economic Development Plan

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I. Existing Conditions/Community Profile



A. Southbridge Population

1. Population, Demographics, Income Characteristics & Trends

Southbridge has an estimated 1990 US Census population of 17,816. The Town's population showed a modest increase since 1980 of 6.9 %. Since 1950, the Town has seen its population rise and fall from low points in 1960 (16,523 persons) and 1980 (16,665 persons) to its current level. The Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) indicates a positive growth trend for Southbridge into the Year 2010. MISER shows a 2000 population of 18,887 and a peak level in the Year 2010 of an estimated 20,152 persons in Southbridge.

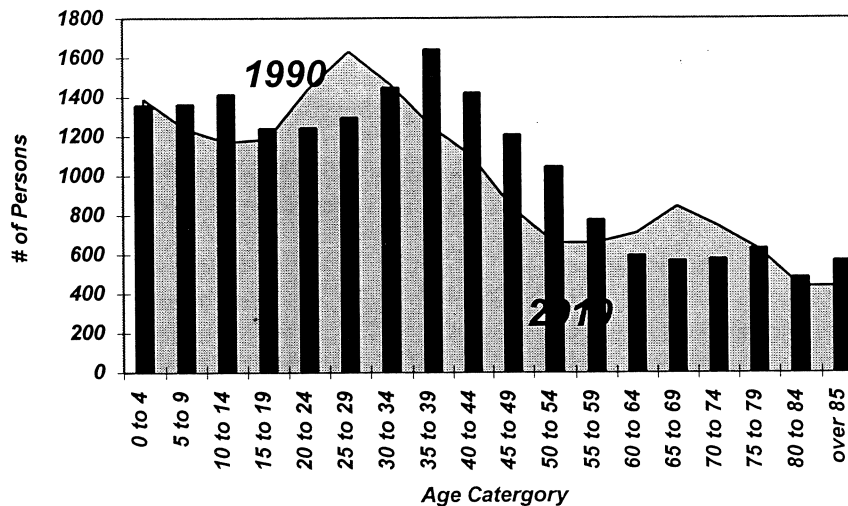
Households in Southbridge increased during the 1980/1990 decade from 6,225 to 6,897 households, a 10.8 % increase. Female headed households, a traditional indicator of whether a family falls within the low and moderate income category, in 1990 made up 14.43 % of the Town (995 households). The number of families with a single mother below the poverty level stands at approximately 6.85 % of the population of Southbridge. This trend is of particular importance to this EOCD funded economic development study relative to program benefit.



As shown in Exhibit I, the age distribution of Southbridge in the coming years will see interesting changes. Beyond the normal shift of age groups, the population over 60 may actually decrease, although the median age of the community may be higher. In short, Southbridge like the country as a whole is getting older, but the estimates for the Town point to a smaller number of senior citizens in Town.

Exhibit I

Town of Southbridge Population Projection
- Age Distribution



Concerning local income, in 1990, the Town of Southbridge had a per capital income of \$12,924. The total annual payroll of community businesses equaled \$150,868,600. The median income of Southbridge households in 1990 was \$27,834. This median income was below the regional mean of \$41,791. To establish effective EOCD / CDBG based targets for economic development programs and activities, the Town of Southbridge needs to channel it's policies and local and state financial resources towards specific demographic groups within the community. Local trends indicate that the Town should meet the needs of specific targeted groups in order to see positive economic development change and in order to meet the national objectives of the CDBG program. The team recommends that economic development program benefits evolving from Southbridge's Action Plan be shaped to targeted recipient groups as defined by this community profile.

In summary, the consultant team reviewed population and income trends within the community to help define a current workable profile of Southbridge. This planning task assists in establishing targets for economic development activities. The following demographic data (Table I) is summarized to represent the intended targets for change.

Table I
Town of Southbridge Community Profile

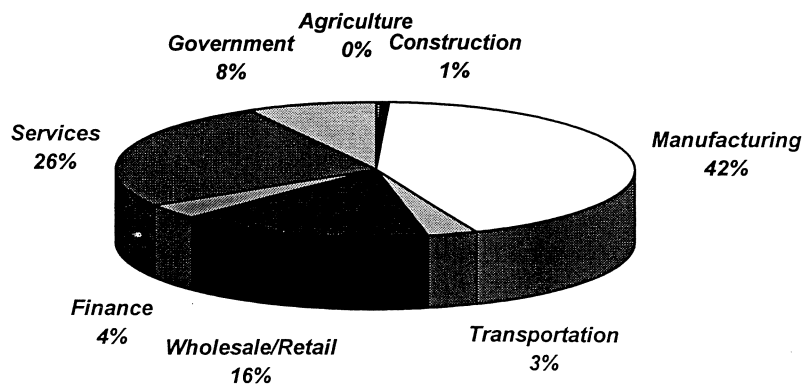
• Age Distribution	Under 5 years	1,362 persons
	5 - 17 years	3,107 persons
	18 - 64 years	10,224 persons
	65+ years	3,101 persons
• Median Age		33.03 years
• Total Households		6,897 households
	with children	2,400 households
	with household head 65+ years	1,844 households
• Total Families		4,702 families
• Female head of household below poverty level		322 families
• Place of Residence 1975/1985		6,998
• Persons in Poverty		2,020 persons
• Persons in Poverty 65+		217 persons
• Low and Moderate Income Households		3130 households
• Per Capita Income		\$12,924
• Unemployment Rate		6.5 %
• Labor Force		8,289 persons
• Median Household Income		\$27,834

2. Labor Force Characteristics

In 1990, Southbridge had total employment of 8192 persons. This labor force increased to 12,400 in 1993. In spite of the strain of national and regional trends, labor force data shows that manufacturing remains the largest employer in the community (42%) with personal/retail services the next largest employer with 2726 persons (26%). Another large employer is whole/retail trade (1019 jobs). Refer to Exhibit II for a 1992 breakdown of employment.

Exhibit II

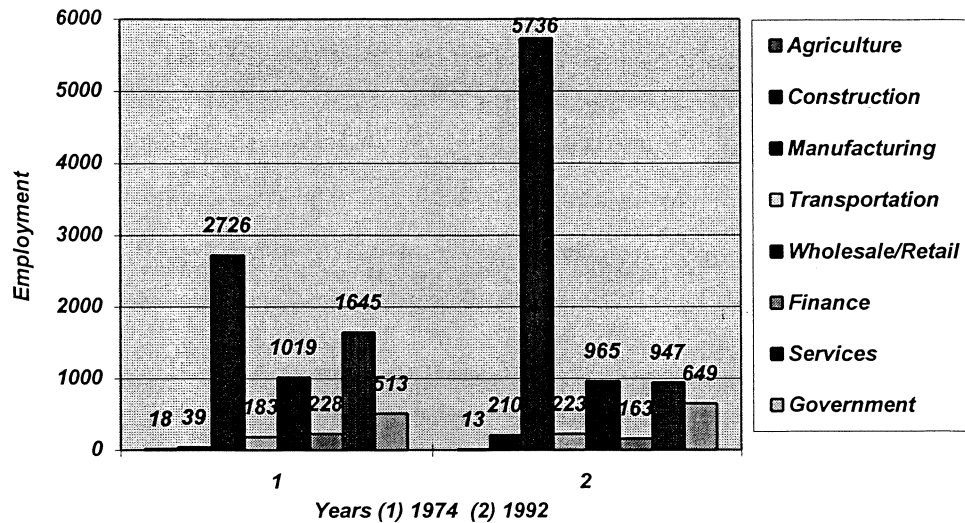
Town of Southbridge Employment 1992



Additionally, labor force trends from 1974 to 1992 show a surprising increase in manufacturing employment, but a decline in wholesale/retail employment and services (Exhibit III).

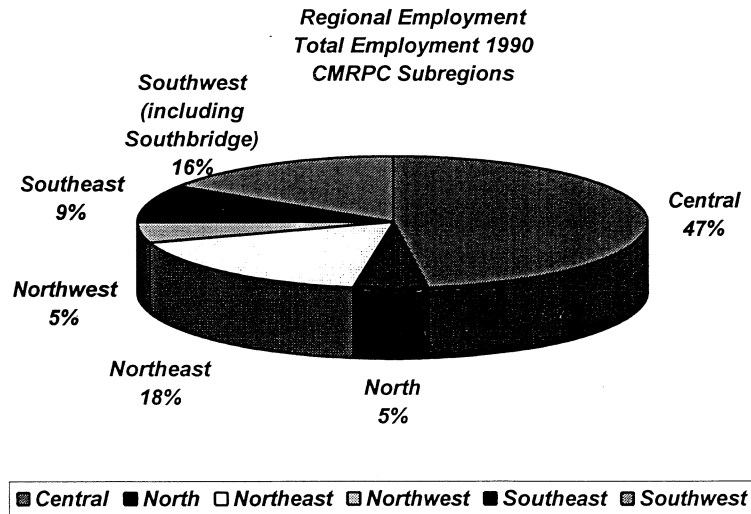
Exhibit III

Town of Southbridge Employment Activity
1974 to 1992



In the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) service area in which Southbridge is situated, the Town (Exhibit IV) has the third largest concentration of employment at 16% behind Worcester and the Northeast section (Shrewsbury, Westboro and points east).

Exhibit IV



In the area served by the Tri-Community Chamber of Commerce, the following business in 1994 were the major employers providing 4949 jobs for persons in and around Southbridge:

<u>Company Name</u>	<u># of Employees</u>
Harrington Memorial Hospital	554
Cabot Safety Corp.	510
Publick House	400
Old Sturbridge Village	342
Hyde Manufacturing	300
Russell Harrington Cutlery	300
Sturbridge Host Hotel	255
Providence House	254
American Optical	250
Schott Fiber Optics	245
Galileo Electro-Optics	217
Spectran Corp.	162
Charlton Masonic Home	160
G & F Industries	148
Arland Tool Co.	119
A & M Tool and Die Co.	112
CPC Engineering - Wheelabrator	74
Transtec Lasers	66
L & P Convertors	65
Command Marketing	58
Southbridge Sheet Metal Co.	58
Incom, Inc.	55
Bermer Tool and Die, Inc.	55
The News	45
Westwood, Inc.	33
Boniface Tool and Die Co. Inc.	30
Southbridge Tool	29
J.I. Morris	21
Henke - Sass Wolfe	17
Applied Fiber Optics	15
<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>4949</u>

In January 1994, Southbridge had an unemployment rate of 8.2%. By January 1995, unemployment in the town had decreased to 6.6%. While increasing in April to 7.7%, the May 1995 unemployment figures identify Southbridge with a 6.5% unemployment rate.

Although lower than a year and a half ago, Southbridge's unemployment is the highest of all major cities and towns in Central Massachusetts. The state unemployment in the Spring of 1995 was 4.6% with Central Massachusetts at 4.4%. The region in which Southbridge is located, the Worcester-Connecticut Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), had the lowest unemployment with 4.2%. Therefore, the Town's relatively poor employment performance is particularly alarming given the much better performance in the municipalities of southern Worcester County and northern Connecticut.

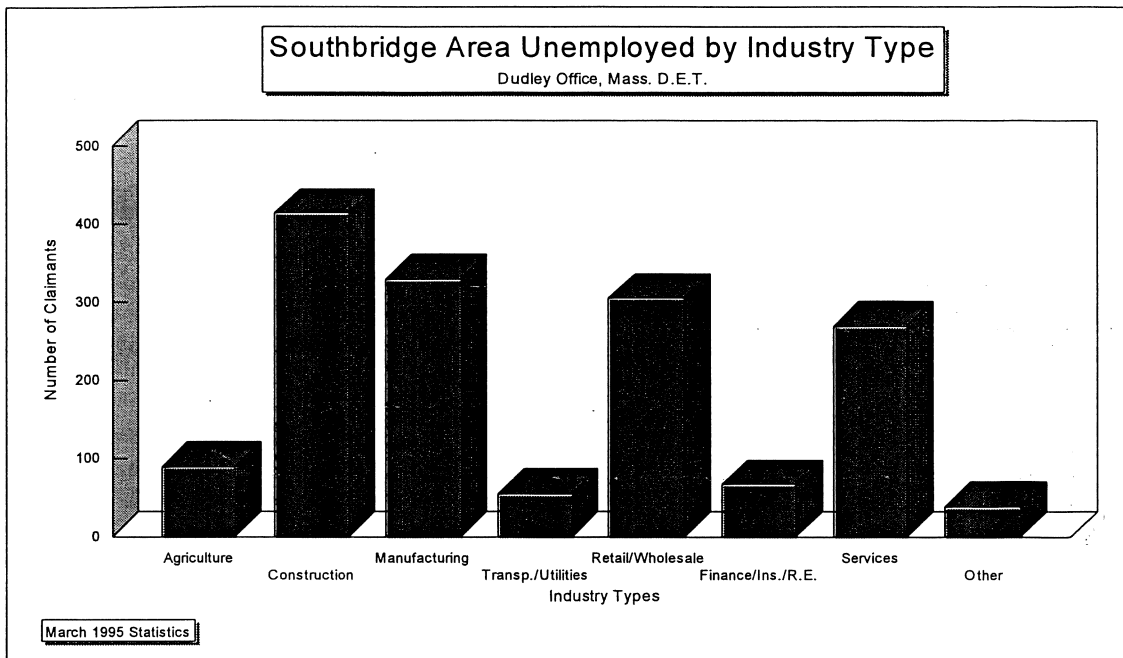
In speaking with Donata Martin, the head of the state's Department of Employment and Training (DET) for the area, the consultant team found that some indicators are good. Lower

unemployment rates throughout the region are supported by a trend where there are currently more job orders from companies than there are people to fill them. In reviewing DET listings of

jobs dated May 22, 1995 and June 9, 1995, however, there were 19 jobs advertised in May with 17 of these same jobs re-advertised in the June bulletin. Hourly wages for jobs listed in the June bulletin ranged from \$2.55 per hour to \$15.00 per hour.

Statistics provided by the John Zimatravich and Robert Austin of the Dudley office of the DET identify the characteristics of the individuals seeking employment in the Southbridge area. Approximately 94% of people seeking services through DET are white. 5% are Hispanic and slightly more than 1% are black or Asian. Approximately 70% are male. Nearly 60% are between the ages of 25 and 44 and nearly 20% are between 45 and 54. Over 70% earned more than \$300 per week prior to becoming unemployed. 80% have been unemployed for more than five (5) weeks, with 30% being unemployed for more than 15 weeks. The largest category of unemployed come from the construction trades (26%) followed by manufacturing (21%) and retail/wholesale (19%). Refer to Exhibit V for data on unemployment by type in Southbridge.

Exhibit V



Monthly claims at the Dudley office can reach 2000 per month. The office is expanding its relationships with Southbridge employers and is providing direct personnel services to firms, such as Russell Harrington Cutlery Co. DET states that transportation is an important factor to people becoming employed. With little public transportation in the area, people are dependent on personal vehicles. Many of DET claimants either do not drive or cannot afford a car.

DET sees a growing need to serve the Hispanic/Latino population in the Southbridge area. Part of the problem is language, but this factor is further complicated by many Latino people in the area being illiterate in their native language. It becomes difficult to train these people in English when they are not proficient in Spanish.

In order to better understand the needs of the low and moderate income people in Southbridge, both the DET and the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (formerly Welfare

provided information and undertook an informal survey of their client base. The consultant team set out to gather pertinent caseload data, thus our request for information from these two (2) agencies focused on:

1. Caseload- quantity over a selected period (annual , monthly, weekly, etc.).What are the trends- increasing, decreasing?
2. What are the demographic characteristics of your client caseload? Age, race, education level , gender, language, etc.
3. Where applicable, What are the employment related needs of the client case load? How can the Southbridge community better serve these people - .types of jobs, education resources, etc.?
4. Of the caseload, what proportion are employable in their current status?
5. What job wages or salary are identified to effectively supplant unemployment benefits and/or transitional assistance?
6. Is transportation a factor in keeping clients out of the work force? What proportion of the caseload has private transportation?

In addition to the above information, it became important to review client caseload. Without identifying individual respondents, the following information was requested:

1. Highest grade level completed in school.
2. The last job held by the respondent, by job type.
3. How long unemployed?
4. Any formal /vocational training in addition to education in item # 1.
5. Identify any language barriers.
6. Identify any transportation barriers to getting a job.
7. Does the respondent have a telephone? If not, identify a way which people can make contact with the respondent.
8. What types of jobs does the respondent want?

A summary of AFDC data that was received by the team is contained in Appendix I. This data provides a snap-shot of the local AFDC caseload and its characteristics. This AFDC information provides a community profile of persons in the most need of program benefits (education, job training and employment) within the Town of Southbridge. These clients, especially low and moderate income clients, would be the most likely candidates and targets for community economic development activities and policies noted in this Local Partnership Study.

From this AFDC data and as part of determining the local profile of Southbridge, local factors contributing to unemployment were evaluated. The AFDC data suggests that new job creation should target persons between the ages of 24-29, to those who have been unemployed less than 5 years and who at their last job made between \$5.00 and \$6.00 per hour. Simple answers to why Southbridge has an unemployment rate higher than the region do not exist. Some people identify the location of the state welfare (Transitional Assistance) office in Town as one reason many unemployed people are attracted to Southbridge. Others identify poor transportation access into the Town and poor transportation access by unemployed people looking for work. Other reasons include: reduced manufacturing employment over the years and a labor pool poorly trained for other kinds of work, a loss of technical employees, the high proportion of Spanish-speaking peoples, a certain provincialism of the population which is unwilling to travel too far for work and vacant commercial/industrial buildings.

In fact, many of these factors combine to create relatively high unemployment in Southbridge. Many of these can be addressed and the economic capacity of the Town can be improved. However, a focus on single factors will be insufficient. There may be people who believe

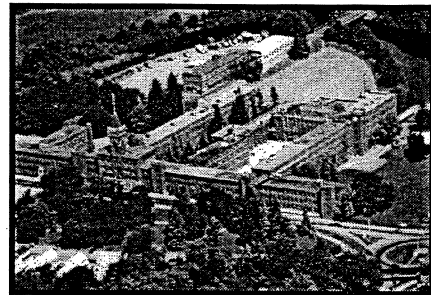
improved road access will be the solution to Southbridge's problems. Certainly, the entrances/gateways into Southbridge from the interstate highway system are inconvenient. However, there are many examples of communities with excellent highway access which also

have economic conditions equivalent or worse than Southbridge. Neighboring Webster, for example, has excellent highway access to I-395. This access has been helpful in retaining the growing Commerce Insurance Company, but few would identify Webster as being a significantly better community, economically or otherwise, than Southbridge.

A vision for Southbridge's economic future requires attention to a number of improvements which can give the Town a better competitive edge. Furthermore, many other communities are looking into these same issues and developing their capacity to attract business, industry and economic activity. Competition, therefore, could become keener, provided these other communities begin an implementation program.

Although retail trade is visible along the major highways in Southbridge, basic industry in the form of manufacturing continues as the Town's most significant economic activity. Most of Southbridge's manufacturers make products which are purchased from companies or consumers outside the tri-community area. Fiberoptics companies are good examples of this, but the same can be said for Cabot Safety, Russell Harrington and Hyde Manufacturing as well as others.

The new Defense Business Management University, although not manufacturing, should be considered a "basic industry". The facility will train DOD people who are located throughout the country and the world. The DOD will send money into the Southbridge economy to pay for these services. It would be the same thing as selling a manufactured product to a company located outside the state. Money comes into the local economy from outside and it is this type of money which provides for economic growth in the Town. When the Defense Business



Management University begins operation, it would be categorized as a basic, service industry. Another example of a service industry which is considered basic would be Old Sturbridge Village. People come from all around the world and spend their money, which they earned elsewhere, into the local area economy.

Harrington Hospital is one of the Town's largest employers with approximately 600 people. The hospital not only represents a major factor in the Town's economy, but also it contributes significantly to the Town's quality of life. And while many people come to the hospital for services from outside the Town, many of its employees live within the region as well. As important as Harrington Hospital is to the lifeblood of Southbridge, it would be categorized as a non-basic, service industry.

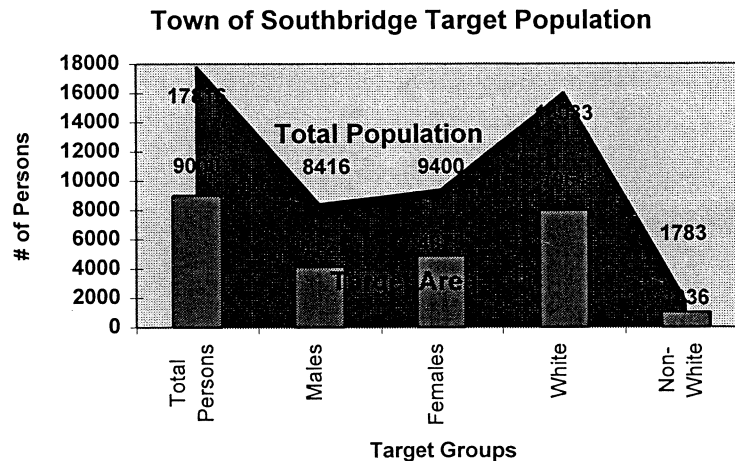
Southbridge's economy contains strong basic and non-basic companies. Although it may be considered more important to focus future economic development activities on basic industrial types, this should not be done at the expense of non-basic companies. These non-basic companies are the ones which contribute most to our quality of life. They represent a significant portion of the economy and people in these companies have good, high-paying jobs which are important to the Town.

3. Southbridge's Minority Community

A key element of this economic development study is understanding the characteristics and dynamics of the Town's minority population, which has and continues to shape demographic trends and the community profile of Southbridge. One cannot plan for or estimate the program benefit of positive economic development change without understanding the current level of minority participation and/or influence on Southbridge. In 1990, 14.9 % of the community was classified as minority and this classification will continue to be a demographic trend to the town. As part of a larger community-wide and downtown development strategy, minorities, especially those between the ages of 20-40, should be considered a target group for economic development activities.

A review of 1990 US Census data shows that three (3) urban core tracts contain the bulk of the minority population. In Southbridge, they are census tracts 7572, 7573 and 7574. Data from these areas highlight a target population which should receive a degree of program benefit out of any community economic development activity. Exhibit VI provides a statistical breakdown of this target population (Latinos) when compared to town-wide demographic data. Moreover, Exhibit VII and VIII profile this target population relative to household size+ and age distribution.

Exhibit VI

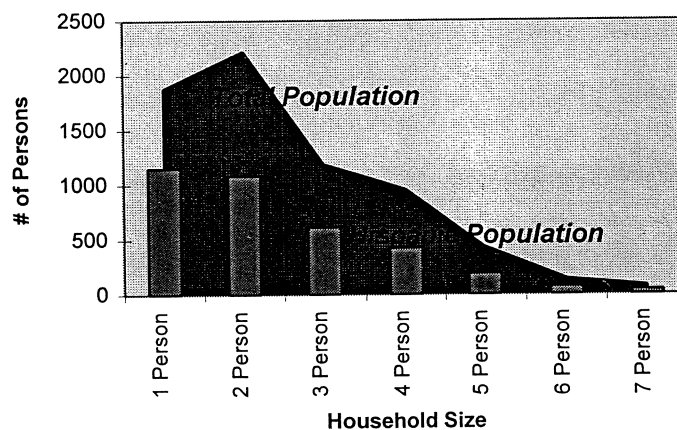


In 1992, Clear Point Inc. Counseling Center of Southbridge conducted a Human Needs Assessment of the Puerto Rican Community funded by the Wells Foundation. Joined by Town officials, the Mass. Division of Employment and Training, the MacKinnon Center, the Southbridge School Department, Harrington Memorial Hospital and other area human service providers, Clear Point Inc. established three basic study goals: 1.) to gather demographic data about Southbridge's Puerto Rican population to better understand their role within the community, 2.) to gain knowledge about the accessibility of human services to this growing community and whether Puerto Rican families utilize these services and 3.) to identify unmet service needs that should be addressed by human service providers in the Southbridge area. The findings and recommendations of this 1992 report still hold today and offer guidance in shaping economic development policy and programs towards Hispanics in 1995 and beyond. When determining economic development goals, Southbridge and the Local Partnership must consider:

- the need to develop programs that continue to spread the message that only education and training, coupled with behavioral changes, will take the Puerto Rican community out of the unemployment lines. Young people must stay in school ;
- the need to identify and enlist the help of leaders in the Hispanic community. People and families must be identified and involved in community projects. Their commitment is vital, especially to economic development activities. These leaders must empower their community;
- the requirement that English must be taught at an early age to ready the Hispanic community for employment. Locally, English speaking people should teach the language of business and employment to the non-English speaking adult population ;
- a link with language training and other human service programs to job-finding assistance for the Puerto Rican community ;
- and lastly, the need to develop community programs to teach cultural adaptability and cultural sensitivity for all Southbridge residents.

Exhibit VII

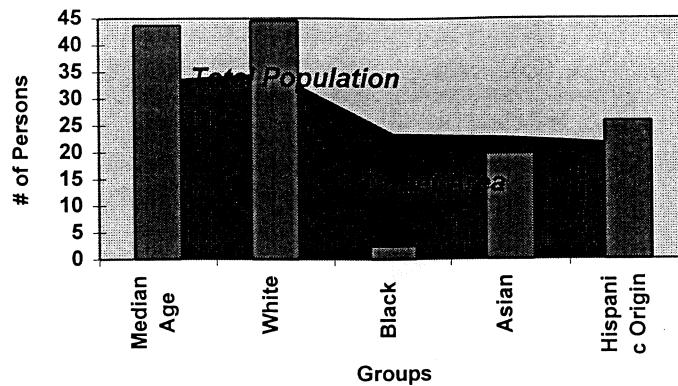
Town of Southbridge Target Area Household Size



In short, a key element of sustainable economic development in Southbridge will be activities that target economic development towards the characteristics and dynamics of the community's growing minority population. Community profile trends indicate that their needs must be met and they must be part of the vision! Targeted activities and municipal actions that remove slums and blight (demolition, housing rehabilitation, aggressive code enforcement and reuse of older buildings / land) need to focus on census tracts 7572, 7573 and 7574 and the larger Downtown area.

Exhibit VIII

Town of Southbridge Age Distribution - Target Area

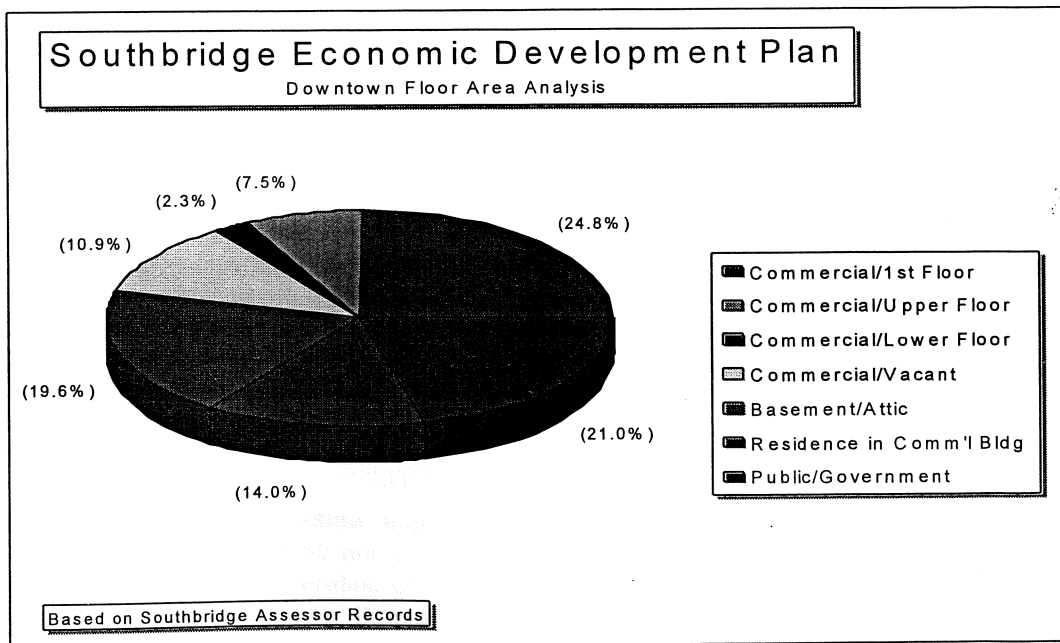


B Land Use

1. Downtown Space Inventory/Vacancy

During mid-1995, the consultant team focused on Downtown Southbridge. In addition to a Local Partnership Committee meeting with downtown property owners and merchants, a survey of ground floor businesses was undertaken as well as a comprehensive analysis of floor area in the downtown. Exhibit IX compiles the results of these surveys and analyses.

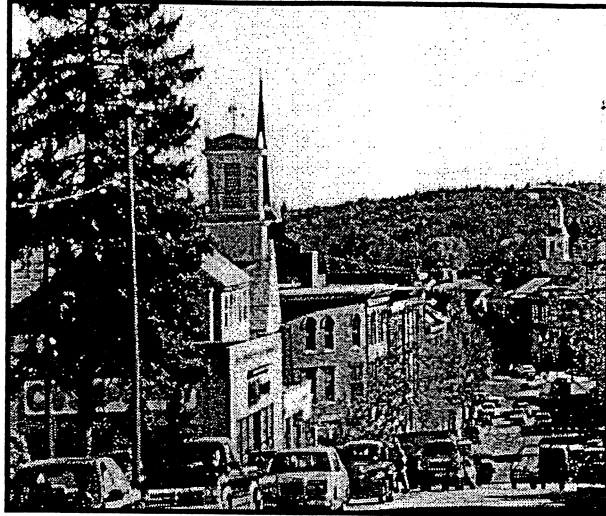
Exhibit IX



Downtown Southbridge contains approximately one million sq.ft. of floor area in buildings containing commercial uses. Additional area exists in buildings wholly designed and used for

residential purposes. When basement and attic space is deleted from the calculations, approximately 850,000 sq.ft. is habitable for commercial or residential uses.

Of the 483,632 sq.ft. of commercial property in the downtown area, nearly one quarter of the space is vacant. Although high, a 24% vacancy rate is not atypical of many Massachusetts downtown's. Worcester, for example, experienced a 30% vacancy rate only a few years ago. Although improving conditions in the past two years have brought the Worcester vacancy rate down to approximately 20% today. Although the bulk of Southbridge's vacant space is in upper floor areas, significant and visible vacancies existed on the first floor. Retail uses continue to be an important part of downtown ground floor space in Southbridge; however, public, institutional and professional uses play a greater role than ever before. The largest



and most fully occupied buildings in the downtown area are offices of banks, lawyers and insurance companies. Public uses, such as municipal and federal offices are important to the downtown economy, as are quasi-public entities, such as the YMCA, churches and non-profit organizations. This category is almost as large as ground floor commercial uses in the downtown area.

Residential floor area functions as a significant user of floor area in the downtown. Housing located in commercial buildings represents 14% of the total floor area. This figure does not include housing located in downtown buildings solely for residential purposes. Town officials state that vacancies in downtown housing are extremely high, estimated at between 35% and 40%.

Total vacancy of commercial space and residential space in commercial buildings comprise approximately 170,000 sq.ft. Combined with basement and attic space (some of which has been converted for productive use and is classified in either commercial or residential categories), empty floor area in downtown Southbridge comprises 375,960 sq.ft., or nearly 40%, of the total downtown area. This is both a problem and an opportunity. Vacant space does not contribute to the economy of the Town or the business community. However, it also means that space is readily available for expanding and new businesses when needed. It also offers an opportunity for the Town and the business community to have a resource to promote for expansion. The need will be to identify productive uses for vacant space before any significant new development downtown can occur.

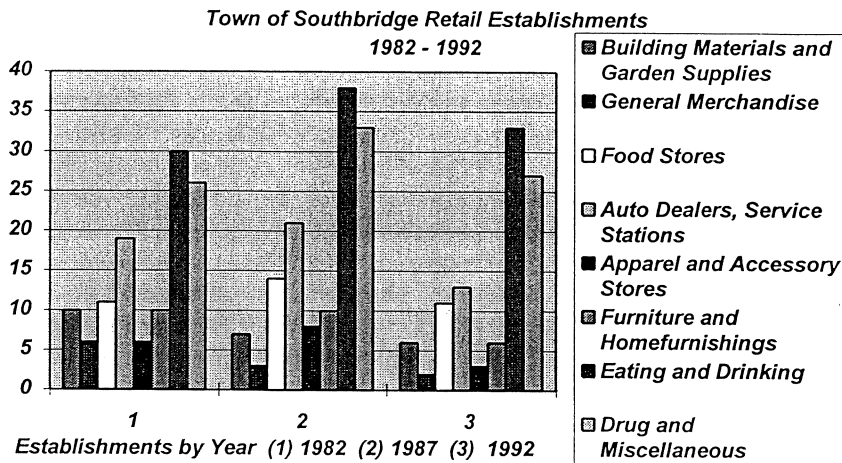
Discussions with local real estate experts identify that rental rates for downtown commercial property ranges between \$4.50 and \$12.00 per sq.ft. per year. The higher rate is on a "gross" basis, that is, all building operating costs are included in the rent. The lower rate is what is known as "triple-net", meaning that all or most building operating expenses would be the responsibility of the tenant.

One recent sale of downtown property took place in June. The property at 222 Main Street which comprises Horne & Hastings Realtors and other businesses was sold to Southbridge Credit Union for \$138,000. Town Assessor records identify this property to contain 3,276 sq.ft., not including

basement and attic space. On a per sq.ft. basis, the property sold for approximately \$42 per sq.ft. This is consistent with triple-net lease equivalencies of approximately \$4.50 per sq.ft.; therefore, the purchase price appears to be at a market rate. \$42.00 per sq.ft. is considered positive and a healthy sign for values in downtown Southbridge. In Worcester, for example, a number of downtown buildings have sold for \$10.00 per sq.ft. or less.

Southbridge like many communities has seen its share of retail business activity (See Exhibit X) leave the downtown core. Still, its regional role generates business opportunities that have remained stable. During a ten (10) year period, retail activity peaked in 1987.

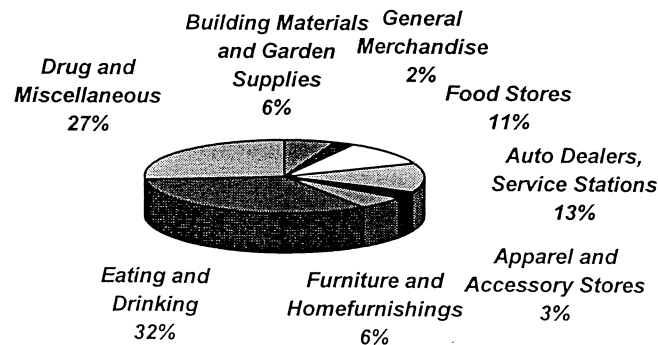
Exhibit X



In 1992, eating and drinking establishments make up the largest percentage of Southbridge's retail activity (Exhibit XI). Again, reflective of national trends, department stores and clothing stores make up the smallest share of community retail business, as those types of uses have gone regional.

Exhibit XI

Town of Southbridge Retail Establishments - 1992

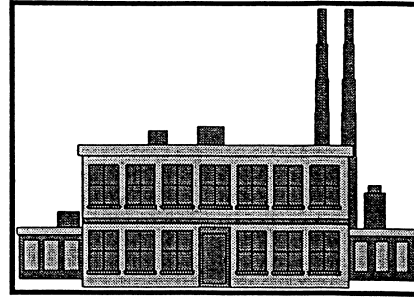


2. Industrial Building Inventory/Vacancy

Appendix II identifies the firms involved in manufacturing in Southbridge. Industrial companies are still a significant factor in Southbridge's economy. Principal among these are Russell Harrington, Hyde Manufacturing, United Lens, Cabot Safety and others. American Optical

Company continues as a presence in the community, but at much less of an employment level than its peak of about 7000 employees in the early part of this century.

Considerable industrial vacancies exist in Southbridge. The consultant team identified the Ashland Avenue and the Globe Village part of the Town where the problems are more acute. Considerable vacancies also exist at the 1.2 million sq.ft. AO complex; however, plans underway for a new Defense Business Management University and for the Center for Advanced Fiberoptics Applications should play major roles in revitalizing the Town's most significant industrial property.



Leasing and sale prices for industrial properties was partially surveyed and additional information was compiled. Consultant team research identified asking prices for industrial property that range between \$2.00 and \$6.00 per sq.ft. per year under lease arrangements and range between \$20 and \$30 per sq.ft. for the sale of property. During public discussions, one broker stated that a property owner would probably agree to sell their property at a price of \$16 per sq.ft.

Generally, properties available include older mill buildings and relatively modern industrial facilities. Some of the industrial mill buildings closest to the center of Town have been converted over to commercial uses and contain sales and service companies. Some other older mill buildings have more of a warehouse purpose and still others are being used for highly technical fiberoptics manufacturing.

3. Industrial Land Inventory

Using Town of Southbridge Assessors records, an inventory of twenty-one (21) vacant industrially zoned land was compiled. These sites represent \$782,500 in assessed value to the Town. From this list, thirteen (13) vacant industrial parcels over one (1) acre in size were targeted for their development potential. These sizable 13 parcels (United Lens, Southbridge Sheet Metal and Hyde Manufacturing hold multiple parcels) valued at \$610,100 (Table II) offer the best economic development opportunity for industrial expansion and business retention in Southbridge.

Table II
Vacant Industrial Land

<u>Parcel Location</u>	<u>Parcel Owner</u>	<u>Parcel Size</u>
Moon St./Worcester St.	United Lens Inc.(4 parcels)	42,180 sq. ft.
Guelphwood/Evergreen Sts.	Southbridge Sheet Metal (2 parcels)	60.11 acres
East Main Street	Southbridge Associates	53 acres
Hartwell/Marsh/Eastford	Hyde Manufacturing (3 parcels)	5.6 acres
Elm Street	J. I. Morris	3.8 acres
Ashland Avenue	Marc Arsenault	1.61 acres
Ashland Avenue	Rita Brown	12.7 acres

4. Hazardous Waste Brown Ground / 21E Sites

Sites that have been contaminated offers another land use/development potential for the Town of Southbridge. Although property owners oftentimes cannot shoulder the total cost of environmental clean-up, the newly established Central Massachusetts Economic Development Authority (CMEDA) presents an innovative mechanism to revitalize 21E sites. Once a site is

cleaned up, the new tax revenues generated by new business uses are distributed to CMEDA member communities. A two-thirds vote by the Town Council of Southbridge will allow for membership in the CMEDA. New members must remain in this new economic development coalition for at least eight (8) years. Table III lists Southbridge's 21E sites per DEP records. These 21 underutilized sites could be incorporated into the larger economic development strategy for Southbridge.

Table III
21E Sites within the Town of Southbridge

<u>Parcel Owner</u>	<u>Site Location</u>	<u>Contamination</u>
Energy Retailers/Sunoco	9 Main Street	Petroleum
Former food store	39 Main Street	Benzene, toluene
Mass. Electric	176 Main Street	Xylem
Shawmut Bank	249 Main Street	Petroleum
Main St. Shell	904 Main Street	Petroleum
Shell gas station	135 East Main Street	Petroleum
MD Motors	401 East Main Street	Petroleum
McKinstry Oil	Foster Street	Diesel fuel
McKinstry Oil	6 Dupaul Street	Petroleum
Not stated	20 Dupaul Street	Fuel Oil
Floods Auto & Tire	93 Hamilton Street	Petroleum
Southbridge Livery	121 Hamilton Street	Gas, fuel oil
American Optical	10 Cabot Drive	#6 fuel oil
American Optical	14 Mechanic Street	Petroleum
Town of Southbridge	41 Elm Street	Petroleum
Southbridge Tire Co.	136 Central Street	Petroleum
XTRA Mart	114 Worcester Road	Petroleum
Texaco Station	176 Worcester Road	Petroleum
Not stated	146 Ashland Avenue	Petroleum
Not stated	34 Eastford Road	Hydraulic fluid
JP Manufacturing	13 Lovely Street	Hydraulic fluid

5. Vacant Commercial Land

Again, using Town of Southbridge Assessors records, an inventory of fifty-two (52) vacant commercially zoned land valued at \$2,242,300 was compiled. Small commercial sites showing no short-term development potential, namely sites under 11,000 sq. ft. as well as land owned by the Southbridge Water Supply Co. (26 separate parcels), were removed from further consideration by the consultant team in their search for a listing of vacant buildable land. In conclusion, the consultant team found just twelve (12) vacant commercial parcels having some degree of commercial expansion and redevelopment potential. These sites valued at \$346,100 represent a untapped value to the Town that could be built upon within a larger economic development strategy.

Table IV
Vacant Commercial Land

<u>Parcel Location</u>	<u>Parcel Owner</u>	<u>Parcel Size</u>
Guelphwood Road	Guelphwood Road Realty (2 parcels)	5.39 acres
Guelphwood Road	Robert Cotton	5.4 acres
Pearl Street	Alex Kamizirides	1.11 acres
Pleasant Street	Mill Street Realty Trust (2 parcels)	11,645 sq. ft.
Hamilton Street	Clarence Knight	14,308 sq. ft.
Central Street	Central Street Land Trust	1 acre
East Main Street	Fileno Realty Trust (2 parcels)	3.88 acres
West Street	David Stevens	3.56 acres
Dennsion St.	Barry Price	3.02 acres

6. Vacant Residential Land

Once more, using Town of Southbridge Assessors records, an inventory of 1035 vacant residentially zoned land was compiled valued at \$14,520,000. These sites, some of which are unbuilt subdivisions (Lebenon Hill, Heritage Park), single lots and unbuildable land, represent a land use option to the Town relative to tax producing non-family orientated residential development (continuing care retirement communities) and as an option to re-zone for commercial/industrial uses. Further analysis by the consultant team, targeted only 3 viable residential parcels that have some potential within a community-wide economic development strategy. This option becomes accentuated when you view the aging profile of persons in Southbridge.

C Southbridge's Economic Base

1. Southbridge and the Region

Of importance to Southbridge, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) has embarked on a regional planning process called the " Development Framework - A Guide for Growth and Change in Central Massachusetts " This process establishes six (6) sub-regions within the CMRPC service area. The effort seeks to understand past and present regional trends within five (5) profile areas. These profile areas include population, infrastructure, environmental conditions, land use and economic development. To date, CMRPC has completed the environmental conditions, population and infrastructure profiles. Southbridge is contained in the Southwest sub-region of CMRPC's planning study. It appears, as the CMRPC region goes, so will Southbridge, which is illustrated in population comparisons for the areas and Southbridge (Exhibit XII). The Southwest sub-region also contains the towns of Sturbridge, Charlton, Dudley, Webster, Oxford and Auburn.

Pertinent demographic information for the Southwest quadrant of the " Development Framework "shows that:

- the area contains 19 % of the land in the total CMRPC study area;
- Southbridge and the other towns in the Southwest section hold 18% of the CMRPC population;
- population in the Southwest increased by 9,400 or 12 % between 1980 and 1990;
- the elderly comprise 19 % of CMRPC's older residents;