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*Southbridge, Massachusetts*

*Master Plan  
Report*



**Prepared for**

**THE SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

**by**

**Bruce Campbell & Associates**

**Consultants • Boston, Mass.**

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**APRIL, 1963**

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BRUCE CAMPBELL & ASSOCIATES

FINAL REPORT

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SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN

prepared for

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Roland Pontbriand, Chairman  
Francis Lemmelin, Secretary  
John J. O'Shaughnessy  
Richard O. Perron  
Vincent J. Rubenstein

Michael J. Morrill  
Benjamin Tully  
Henry Libuda  
Leopold Poirier

and

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

by

BRUCE CAMPBELL & ASSOCIATES  
CONSULTANTS  
BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL, 1963

The preparation of this report was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency, under the provisions of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

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April 25, 1963

Southbridge Master Plan Committee  
Town Hall  
Southbridge, Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

It is with pleasure that we submit herewith our final report containing elements of analysis and recommendations for Southbridge's Master Plan. A summary report is also forwarded for general distribution to interested citizens.

It is our belief that proposals contained in this report will serve as a constructive guide for the future development and control of your community. The Master Plan, however, is not intended to be a directive but rather a guide. As such, it must be kept up to date in accordance with changing conditions which are inevitable in our fast-moving modern times.

By preparing a Master Plan for community development, Southbridge has taken a big step in initiating a program for overall improvement. Progress must not die now. Through active participation of all interested citizens, immediate steps must be taken in the direction of urban renewal, downtown improvements and economic development.

Southbridge has the physical potential for growth and prosperity. But it will take human initiative and leadership to realize this potential. We believe Southbridge can and will develop the means to carry on the program just begun and dedicated to a better community for all citizenry.

May I express our appreciation to all citizens of Southbridge for their assistance throughout the preparation of this report.

Very truly yours,

BRUCE CAMPBELL & ASSOCIATES

*Robert C. Blumenthal*

Robert C. Blumenthal  
Partner-in-Charge

RCB/dc

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Title Page	i
Letter of Transmittal	iii
Table of Contents	v
Base Map - Central Area	1
<u>EXISTING LAND USE</u>	5
Physical Characteristics	10
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Existing Land Use	15
ELU - Existing Land Use Map	17
<u>POPULATION</u>	19
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Plate G-1 - Population Trends	25
Plate G-2 - Age-Sex Pyramid: Southbridge	26
Plate G-3 - Age-Sex Pyramid: Worcester County	27
Plate G-4 - Age-Sex Pyramid: Massachusetts	28
<u>LAND USE COST AND INCOME ANALYSIS</u>	29
Introduction	31
Industrial District	52
Commercial District	55
Residential Areas: High Density	59
Residential Areas: Medium Density	66
Residential Areas: Low Density	76
Open Land Areas	84

	<u>Page</u>
The Need for Urban Renewal in Southbridge	89
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Basic Data Tables	95 - 98
Income-Distribution Tables	99 - 105
Expense Distribution Tables	106 - 115
Land Use Cost and Income Analysis Map	117
<u>HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY</u>	119
<u>ECONOMIC BASE</u>	131
Southbridge's Economic Climate	134
Southbridge's Present Economy. Its Trends and Potentials	145
Southbridge's Economic Potentialities and Recommended Goals for Future Growth	165
Proposed General Goals for Southbridge CBD	168
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table I - Percentage Employment by Category, Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts	136
Table II - Civilian Labor Force: Male - Female	137
Table III - Median Number School Years Completed	138
Table IV - Selected Housing Data: Southbridge, Webster, Worcester County, Massachusetts	141
Plate E-1 - Southbridge Employment Trends 1951 - 1960	146

	<u>Page</u>
Table V - Southbridge Employment Trends 1951 - 1960	147
Table VI - Unemployment Rate	148
Plate E-2 - Southbridge Total Employment	150
Plate E-3 - Worcester County Total Employment	151
Plate E-4 - Massachusetts Total Employment	152
Table VII - Retail Trade Statistics	163
Table VIII - Wholesale Trade, Selected Service Statistics	164
<u>CIRCULATION AND PARKING</u>	175
Transportation and Circulation	177
Parking	183
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Chapter 90 Highway Allotment	178
TP -1 - General Transportation Circulation Plan	191
TP-2 - Curb and Off-Street Parking Plan Central Business District	193
<u>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</u>	195
Schools Study	197
Introduction	197
School Enrollment	198
Existing Public Schools	199
Future Needs	202

	<u>Page</u>
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Education Level of Residents 25 Years and Older	198
Table 2 - Public School Population and Predictions	204
Table 3 - Existing School Inventory	205
Table 4 - Future Needs	206
Recreation	207
Introduction	207
Southbridge Recreation Facilities	210
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Southbridge Outdoor Recreation Facilities	214
<u>Library</u>	215
<u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Library Characteristics 1952 Southbridge and Selected Communities	218
Police Department	219
Fire Department	222
<u>PUBLIC UTILITIES</u>	225
Water Supply Inventory	227
<u>EXHIBIT</u>	
WP - Water Map	233
Sewerage Disposal System	235
Drainage Review	238



	<u>Page</u>
<u>CODES AND ORDINANCES</u>	241
Subdivision Regulations	243
Zoning	244
Zoning Map - Land Use	246
Suggested Specifics	249
<u>AREA OF INFLUENCE</u>	253
<u>FUTURE LAND USE</u>	259
Residential Land Use	263
Commercial Land Use	268
Industrial Land Use	270
<u>EXHIBIT</u>	
Future Land Use Plan	273
<u>CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRAM</u>	275
Tax Base	278
Tax Rate	280
Current Debt Service	282
 <u>EXHIBITS</u>	
Table 1 - Assessed Valuations Per Capita, 1960 - Southbridge, Webster, Worcester County, Massachusetts	279
Table 2 - Southbridge Total Assessed Valuations - 1958 - 1962	280
Table 3 - Estimated Assessed Valuations Southbridge: 1964 - 1969	280

		<u>Page</u>
Table 4	- Southbridge "Equalized" Tax Rates Compared 1958 - 62	281
Table 5	- Summary - Recommended Capital Budget Program: 1964 - 1969	283

BASE MAP

(Central Area)



STURBRIDGE



HATCHET BROOK

M<sup>r</sup> KINSTRY BROOK

COHASSET BROOK

ST. GEORGE CEMETERY

CASHIER'S POND

OAK RIDGE CEMETERY

COLE FOREST

HUTCHINSON CEMETERY

SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT AREA

DEAN BROOK

CADY BROOK

U.S. 1

EXISTING LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use of a community reflects to a large extent the history and development not only of the community itself but the neighboring area of which it is a part.

The discovery of Southbridge is credited to John Oldham in the autumn of 1633. Oldham, famous for his trading exploits with the Indians, led a small trading party through the Nipmuck Indian territory for the purpose of "acquainting himself with this territory and to spy out the doings of the Dutch". The area known today as Southbridge was composed of land from Charlton, Dudley and Sturbridge;

When Oldham and his party returned to Boston, they brought beans and hemp which were growing in the area, and also small lumps of black lead which had been given them by one of the local Indian chiefs. John Winthrop, Jr., son of the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and grantee of the territory, became very interested, and speculation grew high as to the possibilities of mining this mineral. In 1658, Winthrop sent a working party into the area to mine the mineral, but, because of crude mining processes, difficulty of transporting the ore and the poor quality which made it difficult to separate, the venture was soon given up.

As with many of the new settlements in our country's history, the first settlers were farmers. However, with a constant source of water available for power, a few men turned to industry. The first of those was Moses Marcy,

one of the more prominent settlers, who erected a grist-mill as early as 1733. Industrial growth followed and has dominated Southbridge's economy ever since.

While the above historical factors are interesting and help to give the planner an understanding of the existing conditions, the actual comprehensive planning analysis of existing land uses is basically a method inventorying the community's stock at hand -- the kind, the amount and the condition of the community's resources.

Rational planning and later zoning require a broad knowledge of the characteristics, pattern and quantitative analysis of the space devoted to each type of land use. It also requires a basic knowledge of the development of the various types of land use and the factors that influenced their development. Those elements that influenced and guided the existing development must also be understood since it must be determined whether these factors are still in effect now and if they will continue to influence the development of the community in the future.

In most American communities, the existing arrangement of land use, though essentially functional, is not a criterion of modern design. The pattern is, as mentioned above, a product of the past. It does not necessarily represent the most efficient assembly of land development. This is understandable, for urban areas have grown under varying influences, varying pressures and have been subjected to a multitude of personal whims and desires without the respect for the community as a whole. Yet, despite the lack of formal planning in early years,

most land use patterns are to some degree still functional.

The community must be considered as a living agency that is constantly changing in many ways to meet the needs and conditions of the community as it grows and develops. As a community grows older its housing, business complex, and industrial components may become obsolete. With technical changes the existing physical character becomes less efficient and land use changes are required. As the community grows older, there are evident changes in its social and economic structure as well as the characteristics of its population, in the age-sex composition, in the family size and in the employment requirements of its labor force. All these changes exert pressures for new and different services and land uses.

In general, there are three broad classifications of major significance that determine the various types and amounts of land use that a community may develop: economic, social and public interest. The economic influence of the land use pattern considers not only the natural resources found within the community but to some extent those forces that extend beyond the community into the county or metropolitan area.

The social influence of the land use pattern considers not only the day to day requirements of its population but the facilities offered by the general area, county or metropolitan that tend to attract the expenditure of leisure time.

The public interest element that influences the development of land use patterns is not only confined to the functional requirements of government,



education and recreation but extends to the area of State and Federal protection and even includes areas of historical value.

A realistic plan for the future development of Southbridge must be based on a sound knowledge of the above conditions as they exist today. The Existing Land Use study and the Land Use Cost and Income Analysis serve this purpose by presenting a detailed picture of the way land is used or measured at the present time. These studies together with the economic and population projections presented in this report, represent the first basic step in the development of a plan for the future land use of the community. The amount and location of existing land uses will be summarized in map (Exhibit Map-ELU) and table form (Table 1) and will serve to emphasize problems which have arisen as a result of past development practices.

The land use data presented in this report was obtained by a detailed study of the city as well as from an examination of existing maps and statistical data. A map at a scale of one inch equals 400 feet, showing the various types of land use was prepared for detailed analysis. The land use map reproduced in this report is a simplified version of that map and shows the existing land use in a more generalized form.

### Physical Characteristics

Southbridge is located in the southwestern portion of Worcester County and borders Connecticut. Total land area is 20.18 square miles or almost 13,000 acres. Topographical characteristics are dominated by excessive hilly terrain

with elevations ranging from 400 to 800 feet above mean sea level. It is certain that this latter factor more than partially accounts for the fact that less than 20 percent of Southbridge's total land area is built-up.

Southbridge's early history is reflected in the development pattern of the older built-up areas along the Quinebang River and centering around the Central Business District (CBD). Two major influences have been apparent in developing the present pattern of land arrangement. First, intense industrial development in the 1800's occurred along the Quineba g River stimulating residential patterns in clusters nearby. It was important in pre-automobile days that workers lived within easy walking distance of places of employment. Secondly, the natural lie of the land being of a very hilly nature made it difficult for developing any orderly street pattern or residential subdivision. Built-up portions of town are consequently of extremely irregular pattern.

As the primary street pattern began to form, local and regional commercial areas here developed. For reasons of lack of planning, residential clusters around manufacturing plants and topographical irregularities, today's Southbridge finds older residential structures still intermingled in the midst of commercial and industrial development. Such mixed use, in many cases, has caused properties to decline in value and inhibited healthy regeneration of residential areas.

In abstract terms, an east-west axis is formed by the Quineba g River and the Railroad which intersects, at the center of the CBD, with a north-south axis formed by Elm, Central and Worcester Streets (all primary routes). In essence,

the effect is a large cross at the geometric center of Southbridge with the central portion containing the greatest concentration of industrial, residential and commercial elements. Surrounding the central portion, residential density and crowding of homes becomes relieved somewhat with better separation between residential and non-residential land uses and less crowding of structures. Finally, the outer "layer" contains newer, modern residential subdivision or agricultural land but predominantly the land is undeveloped.

Land developed for industrial use includes about 130 acres most of which is used for Heavy Manufacturing. Dominating this land area is American Optical Co. which actively accounts for over half the total industrial land in Southbridge. Industries, most of them engaged in manufacturing, are regional by nature and depend upon markets outside town. They employ about three-fourths of the town's labor force.

Land devoted to Commercial and General Business uses totals approximately 76 acres most of which are in the Central Business District. Scattered local shopping areas and "highway" commercial use round out the present complement of this category. Similar to many other older New England communities, there has been a trend of shopping facilities away from downtown to areas more adaptable to convenient access and parking. Recent location of a small shopping center on East Main Street is an example. Future efforts to preserve the vitality of the Central Business District are considered one of the major areas of concern in the Master Plan and will be covered in detail in subsequent sections.

Residential land use accounts for 11% of the total land area and 63% of the built-up land in Southbridge. Intense development consisting of multi-family housing immediately surrounds the CBD and is referred to as "High Density" residential areas. They contain the oldest dwellings intermingled with other uses. These areas appear to be in danger of deterioration en masse unless corrective action through code enforcement, urban renewal and planning is utilized.

Residential areas of "medium density" are characterized by two-family and single family homes on small lots. Generally, Southbridge's representation in this category forms an outer circle around the CBD. Extending beyond "medium density" areas into the rural outskirts of town is the third category of residential use, "low density" areas. Here are newer single family homes on larger lots. Due to the hilly terrain in the rural areas of Southbridge, much of this development has occurred along existing primary streets where land is most level.

Significant conclusions of the overall pattern of land development indicate that most of the older built-up elements have been out-moded in terms of efficiency and compatability. Drastic changes in transportation, technology, industry and personal desires for certain living conditions have rendered much of Southbridge's land use pattern obsolete in the modern sense. No longer need the worker live close to his place of employ. No longer is a downtown shopping area built to accommodate the needs of the "horse-and-buggy-trade", satisfactory in the automobile-oriented society. No longer can a manufacturing plant

operate successfully in the midst of intense residential development.

Subsequent recommendations throughout the Master Plan Report will emphasize the need for eliminating or restoring the "old" and creating the "new". In the wake of progress, Southbridge must come to grips with the problem if it entertains any hope for maintaining a healthy community in which to live and work in the future.

TABLE 1

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS - EXISTING LAND USE

<u>Type</u>	<u>No. Acres</u>	<u>Approx. Percentage of Total Land Area</u>	<u>Approx. Percentage of Total Built-up Land</u>
<u>DEVELOPED LAND</u>			
<u>Residential</u>			
High Density	166	1.5%	7.3%
Medium Density	382	2.8	16.8
Low Density	880	6.9	38.8
Totals	<u>1428</u>	<u>11.2%</u>	<u>62.9%</u>
<u>Industrial</u>			
Heavy Manufacturing	107	0.8	4.8
Light Manufacturing	20	0.1	0.9
Totals	<u>127</u>	<u>0.9%</u>	<u>5.7%</u>
<u>Commercial-General</u>			
Business	76	0.6%	3.4%
<u>Public &amp; Semi-Public (Exempt)</u>			
Schools	35	0.3	1.5
Parks & Playgrounds (incl. Cole Forest)	120	0.9	5.3
Cemeteries	41	0.3	1.8
Churches	12	0.1	0.5
Streets	340	2.5	14.9
Other Land & Bldgs.	90	0.7	4.0
Totals	<u>638</u>	<u>4.8%</u>	<u>28.0</u>
Total Developed	<u>2269</u>	<u>17.5%</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>UNDEVELOPED LAND</u>			
Water	200	1.5	
Undeveloped Land	<u>10431</u>	<u>81.0</u>	
Total Undeveloped	<u>10631</u>	<u>82.5%</u>	
GRAND TOTALS	12,900	100.0%	

POPULATION

POPULATION

The purpose of the Master Plan is to guide the future development of the town. The single most important factor in any city is its people. Therefore, population studies are primarily concerned with the future make-up of the population, its characteristics and its age-sex relationship. While the past is sometimes the guide to the future, social and technological changes exert a strong influence on population pattern of today and tomorrow. As in the past, the immediate future of population growth will depend on industrial activity, primarily the American Optical Company. No forecast of population growth for this town can ignore the future plans of this industry. There are, however, other elements of significant importance developing in Worcester County.

Until 1940, Southbridge's population had continued to grow steadily as did Worcester County, the City of Worcester and the State. Its population curve, shown as Plate G-1, closely parallels that of the City of Worcester, the largest city in the county. While this trend has been generally upward, both the City of Worcester and the Town of Southbridge's population curves show a rather marked dip over the past ten years. Out-migration of people from the City and Town has been the primary cause.

A comparison of the age-sex pyramid for Southbridge, Worcester County, the City of Worcester and the State of Massachusetts indicates a general out-migration in the 20 to 40 age groups.

In the State pyramid this effect is slight and is more than compensated for in the heavy growth of younger people from under 20 to under 5 years.



Comparing this condition with the State's population growth curve as shown on Plate G-1 leads us to believe that the out-migration from the State has stopped and substantial population growth for the future can be predicted, provided the State can continue to balance its job opportunities with the future educational, cultural and technological changes. For it must be recognized that an out-migration in the 20 to 40 year age group indicates serious deficiencies particularly in the labor element, and to a lesser extent in the sociological elements of the area.

A Worcester County population growth curve generally parallels that of the State; the conditions discussed for the State hold for the county, with one important difference. While both the City of Worcester and the Town of Southbridge indicate out-migration in the important age group, the population's desires are being satisfied within the county. The logical indication is that the out-migration from both Worcester and Southbridge is probably caused by poor housing conditions as well as the lack of job opportunity.

The age-sex comparison pyramid for Southbridge, shown on Plate G-3 indicates that there is a relatively large teenage population, but the "Under 5" group is proportionately smaller than that shown for the State or Worcester County. This means that, barring immediate drastic social or technological changes, Southbridge would continue to lose population over the next ten years but will start to grow again between 1970 and 1980, as the teenagers of today enter the child-bearing age groups.

It should be noticed that the increase and decrease shown on Plate G-1 are very slight and reflect for the most part the natural growth of the

population. This is our minimum prediction based on existing criteria and conditions now in effect in Southbridge. A maximum population prediction is not made for Southbridge, because of the very large amount of undeveloped land within the Town limits which, under favorable circumstances, could stimulate substantial growth in rural parts of Southbridge.

The optimum condition which we have shown on Plate G-1 is based on conditions which we have found within Worcester County. Supporting a tendency for an increase in population after 1970 is the strong and constant increase in the population growth in both the County and State over the past decade. Also supporting this prediction is the natural increase that can be expected from the aging of the existing population.

While all the above curves and theories are generally optimistic, conditions must be developed to stabilize the existing attractiveness of Southbridge and redevelop or renew those elements of the community that have become obsolete or worn out. It is obvious then that the responsibility of population growth and the retention of the young adults between the ages of 20 - 40 depends largely on the community's ability to develop job opportunities and attractive living conditions. Southbridge offers both elements to a limited degree, but not nearly in sufficient quantity.

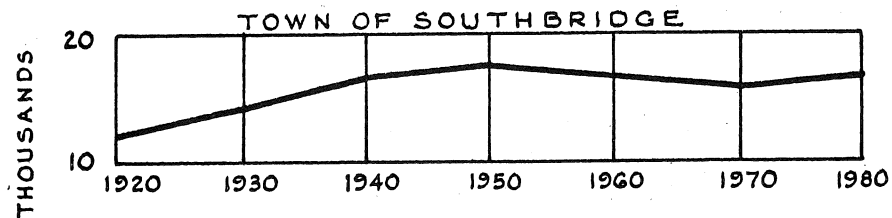
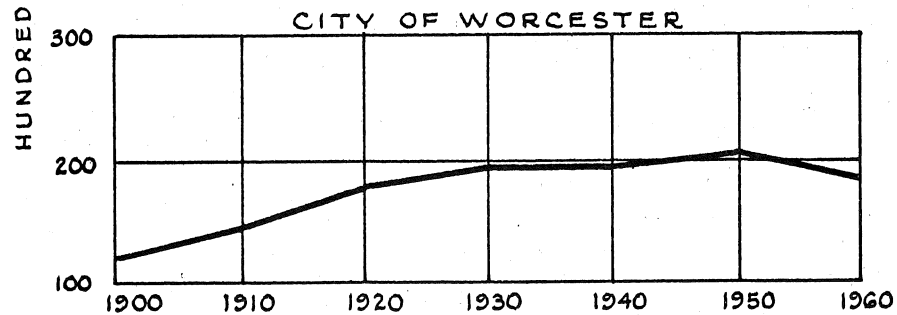
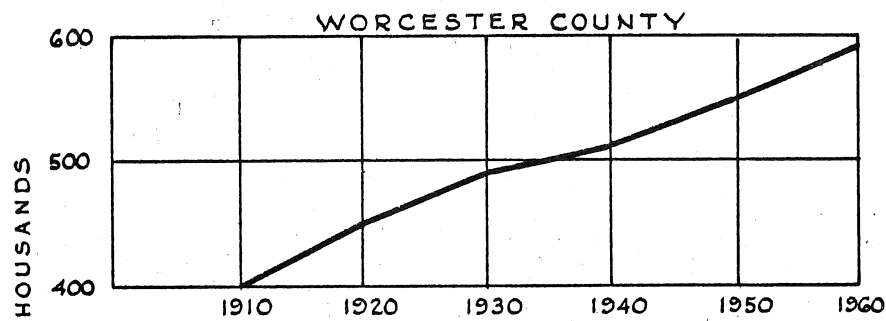
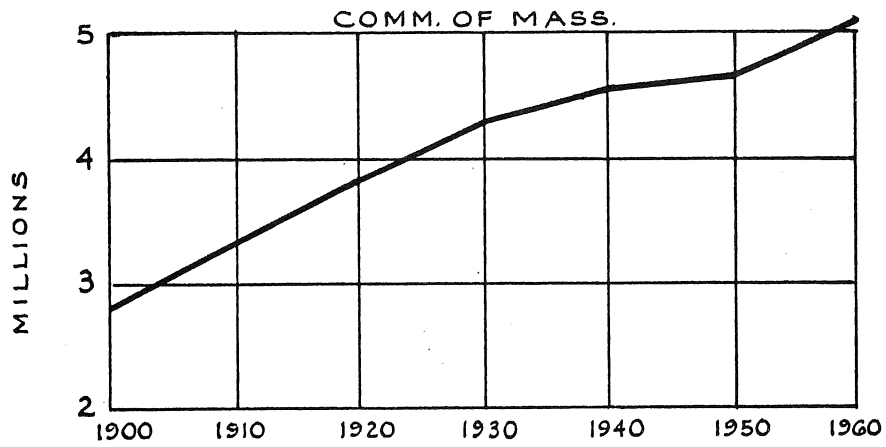
New business and industry coupled with stabilization of existing business and industrial developments will help, but more is needed. The County growth curve strongly indicates that better housing conditions are needed. Better housing in Southbridge is very badly needed as will be seen in the Land Use Cost and Income section. The age-sex pyramid and the socio-economic analysis of the study indicate that Housing for the Elderly is also required. The abundance of undeveloped land within the town limits assures

us that these conditions can be developed and that Southbridge can regenerate its economic life if it coordinates its efforts towards these goals.

The population curves, showing the trend of population growth, compared with the population age-sex pyramid, showing the composition and relationship of the various age groups of the population that have been developed for Southbridge, strongly resembles similar curves and pyramids developed for many of the older communities of Massachusetts.

They indicate generally that the State, and in particular, the Worcester area, have long been plagued by out-migration of younger workers, the child-bearing element of its population.

The recent history of many of these communities (and the State, as a whole) strongly indicates that this trend can be stopped and even reversed. This requires strong and positive action by all concerned with any responsibility in the community. Southbridge has already taken the first step in this action by developing a Master Plan. The subsequent steps, outlined in more detail in this plan, will emphasize the attraction of new industries that will stabilize and cooperate with existing industries, development through Community Renewal (or urban renewal projects) of its commercial center downtown, development of Housing for the Elderly projects, and rehabilitation of existing housing and the decrease of population densities in certain designated areas. Better coordination of State and Federal highway planning to bring greater access to existing and future areas for commercial and industrial development would be of considerable benefit. While these items and the need for them will be repeated several times through the various sections of the Master Plan, it is felt that repetition of this type cannot be avoided without losing the cohesiveness of the Plan.

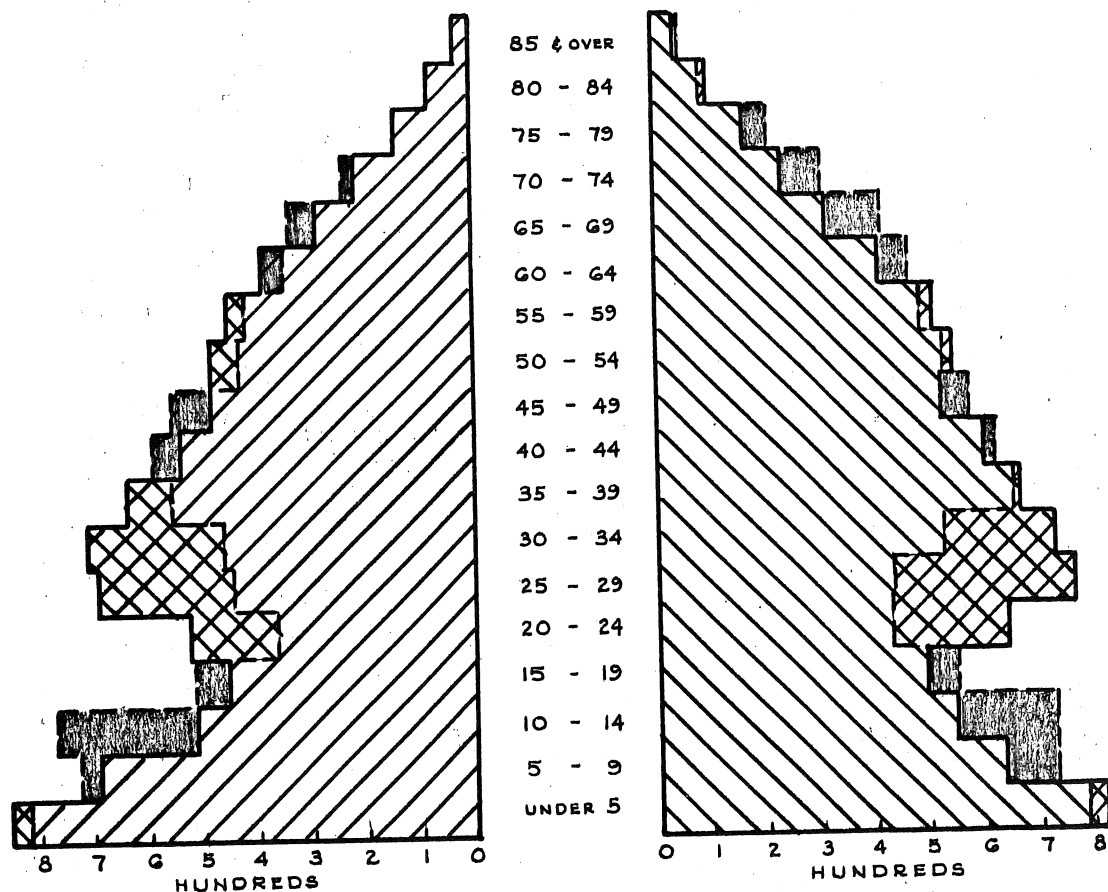


GRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF POPULATION TRENDS  
SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN

PLATE G-1

MALE

FEMALE



### AGE-SEX PYRAMID

SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.

USING 1950 POPULATION

SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

1960 MORE THAN 1950

1960 LESS THAN 1950

BRUCE CAMPBELL & ASSOCIATES  
CONSULTANTS

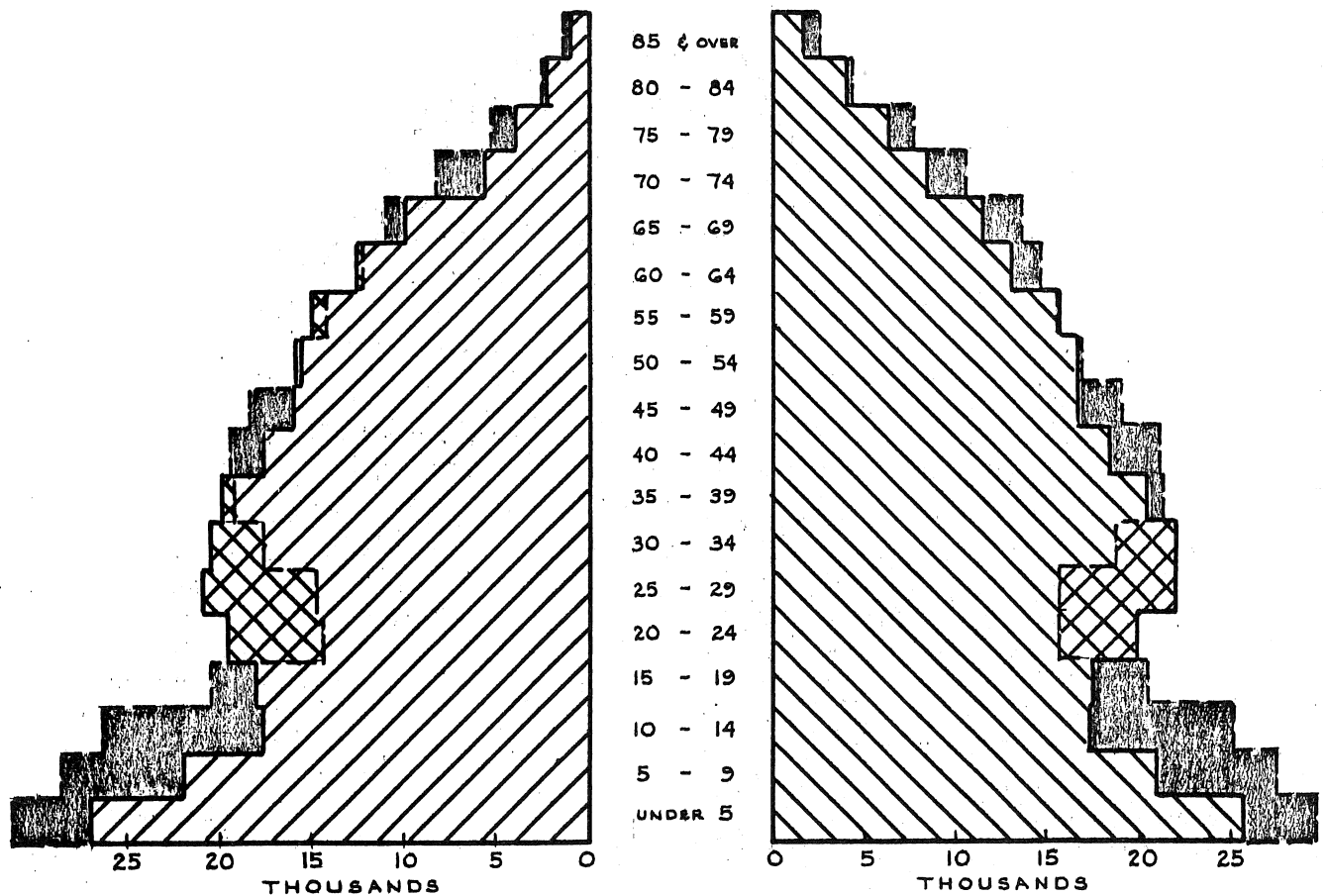
BOSTON

MASS.

PLATE G-2

MALE

FEMALE



### AGE-SEX PYRAMID

WORCESTER COUNTY

USING 1950 POPULATION  
1960

SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

1960 MORE THAN 1950

1960 LESS THAN 1950

BRUCE CAMPBELL & ASSOCIATES  
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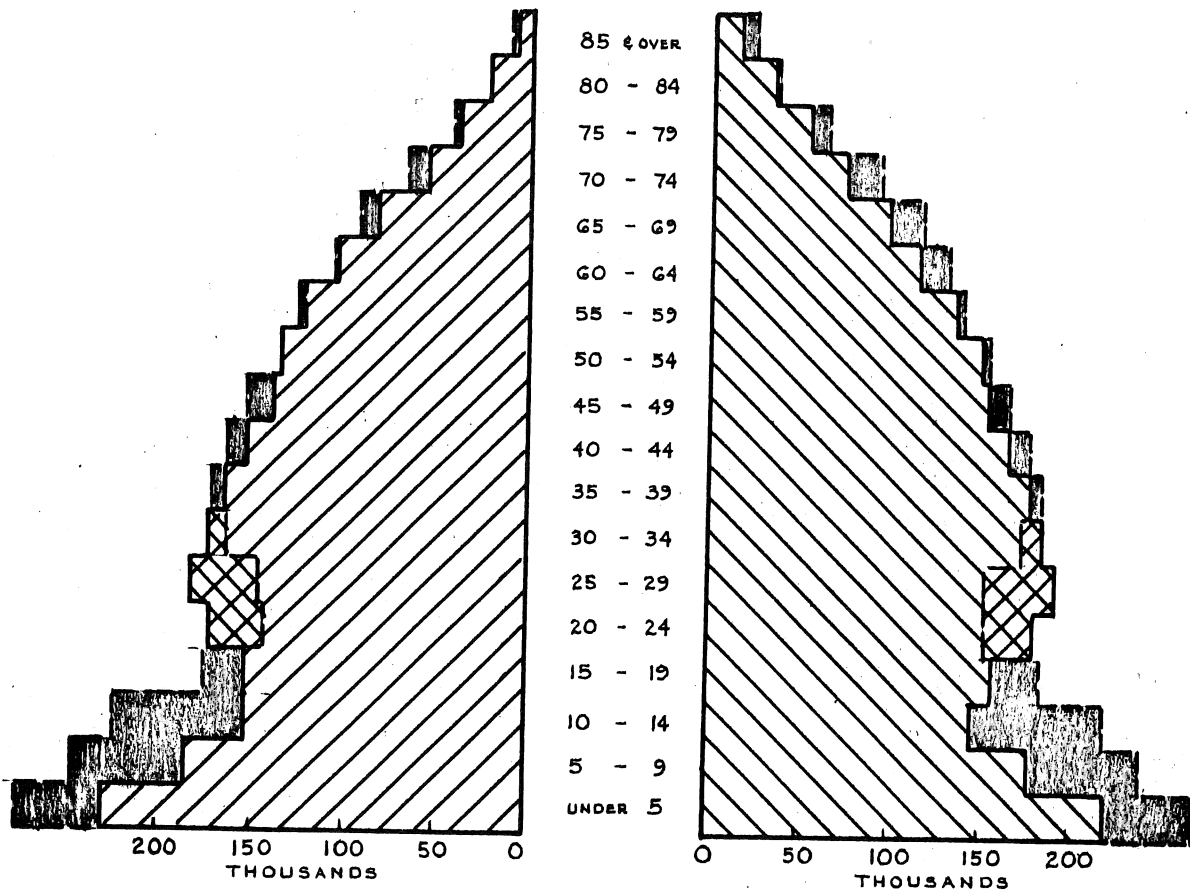
BOSTON

MASS.

PLATE G-3

MALE

FEMALE



# AGE-SEX PYRAMID

## MASSACHUSETTS

### USING 1950 POPULATION 1960

#### SOUTHBRIDGE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

■ 1960 MORE THAN 1950

▨ 1960 LESS THAN 1950

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BOSTON

MASS.

PLATE G-4

LAND USE COST AND INCOME ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTIONSECTION I

Experience has shown that many General Plans, developed to serve as guides for the future progress of cities, have not been put into effect because they failed realistically to consider, and properly correlate, the municipal finance activities of cities with all the other aspects of community life.

The operation of a community can, in many respects, be likened to the operation of a business. Just as a business or industry makes periodic checks of its assets and liabilities to insure successful operation, so, too, should a community periodically check its assets and liabilities to make certain that it is realizing maximum income from its assets while preventing the cost of its liabilities from becoming excessive.

The financial assets of a community are the economic activities which are reflected in its land uses and the income of its people. These produce the revenue which pays the cost of the city's liabilities and supports the various public services provided by the community.

It is obvious then that the community which protects, promotes, develops and expands the strength of its assets and limits the spread and growth of its liabilities will be a successfully run community. Conversely, the community which dissipates its strength and permits its liabilities to grow unchecked, must inevitably wind up wasting its assets and allowing much of its land to become poorly developed or not developed at all. It is also obvious that if a community continues to supply excessive or unjustified services to any area, the departments providing those services will soon outgrow the economic structure of

the community. As these departments then become fixed costs in the community's financial structure, they contribute to the constantly increasing tax burden of the community.

The land use cost and income analysis, therefore, has been carefully designed to bring into proper perspective the financial condition of a community and to relate this condition to its physical, social, economic, and cultural characteristics in order to bring about feasible practical changes which will strengthen the overall structure of the community.

The study identifies all deteriorating, deteriorated, blighted or slum areas - both residential and non-residential - and analyzes the nature and degree of blight and blighting influence in such areas. This analysis is then used as a guide to help determine what clearance, conservation, rehabilitation, or other action is needed. A general indication of appropriate land uses for each area is also given. The cost and income study, in conjunction with other parts of the Land Use Cost & Income Study, provides an evaluation of a community's needs and of its abilities for undertaking urban renewal or other local action.

To effectively accomplish these objectives, this study attempts to draw a picture of a community's current financial and physical condition. This can be accomplished only by an accurate inventory of the community's assets and liabilities as they exist and as they apply to each type of land use within the community. The Land Use Cost and Income Study has been specifically designed to accomplish this result.

This study is, in effect, a comparative analysis. A city divided into sections whose boundaries enclose a particular type of land use different in type, quality and condition from the land use of neighboring sections.

The cost of providing current municipal services in each section is computed, as is also the income derived from each section by the town or other public body providing municipal services. The sections which produce income less than the cost of services provided are termed "deficit", and those which produce income greater than the cost of services provided are termed "surplus". Also determined is the degree of surplus or deficit of each section. These results are then weighed against the social, cultural, and physical benefits to the community of each land use section in order that recommendations may be made for the stabilization and conservation or redevelopment and renewal of each section.

In considering the results of this study, it must be understood that a section of a city can be deficit without being deteriorated or otherwise undesirable, and that a section can also be surplus dollarwise and at the same time undesirable from a social or physical point of view. For instance, a section with low assessed values and consequent low return in taxes to the city may have a disproportionately large number of school children with resultant high educational costs for that section. Although this section may be found deficit because of the large number of school children, this does not necessarily mean that the section is undesirable. As time goes on and the school children grow up and leave school, the section will generally become less deficit and possibly slightly surplus. Later, as new families with children move into the area, the cycle starts again. Therefore, if the neighborhood where the section is located can regenerate itself from generation to generation, and if local building, housing, zoning and subdivision laws are enforced, a section of this type can be expected to be in continuing cycle between a slightly "deficit" and slightly "surplus" condition. It is important

that underlying factors such as this be recognized and considered to prevent unwarranted conclusions and unwarranted actions about particular sections.

Evaluation must be undertaken to discover the basic reasons why, in addition to the monetary deficit or surplus quality, a section is deficit or surplus. In industry certain items are handled at a loss but are necessary to the overall profitable operation of the industry. In the same manner a community may continue to provide services to a section knowing that the income to the city from that section will not pay for its services. While it is important to carefully analyze all sections, surplus or deficit, the significant point to remember is that the highly deficit sections are the ones which must be most thoroughly analyzed and controlled. The possibility of a different use of the land or rehabilitation with eventual new development must always be carefully considered.

Past studies have indicated that heavily "deficit" sections are generally those in which poor physical, building, and environmental conditions exist, and in which excessive fire, police, or welfare costs are most apparent. When these excessive costs and conditions are combined with a low or declining return in taxes and other income, it must be assumed that the area is beginning to show tendencies toward slum conditions or has, in fact, already reached a slum condition. However, in this study, these conditions must be confirmed by a physical analysis.

Slums and physically blighted areas can usually be recognized during a visual survey part of this study. By correlating a thorough analysis of a city's financial structure with a survey of local land

use and building conditions, the cost and income study can serve as a guide in recognizing the danger signs of incipient blight which can cause future slums or which may threaten the successful development of an entire area. An area that is merely tending toward slum conditions may not always be easily discovered through visual inspection, but increased expenditures for police, fire, and welfare shown in the cost and income study signal a warning that such a section may be in the process of becoming blighted. The cost and income study also provides a grading of the sections of the city by showing the comparative degree of surplus or deficit of each section. In the cases where the factors causing sections to be deficit are determined to be detrimental to those sections, this grading or cataloguing can also help in establishing priorities for redevelopment, rehabilitation, or conservation programs.

SECTION IIGENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE LAND USE COST AND INCOME STUDY

Five steps are necessary in making a cost and income study. These steps are: (1) collection and evaluation of financial operations and reports of the public bodies performing municipal services within the city; (2) the division of the city into land use sections; (3) the preparation of maps showing the location of specific types of municipal activities;<sup>1.</sup> (4) the calculation of net area<sup>2.</sup> and net assessed value of the sections and the computation of cost and income of these sections; and (5) the formulation of conclusions and recommendations based on the data obtained from the four previous steps.

In this general discussion, these five steps will be described in broad and general outline. It will be noted - and it needs to be emphasized - that this study by Bruce Campbell & Associates is intended to give a broad presentation of the scope and use of a Land Use Cost and Income Study. In applying the five steps to an individual community, variations from a theoretical norm will be necessary because communities have their own peculiar qualities, characteristics, and problems. Variations were, therefore, necessary in applying the study to the Town of Southbridge just as variations will be necessary in applying the study to other communities.

This presentation is intended to denote the broad general outline and guides under which a cost and income study can be conducted for any community.

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1. In other words, school population, juvenile arrests, welfare costs, etc.
  2. Taxable acres, exclusive of public and exempt properties.

### A. Evaluation of Public Finances

The financial record of services performed in a city is to be found in the annual financial report. In those cities where some municipal services are a function of separate but overlapping jurisdictions, such as school districts or authorities, reports from those bodies must also be obtained. Although the cost and income analysis strives to give a current picture throughout, it is necessary to study the reports of several prior years in order to insure that the finances of the present year do not present a departure from the norm. A large expenditure for a non-recurring item or an unexpected revenue windfall in any one year could easily distort the overall picture of a city's fiscal structure. It is, therefore, important that the current year's figures are realistic in terms of recent history. It is also important to exclude the costs and income received from municipal services supplied by private companies, such as the Water Company in Southbridge, and endowments that support or partly support other services, such as a library.

### B. Delineation of Land Use Sections

While the financial reports are being studied, the job of dividing the city into land use sections may begin. A land use section is a part of a city in which the use to which the land is being put is substantially the same throughout. This is another way of saying that only one type of land use will predominate in a given section. A section may be of any size but generally ranges in size from less than ten to more than a hundred acres. Boundary lines separating sections will be drawn on the same base map used in the preparation of the distribution maps described below. No section will extend beyond the city limits.

Section boundaries separate different types of land use, as well as different qualities of land use within a single type. Tax-exempt land existing in large areas that can easily be delineated is not included in any section. The four primary different categories or types of land use include industrial, commercial, residential, and predominantly vacant land. Industrial sections are further classed as heavy or light, and commercial sections fall into different groups depending on the market served. An area composed of large department stores, hotels, banks, and large food markets serving a regional market would be differentiated from an area in which smaller grocery stores, or hardware stores serve a local market. Residential areas in a city are divided into sections on the basis of type of residential use such as single family, multi-family, apartment, or garden apartment. They are also divided on the basis of quality. Therefore, a section of substantially good quality single-family homes would be separated from an adjacent section of single family homes which are in poor condition or are of a less substantial construction.

Certain natural or man-made barriers may serve to separate sections. These may be streams or railroad embankments or other barriers of such effective divisive nature that the land use on one side differs from that on the other. Streets will form the bulk of the section boundary lines, although it is to be expected that, in many instances, section lines will cut across the center of blocks so that an industrial use at one end may be separated from a residential use at the other.

Land use sections will generally encompass a substantial area. There will, however, be special cases such as garden apartments which may cover only one city block or some industrial areas which may cover only two or three blocks because they are surrounded by other types



of land use. It is difficult to formulate an overall rule for the size of land use sections because so much depends on the peculiarities of individual communities. It is equally difficult to make a hard and fast rule concerning the total number of land use sections in any given town. Past zoning practices and economic activity vary so markedly from community to community that both the total amount of land devoted to a particular use and the number of separate areas devoted to that use must be determined individually in each instance.

It should be noted that the basis for establishing section boundaries is predominant land use. In other words, a section which is classed as single family middle-quality residential may also have within its boundaries land uses which are not residential. There may be small local grocery stores, parcels of vacant land, and industrial properties which are too small or not adjacent to other industrial sections. The important factor is that any given section must be primarily devoted to one land use only.

In any city there are likely to be several sections in different parts of the city which will fall into each of the category and quality classifications. For instance, there will be several sections scattered throughout the city used for the same type and quality residential purpose. These should be treated as separate sections if they are surrounded by other types of land use or if there are dissimilar sections located between sections devoted to the same use.

The first delineation of section boundaries should be treated only as a tentative step because further investigation during the study may show that boundary lines should be moved in order to properly encompass a particular land use, or even that section boundaries be eliminated between sections previously considered different but which, after more detailed study, appear to be used for the same purpose.

The boundaries outlining sections may be drawn on the basis of a field investigation or on the basis of maps already prepared as supplemented by careful field check. It will often be found that maps showing existing land uses and housing conditions have already been completed and are available either from the city planning agency or through services of an Atlas Company. It is always wise to check these sources first because they can serve as an excellent starting point in determining the land use section lines. A later physical investigation of all parts of the city will provide the information needed to confirm or change these original lines.

### C. Preparation of Distribution Maps

While the financial analysis and the delineation of land use sections are being undertaken, the assistance of various city departments should be sought in preparing spot or distribution maps showing the actual locations of certain municipal service activities. These maps will include the following: (1) total population spot map; (2) school population spot map; (3) police arrests spot map; (4) fire alarms spot map; and (5) welfare cases spot map. Some of these maps may have already been prepared in connection with either the city's planning studies or the normal operation of certain city departments. If the maps themselves have not been prepared, the basic data needed for their preparation may have been compiled. It is always important to determine first if these maps or data are available and to make use of such potentially valuable material.

The city engineer or comparable official will ordinarily have a base map of the city showing the location and names of streets. Such a map of proper scale will generally be appropriate for preparing necessary spot maps. Suitable symbols will be used on each map to designate each type of municipal activity. The fire department can help in providing a map showing the location of each fire call, including false alarms, for the most recent year. False alarms are included because of the cost of such alarms. The police department also can develop a map to show the location of adult and juvenile arrests, excluding traffic arrests, during the past year. Juvenile and adult arrests may be indicated on the map by means of different symbols. Traffic arrests are generally excluded because they do not ordinarily require exhaustive investigation and because they relate more properly to a traffic study than to a land use analysis. Welfare services,

whether provided by a division of the local city government or by an arm of a state agency, are generally administered on a local level. The local office will have records which will form the basis for a map showing the location of each welfare case in the city over a period of time. The map symbols will designate the different types of welfare activity such as aid to dependent children, old age assistance, and others. In preparing maps covering data for the latest available year, consideration should also be given to the past records of the various departments, generally for the five previous years. The exact number of prior years' records investigated will depend on local conditions. This examination will determine if the information shown on the map represents a static or a changing picture, and whether it is representative of recent conditions. It should reveal those parts of the city in which certain municipal services are growing or diminishing. Consultation with department heads and other employees is invaluable in determining these trends.

In addition to the maps showing where the various services were performed, it is necessary to have a map of the city showing the distribution of the total population and a map also of children enrolled in public schools. The total population map can be prepared most easily in one of two ways: (1) If a city has a population over 50,000 or has requested the U. S. Bureau of the Census to include it in the 1960 Characteristics of Housing Survey, the map may be drawn on the basis of total population for each block given in the Census report, with block figures added to make a section total; (2) The other method is to go through the local city directory, street by street, and place the information on a map. In the population maps it is necessary to have each symbol denote a number of people. This

is in contrast to most of the other maps where each symbol denotes a single case or action. There are other methods of preparing a total population spot map but they are expensive and time consuming because they require a survey of each individual household. These methods do not provide a greater degree of accuracy commensurate with the effort involved.

The spot map showing where the public school children live is ordinarily prepared in cooperation with a central office where records of the school system are kept. The list of school children and their addresses is used in conjunction with the city directory in order to pinpoint the home of each pupil. If the difference in the cost of educating kindergarten, elementary, and high school students can be established, or if state aid to the school system varies depending on the number of students in each category, it is essential to show the difference between kindergarten, elementary, and high school students by use of different symbols on the map.

It should be possible to prepare all of the maps outlined above for almost any city. In fact, certain cities may provide other municipal services for which maps can be prepared in addition to the ones discussed here.

Throughout this study, the important point to consider always is that no two cities are exactly alike and that modifications of the cost and income analysis must be made to meet unusual or different conditions in different communities.

It should be noted also that the distribution maps can be of use to a city in other ways. In planning new school construction, it is extremely helpful to know where the school children currently live and to have also some idea of possible future shifts or changes in such

school children population patterns. In considering possible locations for a new fire station the distribution maps showing the location of fire calls and of total population can be an important aid. The other maps may be used in other ways. Their usefulness does not end with the cost and income study.

#### D. Calculation of Cost and Income

The next step after the outlining of land use sections is the calculation of the net area and the net assessed valuation of each section. By net area is meant the taxable land, expressed in acres, in each section. This excludes all publicly owned land such as parks, or school property, property owned by churches or colleges, and all streets and roads, leaving only that property which is subject to real estate taxation. The net area of any section will ordinarily be less than the total area, but this latter figure is neither computed nor used in the cost and income study. The assessed valuation of each section is computed in the same manner so that the figure arrived at is one which includes the value of only such land, buildings, and other improvements as are subject to real estate taxation.

The methods by which these figures are determined will vary from city to city, depending upon the manner in which assessment and area figures are kept. In some cities, assessment and area figures are available by city blocks. In these cases it is relatively simple matter to identify the blocks within any given section and to arrive at area and value totals. Where a section line cuts across a block, assessments and areas will normally be computed on property or lot basis.

In many cities, however, assessment and area totals are not available by blocks. In these cases, it is necessary to identify each individual property within a section and to add the individual area and valuation figures in order to get section totals. In many instances, the area figure is expressed in the assessment records as the dimensions of a lot. The area in square feet may then be computed, the lot areas added, and the total converted to acres.

Close cooperation and coordination with the city's assessors is very important in this step because the assessors, naturally, have a close knowledge not only of their own records but also of all the properties in the city.

With net area and net assessed valuation computed, the task of assembling the basic working data for the land use cost and income study is complete, and the job of calculating the incomes and expenditures attributable to each section may begin. There are two underlying principles in this process. First, all expenditures of public money within the city (cost) and all revenue from the people, business, or property in the city to public treasuries (income) must be considered. Some city governments control or provide all the municipal services themselves. In other communities there may be a separate school district and separate water or other authorities. None the less, all municipal services must be accounted for in this study. Second, all incomes and expenditures are allocated to the particular sections where the money was spent or earned in proportion to the assessed value of each section, in proportion to the total population of each section, by the special formula set up by the governing authority for the collection or distribution of funds, or by using a combination of any or all of these methods based upon the

income or expenditure account under consideration.

Some specific examples may help to make this more clear. A city's income can usually be allocated to the sections without too much trouble. Much of a city's income comes from the real estate tax. It is possible to determine, from the city's annual financial report and from the reports of overlapping jurisdictions or authorities, the total amount collected in real estate taxes during the last fiscal year. This total dollar amount depends on the net assessed value of the sections that make up the city. Accordingly, this income figure is divided among all the sections in proportion to the net assessed values of the sections. Other city taxes are allocated to the particular sections in which they are collected. In some cases it is impractical to trace each tax or revenue item to the section of origin. Fees for licenses and permits are an example. Although licenses and permits may cost little individually, so many may be issued that collectively they amount for a substantial portion of a city's income. It is obviously impractical to determine the section for which each dog license was issued. For other such taxes or fees where it is not possible to locate their incidence by section, a decision must be made as to the primary factor responsible for a greater or lesser number of such fees. In the example of dog licenses and certain other permits it will be found that as a city's total population increases or decreases so, too, will the number of licenses issued vary and the total revenue from this source will consequently increase or decrease. For this reason, the income received from licenses and permits is often allocated to particular sections in accordance with the proportion of the total populations of the sections.



Once the manner in which the various incomes are collected is known, the manner in which they are to be allocated back to the particular sections in which they originate becomes apparent. The total dollar income derived from each section is the sum of the amounts allocated from each income account appearing in the financial reports of the local public bodies together with those of the state and federal agencies that are providing municipal services to the city. All municipal incomes are allocated to the section from which they were derived if this is possible and practical. Where it is not, the distribution will be on a proportional basis regulated by the manner in which the key factor responsible for an income varies from section to section, or in accordance with accepted formulas set up by local, state, or federal authority for the collection or allocation of income.

Expenditures are handled in a similar manner. The cost of providing municipal services can either be allocated directly, according to where certain services are performed, or it may be allocated according to a logical proportional arrangement. Actually, expenditures will almost always be charged to specific sections on a combination of both incidence and proportional methods.

The expenditures incurred in operating a city's fire department provide a good example of this. The city's financial report gives the total amount spent for fire protection and the fire call distribution map gives the location of each fire call for the latest complete year as well as the total number of fire calls in each section. An examination of the fire department records will show the percentage of man-hours spent in responding to fire calls and in preparing the fire apparatus for the next call, the percentage spent in public safety programs and rescue service operations, and

the percentage spent in fire protection patrols and property inspections. If it is not possible to obtain exact percentages for each of these items, consultation with the fire chief will usually produce a figure which is accurate enough to use for the purposes of this study.

When the percentages have been established either through personal consultation or from the department's records, it is possible to allocate the department's expenditures. It will often be found that about half the department's time is spent in answering calls, fighting fires, or getting equipment and personnel in readiness for the next call. If this be so, half of the department's expenditure may be charged against the individual sections in proportion to the number of fire calls in each. The remaining half of the fire department's time may be equally divided between public safety or rescue services and fire prevention patrols or inspections. These functions have to do with protection of people and property. Therefore, 25% of the total expenditures will be distributed to the sections in direct proportion to their total population and 25% in proportion to their assessed values. Public safety and rescue services vary according to the number of people in a city, and fire prevention and inspection activity will vary in direct proportion to the number and value of buildings in a city. These percentages will therefore also vary.

All the expenditures for providing municipal services are allocated in like fashion, with a thorough analysis necessary to find out what factors determine the spending of specific sums of money. The basic principles for the allocation of both expenditures and income are the same. Whenever possible, they are carried back to specific cases in particular sections or distributed in proportion to the total population or total net assessed value in the sections.

The more detailed discussion to follow of the manner in which Bruce Campbell & Associates carried out a land use cost and income study in Southbridge, Massachusetts, will give additional examples of the way incomes and expenditures are allocated and will show how local conditions govern the actual distribution percentages.

The allocations as outlined above, when completed, show a dollar amount expended in each section for police, fire, welfare, schools, and all other services a city may provide. Similarly, a dollar amount is shown for each type of revenue or income derived from each section by the public bodies providing municipal services. Because the sections will be found to differ greatly in size, simple dollar amounts for incomes and expenditures do not provide a basis for comparison between the sections. In order that these figures may be placed in a meaningful relationship to each other, the dollar amount for each income or expenditure in a section is divided by the number of net acres in the section, thus giving a cost or income figure per net acre. This may then be compared with net acre costs or incomes in other sections. The differences then have important significance.

The section totals of all incomes and all expenditures are expressed as totals per net acre. Although it would be possible to add all the expenditure or income dollar figures before dividing by the number of acres, it is more useful if each item in the expenditure or income analysis is expressed in total amount as well as in net acre terms. The total amount of income or expense of each item for each section indicates the effect that these items have on the overall development of the community. This also helps during the final analysis when it is important to know the comparative relationship between the welfare, fire, police, or other expenditures of each section.

When the total incomes and expenditures have been calculated for all sections, then the degree to which each section is deficit or surplus may be established. The amount by which expenditures in dollars exceed income in dollars per net acre is the measurement of the degree to which a section is deficit. If income in dollars exceeds expenditures in dollars then a section is surplus to the extent of the net acre difference.

The results of the computations may be portrayed graphically or on a map of the city with the sections colored different shades of red or black to denote the varying grades in which the sections are found to be deficit or surplus.

#### E. Formulation of Conclusions and Recommendations

With the completion of the four steps described, an analysis of the computations and a final field survey are necessary before the study is completed. The individual items comprising the totals per net acre of the deficit sections are carefully scrutinized in order that the significant factors causing those sections to be deficit may be made clear and in order that recommendations aimed at causing the sections to be less deficit may be made. Those sections which are only slightly deficit or surplus may be showing warning signs of incipient blight such as a high proportion of police, fire, or welfare activity. Recommendations may be made to arrest any further decline. Sections which are surplus must also be examined in order that the factors causing them to be surplus may be strengthened.

A final field survey is necessary to properly evaluate the physical, economic, and social characteristics of each section. These characteristics may be of such nature that a section which is deficit in dollars and cents must actually be considered desirable from a broader

point of view. Only a combination of physical survey and factual analysis can provide an effective base for recommendations concerning programs designed to eliminate deficit conditions, half incipient blight, or stabilize the positive qualities of surplus sections.

## INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

Industrial land use consists of four separate non-contiguous sections in the Land Use Cost and Income Analysis: KK, BB and W.

### Section KK

This section is wholly occupied by the American Optical Company which employs approximately 60 per cent of the Town's labor force. Hence, there are no dwelling units nor residential population.

The predominantly developed area is approximately 56 acres, containing industrial structures in good condition reflecting regular maintenance practices.

The Land Use Cost and Income Analysis shows the section to be Southbridge's highest surplus area, +\$2,442 per net acre annually. The principal reasons for this are: high assessment per net acre (\$20,391, ranking seventh); an accumulation of only minor operating costs for major services, and the absence of school and welfare costs. Since there is no residential population, a socio-economic analysis for this section is of no consequence.

### Conclusion

The importance of this area to the economic development of Southbridge cannot be overemphasized. Immediately surrounding it are vast areas of open undeveloped land owned by American Optical. Every effort should be made to protect and preserve this land so that American Optical may continue to operate and expand freely. Specifically, this will involve zoning enforcement to prohibit residential development from infringing upon

American Optical's properties.

### Section BB

This section is located in the west central part of the Town and is bounded by Hamilton Street, the Quinebaug River Bridge Road and Main Street, and River and Cliff Streets.

It is a multiple use area with industrial use covering approximately 33 per cent of the land followed by residential (25%), open land (22%), public land (11%), and Commonwealth of Massachusetts land (9%).

Dwelling units are more than 40 years old and in generally poor condition. Sixty per cent of all units are in multi-family structures, the rest in two-family structures.

The Land Use Cost and Income Analysis indicates that the section is severely deficit at -\$1,357 per net acre, ranking fourth among all deficit sections. An unfavorable combination of low assessed valuation and high service costs are important reasons for this condition.

Socio-economic data shows high population density due to intensity of multi-family dwellings on small lots. The second highest section incurring General Assistance welfare costs (\$328 per net acre), ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) ranks third (\$320) and Old Age Assistance, seventh. Adult and juvenile arrests both rank third (\$248 and \$13 per net acre respectively). School costs, on the other hand, are about average (\$507 per net acre, ranking fourteenth).

### Conclusions

The existing land use pattern here is considered undesirable under

all circumstances. Absence of adequate "buffer zoning" to separate incompatible uses (i. e. , multi-family residential with industrial properties) has contributed to the area's low property assessment as well as adverse environmental conditions. These facts coupled with the structural blight found in residential and industrial properties point to corrective action through renewal activities, particularly specifying the elimination of dwelling units from the section. This would effectively make way for industrial redevelopment on cleared land.

#### Section W

This section is located in the east central portion of Southbridge and includes that area bounded by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, the Quinebaug River and the limits of industrial development.

The predominant use is industrial with 31 dwelling units consisting of two-family and single-family homes most of which are over 40 years old. Residential structures are in sound condition.

Service costs and assessments per net acre are comparatively low due, in part, to a sizable portion of the land which is vacant and undeveloped. As a result, the section, shows a mildly surplus nature (+ \$9).

Socio-economic criteria indicate no welfare costs, no juvenile arrests and only minimal fire, police and school costs.

#### Conclusions

Normally, adverse environmental effects occur when industrial use is allowed to exist so close to residential areas. In this case, however, proper buffer-zoning separating the two is provided by Main Street. The



residential area is somewhat elevated as well. While this situation appears satisfactory for the present, caution must be exercised in the future to insure that residential/population growth is controlled. It is strongly felt that any encouragement of growth in this section should be directed towards industrial expansion utilizing available undeveloped land adjacent to existing industry.

### COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Sections developed for commercial use A and II. Like those developed predominantly for industrial use, commercial sections are not contiguous. They both, however, reflect the historical influence of the Quinebaug River and the railroad, typical of many such developments in older New England communities.

#### Section A

This is the Central Business District comprised of a complex of commercial properties which form a semi-regional trading center for surrounding communities. Intermixed throughout, there are 66 dwelling units of varying condition and size. Those closest to the commercial area show definite signs of structural blight, crowded conditions and declining value. Lying exposed and without adequate protection from commercial activity, it would appear that most of these residential structures will continue to deteriorate unless they are eliminated altogether.

Commercial buildings, on the whole, are poorly maintained creating an overall picture of "drabness" in the downtown shopping area. Certainly, the predominance of old, multi-story structures give an

appearance of obsolescence, but an equally important factor contributing to the demise of commercial activity in this area has been a general apathy on the part of individual shop owners. Their lack of effort in improving the structural and environmental attractiveness of the downtown area is one good proof of this; failure to adopt modern merchandising practices, another.

Like most Central Business Districts, this section is highly surplus at \$1,125 per net acre yearly and ranks behind that area occupied by American Optical among the surplus sections. Despite its unfavorable structural and environmental conditions, it is not surprising that this section pays more in local taxes than it consumes in service costs for the following reasons:

1. The commercial development is intense in the CBD and properties are assessed very highly (\$42,516 per net acre, ranking first).
2. Even though most service costs are extremely high, few school children residing in the section have kept school costs moderately low.

Socio-economic criteria indicate that police costs, adult and juvenile arrests were highest of all sections. This was also true of fire alarms. While it has been discovered that downtown areas normally show unusually high costs in these categories due to their function as entertainment centers, intensity of development, etc., we consider that costs in this case are abnormally high.

Welfare costs similarly are high particularly for a section with medium density. ADC (\$193) and Old Age Assistance (\$735) rank sixth and fifth respectively.

### Conclusion

An intense mixture of old residential and commercial structures with no protective barrier separating the uses can only stimulate degradation of the entire section. Other factors contaminating the downtown area as a shopping center include inefficient street pattern and lack of off-street parking. It is of immediate importance that corrective measures be established for the revitalization of the Central Business District. The following recommendations are deemed necessary toward this end:

1. The entire section be included for study of physical and environmental blight factors in determining specific renewal action needed for their elimination. It is recommended that the Town undertake a Community Renewal Program for this purpose as described in greater detail in the section following this report.
2. That Fire Prevention Inspections be made periodically to help reduce fire costs.
3. That a police study of liquor establishments be made and security measures taken by individual retail establishments would help to decrease the adult and juvenile arrests.
4. That a campaign be conducted to enforce housing, building and health codes.

5. That a committee be formed with representation of all shop-owners and dedicated to the unified cause of providing better downtown shopping facilities capable of competing with other shopping centers in the immediate vicinity.

## Section II

This section lies along East Main Street and has developed predominantly for "strip" commercial use. Smaller areas of undeveloped land and residential use interrupt the commercial development intermittently. As in the CBD, residential structures (there are 25 dwelling units) are close to commercial properties. Most are multi-family, over 40 years old and in sub-marginal condition. From a marketing standpoint, these factors seem to indicate rapidly declining values for such homes.

Cost and Income Analysis ranked the section eighth highest of 22 deficit sections with -\$112 per net acre. Principal causes appear to be low assessed valuation (\$3,310) and an accumulation of moderate costs for major services since there are large undeveloped areas within the section.

The socio-economic data did not show any costs for General Welfare Assistance, Aid-to-Dependent Children or Juvenile arrests. On the other hand, Old Age Assistance costs are relatively high (\$263) revealing a heavy proportion of elderly residents represented in the section's population age characteristics. Adult arrests are moderate for a commercial section at \$63 per net acre. School costs rank a low twenty-third at \$89.

### Conclusion

Residential development should be discouraged from this section for a number of reasons. Its existence between two commercial and industrial corridors (Sections A and KK) and lying along a major thoroughfare make this section impractical for residential development. This has been borne out by the declining values of residential structures now situated there. It is recommended that this section be included in the scope covered by a Community Renewal Program in Southbridge.

### RESIDENTIAL AREAS: HIGH DENSITY

There are two general areas falling into a "High Density" category: one located in the southwest central part of Town comprising of Sections DD, C and B; the other, northeast central part comprising Sections H, J, K and EE. These sections are characterized by intensity of physical development as well as density of population, per net acre.

#### Section DD

Residential use predominates with multi-family structures covering approximately 11 net acres. Per net acre, there are almost 10 dwelling units, 52 people or 14 families -- significant proof of high density in any town. The majority of these structures, while of older and somewhat unappealing design, are sound structurally.

At -\$1,917 per net acre, it ranks as the third highest deficit area. Old Age Assistance costs are twice as high as the section ranking second in this category (Section J) at \$2,265 per net acre. School costs rank third (\$1,417). Due to the intensity of land use, assessed valuations also rank third.

Socio-economic blight criteria indicate that Fire, Police, Arrest and Welfare Costs are low -- an indication that environmental conditions are healthy enough.

### Conclusions

What physical blight exists in this section appears to be due to crowding and age of buildings, the lack of open spaces for recreational purposes, etc., and the quality of surrounding areas. We recommend that this section be included in the Community Renewal Program. In addition, control measures through code and regulations enforcement must be strictly practiced.

The development of "tot-lots" to serve this and surrounding areas with a high concentration of children would enhance the community facilities.

### Section C

Land here is zoned exclusively for two-family residential use. Existing use, however, shows a scattering of single family homes in addition to two family residences comprising approximately 80% of the land area, followed by industrial (15%) and commercial (5%). Of the 724 persons living in the section, only 27 are school children indicating higher concentration of people in older age groups.

The structural condition of buildings is fair and, like similar residential development surrounding the Central Business District, houses are over 40 years old.

The Land Use Cost and Income Analysis indicates a deficit condition of \$270 per net acre or the eleventh highest of 22 deficit sections. A combination of very high costs for Old Age Assistance and Fire Alarm

offset comparatively high assessed value per net acre rendering the deficit condition.

On the other hand, the socio-economic blight criteria show that there is no incipient blight in the section. Specifically, there are no ADC costs, juvenile arrests or adult arrests and General Welfare Assistance is minimal.

### Conclusions

The major problem appears to be a large number of elderly people living in this area. Proportionately, on the other hand, there are few younger families as evidenced by the small number of school children. Although homes are in seemingly sound condition, density created by the elderly in this section coupled with overall density in surrounding areas have placed a burden on community facilities. There are clearly inadequate recreational park and playground space to serve the population. Improvements to this situation would most probably call for relieving some population density with Federally financed housing for the elderly (see Section "Housing for the Elderly"). Environmental conditions would benefit from additional recreational space to serve all ages.

### Section B

This section lies below the Central Business District and is predominantly developed for multi-family housing. Small areas have been developed for commercial (local shopping center), industrial and public use. The general structural condition of structures is good yet the high intensity of development has caused notable crowding.

It is the fifth highest deficit section (-\$499) due to moderate assessed valuations per net acre compared with higher costs for municipal services consumed here. Welfare costs rank very high, particularly Old Age Assistance (\$754 per net acre, ranking fourth). Other costs are moderate to high with school costs showing very high costs.

Socio-economic study indicates that this section is showing signs of incipient blight. Welfare costs, adult arrests and fire activity are abnormally high.

#### Conclusions

Successful regeneration of this section appears to depend somewhat upon renewal study to determine whether it contains sufficient signs of deterioration (environmental) to warrant renewal action. In this light, we recommend that this section be initially included in the overall area to be covered in a Community Renewal Program for Southbridge.

#### Section H

In the northeast central part of Southbridge, this section lies between the Central Business District (Section A) and American Optical Company (Section KK). It is composed of mixed uses with a predominance of multi-family housing.

Residential development is highly intense in the Dean-Crystal Street area where the structures are in poor condition, crowded and in close proximity to adverse effects of the railroad and commercial uses. Such factors contribute to an overall poor living environment.

Land use along Main Street is zoned and developed predominantly



for General Business utilizing large single family residential structures which formerly were the homes of several of Southbridge's wealthier residents.

The northern portion of this section consists of industrial use with no effective physical barrier separating it from the residential area.

For a section which has considerable industrial and commercial valuation, it is alarmingly deficit, financially, at -\$724 (ranking sixth of 22 deficit sections). Welfare costs are all high as are arrest costs, fire activity and police costs. It shows extremely high school costs, \$1,093 per net acre, ranking third in this category.

Signs of incipient blight were clearly evident in the socio-economic analysis but this may only be applied to residential areas.

#### Conclusions

There are serious problems of incompatible mixed uses in the section. Residential properties are badly affected and poorly planned. In addition to environmental deficiencies, residential structures are in serious need of major repairs. It is highly recommended that this section re-zone exclusively for General Business and light industry after eliminating residential properties entirely. Specific action toward this goal would be determined in a Community Renewal Program.

#### Section J

Predominantly developed for multi-family residential use, this area consists of 26 net acres and houses 690 people. Like similar residential sections surrounding the commercial and industrial areas, its pattern

reflects 19th century development with a clustering of row-type housing on small lots, unplanned street patterns and incompatibility of mixed uses.

Housing by-and-large is in adequate condition from a structural standpoint. On the other hand, unhealthy environment and crowded conditions seriously affect housing values.

This is dramatically evident in the Land Use Cost and Income Analysis of the section which indicates a badly deficit nature of -\$1,953 per net acre, the second highest deficit section in Southbridge. Accumulatively and individually, this section consumes extremely high municipal costs especially general welfare, old age assistance and aid to dependent children, ranking first, second and first, respectively. This situation has developed from the dangerously high intensity of residential development and population density level.

#### Conclusion

This section has serious problems which appear to indicate that regeneration can only be achieved through renewal. It is, therefore, recommended that it be studied further in a Community Renewal Program. Specifically, it is important that population density be relieved to some degree if present community facilities serving the area are expected to suffice.

#### Section K

This area contains 13 net acres and lies above Section J. It is the second highest density section with 41 people per net acre. Predominant land use is multi-family and two-family residential.

Crowding of buildings creates definite problems. Building condition is considered fair although the type and age of structures has caused stabilization or decline in property values which is somewhat reflected in moderate assessments.

The section ranks as the fifth deficit area; principal factors being very high school costs (highest in this category), welfare, adult arrests and fire alarm activity. Accumulatively, these costs offset per net acre assessed valuations which rank second of all sections.

#### Conclusions

This section would benefit if population density were reduced and open space were provided. These can best be attained through the elimination of several of the older, more sub-standard residential structures. Therefore, this section should be studied in connection with a Community Renewal Program. It is felt that existing properties deemed in good condition would increase in value if crowded conditions and undesirable environmental factors were reduced in the section.

#### Section EE

This consists of six taxable or net acres developed for multi-family residences. It is an extremely dense area containing 33 persons and 15 housing units per net acre. The housing stock is over 50 years old but by and large conditionally sound.

Economically, Section EE is the worst deficit area with a per net acre liability of \$2,623 annually. This strongly reflects extremely low assessments, high density and high service costs. School costs rank second highest in the town while Aid to Dependent Children and Fire activity

are similarly excessive.

### Conclusions

The highly deficit nature of this section is somewhat misleading since the overall physical condition of residential structures is satisfactory. Excessive school costs and low assessed values per net acre have been largely responsible for this situation. Because there are prevalent adverse environmental conditions such as overcrowding of buildings, poor street pattern and a lack of adequate open space, this section has been recommended for further study in the proposed Community Renewal Program.

### MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS

There are four medium density residential areas in Southbridge. The area generally northeast central is made up of Sections\* O and P; south central area is composed of Sections F, G, M and JJ; the west central area composed of Sections D and E; and the northwest area consisting of Sections AB and CC. These areas are all predominantly residential in character and of moderate density ranging from 5 to 19 persons per net acre. In a very broad sense, they encircle the high density residential sections which in turn surround the Central Business District at the core of developed Southbridge.

### Section O

This section lies just east of Charlton Street and north of high density residential development. It is approximately 59 net acres of which 94% is residential, 1% commercial and 5% public or semi-public use.

Residential structures are two family or multi-family, old but in

good condition. Community facilities are seen to be available at safe and convenient distances from all homes. Environmentally, this section suffers in appearance and safety from a large number of dead-end streets without adequate turn-around provisions. It is felt that this creates serious hazards to safety in emergency situations in addition to normal inconvenience to delivery vehicles and automobiles.

Economic analysis of the section's assets and liabilities shows a moderately deficit nature of \$286 per net acre. The significant cause appears to be low assessed value on a net acre basis since major service costs are not exorbitant.

Socio-economic blight criteria show no significant signs of incipient blight although costs for General Assistance and Old Age Assistance are higher than might be expected.

#### Conclusions

An effort on the part of the town to improve street conditions and provide turn-arounds for dead-ends would enhance the environmental condition of this section. As for housing, it is expected that strict enforcement of local codes and ordinances would effectively aid in its regeneration. These measures must be exercised in any residential area where there is a predominance of older type houses not only to insure safe and adequate housing but also to protect property values.

#### Section P

Predominant land use here is residential although a substantial portion contains industrial and commercial properties. The section is characterized by some undesirable "overlapping" of these three uses

without proper protective barriers separating them. To a large extent this reflects the uncontrolled development of land evident in other older areas in Southbridge.

The majority of residential structures, interspersed among commercial and industrial properties, are multi-family. Those closest to industrial and commercial uses are considered in poor condition both structurally and environmentally; very densely populated with unsafe play areas for children. In outlying areas where residences are separated from commercial uses, homes are in good condition.

Land Use Cost and Income Analysis indicates a mildly deficit condition of \$104. Considering the number of commercial and industrial properties in this section (which are known to pay in local taxes far more than they consume in municipal service costs), this condition is more serious than if the section were devoted almost exclusively to residential use. For its population density, the major service costs are high, assessed valuations fairly low.

Blight criteria represented include very high Fire Alarm Costs and Adult Arrests. It is felt that both have been affected by the existence of sub-standard housing located along side of commercial and industrial properties.

#### Conclusions

Incompatible residential use with commercial and industrial activity must be rectified if there is any hope of providing safe and sanitary housing for the inhabitants of this section. It is recommended, therefore, that this section be considered along with neighboring sections of higher population

density for renewal (specifically elimination of residential structures where exposed to commercial and industrial use along Charlton Street). Toward this end, we include this section in the general area we propose for study in a Community Renewal Program.

#### Section F

Section F is in the south central portion of "built-up" Southbridge and is delineated roughly by Oak Ridge Cemetery, Everett and Main Streets. Land area is almost solely devoted to residential use.

Residential structures, a mixture of two family and single-family types, are in good condition.

Financially, the section is moderately surplus at \$428 per net acre and ranks, in this respect, as the fifth highest surplus area in the town. Relatively low service costs, well maintained and well assessed properties are the predominant reason for this. Property values have increased out of proportion with other residential sections of comparable density and development.

Socio-economic analysis indicate no element of incipient blight.

#### Conclusions

It is important that this section be zoned properly for two family and single-family residences in order to check any future possibility of undesirable population density or overdevelopment while at the same time, through proper subdivision and zoning enforcement, incompatible uses such as commercial development (possible in a section so close to the Central Business District), will be prevented.

### Section G

On the eastern side of Oak Ridge Cemetery and bounded by Main Street and the railroad is Section G, developed for multi-family and two-family residences. The topography of this section is hilly and uneven yet this has not inhibited residential development.

Residential structures, while old, are sturdy and well maintained. Buildings are not dangerously crowded together and there appears to be adequate open space required of healthy living environment.

The section was found to be slightly deficit (\$188 per net acre) as a result of moderately low assessed valuations per net acre. Service costs incurred are moderate across the board.

Socio-economic analysis indicates that the section shows no signs of incipient blight. Aid to Dependent Children, Old Age Assistance, Fire Alarms and Adult Arrests were moderate costs and may be considered normal for a residential section of similar character.

### Conclusions

Future development plans for this section should seriously consider playground space to serve the area. Ample open space makes this feasible particularly in the vacant land contained in Cole Forest. It is recommended that the town allocate 5 to 10 acres of Cole Forest for this purpose. For better financial balance, it is recommended that the section be reviewed by assessors.

### Section M

This area is one of Southbridge's more recent residential subdivisions and is distinct in its character from the highly intense developments



found in older sections nearer the center of town. It has been planned to include ample lot sizes and contains logical street pattern. Open space is preserved and controlled.

Housing structures and environmental conditions are considered sound and healthy.

Characteristically, the residences are almost all single family, most of which are of modest value. There is a majority of young families living in them.

#### Section JJ

Section JJ is developed along Morris Street north to the railroad. Its 32 net acres are almost exclusively devoted to residential use including single family, two family and multi-family homes. Housing structures, though old, are in good sound condition throughout except at the bottom of Morris Street where several homes were found to be in poor condition.

The section shows a modest deficit condition in the Land Use Cost and Income Analysis of \$82 per net acre. Due to the age of the housing stock here (as in other sections close to the downtown area) and the length of ownership tenure, assessments have not changed measurably over the years to support increasing service costs.

Socio-economic blight criteria indicate very moderate to no costs for fire alarms, welfare, arrests, etc.

#### Conclusions

There are no indications of existing or incipient blight in this section. Financially, the section should realize a surplus condition when assessed valuations are reviewed.

#### Section D

This area is located in the west central area part of town. It is a very large section both in terms of taxable land area and population (85 net acres and 19 persons per net acre). Residential structures are old, multi-family types in varying degrees of condition. Roughly, one-third are in need of extensive repairs requiring rehabilitation. A small number of these appear to be dilapidated beyond repair and should be razed.

The Land Use Cost and Income Study indicates a moderate deficit position of \$467 per net acre. Relatively high school costs are a major contributing factor.

In the socio-economic analysis, every major cost item was represented although costs per net acre in every case were rather low. This can be interpreted as indicative of some incipient blight principally caused by the density of population in the section's built up portion and the crowded pattern of residential development.

#### Conclusions

This section is bordered in the north by two sections (BB and DD) which have been designated for further study in a Community Renewal Program. Section D contains sufficient evidence of structural and environmental deficiency to merit inclusions in the general study area tentatively proposed in this report for such a program.

#### Section E

This area is located near the center of Southbridge and consists of multi-family and two-family homes. While this is one of the older built up sections, overall condition is satisfactory. There are only two or three

structures which appear to be deteriorating. Environmental factors are good with community facilities and public utilities close by and providing adequate service to present inhabitants.

It is only moderately deficit (\$209 per net acre) ranking 12 of 22 deficit sections. Slightly higher service costs than the assessed valuations return in taxes is responsible for this.

There are, however, signs of incipient blight beginning in the section and these are worthy of mention. General Assistance, ADC and Old Age Assistance are all significantly represented with higher than normal costs per net acre. Fire Alarm costs are high, ranking 9 out of 28 sections showing costs for this item.

#### Conclusions

Analysis has shown that the structural and environmental condition of this section as observed in the "visual" survey is satisfactory. However, from a financial point of view, it is apparent that blighting factors are just beginning to affect the area. Perhaps one of the chief reasons for this is its location adjacent to the Central Business District, and its lack of proper buffer separating residential and commercial properties. Such incompatibility of land uses at the fringe of these two sections demands further study (CRP) aimed at the elimination of unhealthy factors affecting residential environment in Section E.

#### Section AB

This section consists of 32 net acres, of which approximately one-half is open land. The built up portion has been developed for residential use consisting of single, two and multi-family homes. One particular section,

however, was found to be badly deteriorating with definite indications of physical and environmental blight. This area is generally bounded by Roberts, Pleasant and Walcott Streets and a part of Wall Street. Major deficiencies pervading the buildings include crumbling foundation, sagging roofs, broken windows and excessive minor defects. Environmentally, residences exist close to industrial properties on Mill Street with no effective barrier of separation.

Land Use Cost and Income data shows a moderately deficit condition of \$679 per net acre. Higher than average costs for General Assistance (ranking 4 highest in the category), Aid to Dependent Children and Schools are largely responsible for this condition. In addition, its Police Arrests costs are the 7 highest of all sections. For an area of medium density, these costs are considered significant indication of socio-economic blight.

The quality of community facilities serving the area is below average standards, further documenting the need for renewal action in this area. Street patterns are poor as are street conditions which badly need repaving. Recreational facilities are lacking in the area at the present time giving use to dangerous and unsafe play activity in streets.

#### Conclusions

The portion of this section mentioned above as containing clear-cut signs of physical and environmental blight merits further study as a potential renewal area. In this regard, it is recommended that a Community Renewal Program include the section in the overall "suspect area". Of immediate importance, street maintenance should be initiated as soon as possible. The provision of an improved residential playground area to serve this section is covered in the Community Facilities section entitled "Recreation" following this report.

## Section CC

This area is located in the west central portion of the town, and consists of approximately 32 net acres. Hilly topography has prevented much of the land from development, consequently street pattern is irregular; dead-ends without adequate turn-around facilities are evident throughout the built-up portion. Residential structures are mixed in type and condition. Older two-family homes are situated nearer River Street with more recent sub-divisions of single family homes in good condition have occurred in the northern sections. Of the older type, there are isolated instances of physical deterioration, characterized by extensive minor defects. Overall, however, the section contains adequate housing and environmental conditions.

Land Use Cost and Income Analysis shows a deficit nature of \$678. Relatively low assessed valuations compared with a generally high level of major service costs, particularly school costs, contribute largely to this condition. There appears to be very slight evidence of environmental blight in the area.

Socio-economic blight criteria represented in the expenditure breakdown show moderate costs for O. A. A. and A. D. C. as well as Police and Fire Alarms. A high number of public school children in the section reflects the excessive school costs found.

### Conclusions:

The older portion of residential land use (area near River Street) lies unexposed and adjacent to run-down Section BB. Consistent with our recommendations for further study of Section BB, we have included

the residential portion along River Street in the proposed Community Renewal Program Study Area. In the northern part of the section, it is highly recommended that dead-end streets be either connected with through streets or provided with satisfactory turn-arounds.

#### LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL SECTIONS

Low density sections surround the central built-up area of the town. Street patterns are irregular and generally poorly plotted with an abnormally large number of dead-end streets. In most cases, development in these outlying areas has been limited due to the topographical irregularities of the terrain.

The sections delineated for this category include L, N, Q, R, T, U, V, AA, and GG.

##### Section L

The general location of L is in the southwestern part of the community. Containing approximately 1,870 net acres, existing land use apportionment is as follows: 45% residential (two family, single family), 45% open, undeveloped land and 10% public or semi-public use.

Older and more intense use residential lies closer to the central area of town and, in itself, is moderately dense in terms of both population and building. The structural condition of houses is consistently satisfactory as is environment. New subdivisions in the Dennison district are well designed and seem certain to inject an attractive element to the overall living environment of the section as a whole.

Financially, there is a very slightly surplus condition here of \$2 per net acre. Assessments of open land and built-up land appear well in balance with the service costs consumed in the section. With the addition

of new valuations (with up-to-date assessments) derived from the aforementioned subdivisions, future financial balance appears to be assured.

There was no sign of incipient blight; only very slight costs for Old Age Assistance and Fire Alarms were indicated.

#### Conclusions

All indications are that Section L will retain its attractiveness as a residential area in the future. In the older portion, however, it is recommended that local codes and ordinances be enforced, particularly Subdivision control.

#### Section N

This residential area extends northward on both sides of Charlton City Road to within a half mile of the Southbridge-Charlton town line. Of the 70 net acres, roughly 56 acres have been developed for residential use, the remaining 14 undeveloped, open land. Most of the residential structures are single family of modest value and in good to excellent condition.

Community facilities serving the area are sufficient in all but two respects:

1. Town owned recreational space and facilities are presently inadequate for the population served and,
2. Streets are in bad condition.

Land Use Cost and Income data indicates a mildly surplus condition of \$34 per net acre. Properties appear to be fairly assessed while major municipal service costs are in proper balance.

Socio-economic blight items show only very small costs for Fire Alarms and Old Age Assistance. School costs are normal for a section of comparatively low density.

### Conclusions

The sole physical problems apparent in Section N are (1) lack of proper recreational area and (2) an abundance of dead-end streets with no safe turn around provisions. Both of these will require community effort and expense. They are considered necessary for the future regeneration of this section, one of Southbridge's otherwise more promising residential areas.

### Section Q

Section Q is situated in the extreme south central portion of town and contains few dwelling units or inhabitants. The majority of land, due to topographical problems, is currently undeveloped, privately owned land.

Characteristic of most predominant undeveloped sections, Q is only slightly surplus at \$7 per net acre. Costs for major services are extremely small.

There are no costs for socio-economic blight items.

### Conclusions

Due to undeveloped character of this section, there are no recommendations at the present time.

### Section R

Section R is a sparsely developed area of 168 net acres located in the south central part of town. Residential structures are almost all single family type, many of which have been built in the past 15 years. Subdivision and street patterns are irregular due to topographical limitations. Structural condition is good throughout.

A very slight deficit condition was found in the financial analysis of Section R and this can be attributed to low assessed valuations placed upon



undeveloped land in the section.

Fire Alarm costs represent the only socio-economic item of any consequence, \$22 per net acre. School costs are moderate. All other major service items show slight to no costs for this section.

#### Conclusions

Assuming that, in the future, Southbridge can attract new residents on the basis of available land and a strengthened economy producing new jobs, it would appear that this section would be among the first areas for new residential sub-division. To maintain the attractiveness of the area, it is recommended that attention be given to enforcing local subdivision regulations. In addition, investigation should be made to determine the cause and effect of fire activity.

#### Section T

Here is another sparsely developed area of open land and single family residences. Physical condition of built up portion is considered good.

Service costs are understandably low as are assessed valuations on a net acre basis. Overall, there is a moderate surplus condition of \$125.

The socio-economic element of the analysis showed insignificant evidence of blighting factors. There were only very slight costs for Fire Alarms found.

Sparse population explains very low school costs incurred in this section.

#### Conclusions

Future development growth in this area, other than along Elm Street,

appears limited in the near future for reasons of a general lack of demand for new single family homes and major topographical problems demanding high development expense. At the present time, the developable portions of this section, as a residential area, is satisfactory from all points of view and given every indication for continuing so in the future.

#### Section U

This section is the major built up portion of a residential section known to many as "Sandersdale". It lies south of East Main Street and is roughly divided by North Road. Residential use is properly separated from commercial and industrial properties in close proximity by the natural incline of North Road which rises to a maximum height of approximately 125 feet, where residential development begins. Residential structures were rated as satisfactory in providing safe and sanitary housing for the inhabitants of the area. Most are single family units constructed at least 25 years ago.

Similar to other sections there are a number of dead-end streets which should be provided with individual turn arounds.

Land Use Cost and Income analysis indicates a mildly surplus nature of \$48 per net acre. Combination of moderate service costs and moderate assessed valuations are major factors contributing to this condition.

Adult Arrests and Fire Alarm activity are present yet insignificantly small to warrant further comment.

#### Conclusions

While this section presently shows an excellent balance of income

and expense per net acre in addition to favorable structural and environmental conditions, it is recommended that assessments be reviewed if residential development becomes more intense in the future.

#### Section V

Section V is a "strip" development along North Road and contains approximately 181 net acres. Development is sparse in the section consisting of 47 dwelling units, all of which are single family structures. Environmental problems revolve around the distance from major community facilities such as schools, recreation, local shopping, etc. Structural condition is considered average and adequate.

Land Use Cost and Income analysis indicates a mildly surplus condition of \$35 per net acre. Similar to other sections of sparse development, assessments are comparatively low with service costs held at a minimum.

No signs of existing or incipient blight precipitated from the socio-economic analysis for this section.

#### Conclusions

It is conceivable that presently vacant, but developable land along North Road will be attractive to residential development in the near future. If so, it will necessitate provision for additional community facilities particularly recreational space.

#### Section X

This section lies just below Section V, on both sides of North Road. The majority of this land is undeveloped. Built-up area consists of 7

single family units. Population per net acre naturally is low.

Predominance of undeveloped land explains the low assessed valuations per net acre in this section. Minimal service costs are consumed, and there are no blight factors evident.

#### Conclusions

Local assessors should review this section in the event of residential development.

#### Section AA

This section was almost completely vacant 15 years ago. Recently, new residential subdivisions have capitalized on developable areas and home construction is expected to increase gradually in the future. A good portion of the natural terrain is uneven hillside and at the present time the majority of its 75 net acres is still undeveloped. Homes are of modest value for the most part, and of excellent construction. As in other sections which are located outside the central core area of Southbridge, Section AA does not enjoy proximity to community facilities (ie., schools, recreation areas and stores within reasonable walking distance of homes).

Financial evaluation showed the section to be slightly deficit at \$25 per net acre. The chief reason for this appears to be comparatively high school costs due to the number of younger families settling in this area.

Socio-economic blight items represented are Old Age Assistance, Adult Arrests, Juvenile Arrests, and Fire Alarms. While the cost per net acre is not appreciably high on a net acre basis, it must be remembered

that the majority of land is undeveloped. In this regard, it is apparent that such costs considered per developed net acre would be more meaningful and indicate definite signs of incipient blight conditions.

### Conclusions

No physical blight can be seen in Section AA. As pointed out, however, there is evidence enough of environmental deficiency to warrant corrective action as soon as possible. The first recommendation is to enforce local codes and ordinances for better control over subdivision and zoning. In addition, it is certain that recreational facilities owned and operated by the town merit immediate attention.

### Section GG

This section is located in the north central portion of the town and contains 168 net acres. Land has been developed almost exclusively for residential use with a few exceptions along Worcester Street (north), where there is some commercial (general business) usage. By and large, this is one of Southbridge's newer residential sections.

Residential structures included 53 single family, 26 two family and the remaining 8 multi-family. Structural condition, for the most part, was found to be satisfactory although several older two-family homes located near Moon Street are in serious condition.

Land Use Cost and Income analysis indicates that GG is slightly deficit at \$54 per net acre. A predominant reason for this seems to be underassessment of older residential properties situated in the southern part of Worcester Street.

Socio-economic blight criteria indicated moderate costs for ADC,

Adult Arrests and Fire Alarms. These costs were found to be incurred in the south Worcester Street area (mentioned above), where population density, housing quality and condition are distinctly different from the rest of the section.

### Conclusions

The southern portion of Worcester Street warrants further renewal study on the basis of incompatible mixed uses and high service costs. Therefore, this subarea of Section GG is included in the proposed Community Renewal Program Study Area following this report.

### OPEN LAND AREAS

Predominantly open land in Southbridge consists of 5,000 acres of hilly, uneven terrain surrounding the central built up portion of town. Accessibility to these outlying areas is restricted to a small number of roads, along which there are a few single family, farm-type homes. "Open land" sections include Y, Z, FF and HH.

In our analysis, these areas have been taken collectively since their undeveloped character preclude significant appraisal from a socio-economic, financial or physical point of view. In the other hand, the sections are considered important insofar as their potential for future development is concerned.

As a whole, Sections Y, Z, FF and HH were slightly surplus according to the Land Use Cost and Income Analysis. Experience has shown that undeveloped areas with low assessments and negligible service costs normally show only slight surplus conditions. With few people living in these areas, socio-economic blight criteria indicated minute

costs for items in this category.

### Conclusions

Topographical problems in these areas appear to be extensive and serious enough to frustrate any wide-scale development in the near-distant future. The two chief reasons for this are:

1. Development expense would be higher than the present market would pay; providing utilities to these areas involves further expense.
2. There has been no evidence that Southbridge's image as an attractive residential community has improved. It appears logical that, unless the town is relieved of some of its obsolescent housing, its crowded living conditions in older residential areas and other problems, no development pressure will come to bear upon open, undeveloped land areas.

The above section provides an evaluation of structural and environmental condition in Southbridge's residential and non-residential areas. As a planning tool, it represents the initial step toward eliminating undesirable elements found in built-up areas. In broad terms, the study first identifies "symptoms" or problems of a physical, environmental, financial or socio-economic nature in various sections of similar land use.

Where symptoms of decay were found (physical and/or environmental) there was an attempt to recommend practical solutions in general terms. Types of solutions fall roughly into two categories, differing both in treatment and importance:

1. Major Treatment requires changes in the character, density, economic value or use of land. Planning, design and development costs are normally financed by Federal, private, municipal and often State funds.
2. Minor Treatment involves corrective solutions at the local level with necessary funds appropriated from the General Fund or Special Bond Issue. Physical pattern of land and buildings is not normally altered. Typical actions include revision and/or better enforcement of codes and regulations (e. g. , Building Code, Subdivision Regulations, Zoning By-Laws, et al.); repavement of streets; revaluation of assessed property; provision of additional community facilities, such as recreational areas or a fire station; and improvements of public utilities serving the area.



"Major Treatment" usually calls for urban renewal activity in some form. Urban renewal, for our purposes, may be defined generally as a continuous process whereby local government puts into effect those public measures and techniques needed to restore and maintain a state of economic and social health. It is a total approach aimed at curing and further preventing blight and deterioration in rundown sections of a community.

A typical urban renewal program adaptable to the needs of a comparatively small town of Southbridge's size and condition, would involve the following procedural elements.

1. Establishment of a Workable Program for Community Improvements, documenting coordinated community effort to eliminate blight. Basic requirements include:

- a. Codes and Enforcements

- Adoption and compliance of adequate standards of health, sanitation and safety for dwelling units.

- b. Comprehensive Community Plan (Master Plan)

- Approval of the following plans, programs, and regulatory measures:

- Land Use Plan
      - Major Thoroughfare Plan
      - Community Facilities Plan
      - Zoning Ordinance
      - Subdivision Regulations
      - Public Improvements Program

- c. Neighborhood Analyses

- Identification of areas, presently blighted or in danger of becoming blighted, and a program for seeing that

each area is made up of decent structures in a suitable living environment.

d. Administrative Organization

Establishment of administrative responsibility for carrying out Workable Program.

e. Financing

Development of the means for meeting the costs of carrying out an effective program for the elimination and prevention of slums and blight.

f. Housing for Displaced Families

Program to relocate families displaced by governmental action in decent, safe, and sanitary housing within their means.

g. Citizen Participation

Participation of individual citizen's and citizen groups insuring public understanding and support to accomplish community goals.

2. Establishment of a Local Public Agency (LPA or Redevelopment Authority) responsible for carrying out urban renewal activity in the community. Town Meeting approval of the LPA is necessary. An established LPA gains the authority of land assembly (acquisition by eminent domain).

3. Planning Studies to Examine:

- a. The cause and effect of blight and blighting conditions;
- b. The community's financial and administrative capacity for carrying out renewal programs;

- c. Significant market information and other factors determining the best re-use of cleared land;
  - d. The attitude and readiness of citizen's for urban renewal activity;
  - e. The feasibility of various types of renewal treatment (i. e., clearance, rehabilitation, or conservation) for specific areas selected for renewal.
4. Determination of renewal areas and respective treatment including a schedule for carrying out renewal projects.
  5. Putting the plan into effect with any or a combination of the three basic types of renewal activities, as applicable:
    - a. Conservation of residential or non-residential areas through a network of better controls including zoning, housing laws, traffic conditions, etc.
    - b. Rehabilitation of sub-standard housing or run-down commercial and industrial areas by remodeling, repairing, altering or removing structures.
    - c. Clearance (redevelopment) by demolition of dilapidated, unsafe structures and making the land available for whatever purpose might best be served.

#### THE NEED FOR URBAN RENEWAL IN SOUTHBRIDGE

While it is outside the scope of the General Plan to recommend final treatment for specific areas, the preceding analysis (Land Use Cost and Income Study combined with the Structural Survey) provides a sound basis

for determining preliminary conclusions. Its purpose is to stimulate further detailed study focusing upon urban renewal action where a need exists. Due to the large number of obsolete building types, the lack of open space in some residential areas, and other serious problems presently affecting the built-up areas surrounding (and including) the Central Business District core, a Community Renewal Program is recommended as the next stage towards formulating an effective plan to eliminate harmful and undesirable elements in Southbridge. Prior to discussing the Community Renewal Program, its purpose, scope and function, we submit the following factors underlying our recommendations for urban renewal activity in Southbridge:

1. Obsolete development patterns of residential areas characterized by crowding of buildings (improper building-to-land area ratio), lack of open space, incompatible mixed uses with no adequate barrier, and decreasing real estate values.
2. Existing physical blight of residential areas reflected in dilapidated structures (beyond the state of normal repair), lack of sanitary facilities, etc.
3. Socio-economic factors as evidenced by abnormal crime or delinquency rate, fire activity and welfare costs in residential areas. (See footnote below.)

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In the Land Use Cost and Income Study, the sections recommended for further study in connection with a Community Renewal Program (A, E, H, J, K, AB, BB, CC, DD, FF and II) accumulatively account for the following elements of blight criteria:

	%		%
Total Population	35	Aid-To-Dependent Children	73
Developed Land Area	11	Old Age Assistance	51
Juvenile Arrests	89	Disability Assistance	57
Fire Alarms	38	Return on RE Tax	13
General Relief	71		

In simple terms, these areas pay low taxes yet incur abnormally high costs for major crime, health, welfare and fire services.

4. Environmental deficiencies affecting healthy living conditions - such as lack of amenities (attractiveness as a residential area), traffic hazards, etc.
5. Commercial shopping area containing poor circulation and lacking off street parking facilities, obsolete structures (many in poor condition), rendering an overall appearance which has almost completely lost its appeal to the modern shopper.

Those sections containing one or a combination of these elements follow with a summary of recommended corrective action:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Major Treatment</u>
A	Rehabilitation, Limited Clearance
II	Rehabilitation
W	Conservation
BB	Clearance, Rehabilitation
DD	Rehabilitation
GG	Conservation
D	Conservation
E	Rehabilitation, Some Clearance
AB	Clearance (Roberts, Plimpton St. Area)
FF	Rehabilitation, Limited Clearance
P	Conservation
O	Conservation
H	Rehabilitation, Some Clearance
J	Rehabilitation, Some Clearance
K	Rehabilitation

Combinations of all the above sections comprises our recommended Proposed Community Renewal Program Study Area.

WHY SOUTHBRIDGE'S NEXT STEP SHOULD BE A  
COMMUNITY RENEWAL PROGRAM

It is clear from our observation and study that obsolescence and blight is widespread in Southbridge, covering an area far larger than a single renewal project could handle. The approach to Southbridge's problems, then, calls for a community-wide scope beginning with a comprehensive plan determining specific project areas, then phasing them into a continuous long-range program (10 years or more) encompassing all run-down areas.

The recently-established Community Renewal Program (CRP) meets precisely Southbridge's needs. The Community Renewal Program, an amendment to the Housing Act of 1949, is a Federally-assisted plan, city-wide in scope and including both residential and non-residential areas. Its basic purpose is to identify and measure in broad terms, the total need for urban renewal in the community, to relate this need to the resources available in the community, and to develop a long-range program for urban renewal action.

A typical program would include the following work items.

1. Studies of economic and market forces that affect the city's capacity for growth, especially in terms of housing and the demand for land.
2. Identification and measurement of the total need for residential and non-residential renewal action.
3. Relating these needs to the community's resources - financial, relocation, administrative and legal - now or likely to become available.

4. Development of a long-range program with the scheduling and timing of specific renewal projects for upgrading the community's blighted and deteriorating areas.

BASIC DATA

<u>Section</u>	<u>Net Acres</u>	<u>Total Net Ass. Value</u>	<u>Net Ass. Val. Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Total Population Per Net Acre</u>
A	42	\$1,785,600	\$42,516	762	18
B	49	899,420	18,355	1,125	22
C	26	610,705	23,488	724	27
D	85	1,149,175	13,519	1,686	19
E	26	197,125	7,581	338	13
F	16	250,790	15,674	269	16
G	54	523,850	9,700	551	10
H	35	651,150	18,604	873	24
J	26	596,715	22,950	689	26
K	13	337,675	25,975	534	41
L	1,870	2,104,675	1,125	2,014	1
M	19	283,285	14,909	255	13
N	69	303,935	4,404	329	4
O	59	234,120	3,968	323	5
P	25	217,410	8,696	376	15
Q	83	9,250	111	22	1
R	168	413,235	2,459	387	2
S	47	20,950	445	90	2
T	155	380,925	2,457	286	2
U	65	168,235	2,588	208	3
V	181	207,965	1,148	171	1
W	142	130,650	920	138	1
X	46	41,300	897	44	1
Y	1,325	256,640	193	113	-
Z	1,810	322,330	178	138	-
AA	75	281,705	3,756	217	2
AB	32	222,110	6,940	417	13
BB	57	395,145	6,932	611	10
CC	34	425,685	12,520	517	15
DD	11	281,265	25,569	582	52
EE	6	139,545	23,257	202	33
FF	696	246,540	354	136	
GG	168	479,975	2,856	359	2
HH	1,138	307,490	270	29	
II	34	112,555	3,310	48	1
JJ	32	219,225	6,850	326	10
KK	56	1,142,403	20,391	-	-



BASIC DATA

<u>Section</u>	<u>Public Total School Population</u>	<u>Total Sch.Pop. Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Pers.Pro.Valuation For Section</u>	<u>Pers.prop.val. Per Net Acre</u>
A	35	1	\$564,175	\$13,432
B	129	2	40,470	825
C	49	2	3,960	152
D	193	2	14,635	172
E	19		5,740	220
F	32	2	625	13
G	69	1	10,400	192
H	135	3	621,175	17,747
J	87	3	22,675	872
K	78	4	17,515	1,347
L	334		10,750	5
M	49	3	800	42
N	57	1	1,000	14
O	51	1	5,360	90
P	49	2	26,450	1,058
Q		-	-	-
R	64		18,025	107
S	10		-	-
T	27		850	5
U	13		3,380	52
V	3		1,400	7
W	26		5,150	36
X	-		4,400	95
Y	11		1,520	1
Z	66		415	-
AA	64	1	3,700	49
AB	70	2	7,535	235
BB	102	2	37,925	665
CC	131	3	2,275	66
DD	55	5	1,750	159
EE	31	5	250	41
FF	2		6,575	9
GG	120	1	18,425	109
HH	5		255,676	224
II	10		12,950	380
JJ	38	1	4,765	148
KK		-	1,278,380	22,819

BASIC DATA

<u>Section</u>	<u>Police Adult Arrests</u>		<u>Police Juvenile Arrests</u>		<u>Fire Alarms</u>		<u>Fire Alarms</u>	
	<u>Total for Section</u>	<u>Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Total for Section</u>	<u>Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Tot. for Sect.</u>	<u>Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Per Net Acre</u>
A	133	3	11	-	66		1	
B	19	-	-	-	19		-	
C	8	-	-	-	32		1	
D	13	-	1	-	21		-	
E	8	-	-	-	10		-	
F	1	-	-	-	1		-	
G	3	-	-	-	5		-	
H	36	1	1	-	16		-	
J	20	1	-	-	24		-	
K	9	-	-	-	13		1	
L	1	-	-	-	40		-	
M	-	-	-	-	3		-	
N	-	-	-	-	6		-	
O	2	-	-	-	3		-	
P	7	-	-	-	16		-	
Q	-	-	-	-	-		-	
R	3	-	-	-	22		-	
S	-	-	-	-	-		-	
T	-	-	-	-	6		-	
U	7	-	-	-	11		-	
V	7	-	-	-	10		-	
W	4	-	-	-	-		-	
X	1	-	-	-	-		-	
Y	-	-	-	-	3		-	
Z	5	-	-	-	8		-	
AA	7	-	1	-	3		-	
AB	14	-	-	-	10		-	
BB	69	1	4	-	6		-	
CC	8	-	-	-	16		-	
DD	3	-	-	-	1		-	
EE	2	-	1	-	5		-	
FF	3	-	-	-	13		-	
GG	9	-	-	-	34		-	
HH	1	-	-	-	32		-	
II	11	-	-	-	6		-	
JJ	1	-	-	-	-		-	
KK	-	-	-	-	-		-	

BASIC DATA

<u>Section</u>	<u>Gen. Relief</u>	<u>A.D.C.</u>	<u>O.A.A.</u>	<u>Disability Asst.</u>
	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>
	<u>Tot. for Sect.</u>	<u>Tot. for Sect.</u>	<u>Tot. for Sect.</u>	<u>Tot. for Sect.</u>
A	2	4	31	1
B	4	2	37	-
C	1	-	19	3
D	4	4	43	6
E	2	2	3	1
F	-	-	1	-
G	-	2	18	1
H	5	5	19	2
J	11	5	32	4
K	-	2	10	1
L	1	1	25	2
M	-	-	4	-
N	-	-	1	-
O	4	-	14	-
P	-	-	4	-
Q	-	-	-	-
R	-	-	6	1
S	-	-	-	-
T	-	-	-	-
U	-	-	-	-
V	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-
X	-	-	-	-
Y	-	-	-	-
Z	-	1	-	-
AA	-	-	1	-
AB	3	2	9	1
BB	14	9	31	4
CC	2	1	11	1
DD	-	-	26	2
EE	-	1	4	-
FF	-	-	-	-
GG	-	1	1	-
HH	-	-	-	-
II	-	-	9	-
JJ	2	1	3	-
KK	-	-	-	-

INCOME - DISTRIBUTION

<u>Section</u>	<u>Total Real-Est. For Section</u>	<u>Real-Est.Tax Per Net Acre</u>	<u>Total Pers.Prop.Tax For Section</u>	<u>By Location. Total Pers.Prop.Tax Per Net Acre</u>
A	141,015	3,358	44,570	1,061
B	71,021	1,449	3,197	65
C	48,190	1,853	313	12
D	90,771	1,068	1,156	13
E	15,563	599	453	17
F	19,750	1,234	49	3
G	41,317	765	822	15
H	51,429	1,469	49,073	1,402
J	47,140	1,811	1,791	69
K	26,676	2,048	1,384	106
L	166,269	8,891	849	-
M	22,357	1,177	63	3
N	23,927	347	79	1
O	18,486	313	423	7
P	17,143	686	2,090	84
Q	711	9	-	-
R	32,627	194	1,424	8
S	1,580	34	-	-
T	30,020	194	67	-
U	13,272	204	267	4
V	16,353	90	111	1
W	10,270	72	407	3
X	3,239	70	348	8
Y	20,224	15	120	-
Z	25,438	14	33	-
AA	22,199	296	292	4
AB	17,538	548	595	19
BB	31,205	547	2,996	53
CC	33,575	988	180	5
DD	22,199	2,018	138	13
EE	10,981	1,830	20	3
FF	19,434	28	519	1
GG	37,841	225	1,456	9
HH	26,440	23	24,676	22
II	8,848	260	1,023	30
JJ	17,301	540	376	12
KK	80,832	1,443	98,528	1,759