



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor ♦ Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

May 1, 2012

Mr. Christopher Clark, Town Manager
Town of Southbridge
Town Hall, 41 Elm Street
Southbridge, MA 01550

RE: Downtown Southbridge Urban Revitalization Project

Dear Mr. Clark:

The Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) is in receipt of the Town of Southbridge's urban renewal plan titled, the "Downtown Southbridge Urban Revitalization Project," submitted on December 10, 2007. Additional Information to complete the Plan was submitted on June 10, 2010, August 17, 2011 and April 17, 2012. The Plan proposes the revitalization of the core of Downtown Southbridge, which includes areas of commercial/retail, residential, industrial, institutional, and public space land uses.

Under the proposed Urban Renewal Plan, the Southbridge Redevelopment Authority (SRA) will fully acquire 12 parcels (4.59 acres of privately owned land); partially acquire three parcels (1.33 acres of privately owned land); relocate 14 households and 13 businesses; demolish 11 buildings; carry out clearance and site preparation work; create public improvements; create three disposition parcels to support redevelopment projects; implement zoning changes; and adopt design guidelines to govern future redevelopment activities in the 27.9 acre urban renewal area. The Urban Renewal Plan is designed to revitalize the downtown and will facilitate mixed-use development and new commercial investment; encourage new housing development; improve traffic flow; relieve congestion and improve walkability downtown; consolidate and expand available public parking in the downtown; create new recreational space connecting the downtown with the Quinebaug River waterfront; and add up to 80 jobs. The Urban Renewal Plan will have a 20-year duration.

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 121B, § 48 the Department has reviewed the Urban Renewal Plan submission and makes the following findings.

- The project area would not by private enterprise alone and without either government subsidy or the exercise of governmental powers be made available for urban renewal.
- The proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area will afford maximum opportunity for privately financed urban renewal consistent with the sound needs of the Town of Southbridge as a whole.
- The financial plan is sound.
- The project area qualifies as decadent.

- The Urban Renewal Plan is sufficiently complete.
- The SRA must request designation of a Relocation Advisory Agency by the Bureau of Relocation (760 CMR 27.02) prior to property acquisition or other relocation activities.
- The SRA must submit a Relocation Plan for approval to the Bureau of Relocation pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 79A prior to the commencement of any relocation activities.

The Department concurs with the finding of the Town's Planning Board that the Downtown Southbridge Urban Revitalization Project urban renewal plan is based upon a local survey and conforms to a comprehensive plan for the Town.

Please be advised that pursuant to 760 CMR 12.04, "Land Acquisition," two recent, independent appraisals must be submitted to the Department prior to any actual land acquisitions. Please contact John Fitzgerald, Urban Development Coordinator, at (617) 573-1446 or at John.Fitzgerald@state.ma.us if you have any questions or need assistance.

The Department approves the Downtown Southbridge Urban Revitalization Project urban renewal plan submission. On behalf of Governor Patrick, I congratulate the Town of Southbridge and the Southbridge Redevelopment Authority on your efforts to date and look forward to working with you in the future on the successful implementation of this urban renewal project.

Sincerely,



Aaron Gornstein
Undersecretary

cc: Senator Richard T. Moore
Representative Peter Durant
Richard Clemence, Chairman, Southbridge Redevelopment Authority
Cassandra Acly, Director of Economic Development and Planning