

SURVEY OF SOUTHBRIDGE RESIDENTS WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

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SURVEY OF THE RESIDENTS OF SOUTHBRIDGE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The information contained in this report has been derived from a survey of residents of Wilmington's Southbridge neighborhood. This survey was conducted door-to-door in the neighborhood by the University of Delaware's Center for Community Development and Family Policy. Arrangements were made with Neighborhood House for students registered in the Community Analysis and Development Seminar to survey, neighborhood residents regarding their demographic characteristics, the most serious problems in Southbridge, political and organizational behavior, familiarity and use of Neighborhood House, banking use and needs, neighborhood commercial and service needs, opinions about the development of the waterfront, perceptions of the environment in and around Southbridge, and household problems.

Methodology

Students canvassed the neighborhood by going door-to-door during the day and asking residents if they would participate in the survey. Thus, the survey was not a random sample of the neighborhood but rather represents residents of the neighborhood who tend to be home during the day. Ninety-five of the approximately 600 households in Southbridge participated in the survey.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Figure 1 shows the age breakdown of the survey respondents. A substantial proportion of the respondents were over the age of 60 (nearly 27 percent) and three-fifths (60 percent) were female. The characteristics of the survey respondents reflect the fact that the survey was conducted during the day when females and older residents are more likely to be encountered. Fully 57 households (63 percent) reported having children at home, while 33 (37 percent) reported having no children in the household.

Figure 2 details the educational attainment of the respondents to this survey. Only 20 percent had less than a high school education.

Finally, it should be noted that 45 (48 percent) of the survey respondents reported owning their own home, while 49 (52 percent) stated that they rent. Many of the respondents are long term residents of Southbridge. Figure 3 shows that almost 60 percent have lived in Southbridge for 11 years or more.

Figure 1
Age of Respondents

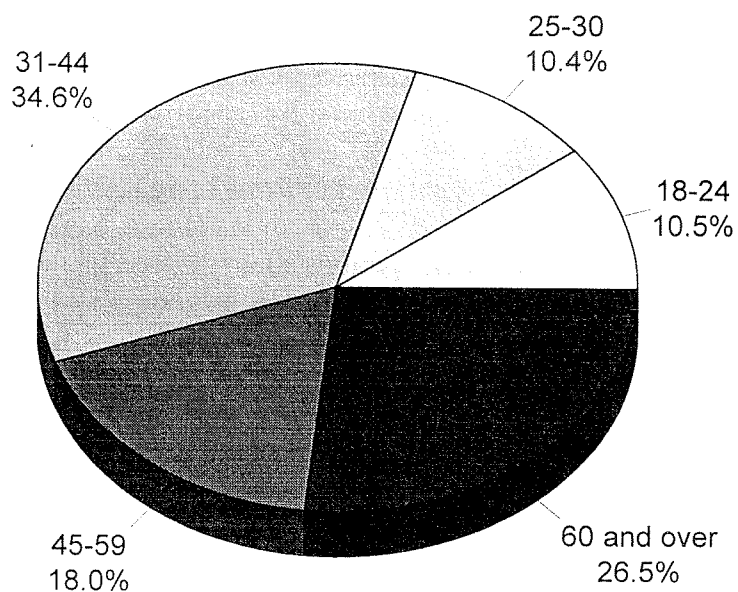
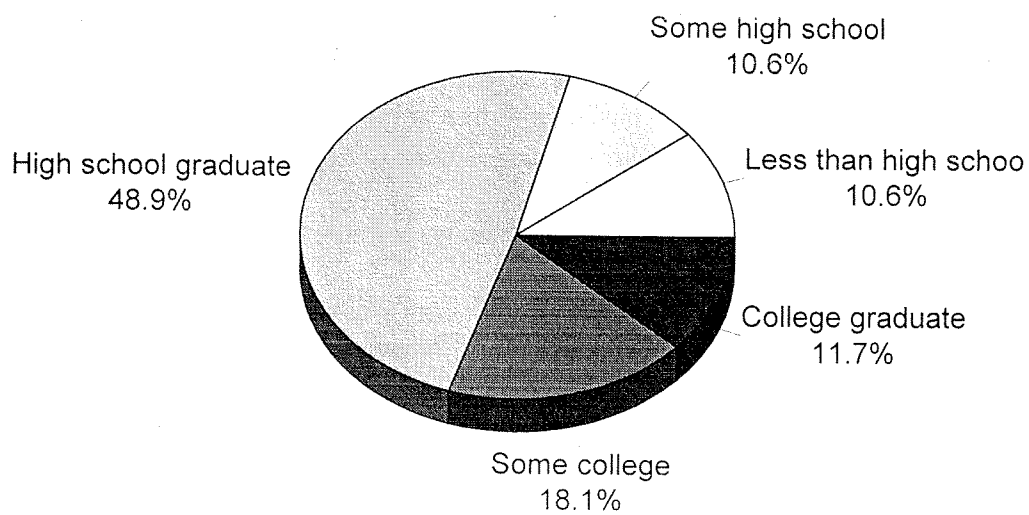
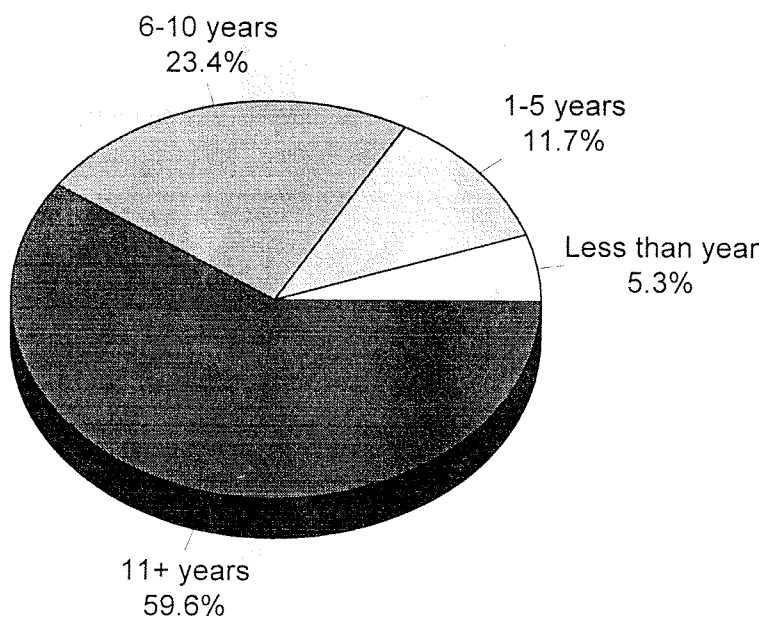


Figure 2
Education of Respondents



The following figure shows the breakdown of responding residents by length of residence at their current address.

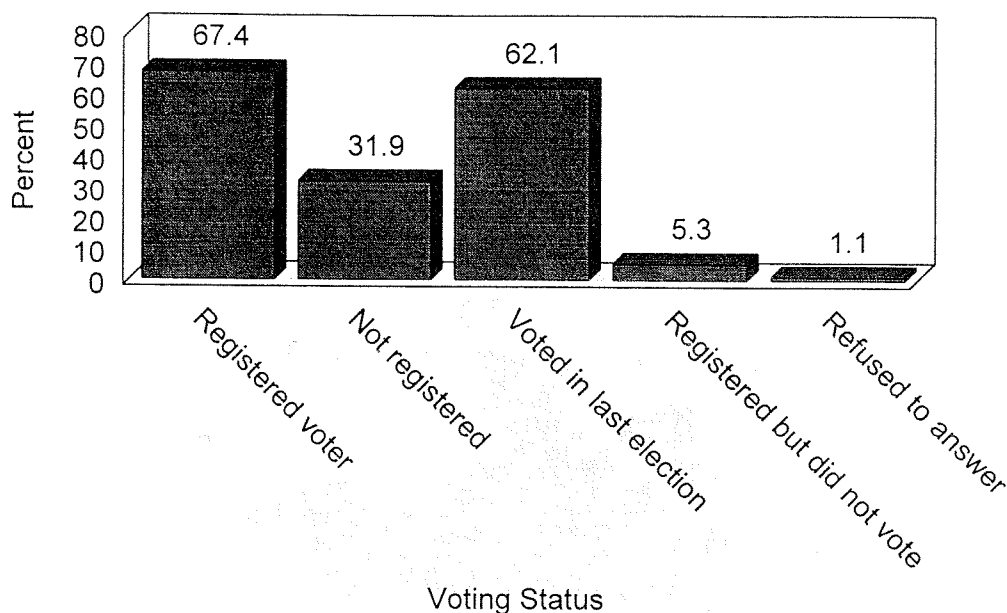
Figure 3
Length of Residence



Electoral and Organizational Activity

Southbridge residents appear to be active in the electoral process: 64 (68 percent) of the survey respondents said that they are registered voters while only 30 (32 percent) are not. Of the 64 registered voters, 59 (92 percent) voted in the last election.

Figure 4
Voting Participation



One quarter of the surveyed residents (25 percent) reported belonging to a civic organization (four mentioned the Southbridge Civic Association and 10 mentioned Neighborhood House). Of those who reported belonging to a civic association, 21 (91 percent) stated that the organization meets their needs.

Familiarity and Use of Neighborhood House

Of the 73 residents who reported being familiar with Neighborhood House and its services, 35 (48 percent) had availed themselves of these services. The most commonly used services provided by Neighborhood House, according to these residents, are day care, tutoring, the teen center, 4H, and summer camps. The programs which these residents stated they would most like to see being offered by Neighborhood House are additional youth activities, housing assistance programs, and computer skills training for both youth and adults.

Residents who responded to this survey were asked what services they would like to see a community organization in Southbridge provide. The following were mentioned as needed services:

- Work skills training
- Day care
- After-school programs for youth
- Recreation programs for youth
- GED
- Drug counseling

Banking Use and Needs

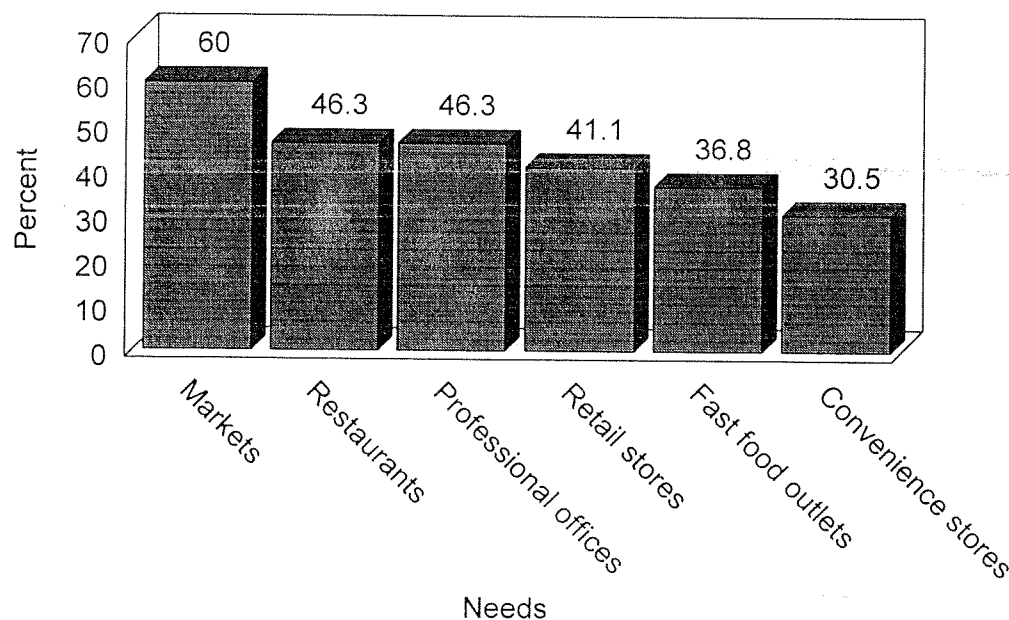
Questions were asked about the banking uses and needs of Southbridge residents. Over 70 percent reported having a bank account of some sort. PNC, Wilmington Trust, and Delaware Trust were the banks reported to be most commonly used by survey respondents. Most reported banking either “in Wilmington” or “on Market Street”. Of those respondents with bank accounts, 46 (69 percent) said that they would be willing to change banks if a bank were established in Southbridge.

Continuing with questions on banking, 47 or 70 percent of the respondents with bank accounts reported that they go to their bank four times per month or fewer, or need banking services four times per month or fewer. The service which these respondents overwhelmingly reported needing more often than any other was check cashing services.

Neighborhood Commercial and Service Needs

Survey respondents were asked which kinds of additional businesses are needed in Southbridge to serve existing needs. The following figure details the results.

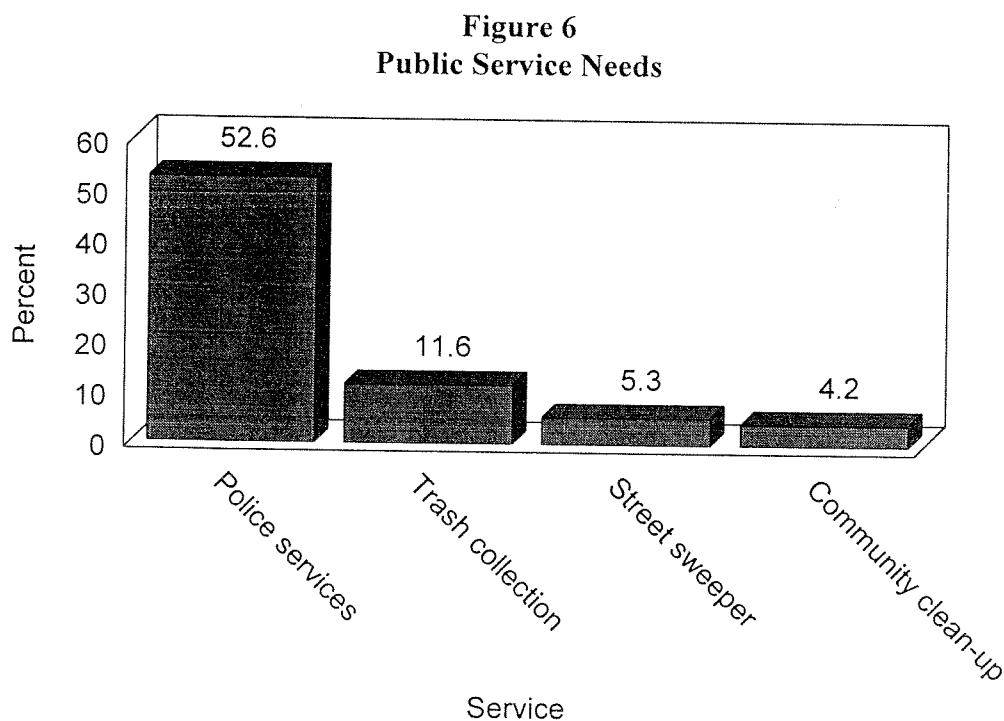
Figure 5
Retail and Commercial Needs



When asked to be specific in the category of “other”, several residents specified a low-budget community store and a laundromat as needs. Over a third (36 percent) of the respondents

said that Southbridge had too many liquor stores and nearly a fifth (19 percent) felt that there were too many bars.

Respondents were also asked to indicate which public services would be beneficial in helping Southbridge to prosper. As shown in Figure 6, the most frequent reply (53 percent) was more police presence.



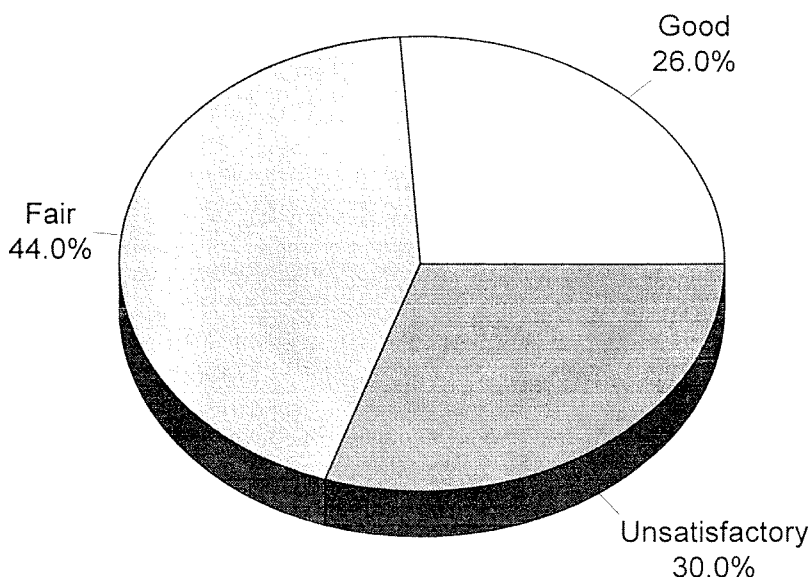
Waterfront Development

When asked about the proposal to dredge an area of Southbridge for waterfront development, 61 (64 percent) of respondents reported being aware of this proposal. A follow-up question was asked as to whether this development would benefit or harm Southbridge. Of those who responded to this question, 38 (76 percent) felt that the development would benefit Southbridge, while only 9 (18 percent) felt that such development would be detrimental. The most common response was that the proposed development would lead to more jobs and a cleaner environment in Southbridge.

Perceptions of the Environment

The survey respondents were asked about their perception of the environment in Southbridge. The results are as follows.

Figure 7
Perceptions of the Environment

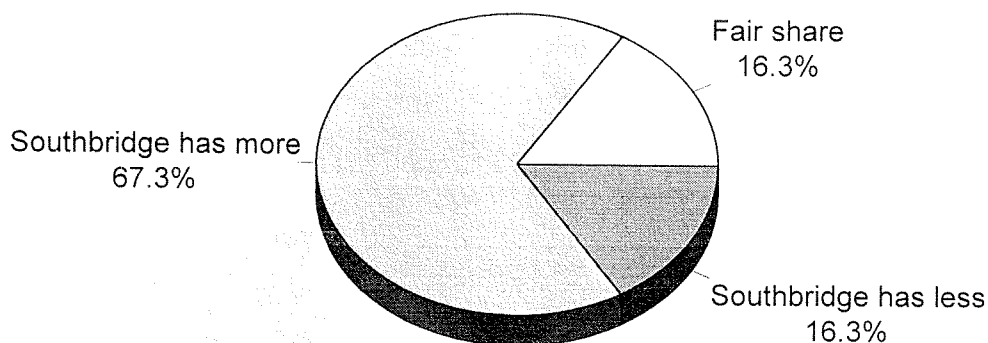


It is instructive to note that none of the respondents chose the option "excellent" to describe the environment in Southbridge. Also, new residents (those in Southbridge less than one year) stated unanimously that the environment in Southbridge is unsatisfactory, while others with a longer residential tenure were almost evenly split on the subject.

Residents were also asked if they personally face environmental problems. Of those responding, 46 (59 percent) said yes and 32 (41 percent) said no. Air and water pollution and offensive smells were most often cited as personally-faced environmental problems in Southbridge. Notably, families with children at home were more likely to report personally facing environmental problems. A total of 41 respondents reported that their family's physical or mental health had been harmed by the waste facilities in Southbridge. Asthma and other breathing problems were most commonly reported as being faced by Southbridge residents. Only 14 (15 percent) of the survey respondents had ever voiced an environmental complaint. All of those who had voiced a complaint were registered voters who belong to a community or civic organization. Seven (54 percent) of these stated that their problem was quickly addressed, and five (39 percent) said they received little or no help.

As shown in Figure 8, over half of those responding to a question about the location of environmentally hazardous facilities (37 or 57 percent) felt that Southbridge gets more of these facilities than anywhere else in Wilmington and only 9 residents (14 percent) said that they feel Southbridge gets fewer environmentally hazardous facilities than other locations in Wilmington.

Figure 8
Location of Hazardous Facilities



Common Problems Faced by Households

Respondents were given a list of difficulties that many households experience and asked to indicate whether any of these were problems for themselves or someone in their household. As shown in Table 1, housing repair (44%), lack of recreational activities (39%), and weatherization of the home (36%) were the most frequently reported problems faced by respondents to this survey.

Some comparative data is included in the table from a study conducted for the Delaware Division of State Service Centers in 1994¹. Care must be taken in comparing the Southbridge results with the city and state data because the methodology used in the earlier study was quite different. In that study, a telephone and field survey of 1340 low- and moderate-income households was conducted statewide. Therefore, the population sampled was likely to be made up, on average, of lower income households than was included in the Southbridge survey. Thus, Southbridge respondents were less likely to report income related problems such as unemployment, difficulty in paying utility bills or for medicine, or inadequate health insurance or dental care. It should be noted, however, that the Southbridge respondents were more likely to report that housing repair, a lack of recreational activities, and a need for weatherization were

¹**Community Needs Assessment. Part I: Synthesis of Statewide Survey and Inventory of Needs Assessment.** Prepared for the Division of State Service Centers and the Division of Social Services, Delaware Health and Social Services by the Center for Community Development, College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, November 1994.

household problems. A somewhat higher proportion of Southbridge respondents also reported that drug abuse or alcoholism was a household problem but this result may be related to the fact that the Southbridge survey was conducted fact-to-face rather than by telephone, allowing the interviewer to establish a greater level of trust.

Table 1
Household Problems

Problem	Southbridge	Wilmington	State
House needs repair	44%	20%	23%
Finding recreational activities	39%	26%	28%
House needs weatherization	36%	21%	20%
Unemployment	28%	54%	44%
Paying utility bills	22%	38%	37%
Adequate health insurance	22%	34%	37%
Drug abuse or alcoholism	18%	4%	2%
Paying rent or mortgage	17%	22%	24%
Poor school performance	15%	19%	15%
Adequate dental care	15%	33%	36%
Finding day care	14%	14%	16%
Finding a doctor	12%	11%	12%
Adequate food or nutrition	12%	13%	14%
Money for medicine	11%	23%	27%
Family planning	11%	3%	3%
Child support	11%	42%	34%
Transportation to appointments	10%	21%	18%
Housekeeping or shopping	7%	14%	16%
Physical/occupation therapy	7%	7%	9%
Pregnancy care	6%	4%	5%
Treatment for chronic disease	5%	16%	22%
Treatment for mental health	3%	6%	8%

**APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Southbridge Resident Survey

Survey No. _____

INTERVIEWER: FIRST TELL THE PERSON WHO ANSWERS THE DOOR THAT YOU ARE WORKING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE AND CONDUCTING A SURVEY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE ABOUT THE NEEDS OF SOUTHBRIDGE HOUSEHOLDS. THEN DETERMINE IF THE PERSON YOU ARE INTERVIEWING IS OVER THE AGE OF 18 WHO BEARS A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HOUSEHOLD. IF SO, READ THE INDIVIDUAL THE STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT. IF THE PERSON YOU ARE SPEAKING TO IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE INTERVIEW, ASK IF THERE IS SOMEONE ELSE AT HOME WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY (OR WHEN THEY WILL BE HOME). WHEN CONSENT IS GIVEN TO PROCEED, INTERVIEWER SHOULD COMPLETE QUESTION NUMBER 1.

1. Street _____ Block (e.g. 100) _____
- Census Block (for coder) _____
1. Odd # address
 2. Even # address

2. Starting with yourself, could you tell me the age and sex of all the members of your family living in this household?

	Male	Female		Male	Female
respondent: age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2
age _____	1	2	age _____	1	2

3. How long have you been a resident of this community? (circle one)

1. Less than one year
2. 1 - 5 years
3. 6 - 10 years
4. 11 or more years
5. Refused/Don't Know

4. Are you a registered voter? (circle one)
1. Yes (Go to Question 5)
 2. No (Skip to Question 6)

- (Skip to Question 16)

15. What services would you like a community organization in Southbridge to provide to you or your community?

(Interviewer: Now I am going to ask you a few questions about your banking needs)

16. Do you have a bank account? **(circle one)**
1. Yes **(Go to Question 17)**
 2. No **(Skip to Question 21)**

17. Where do you currently bank (indicate name and branch location)?

18. What type of accounts do you maintain? **(Circle all that apply)**

1. Checking account
2. Savings account
3. Other (such as CD)

19. Would you be willing to change banks if one was located in the Southbridge community? **(circle one)**

1. Yes
2. No

20. How many times a month do you go to your bank? _____
(Skip to Question 23)

21. How many times a month do you need the services of a bank? _____

22. What services do you need? _____

(Interviewer: Let's talk about the businesses and public services that are available in Southbridge)

23. What types of additional businesses, if any, do you feel are needed in Southbridge to help serve business needs, employee needs, and/or consumer needs? (**Circle all that apply**)

1. Food/markets
2. Fast food chains
3. Restaurants/diners
4. Convenience stores such as Wawa or 7-11
5. Retail/speciality stores (shoe stores, florists, bakery, deli, etc.)
6. Professional (i.e., doctors, lawyers, accountants, etc.)
7. Other, please specify _____
8. Don't Know/No Answer

24. What kinds of stores or businesses do you feel that there are too many of?

25. What kinds of public services would best help your community prosper? (**Give an example such as trash collection or more police service if they do not understand, but try not to lead the respondent**)

(Interviewer: The next several questions will address your thoughts about development and environmental issues in Southbridge)

26. Are you aware of the proposal to dredge an area of Southbridge for waterfront development? (**circle one**)

1. Yes (**Go to Question 27**)
2. No (**Skip to Question 29**)

27. Do you feel that the harbor development will benefit the residents of Southbridge or harm the residents of Southbridge? (**circle one**)

1. Benefit (**Go to Question 28**)
2. Harm (**Go to Question 28**)
3. No answer/don't know (**Skip to Question 29**)

28. In what ways will this development benefit or harm the residents of Southbridge?

29. What is your overall impression of the quality of the environment (for example, the air and water) where you and members of your household live and play? (**circle one**)

1. Excellent
2. Good.
3. Fair.
4. Unsatisfactory.
5. Don't know/No answer

30. In your community, do you face environmental problems posed by air pollution, water pollution, hazardous waste sites, or other pollutants? (**circle one**)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yes | (Go to Question 31) |
| 2. No | (Skip to Question 32) |
| 3. Don't know | (Skip to Question 32) |

31. Please specify the type(s) of environmental problem(s) you face.

32. Do you feel that you or your family's physical or mental health is harmed by industries and/or waste facilities within your community?

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yes | (Go to Question 33) |
| 2. No | (Skip to Question 35) |
| 3. Don't know | (Skip to Question 35) |

33. Please explain how these industries and/or waste facilities affect your or your family member's health?

34. Which industries or waste facilities do you think most affect your health? (You need not answer this question if you do not know the specific industry.)

35. Have you or your family members ever voiced concerns over environmental issues in Southbridge to government or industry officials or to a community representative?

1. Yes (Go to Question 36)
2. No (Go to Question 41)

36. What led you to voice your complaint?

37. In what year did you voice your complaint? _____

38. Who did you voice your complaint to? (Please indicate all officials contacted concerning this complaint).

1. Government official. Please specify the agency for which this official worked.

2. Industry official. Please specify the company that this individual represented.

3. Community representative. Please specify the association this individual belongs to.

39. What was the response of this (these) official(s)?

40. Did you find that **(please read the following options)**:

1. Your concerns were quickly addressed to your satisfaction.
2. You initially had difficulty drawing attention to your concerns or getting information, but eventually received help.
3. You received little or no help with the environmental problem confronting you.

41. Do you feel that environmentally hazardous facilities are spread throughout Wilmington or just concentrated in a few areas? Are they **(please read the following options)---**

1. Spread throughout Wilmington;
2. Concentrated in a few areas; or
3. There are no environmentally hazardous facilities in Wilmington.
4. Don't Know/No Answer

42. **(Interviewer read the following statements and ask which of the statements the respondent most agrees with)** I am going to read you some statements about whether you feel environmentally hazardous facilities have been fairly located in Wilmington. Please tell me which statement you most agree with:

1. All communities receive a fair share of potentially hazardous facilities.
2. Southbridge receives more than its fair share of potentially hazardous facilities.
3. Southbridge has received fewer potentially hazardous facilities.
4. I have no opinion.
5. Don't Know/No Answer

43. Do you own or rent your home? 1. Own 2. Rent

44. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Refused

45. How much schooling have you completed? **(circle one)**

1. Less than high school
2. Some high school, but no diploma
3. High school graduate (or equivalent)
4. Some college, but no degree
5. Four year college degree or more

46. How many people in your household work in the following locations? (**Indicate number in space**)

1. _____ Southbridge
2. _____ City of Wilmington
3. _____ Other areas of New Castle County
4. _____ Other areas of Delaware
5. _____ Outside of Delaware
6. _____ No one in household is working

Interviewer--Please hand the chart on the next page to the respondent and make the following statement:

47. This is a list of difficulties that many households experience. Are any of these a problem for you or someone in your household? If so, please circle those that are a problem for you or someone in your household.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER NEXT TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD EXPERIENCE

1. Housing that needs repair
2. Housing that needs weatherization
3. Paying the rent or mortgage
4. Having sufficient food or good nutrition
5. Getting transportation to medical and other appointments
6. Paying electric, heating, or other utility bills
7. Finding a doctor
8. Having adequate health insurance
9. Lacking money for medicine
10. Lacking adequate dental care
11. Need physical or occupational therapy
12. Need treatment for a mental health problem
13. Need treatment for a chronic disease such as cancer, TB, lung disease or heart disease
14. Need care during and after pregnancy
15. Need family planning
16. Finding suitable recreational activities
17. Doing housekeeping or shopping
18. Finding day care
19. Getting adequate child support from a child's other parent
20. Poor school performance
21. Unemployment
22. Drug abuse or alcoholism

PLEASE PLACE YOUR SURVEY FORM IN THIS ENVELOPE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.