Niche Marketing Plan: Village of Brewster

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PUTNAM COUNTY MAIN STREET PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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Introduction

Funded through a grant from the New York State Department of State, the Putnam County Main Street Partnership Program is a partnership between Putnam County and its towns and villages to address issues of community revitalization in Putnam's hamlets, villages, and traditional commercial centers. It is administered by the Putnam County Planning and Purchasing Departments. Through this program, funds are earmarked to conduct a variety of planning studies, including niche marketing plans, the development of design guidelines and signage ordinances, traffic analysis to improve pedestrian access, and the identification of public spaces for future pocket parks.

All Putnam municipalities were invited to participate, and the towns of Kent, Putnam Valley, and Philipstown and the villages of Cold Spring and Brewster joined the program. Topics for study were selected by each community to reflect their needs. Following a Request for Proposals process, Putnam County selected The RBA Group in association with E.M. Pemrick and Company to conduct the various planning studies requested by the participating communities. E.M. Pemrick and Company was responsible for the preparation of niche marketing plans for study areas in the Village of Brewster and Town of Kent.

Project Objectives

The purpose of the Niche Marketing Plan is to identify commercial uses that are economically viable, compatible and appropriate and make specific recommendations to the Village of Brewster to strengthen the business mix, enhance economic activity, and develop a commercial "niche" or identity.

A niche marketing plan is designed to answer the question, "What makes us unique and marketable?" It provides strategies for promoting the area to new businesses, potential investors, and resident and/or visitor markets. Typically, niche strategies for downtown commercial districts focus on opportunities within the following categories:

- ***Consumer-based niches (demand)*** – Ethnic groups; college students; families with young children; teens and tweens; young professionals; area employees (e.g., office workers); artists; pass-through traffic; outdoor recreation enthusiasts; and other market segments.

- ***Goods- and services-based niches (supply)*** – Antiques; home furnishings; children's products (e.g., clothing, toys, books, entertainment); apparel (usually very high-end, or serving a distinct market segment); restaurants; specialty or gourmet foods; visual arts; performing arts and entertainment; weddings; "convenience" retail; etc. "Restaurant rows" and entertainment districts are especially popular.

- ***Other niches*** – Capitalizing on natural, cultural, and other features that attract people to an area, such as history (e.g., historic structures and sites, museums); the waterfront (e.g., connections to a river or lake, walking trails); or parks and recreational areas. With these niches, the mix of businesses tends to be secondary to the "main attraction"; economic benefits are derived from related business activity.

Identifying a niche usually involves interviews, research and analysis to answer several questions:

- What already exists in the study area? Complementary businesses? Businesses serving complementary markets? What currently attracts people to the study area?
- What makes this area unique? What are its characteristics and attributes?
- What do outsiders say about the area?
- What are some of the major issues or obstacles affecting the area's success?

Work Completed

To address the objectives of the project, E.M. Pemrick and Company completed a scope of services that included:

- Review of existing planning studies and reports, including the most recent comprehensive plan for the Village of Brewster.
- Fieldwork to assess commercial uses and existing conditions in the study area.
- Interviews with various stakeholders (see list at right).
- Facilitation of a focus group meeting with business and property owners and municipal leaders in Brewster.
- Analysis of market demographics, consumer spending patterns, and retail sales.
- Identification of potential niche opportunities and development of recommendations.

Interviews Conducted

> K.C. Anderson – Coalition for a Better Brewster

> Kevin Bailey – Putnam County Economic Development Corporation

> Mark Buzzetto – Brewster Flower Garden and Coalition for a Better Brewster

> Denis Castelli – Brewster Village Historian

> John Degnan – Former Brewster mayor/trustee

> Jack Gress – Consultant to the Village of Brewster

> Robert Morini – The Harvest Group, Houlihan Lawrence and Brewster property owner

> James Nixon – Architect and Coalition for a Better Brewster

> Steve Priest – The Pool Hall

> Richard Ruchala – Putnam County Empire Zone, Putnam County Industrial Development Agency, and Brewster property owner

Related Plans, Reports, and Projects

Downtown Revitalization Plan for Historic Brewster

The Downtown Revitalization Plan was the result of an ongoing process by the Coalition for a Better Brewster, Inc. (CBB) to re-establish downtown Brewster as a vital business and cultural center. Completed in March 1999, the revitalization plan evaluated physical conditions in the downtown, analyzed the retail market, and identified a series of actions to be undertaken by the CBB, the Village, and other partners to facilitate implementation of the plan's recommendations. The plan addressed such issues as business development, physical improvements, regulations and guidelines, and financing.

The study area for the Downtown Revitalization Plan was defined as Main Street between Hoyt Street and Merritt Lane. At the time, the area had a vacancy rate of more than 22 percent, and as the plan reported, “The closing of the Cameo theater, Hope’s Drugstore and the post office have had a particular hard effect… since these were uses that drew people to the downtown.” The Cameo Theater, an old-fashioned movie house, had been open for nearly sixty years. With the exception of La Guadalupana, most of the establishments operated by Hispanic entrepreneurs today did not yet exist. Noting the unusually low proportion of non-food retailers and lack of “one-of-a-kind” specialty stores, the plan identified a number of retail and service categories not sufficiently represented along Main Street, including specialty gift stores, a shoe repair shop, a bakery, a drugstore, additional antique stores, and “more quality restaurants and cafes.”

To understand the market potential for the downtown, the consultant team charged with developing the revitalization plan analyzed the demographics of areas within a five-mile radius, and a broader fifteen-mile radius, of Main Street (see map at right). They concluded that “there is sufficient spending power in the area to support the amount of retail space which currently exists in the Village center and which is likely to be created in the foreseeable future.” The consultants noted, however, that the downtown’s physical condition and appearance needed work, citing a lack of attention to general maintenance, poor storefront signage, a lack of cohesive streetscape design, sidewalks in substandard condition, and “an unattractive approach to the downtown… that creates a negative first impression,” among other problems.

The plan provided a range of specific recommendations to address the issues identified. In addition to upgrading the appearance of Main Street, the consultants said that the existing retail mix should be expanded and the quality of available goods and services improved. They also recommended the development of a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan, but noted that it should be undertaken only after significant physical improvements had been made.

<u>The Brewster Plan</u>

The Village of Brewster adopted its most recent master plan, known as *The Brewster Plan*, in February 2004. The plan was prepared as an update to an earlier 1991 plan pursuant to the Village’s obligations under the landmark Watershed Agreement executed between New York City, New York State, municipalities in the Croton Watershed, and other partners.

As part of the development of the plan, research was conducted on existing demographic and economic conditions in the Village. In particular, the plan noted the “sizeable Hispanic immigrant population [in Brewster] that has increased exponentially over the last ten years,” in marked contrast to surrounding communities. This population was primarily from Guatemala, with some immigrants from countries in South America. Other demographic characteristics highlighted in the plan included the high rate of renter-occupancy, low educational attainment levels, and a significantly lower median household income relative to the Town of Southeast and Putnam County.

When *The Brewster Plan* was written, "food services, miscellaneous store retailers, and consignment and antique shops" accounted for the majority of business establishments along Main Street, "the center of economic activity in the Village." The Village lacked essential goods and services, with no pharmacy, bank, post office, or hardware store, and there were many vacant storefronts, most of which were in fair or poor condition. The plan cited the need to amend Village zoning regulations, relax off-street parking requirements, and improve sidewalks to promote the charm and pedestrian friendliness of the Main Street area.

In a discussion of Brewster's economic potential, the plan identified two options for expanded economic activity downtown: developing a niche identity, possibly based on arts and entertainment; and encouraging small business owners to diversify their business activity, catering to certain segments of the population. Notably, many of the recommendations of *The Brewster Plan* for the Main Street area are germane to the current study, including the following:

- Create an open-air market (farmer's market, flower market, arts & crafts) to attract people on weekends.
- Generate community interaction through cultural events and activities.
- Create stronger physical connections with the region through, for example, the establishment of bicycle and pedestrian trails to increase use of Brewster's retail and service businesses.
- Develop a historic walking tour to highlight and market the Village's rich history.
- Enhance the Village's communications with its constituents, possibly through a regular newsletter, so that residents can better understand "the rate and nature of progress" in Brewster.
- Consider the development of a parking structure connected to Main Street, with an environmentally-sustainable design.

A Vision for the Village of Brewster. . .

An historic community about an hour north of New York City, the Village of Brewster is in the midst of a dramatic renaissance. New water and sewer lines, artful renovations of classic homes and buildings, pedestrian friendly streets and a scenic setting will make Brewster a vital 21st-Century business and cultural destination. Where else in five minutes can you walk to a fine library, a fast commuter train and a world-class trout stream?

To fully realize Brewster's rich future, residents must make the most of a unique blend of rural and modern assets. With accessible, small-town government and strong community spirit, the village embraces its role as an environmental steward of the Croton Reservoir System. Simultaneously, citizen groups carefully evaluate and integrate state-of-the-art communication and transportation systems to ensure Brewster's long-term role as the economic hub of the entire Harlem Valley.

The Brewster Plan, February 2004

Recent Developments

The historic 1997 Watershed Agreement to improve New York City's water supply made funding available to address the failing water and sewer infrastructure in Brewster that had discouraged business investment in the Village for many years. Although the process involved complex negotiations between Village officials and the City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), it resulted in an unprecedented level of commitment by the DEP to resolve Brewster's infrastructure issues. Today, Brewster has new water and sewer lines and a modern wastewater treatment plant, and is considered a steward of the Croton Watershed.

Other recent developments in Brewster have included:

- ***Brewster Station Area Plan*** – The redevelopment of MTA property around the Metro-North station, creating a landscaped island (the Brewster Triangle) with a clock tower, new crosswalks and traffic controls, 70 new long-term parking spaces, and a renovated 75-space lot; completed in July 2007.

- ***Walter Brewster House Renovation*** – The restoration of the Greek Revival-style home of Walter F. Brewster, who, with his brother James, purchased the 134-acre farm that became the Village of Brewster. Constructed around 1850, this building had been vacant for several years when ownership was transferred to the Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast in 1977. Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Brewster House is open year-round by appointment and during special events.

- ***Putnam County Empire Zone Designation*** – The approval of Putnam County's first Empire Zone, offering financial and tax incentives to eligible new and expanding businesses in Brewster; designated by New York State in February 2008.

- ***Zoning Revisions*** – The adoption of revised zoning regulations for the Village of Brewster by the Village Board in June 2008.

- ***50 Main Street Rehabilitation Project*** – The rehabilitation and conversion of a 28,000-square foot building, by the Putnam Community Foundation, to a 25-unit senior apartment complex; opened in August 2008.

- ***Main Street Grant*** – Through the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal's New York Main Street Program, the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation and the Coalition for a Better Brewster received grant funding for façade rehabilitation and streetscape improvements to assist with the Village of Brewster's Main Street revitalization efforts. This program is administered by the Putnam County Planning and Purchasing Departments. In 2008/2009, assistance was provided for 2-14 Main Street, 20 Main Street, 49 Main Street, 65 Main Street, 64-70 Main Street, 79 Main Street, and 99 Main Street. Streetscape improvements included assistance for the Veteran's Honor Roll, seasonal street plantings, and refuse receptacles.

Additional projects are still in the planning stages, but are worth noting because of their potential impact on the study area.

- ***Future Waterfront Park*** – A plan is underway to develop a public park and passive recreation area on property owned by the NYC DEP along the east branch of the Croton River. While ownership of the land will remain in the hands of the DEP, the Village will be responsible for the improvements. According to *The Brewster Plan*, the park will provide improved public and handicap access to the river, allowing for low-impact recreational uses including walking, hiking, nature study, and birding. Other than walking trails, park benches, and footbridges, the design of the park is expected to maintain the natural landscape.

- ***Old Town Hall Renovation*** – The Old Southeast Town Hall, which served as the seat of government until 1965, is located at 67 Main Street. The Southeast Museum is located in the basement, but the town no longer has offices in the building; the upper floors, which include an ornate auditorium, are vacant. Over the years, money has been spent to maintain and make improvements to the structure, but plans for a significant restoration project funded by a bond issue were never implemented by the Town. With new leadership in place, the Town has hired an architectural firm, and plans to install a new roof and an elevator to make the building ADA-compliant. If the unused upper floors can be brought up to code and structural and safety issues addressed, it is hoped that the Old Town Hall can be used for theater and other performances in the future.

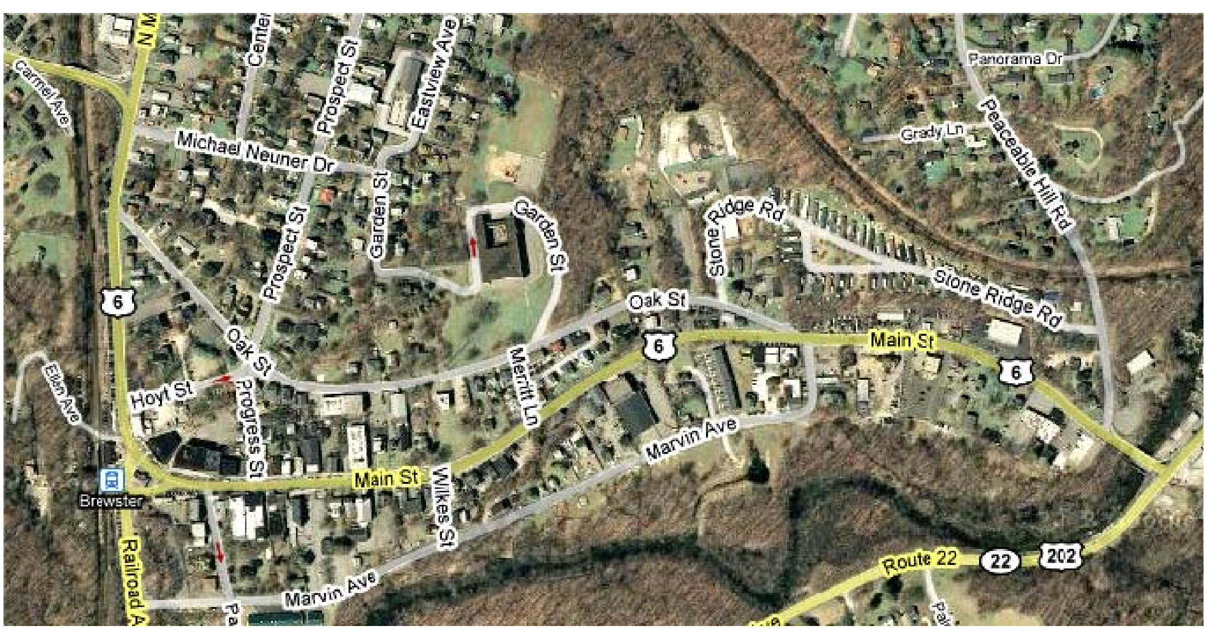
- ***Municipal Parking Garage*** – A municipal parking garage was proposed several years ago by a group of private investors. The garage would be constructed on the site of the current Village-operated commuter lot on the east side of Railroad Avenue, behind Bob's Diner. It would serve several purposes: it would replace existing surface lots on Marvin Avenue, eliminating a source of nonpoint pollution (road run-off) in the Croton Watershed; provide a source of revenue for the Village through a financial agreement with the developer; and free up on-street parking spaces now used by employees of downtown businesses. Although it would primarily serve as commuter lot, the parking garage would also serve shoppers and provide parking during special events.

  Designs produced by Barton & Associates in 2006 show a multi-story parking structure with five levels on the side closest to Main Street and ten to eleven levels in the back of the sloped parcel, with an ultimate capacity of 1,078 parking spaces. It would link to the Metro-North station and Main Street via pedestrian bridges; a landscaped, park-like setting would face Railroad Avenue. One of the most controversial elements of the proposal was the inclusion of 5,000 square feet of new retail space, which some argued would negatively impact existing Main Street businesses.

  Currently, the parking garage project appears to be in limbo, but its backers hope to pursue it again in the near future.

Existing Conditions

The study area for the Niche Marketing Plan was defined as Main Street/North Main Street, from the firehouse at the intersection of Carmel Avenue and North Main to the terminus of Main Street at Route 22. The majority of commercial uses are located along Main Street between Hoyt and Wilkes Streets; businesses are also concentrated near the Carmel/North Main intersection and on the eastern end of the study area near Route 22.



Business Mix

Fieldwork conducted in December 2008 identified approximately 58 active businesses in downtown Brewster. As shown below, more than one-third are personal service businesses, eight (8) of which can be characterized as hair salons and barber shops; there are also four (4) travel agencies and couriers, and two (2) insurance agencies. Other service businesses include a taxi service, pet groomer, optician, laundromat, upholstery repair shop, and mailing service. Although there is an ATM at 34 Main Street, the study area currently lacks a banking and lending institution, and the last local pharmacy closed in 1999.

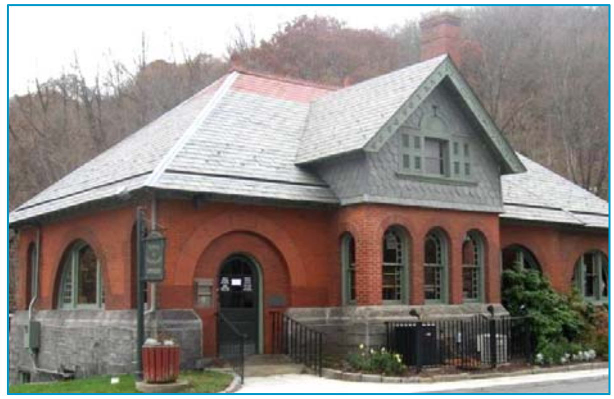
Table 1. Business Mix in Downtown Brewster		
Personal Services	21	36.2%
Beauty and Barber Shops	8	13.8%
Travel Agencies and International Couriers	4	6.9%
Insurance Agencies	2	3.4%
Other Services	7	12.1%
Retail (Non-Automotive)	12	20.7%
Food Retail (Markets and Delis)	5	8.6%
Other Retail	7	12.1%
Professional Services	8	13.8%
Food Services (Restaurants and Fast Food)	7	12.1%
Automotive-Related Uses	5	8.6%
All Other Establishments	5	8.6%
TOTAL	**58**	**100.0%**

Source: Consultant field survey, December 2008.

Municipal, religious, and residential uses excluded; "all other" includes non-profit organizations.

One-fifth of the businesses in downtown Brewster are retail establishments (excluding automotive-related uses), and of these, five (5) are food markets and delis. As in 1999, when the revitalization plan was completed, Main Street generally lacks the “one-of-a-kind” specialty retailers that often attract customers from long distances. The sole exception is Dottie Maguire’s Celtic Imports, a shop that relocated to Brewster from Pawling in June 2008. Next to Dottie Maguire’s is the Brewster Flower Garden, a downtown landmark since 1989. The Flower Garden, which (according to its website) serves Brewster, North Salem, Somers, Croton Falls, and Purdys, does much of its business by phone and the Internet, and is known for its attractive window displays. Other non-food retailers in the study area include a wine and liquor store, a gift shop that caters to the Hispanic community, and a thrift shop whose sales support the local hospital. Anne Koplik Designs, a company recognized internationally in the fashion jewelry market, has its studio and showroom on the eastern end of Main Street.

Of the seven (7) food service establishments on Main Street, only Bob's Diner and Peking Garden were in business in 1999.[1] Bob's Diner, a classic American diner, was established in 1955. The Pool Hall is included in this category, although its café is, in the words of its owner, a "well-kept secret"; billiards is the main business. The Pizza Place & Trattoria II is the most recent dining addition in Brewster, opening in 2008 after an extensive renovation effort on the site of a former coffee house.



At least eight (8) professional service providers – e.g., architects, business consultants, attorneys, and real estate professionals – occupy space in the study area.[2] The Town of Southeast's building and planning departments, code enforcement, parking office, fire inspector, and special districts office occupy a historic bank building at 1 Main Street, but all other town functions, including town court, have moved out of downtown Brewster. The Brewster Chamber of Commerce also used to have an office on Main Street, but is now on Mount Ebo Road off Route 22. These relocations – combined with the closures of various businesses – have had a noticeable impact in downtown Brewster, as the number of people coming to Brewster to conduct business, attend meetings, and go to court has declined dramatically.

Other businesses in the study area include gas stations, an auto parts store, and automotive repair shops; the Southeast Museum; Brewster Iron Works; a pre-school and the Putnam Community Action Program; and Verizon. The Pool Hall is already counted in the dining category, but could also be categorized as "other." Like Bob's Diner, the Pool Hall is one of just a handful of businesses that seems to attract people from well beyond the Village of Brewster. The business opened in 1963, and while other pool rooms in the Hudson Valley and Connecticut have closed, the Pool Hall has managed to stay in business, supported by the local Hispanic community as well as billiards enthusiasts from throughout the region who travel to Brewster for tournaments.

In evaluating the mix of businesses in the study area, it is apparent that there is no real "anchor" on Main Street. In the retail trade, an anchor store is a major retail store that drives business to smaller retailers; in the context of a downtown, an anchor retailer is one that regularly draws local residents to the area on a frequent basis (e.g., a grocery store or a pharmacy), or that attracts visitors less frequently from a broader region. Bob's Diner and the Pool Hall probably come the closest to being anchors, in that they draw customers from a relatively large geographic area; the Southeast Museum also attracts visitors. None of these businesses, however, generates the large amounts of foot traffic necessary to drive additional business to other merchants.

[1] The Pool Hall existed at the time of the revitalization plan, but the café portion of the business did not.
[2] Unless signage was visible from the exterior, occupants of upper-story space were not identified as part of the field survey, which focused on first-floor storefronts; this number may be higher.

Vacancies

The field survey identified a number of first-floor commercial vacancies in downtown Brewster, defined as vacant storefronts and buildings that have accommodated a commercial use in the past and could be similarly occupied in the future. As of December 2008, these included the following:

- ***North Main Street*** – This vacant 700-square foot storefront is located between an upholstery business and a taxi service.

- ***20 Main Street*** – The former site of the Brewster Post Office, this modern (*circa* 1960s) building has been updated but has been vacant for several years. It is listed with Coldwell Banker.

- ***43 Main Street*** – Located between Hair Design and Lopez Express International Courier, this vacant storefront is approximately 900 square feet.

- ***50 Main Street*** – In August 2008, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for this 28,000-square foot building that was rehabilitated and converted to a 25-unit apartment complex for seniors with assistance from state and federal grants. The renovations included the creation of 7,000 square feet of commercial space on the first floor. Reportedly, Brewster Village Hall, Village Court and a bank will be relocating to the building, but a move-in date has not yet been scheduled, nor has the bank been identified.

- ***63 Main Street*** – The Cameo Theater, Putnam County's first movie house, was built in 1939 and served the community until 1997. In 2000, the darkened theater was purchased by a local developer to forestall its demolition. His original intent was to renovate the 6,500-square foot building and lease it to an experienced theater operator, but he was unable to find a suitable tenant. The interior of the structure has deteriorated to the point where rehabilitation may be cost-prohibitive.

20 Main Street

39-45 Main Street

78-80 Main Street

- ***78-80 Main Street*** – This vacant 1,000-square foot storefront suitable for retail or office use is listed with Houlihan Lawrence, with an asking price of $1,100 per month. It has been vacant for more than a year.

- ***175 Main Street*** – Located in a small strip development across from the village offices, just off Route 22, this 1,000-square foot storefront was formerly occupied by a tanning salon. It is between an established hair salon and an insurance agency and is listed with Houlihan Lawrence, with an asking price is $1,500 per month.

It should be noted that there is no formal vacancy list compiled for downtown Brewster, nor is a list of Main Street businesses maintained. Property owners report receiving inquiries from potential tenants, but they tend to be for the same types of businesses that already exist on Main Street or Route 22: e.g., pizzerias, delis, bodegas, check-cashing services. Food service businesses are not appropriate for every space due to ventilation issues.

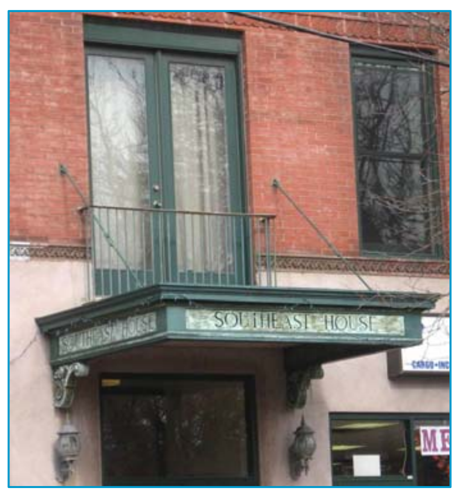
Another challenge is the small size of the available storefronts. While some businesses have been able to address their space needs by combining multiple storefronts, most large retailers are excluded from the downtown due to the lack of suitable space, and there are few – if any – undeveloped parcels in the study area on which to construct new buildings.

Physical Conditions

The 1999 *Downtown Revitalization Plan* identified the physical condition and appearance of Main Street as one of the principal challenges to the revitalization of downtown Brewster. Over the last several years, however, some of the issues listed in the plan have been addressed, particularly in the area around the Metro-North station.

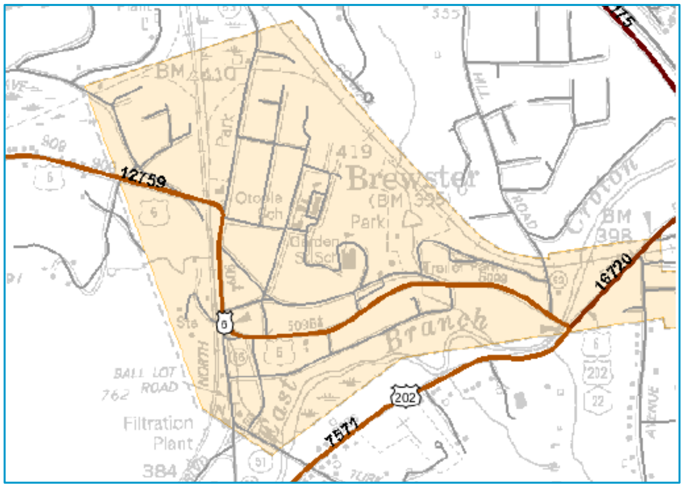
The condition of roads and sidewalks was improved as part of the water and sewer infrastructure project. Sidewalks and parking meters extend the length of Main Street as far east as the Walter Brewster House. Streetscape enhancements and façade improvements have been completed with assistance from the New York Main Street Program. The Village appears to be doing a good job keeping the streets clean, but concerns have been expressed about the need for storeowners to remove garbage cans and trash from view.

The approach to the downtown from Carmel Avenue and North Main Street is adequate, if unremarkable. The Brewster Triangle with its clock tower and landscaping is a nice addition, although the large number of “permit-only” spaces for commuters near the train station detracts from Main Street’s pedestrian character, Signage to welcome visitors and mark the entrance to the historic district would be helpful, as would a directory of Main Street businesses.



One of the most striking aspects of this part of the study area is its dense, urban character and the number of charming historic buildings. Several buildings have signs or plaques with names that evoke Brewster’s past: the Avery Building, *circa* 1850, which houses the Brewster Flower Garden and Brewster Mail Station; Southeast House at 52-54 Main Street; and the Old Town Hall, constructed in 1896 and now the home of the Southeast Museum. Although some of Brewster’s architecture has been altered over the years, it nevertheless contributes to the overall character of the downtown.

The eastern end of the study area, which developed later, is more haphazard in appearance and is oriented towards vehicular rather than pedestrian traffic, with large parking areas in front of many commercial structures. Near the intersection of Main Street, Peaceable Hill Road, and Route 22 is the old Borden Bridge, highlighted by a historic marker. The farmers market takes place here, on Village property, on Wednesdays and Saturdays from June through



Source: NYS Department of Transportation, Traffic Data Viewer (http://gis.nysdot.gov/tdv/main.asp)

November. The farmers market was once located in the parking lot between the Southeast Museum and Brewster Public Library, but it was not as well attended.

According to the NYS Department of Transportation, traffic volumes on Main Street within the study area average 12,759 vehicles per day. The AADT increases to 16,720 along Route 22 north of its intersection with Main Street; there is significantly less traffic to the south.

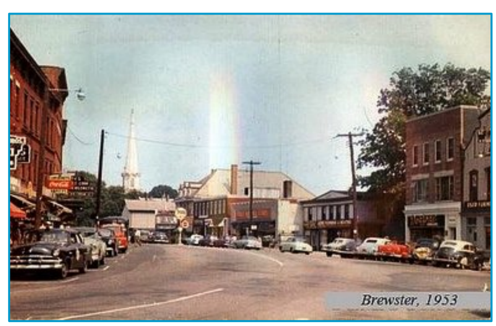
Some of this traffic is attributable to commuters who lease parking near the Metro-North Station. There are six surface parking lots, including two operated by the Village of Brewster, with a total capacity of 517 spaces.

On average, the Metro-North station in Brewster serves 900 to 1,000 riders per day. Anecdotal information suggests that most riders who board the train at Brewster are from Connecticut. The train station is also served by public transportation from Danbury via Housatonic Area Rapid Transit.

Perceptions of the Study Area

At the start of a focus group meeting with business and property owners and municipal leaders in December 2008, participants were asked to answer the question, "What makes downtown Brewster unique?" The responses, and others provided during interviews with other community stakeholders, included:

- The train station
- The east branch of the Croton River
- World-class trout fishing
- "Location, location, location"
- Easy transportation access; proximity to the interstates
- Environmental excellence through our stewardship of the Croton Watershed
- It's the main street for the Town of Southeast
- The new wastewater treatment plant
- Different stores on Main Street
- Historically, it's the hub of the Harlem Valley
- An eclectic mix in a small downtown
- The Southeast Museum and the library
- Sidewalks and walkability
- Lovely homes
- Elements of a "real community"
- A great place to raise a family



These perceptions are very positive and reflect the sense of community pride that is promoted on Founders Day, an annual street festival organized by the Coalition for a Better Brewster for more than fifteen years.

Interviews conducted for this project provided an opportunity to understand the range of perceptions held by community members, business owners, and other stakeholders regarding downtown Brewster. By and large, these focused on three topics: the Hispanic population, parking, and outsiders' impressions of the study area.

<u>The Hispanic Population</u>

During the 1980s and '90s, new development along Routes 6 and 22 in the Town of Southeast made larger spaces and more parking available for commercial establishments. As was the case in communities across the United States, many businesses abandoned Main Street for new locations in the suburbs. This left downtown Brewster with numerous vacancies.

By all accounts, Hispanic immigrants – who had apparently come to Brewster in pursuit of inexpensive rental housing and work opportunities – filled the void. A 1999 article in the *New York Times* reported that "Brewster has taken on a distinctive Hispanic flavor," as restaurants and other businesses were opened by Hispanic entrepreneurs.

Some immigrants, however, worked as day laborers in Putnam County's growing construction industry, lining the streets of Brewster every morning, waiting for contractors to hire them for the day. This phenomenon, which started in the late 1990s, has continued through the present day, serving as a source of controversy in the Village.

On one hand, many of those interviewed recognize the value of Brewster's Hispanic population, crediting them for the continued viability of Main Street businesses when non-Hispanic residents of the surrounding communities have "given up on" Brewster. As one stakeholder pointed out, many Hispanic immigrants are *not* day laborers: "They are now buying houses… they have homes and businesses." Another person noted that there are many "examples of Hispanics with legitimate businesses who have been successful."

On the other hand, the presence of the day laborers on the streets of Brewster makes some people uncomfortable. Although there is little evidence of criminal behavior, women in particular report that they feel intimidated by groups of Hispanic men and are afraid of harassment. A 2006 *New York Times* article quoted a local merchant: "A lot of my truly good customers have told me point blank that they won't come back. It's not that the men are violent, it's just that the sheer number of them hanging in the doorway intimidates people."[3]

Some feel that the day laborer situation has discouraged investment and stopped people from coming into the Village to shop. As one person interviewed stated, "Instead of dealing with the diversity, people have abandoned the area." It is not clear, however, whether the growing

[3] "In Brewster, A Backlash Against Day Laborers," *New York Times*, February 5, 2006.

Hispanic population caused local residents to abandon downtown Brewster, or whether residents had *already* given up on the downtown as retailers moved into suburban strip malls.

At their most extreme, these negative images of Brewster's Hispanic community have been fed by bigotry and prejudice, as evidenced by letters to the editor and comments posted online in response to news articles about the day laborer situation (and sometimes even other stories about the downtown). The remarks about "illegal immigrants" and allegations that Hispanic residents are responsible for Brewster's problems severely undermine the community's image and suggest – even to those who have not been to the Village in years – that Main Street is a place best avoided. As one interview participant concluded: "[There] is no way the Village will succeed…unless the image of the Village is restored. [But] I am torn as to whether the change comes first to improve the image or the image comes first in order to make the change, or maybe both together."

Parking

Another issue raised repeatedly during the interviews was parking. Main Street commercial districts are commonly perceived as not having enough short-term parking for customers and long-term parking for employees and residents. In some cases, better signage and marketing to direct drivers to off-street parking areas, municipal lots, and metered parking spaces are all that is needed. In other instances, a designated off-street parking lot or a centralized parking structure may be warranted.

Those interviewed offered a range of perspectives on the parking situation in the downtown. Some feel that while parking is routinely blamed for the lack of shoppers, it is an "artificial issue"; area residents often feel that they need to park directly in front of a store downtown, even though they probably walk an equal distance from a mall parking lot to a store entrance. (Residents from surrounding townships were described as "mainly 'strip center' people," who may not be accustomed to on-street parking.) One interview participant pointed out that when the Town of Southeast still had its court in Brewster at the Old Town Hall, there was a greater demand for parking during the day. Changing demographics have also reduced the parking demand: according to the 2000 Census, 23.7% of Brewster households (compared to 4.2% of Putnam County households) do not even have a car.

Others asserted that the lack of parking discourages investment. A business owner claimed that there are only 100 parking spaces in the entire village, noting that restaurants, grocery stores, and larger businesses that require 15 to 20 parking spots at a time are hard-pressed to find them on Main Street; without a parking facility, he said, downtown Brewster will not be able to attract additional businesses and investors. There is also the question of whether Brewster could support special events if, for example, performances were presented at a restored Old Town Hall.

Parking enforcement was discussed during the interviews as well. Several people suggested that Brewster police are too aggressive with the enforcement of snow emergency rules, to the point where loyal customers have had their cars towed from Main Street. Parking tickets are also an issue; some believe that the police are too quick to issue a parking ticket when the time on a parking meter has expired. Local merchants are particularly concerned, as these actions have resulted in lost customers.

Outsider Perceptions

Brewster’s urban environment seems to leave a very different impression on people from outside Putnam County than on local residents. As some interview participants noted, visitors from lower Westchester County and the Bronx perceive Brewster as “cute and funky, sort of a mini-Greenwich Village,” rather than expecting the New England look and feel of, say, Cold Spring. Brewster’s history is blue-collar; as the Village Historian explained, it was home to the miners, the railroaders, and the dam builders of Putnam County, and then to the people who worked at the Borden factory.

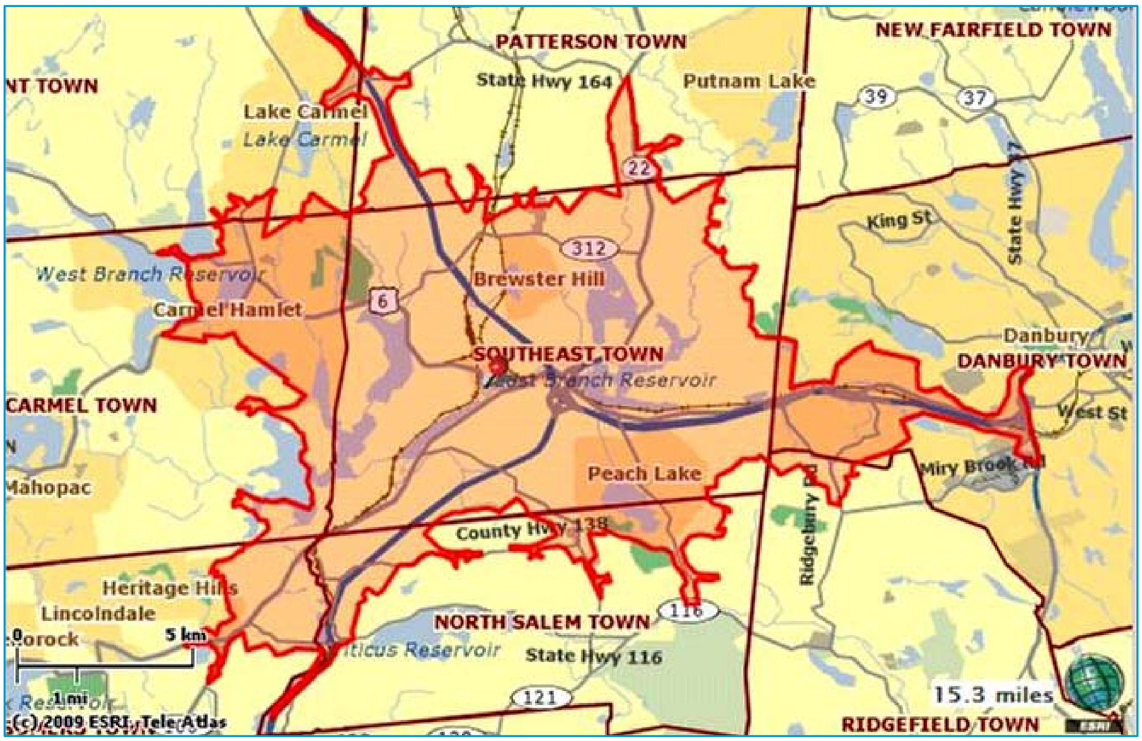
In 2001, Brewster received renewed attention from a group of New York City artists, who studied the area’s history, sociology and architecture and created a conceptual art project, culminating in a weekend-long street festival and a follow-up art installation. The project was a big success and in part helped to restore residents’ faith in their own community.

Several of those interviewed pointed out that urban dwellers do not seem to have a strong preconception about Brewster. They accept the diversity of Main Street and are less likely to perceive “men standing on the street” as dangerous. Shopping in Brewster’s antique stores years ago, they “didn’t have the same prejudices… [they weren’t] remembering ‘how it used to be.’” The perception of Brewster by out-of-towners may offer the basis for the development of a more positive image for the downtown and ultimately, stronger support by residents of surrounding communities.

Market Analysis

Trade Area Definition

A *trade area* is generally defined as the geographic area from which local retailers draw the majority of their customers. For the purpose of this analysis, we have defined the trade area as *within a 10-minute driving time* of downtown Brewster. As illustrated below, this area includes the Village of Brewster, the Town of Southeast, and the Carmel hamlet. The 10-minute drivetime zone also incorporates areas along Interstate 684 and other major roadways in Somers and North Salem, Westchester County and in Danbury, Connecticut.



The delineation of the downtown Brewster trade area is not meant to suggest that prospective customers of local businesses will be drawn *solely* from this geographic area. Businesses in Brewster may provide goods and services to people outside the trade area, such as commuters passing through the Village and visitors from downstate. However, based upon the markets *currently* served by downtown businesses, nearby retail competition (both current and planned), and other factors, this trade area provides a reasonable basis for assessing retail potential.

Market Demographics

This section analyzes the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of residents in the defined trade area. The statistical data presented is derived from the U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI Business Information Solutions, a leading national provider of market information. ESRI's proprietary methodology employs both federal and private data sources to develop demographic estimates and projections. For comparative purposes, demographics are provided for the trade area as well as for the Village of Brewster and Putnam County.

Population and Household Growth

- As shown in Table 2, the 2008 population of the trade area, the 10-minute drivetime zone, is estimated at 30,626. This reflects an average annual increase of 1.1% or a net gain of approximately 2,400 residents since 2000. During the 2008-2013 time period, the trade area population is projected to grow more modestly at 0.8% per year.

Table 2. Market Area Population & Household Growth

Market Area	2000	2008 (est.)	2013 (proj.)	*% Avg Annual Change*	
				2000-08	*2008-13*
Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone					
Population	28,204	30,626	31,786	*1.1%*	*0.8%*
Households	10,518	11,441	11,918	*1.1%*	*0.8%*
Avg. Household Size	2.63	2.62	2.61	*0.0%*	*-0.1%*
Village of Brewster					
Population	2,162	2,215	2,262	*0.3%*	*0.4%*
Households	840	844	860	*0.1%*	*0.4%*
Avg. Household Size	2.52	2.57	2.58	*0.2%*	*0.1%*
Putnam County					
Population	95,745	101,684	105,316	*0.8%*	*0.7%*
Households	32,703	35,075	36,504	*0.9%*	*0.8%*
Avg. Household Size	2.86	2.84	2.82	*-0.1%*	*-0.1%*

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

- With an estimated 2,215 residents, the Village of Brewster accounts for about 7% of the trade area population. The number of residents in Brewster is expected to remain relatively steady over the next few years, with only a marginal increase projected.

- The Census Bureau defines a household as all persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more persons living together, or any other group of individuals who share living arrangements outside of an institutional setting. There are approximately 11,000 households currently residing within a 10-minute drive of downtown Brewster, with an average household size of 2.62 persons. Household sizes in Putnam County are considerably higher, averaging 2.84 persons, reflecting a higher proportion of households with related children.

- Although 2008 and 2013 data on households by type are not available, figures from the 2000 Census reported by ESRI indicate that 60.5% of trade area households are married-couple families, 11.5% are other family households, and 28.0% are nonfamily households, mostly individuals living alone. Nearly 36.0% of trade area households have related children under 18 present. In comparison, just 27.6% of households in the Village of Brewster and 41.0% of Putnam County households have related minor children at home.

Population and Householders by Age

- As shown in Table 3, the Brewster trade area has a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and over than the Village of Brewster or Putnam County. Brewster's population is relatively young, with a median age estimated at 34.8 years. This is due not to an above-average proportion of children, but rather to an unusually high percentage of individuals in the 25-34 and (to a lesser extent) 35-44 age categories in the Village. Residents in their 20s and 30s are more likely to be in a "household-forming" stage of life than the general population.

Table 3. Market Area Population by Age, 2008

	Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone		Village of Brewster		Putnam County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 25	9,678	31.6%	696	31.4%	33,657	33.1%
25 - 34	2,909	9.5%	421	19.0%	10,067	9.9%
35 - 44	4,655	15.2%	434	19.6%	15,964	15.7%
45 - 54	5,268	17.2%	332	15.0%	17,998	17.7%
55 - 64	3,828	12.5%	164	7.4%	12,711	12.5%
65 - 74	2,144	7.0%	82	3.7%	6,304	6.2%
75 and over	2,144	7.0%	86	3.9%	4,983	4.9%
Total population	**30,626**	**100.0%**	**2,215**	**100.0%**	**101,684**	**100.0%**
Median age		***41.2***		***34.8***		***40.1***

Source: ESRI (estimates) and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

- Age is one of the most important factors impacting consumer spending patterns. During the 1990s, the aging of the vast baby-boom generation resulted in a significant increase in the number of households headed by individuals between the ages of 45 and 54, peak earning years for most Americans. According to the annual Consumer Expenditure Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the typical household headed by a person aged 45-54 spends more, on average, than other households.

Table 4. Householders by Age - Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone

	2000		2008 (est.)		2013 (proj.)		*% Avg Annual Change*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	*2000-08*	*2008-13*
Under 25	160	1.5%	180	1.6%	181	1.5%	*1.6%*	*0.1%*
25 - 34	1,243	11.8%	1,138	9.9%	1,216	10.2%	*-1.1%*	*1.4%*
35 - 44	2,779	26.4%	2,328	20.3%	1,937	16.3%	*-2.0%*	*-3.4%*
45 - 54	2,470	23.5%	2,911	25.4%	3,061	25.7%	*2.2%*	*1.0%*
55 - 64	1,670	15.9%	2,231	19.5%	2,604	21.8%	*4.2%*	*3.3%*
65 - 74	1,242	11.8%	1,299	11.4%	1,518	12.7%	*0.6%*	*3.4%*
75 and over	1,006	9.6%	1,351	11.8%	1,401	11.8%	*4.3%*	*0.7%*
Total households	**10,518**	**100.0%**	**11,441**	**100.0%**	**11,918**	**100.0%**	***1.1%***	***0.8%***

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

- Consistent with national demographic trends, households in the trade area became more concentrated in the 45-54 age category between 2000 and 2008. As illustrated in Table 4, householders (heads of household) aged 45-54 accounted for 23.5% of total households in 2000, increasing to an estimated 25.4% in 2008. In the next five years, more dramatic growth is anticipated in the number of householders aged 55-64. Representing 15.9% of trade area households in 2000, the percentage of householders aged 55-64 is projected to encompass 21.8% by 2013.

Household Income

- Median household income (MHI) levels in the Village of Brewster have consistently lagged behind those in Putnam County overall. The 1990 Census reported an MHI of $34,006 in Brewster and $53,634 in the County; in 2000, the MHI of approximately $43,000 in Brewster was roughly 60% of the County median. According to *The Brewster Plan*, these disparities indicate simply that Brewster residents earn less than those in surrounding areas, and do not reflect changing demographics; indeed, Brewster has a long history as a blue-collar community.

- ESRI data indicate that households within a 10-minute driving time of Brewster have income levels that are more consistent with those in Putnam County. As reflected in Table 5, nearly 78% of trade area households have incomes of at least $50,000; 60% have incomes of $75,000 or more. The trade area also has a higher per capita income than either Brewster or Putnam County.

Table 5. Market Area Households by Income, 2008

	Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone		Village of Brewster		Putnam County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than $15,000	481	4.2%	110	13.0%	1,263	3.6%
$15,000 - $24,999	469	4.1%	70	8.3%	1,333	3.8%
$25,000 - $34,999	503	4.4%	71	8.4%	1,228	3.5%
$35,000 - $49,999	1,098	9.6%	122	14.5%	2,771	7.9%
$50,000 - $74,999	2,002	17.5%	176	20.9%	6,208	17.7%
$75,000 - $99,999	1,384	12.1%	101	12.0%	4,595	13.1%
$100,000-$149,999	3,284	28.7%	148	17.5%	10,768	30.7%
$150,000 or more	2,220	19.4%	46	5.4%	6,910	19.7%
Total households	**11,441**	**100.0%**	**844**	**100.0%**	**35,075**	**100.0%**
Per capita income	***$ 42,370***		***$ 28,863***		***$ 40,945***	

Source: ESRI (estimates) and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

- The adult population within the trade area is very well-educated: 39.5% of residents age 25 and over have at least a bachelor's degree and 17.0% have a graduate or professional degree. More than two-thirds of employed trade area residents work in white-collar occupations, including 26.5% in one of the professions and 17.8% in managerial, business and financial occupations.

- ESRI projects that the number of trade area households in higher-income brackets will continue to grow. The number of households earning $150,000 or more, for example, is projected to increase from an estimated 2,220 today to 4,044 by 2013.

Race/Ethnicity

- The population in the defined trade area is predominantly white. As shown in Table 6, however, Hispanic and Asian populations in the trade area – and in each of the comparison areas – are increasing both in number and proportion. There are currently more than 2,800 persons of Hispanic origin (of any race) within a 10-minute drive of Brewster, based on ESRI estimates. This figure is projected to increase by 16.2%, to 3,274, by 2013. Similarly, the Asian population is projected to grow 27.7%, from 796 to 1,017 persons.

- Among the most salient characteristics of Brewster's population is its racial and ethnic diversity. An estimated 5.7% of Village residents are African-American, 2.9% are Asian, and more than one in three residents is of Hispanic origin. The growth of Brewster's Latino population is a relatively recent phenomenon; the 2000 Census reported that 32% of all Brewster residents were foreign-born, compared to just 10% in 1990. The Hispanic population in the Village is predominantly Guatemalan in origin, with smaller numbers of immigrants from Mexico, Ecuador, and Columbia.

Table 6. Market Area Racial & Ethnic Composition

Market Area	2000	2008 (est.)	2013 (proj.)	*% Change in Population*	
				2000-08	*2008-13*
Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone					
White Alone	92.3%	90.4%	89.1%	*6.4%*	*2.3%*
Black Alone	2.2%	2.5%	2.7%	*23.4%*	*12.1%*
Asian/Pacific Islander Alone	1.9%	2.6%	3.2%	*48.6%*	*27.7%*
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	7.6%	9.2%	10.3%	*31.4%*	*16.2%*
Village of Brewster					
White Alone	78.8%	76.1%	74.5%	*-1.1%*	*0.0%*
Black Alone	5.4%	5.7%	5.9%	*8.1%*	*5.7%*
Asian/Pacific Islander Alone	2.3%	2.9%	3.4%	*29.2%*	*19.7%*
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	32.1%	36.9%	39.8%	*17.8%*	*10.1%*
Putnam County					
White Alone	93.9%	92.5%	91.5%	*4.6%*	*2.5%*
Black Alone	1.6%	1.9%	2.0%	*26.1%*	*9.0%*
Asian/Pacific Islander Alone	1.3%	1.7%	2.0%	*38.9%*	*21.8%*
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	6.2%	7.7%	8.7%	*31.9%*	*17.0%*

Note: American Indian Alone, Some Other Race Alone, and Two or More Races not shown. Figures do not add to 100%.
Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

- Hispanic populations are growing throughout the Hudson Valley, and not only in large cities. Other communities with fewer than 25,000 residents where Hispanic residents make up a large proportion of the population include Sleepy Hollow (45%), Ossining (28%), Mount Kisco (25%), and Peekskill (22%) in Westchester County, and Ellenville (29%), Monticello (26%), and Liberty (15%) in Sullivan County. In most of these communities, as in Brewster, individuals of Hispanic origin arrived as immigrants from south and central America during the 1990s, and have contributed to community life as entrepreneurs, employees, property owners, and consumers, filling the void as non-Hispanics have departed.

- The growth of the Hispanic population is expected to continue even in the absence of additional immigration; according to the Census Bureau, roughly one in five U.S. residents will be of Hispanic origin by 2030. Many businesses are recognizing the opportunities presented by this rapidly growing segment of the population, at a time when other segments of the population are aging and purchasing fewer retail goods. The most recent Consumer Expenditures Survey from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that Hispanic households spend more than non-Hispanics on groceries, telephone services, furniture, clothing, footwear and housing. Persons of Hispanic origin are more likely to be younger, entering the workforce for the first time, and forming households; in the coming decade, their income levels – and those of their children – will rise as they advance in their careers.

The Hispanic Population in Transition

An analysis of recent Census estimates by the *Journal News* found that young Hispanic families are increasingly choosing the lower Hudson Valley (Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland counties) as a place to settle down and have children. "While the region as a whole remains predominantly white non-Hispanic, young families with small children may soon be mostly Hispanic." In Putnam County, 21% of young adults (ages 25-34) and 16% of children younger than 5 are Hispanic. See "Young Hispanics Settling Down," *Journal News*, August 7, 2008.

Westchester County has an estimated 175,000 Hispanic residents, accounting for 19% of its total population.

- Their median age is 29.6 compared to 39.3 for the overall population.
- Nearly 50% are native-born residents of the United States, and of the remainder who are foreign-born, 31% are naturalized U.S. citizens.
- Although 40% of the County's Hispanic residents do not speak English well, Westchester has 20,000 Hispanics aged 25 and over with at least a bachelor's degree.
- Westchester County has 16,793 Hispanic residents employed in high-paying management, professional, and related occupations.
- More than 7,000 Hispanic residents are entrepreneurs, working in their own business; they have a higher rate of self-employment than the general population (8.3% vs. 7.7%).

Putnam County has an estimated 9,680 Hispanic residents, accounting for 10% of its total population. Approximately 1,200 Hispanics aged 25 and over in Putnam have at least a bachelor's degree. In Fairfield County, Connecticut, 129,000 Hispanic residents now make up 14% of the total population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005-2007 Three-Year Estimates. Some ACS data for Putnam County is not available because the number of sample cases is too small.

Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is defined as the classification of consumers according to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, lifestyles, and product preferences. It is based on the notion that "birds of a feather flock together"; that is, people with similar tastes, household types, and behaviors naturally gravitate toward each other and into the communities in which they live. Segmentation systems allow businesses to better understand the needs and interests of local shoppers, develop effective strategies that attract consumers to their stores, and select products suited to customer preferences and lifestyles. Market segmentation offers yet another perspective in understanding existing and prospective customers for businesses in downtown Brewster.

Developed by ESRI Business Information Solutions, Community Tapestry categorizes U.S. neighborhoods into 65 market segments, each reflecting a range of opportunities and influences. Neighborhoods are analyzed and sorted by a variety of demographic and socioeconomic attributes as well as other determinants of consumer behavior.

Households residing within the defined trade area have been grouped into the Community Tapestry market segments as summarized in Table 7. The descriptions reflect the propensity of households within that segment to exhibit certain characteristics and preferences relative to the general population. While each segment paints a slightly different "picture" of the trade area market, there are some common features: for example, households in the three largest segments are married-couple families with dual incomes and owners of single-family homes.

There are also some notable differences between trade area households in general and those residing in Brewster. *International Marketplace* is the largest market segment in the Village of Brewster, and is characterized by a rich blend of cultures and household types. Married couples with children and single parents with children represent about 45% of the households. The typical household in this segment rents an apartment in an older, multi-family structure; top purchases include groceries, children's clothing, and movie tickets. They are loyal listeners of Hispanic radio programs, tend to shop at discount stores, and enjoy traveling abroad to visit family members.

Table 7. Top Tapestry Segments in the Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone

Market Segment	Demographic & Socioeconomic	Residential	Consumer Preferences
Pleasant-ville *(24.4% of trade area households)*	▪ Mostly married-couple families, slightly older than average ▪ "Prosperous domesticity" ▪ Little ethnic diversity	▪ Length of residency >10 years ▪ Single-family homes ▪ Own two or more vehicles ▪ Long commutes	▪ Home remodeling is a priority, but doing the projects themselves is not ▪ Shop at warehouse-type stores as well as department stores ▪ Enjoy dining out and baseball games
Suburban Splendor *(12.3%)*	▪ Married-couple families in growing neighborhoods ▪ Epitome of upward mobility ▪ Well-educated	▪ Own large homes that are relatively new, with the latest amenities ▪ Own two or more vehicles	▪ Own all the latest gadgets ▪ Use the Internet to make purchases ▪ Free time devoted to family, travel, fitness, museums
Wealthy Seaboard Suburbs *(11.1%)*	▪ Mostly married-couple families ▪ "Older, established quarters of affluence" ▪ High median net worth	▪ High-value single-family homes ▪ Slow to change residences	▪ Shop at warehouse-type stores as well as upscale retailers ▪ Travel in the U.S. and abroad ▪ Enjoy going to the beach, skiing, and attending theater performances
Silver and Gold *(10.6%)*	▪ Mostly age 55+, retired or semi-retired professionals ▪ Educated seniors, many self-employed	▪ Not typically living in the homes where they raised their children	▪ Have the free time and resources to pursue their interests ▪ Often shop by phone ▪ Avid readers
International Marketplace *(9.7%)*	▪ Ethnically diverse urban market with high share of immigrants	▪ In older urban neighborhoods dominated by renters	▪ Biggest spending priority is family ▪ Keeping in touch with relatives abroad is important

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

Consumer Spending Patterns

To evaluate potential consumer demand in and around Brewster, current estimates of consumer spending by households in the trade area – whether purchases were made within or outside of the 10-minute drivetime zone – were obtained from ESRI Business Information Solutions. The data are based on the annual Consumer Expenditure Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Labor Statistics. Excluded from the analysis are expenditures for goods and services not typically found at a retail establishment: home mortgages, utilities, financial investments, vehicle loans, insurance, child care, transportation, and so on. It should be noted that the categories listed represent purchases by merchandise line or product type rather than *store* type, and items may be sold by several types of establishments.

Based on the ESRI data, the estimated consumer demand for apparel, computers, entertainment and recreation, food and beverage, health and personal items, household furnishings and equipment, and other goods by trade area households totals more than $361 million, or $32,000 per household per year (see Table 8 on the following page).

The aggregate demand for food and beverage represents 46.8% of the consumer demand. This includes approximately $68 million for food consumed away from home, including while on trips, and translates to roughly $6,000 per household every year.

The entertainment and recreation category includes spending on video and sound equipment, sporting goods, pets, toys and games, photographic equipment, and books. The demand for entertainment and recreation in the trade area is estimated at nearly $65 million a year, or $5,668 per household.

In part due to their above-average income levels, trade area households spend more than the average U.S. household on many goods and services. The Spending Potential Index is significantly higher for such items as travel (airfares, lodging, and dining while on trips), apparel products and services (e.g., shoe repair, dry cleaning), household furnishings (especially furniture, floor coverings, household textiles, and luggage), fees and admissions for entertainment and recreation, reading materials, and computer software.

Table 8. Selected Goods and Services Expenditures, Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone				
	Total Annual Spending (000s)	% Share	Avg. Spending Per Household	Spending Potential Index*
Apparel & Services	**$ 39,627**	**11.0%**	**$ 3,464**	**129**
Women's	$ 13,321	3.7%	$ 1,164	124
Men's	$ 7,575	2.1%	$ 662	134
Children's	$ 6,538	1.8%	$ 571	138
Footwear	$ 5,626	1.6%	$ 492	102
Watches and Jewelry	$ 4,064	1.1%	$ 355	159
Apparel Products and Services	$ 2,504	0.7%	$ 219	173
Computers	**$ 4,258**	**1.2%**	**$ 372**	**156**
Computers and Hardware for Home Use	$ 3,731	1.0%	$ 326	155
Software and Accessories for Home Use	$ 527	0.1%	$ 46	160
Entertainment & Recreation	**$ 64,842**	**18.0%**	**$ 5,668**	**153**
TV, Video and Sound Equipment	$ 24,483	6.8%	$ 2,140	149
Fees and Admissions	$ 11,981	3.3%	$ 1,047	169
Pets	$ 7,942	2.2%	$ 694	157
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	$ 7,104	2.0%	$ 621	152
Reading	$ 5,290	1.5%	$ 462	161
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	$ 3,353	0.9%	$ 293	136
Toys and Games	$ 2,472	0.7%	$ 216	145
Photo Equipment and Supplies	$ 2,220	0.6%	$ 194	152
Food & Beverage	**$ 169,032**	**46.8%**	**$ 14,774**	**-**
Food At Home	$ 83,178	23.0%	$ 7,270	149
Food Away from Home	$ 59,192	16.4%	$ 5,174	151
Alcoholic Beverages	$ 10,630	2.9%	$ 929	156
Food and Drink on Trips	$ 8,797	2.4%	$ 769	164
Nonalcoholic Beverages At Home	$ 7,235	2.0%	$ 632	143
Health, Household, & Personal Items	**$ 32,323**	**9.0%**	**$ 2,825**	**-**
Housekeeping Supplies	$ 12,954	3.6%	$ 1,132	148
Prescription Drugs	$ 8,954	2.5%	$ 783	138
Personal Care Products	$ 7,302	2.0%	$ 638	147
Nonprescription Drugs	$ 1,789	0.5%	$ 156	138
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	$ 1,324	0.4%	$ 116	150
Household Furnishings and Equipment	**$ 24,804**	**6.9%**	**$ 2,166**	**157**
Furniture	$ 12,059	3.3%	$ 1,054	160
Major Appliances	$ 5,456	1.5%	$ 475	158
Household Textiles	$ 2,517	0.7%	$ 220	157
Floor Coverings	$ 1,881	0.5%	$ 164	170
Housewares	$ 1,564	0.4%	$ 137	144
Small Appliances	$ 620	0.2%	$ 54	154
Telephones and Accessories	$ 521	0.1%	$ 46	105
Luggage	$ 187	0.1%	$ 16	163
Other Expenditures	**$ 26,160**	**7.2%**	**$ 2,286**	**-**
Airline Fares	$ 8,320	2.3%	$ 727	174
Lodging on Trips	$ 8,299	2.3%	$ 725	171
Lawn and Garden	$ 7,722	2.1%	$ 675	159
School Books and Supplies	$ 1,819	0.5%	$ 159	135
Total, Selected Expenditures	**$ 361,047**	**100.0%**	**$ 31,555**	**-**

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

* The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent relative to the national average (=100).

Retail Sales

Table 9 profiles the retail sector within the defined trade area. It includes the total number of establishments, estimated sales, and the distribution of sales for each store type. According to ESRI, the 433 retail establishments within a 10-minute driving time of downtown Brewster generate an estimated $602.4 million in annual sales.

Table 9. Retail Sales Profile - Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone

	Store Count	Estimated Retail Sales	Sales Distribution
Food Services & Drinking Places	**140**	**$66,625,683**	**11.1%**
Limited-Service Eating Places	60	$38,139,885	6.3%
Full-Service Restaurants	73	$24,409,415	4.1%
Special Food Services	6	$3,919,201	0.7%
Drinking Places	1	$157,182	0.0%
Convenience Retail	**75**	**$251,015,744**	**41.7%**
Grocery Stores	15	$203,398,763	33.8%
Building Materials & Supplies Dealers	21	$22,339,563	3.7%
Health & Personal Care Stores	28	$20,758,024	3.4%
Specialty Food Stores	5	$2,688,545	0.4%
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores	6	$1,830,849	0.3%
Automotive-Related Retail	**52**	**$175,218,351**	**29.1%**
Automotive Dealers	13	$107,785,004	17.9%
Gasoline Stations	22	$52,871,687	8.8%
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4	$8,183,751	1.4%
Auto Parts, Accessories and Tire Stores	13	$6,377,909	1.1%
Shoppers' Goods Retail	**166**	**$109,578,155**	**18.2%**
General Merchandise	10	$49,135,438	8.2%
Clothing Stores	12	$17,541,284	2.9%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	25	$9,118,651	1.5%
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores	12	$6,329,262	1.1%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	17	$5,661,853	0.9%
Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores	8	$4,984,236	0.8%
Sporting Goods/Hobby Stores	18	$4,718,202	0.8%
Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores	19	$3,711,278	0.6%
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	21	$3,225,779	0.5%
Shoe Stores	3	$2,316,581	0.4%
Used Merchandise Stores	10	$1,244,643	0.2%
Book, Periodical, and Music Stores	3	$991,246	0.2%
Florists	8	$599,702	0.1%
Total Retail Sales	**433**	**$602,437,933**	**100.0%**

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

The store types with the highest annual sales in the trade area are grocery stores ($203.4 million), automotive dealers ($107.8 million), and gas stations ($52.9 million). All of these are typical sales leaders, the automotive category due to the price of their product and food stores because they offer items consumed virtually every day by households regardless of income level. Other standouts include general merchandise ($49.1 million), which includes department and discount stores; limited-service eating places, defined as "quick-service" or fast food eateries ($38.1 million); and full-service or sit-down restaurants ($24.4 million).

The demand for goods and services that is not being met locally is referred to as *sales leakage*. The leakage occurs because consumers make purchases outside the trade area, or shop online with non-local stores.

Table 10 shows the retail gap for various retail categories within the trade area. The Leakage/Surplus Factor, calculated by ESRI, presents a snapshot of retail opportunity. It is a measure of the relationship between supply and demand that ranges from +100 (total leakage) to -100 (total surplus). A positive value represents a leakage of retail opportunity outside the trade area, with the potential for local businesses to recapture a portion of the sales that are leaving the area. A negative value represents a *surplus* of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area.

Table 10. Retail Gap Analysis - Brewster 10-Minute Drivetime Zone

	Estimated Surplus (millions)	Estimated Leakage (millions)	Leakage/ Surplus Factor
Total Food & Drink	**-$0.7**		**-0.5**
Total Retail Trade	**-$107.4**		**-11.0**
Grocery Stores	-$117.0		-40.2
Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores	-$2.5		-33.1
Building Materials & Supplies Dealers	-$4.9		-12.3
Health & Personal Care Stores	-$3.2		-8.3
Sporting Goods/Hobby Stores	-$0.4		-4.2
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores		$0.1	2.3
General Merchandise		$3.0	2.9
Clothing Stores		$1.9	5.1
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores		$0.7	5.6
Specialty Food Stores		$0.6	9.6
Shoe Stores		$0.5	10.3
Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores		$1.0	11.8
Book, Periodical, and Music Stores		$0.4	17.4
Florists		$0.3	19.1
Used Merchandise Stores		$0.9	25.6
Electronics & Appliance Stores		$9.0	33.1
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores		$11.0	49.3
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	**-$108.2**		**-9.8**

Source: ESRI and E.M. Pemrick and Company.

ESRI estimates that, within a 10-minute driving time of downtown Brewster, retail and restaurant sales actually *exceed* the demand, or retail potential, by almost 10%. While Putnam County is often perceived as an underserved market, it appears that the demand for some retail categories is being absorbed by the new shopping centers that have been developed in the last few years. There are significant sales surpluses in grocery stores; jewelry, luggage and leather goods; and building materials and supplies, among others.

ESRI identifies modest leakages in several categories, including furniture/home furnishings, electronics and appliances, office supplies, specialty foods, general merchandise, and apparel. These gaps may not be enough to support the development of an entirely new business, and some categories are not easily accommodated (or successful) in a downtown environment. There may be opportunities for existing businesses, however, to expand their product lines and pursue marketing efforts to attract prospective trade area customers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The chart below summarizes the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the study area, based on the preceding sections, in no particular order.

Downtown Brewster: Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Strengths

- Pedestrian-friendly
- Historic architecture
- Relatively few commercial vacancies
- Popular farmers market
- Well-regarded museum and library
- Updated water and sewer infrastructure
- The dedication/involvement of the Coalition for a Better Brewster as well as individual residents, merchants, and property owners
- Easy access from New York City and Westchester County by train

Challenges

- Limited retail mix, with essential goods and services missing
- No major retail or activity anchor to stimulate foot traffic
- Poor retail visibility and signage in some locations – hard to know “what’s here”
- Negative perceptions of Brewster due to the day laborer situation
- Some buildings in need of significant renovation (e.g., Cameo Theater)
- Lack of evening activity
- Weak marketing – websites with information on Brewster are out of date or hard to find
- Limited organizational capacity – no paid staff to market the downtown, coordinate events, cultivate businesses, etc.
- Historic relationship between the Village and the Town

Opportunities

- Build off Village’s ethnic diversity and working-class history (railroads, mines, dairy)
- Affluent markets within a 10-minute driving time
- Strong spending potential among trade area residents in household furnishings, entertainment and recreation, and reading materials compared to national averages; interest in cultural pursuits (e.g., attending theater performances, going to museums)
- Increasing diversity of the Hudson Valley and tri-state (NY/NJ/CT) area
- Growing Hispanic purchasing power regionally / nationally, especially with second- and third-generation
- Perceptions of Brewster among visitors from New York City and other urban locations
- Future waterfront park – opportunities for business development related to recreation
- Possible development of a parking facility to serve both commuters and shoppers
- A thousand commuters a day. . . more of a long-term opportunity

Market Identity

Returning to the question originally posed in the introduction, what makes the study area unique and marketable? We believe that the key elements of downtown Brewster's commercial "niche" identity are its *ethnic diversity*, *history*, and *urban environment*. These elements should be integrated and used to differentiate Brewster and communicate what it has to offer.

- ***Capitalize on the Village's ethnic diversity*** to create a unique environment that attracts people for the cultural experience: It could be Guatemalan or Mexican, but also Italian, Chinese, Irish, Indian, and so on.
- ***Build upon Brewster's history:*** the mines, the railroads, and early factories, as well as today's immigrant population. Involve the Southeast Museum, the Landmark Preservation Society, and other groups to educate visitors and connect the past and the present.
- ***Use the urban environment as an asset*** – Highlight Main Street's walkability and easy access by train. Consider positioning the Village as "a little of the city in the country" to distinguish Brewster from suburban shopping areas in neighboring communities.

Additional strategies to strengthen and market this niche identity are provided in the sections that follow.

Business Development and Recruitment

A primary objective of the Niche Marketing Plan is to identify commercial uses that are economically viable, compatible and appropriate. We offer several recommendations for business recruitment as well as the enhancement of existing establishments.

<u>Recruit Additional Businesses</u>

The recruitment of additional businesses to downtown Brewster should build on Main Street's existing strengths and customer base, while enhancing longer-term opportunities for capturing the trade area market. Business recruitment should be used as a means to fill vacancies and gaps in the retail mix, but more importantly, to strengthen Brewster's niche identity. The following types of new businesses are recommended:

- Home furnishings and accessories / décor – e.g., textiles, handcrafted items
- Specialty foods – e.g., bakery, seafood market, Italian imports, Indian spices
- Reading materials and music – not a full-service bookstore, but an establishment offering a limited array of local, regional, and even international newspapers and magazines, new and used books, CDs, and other items
- Additional dining and/or entertainment opportunities, preferably with an ethnic/cultural theme

Businesses and activities targeted to children, perhaps tied in with school-based activities at the Southeast Museum, should also be considered. The trade area has a higher proportion of households with related children under 18 present than the Village of Brewster. A family orientation that puts parents and children on the streets of downtown Brewster could help to change the negative image of the Village.

We recognize that Brewster has had some of these businesses in the past: for example, the Brewster Fish Market, which closed after twenty years. There are many reasons why retailers fail or decide to cease operations, however. One should not assume that a particular type of business that was not successful in the past will not be able to succeed in the future.

Business recruitment is often a long-term effort. Suitable sites for all of these businesses may not be available now, but over time, some business turnover will occur and there will be other vacancies to be filled.

<u>Seek Out Talented Entrepreneurs</u>

A strategy that is frequently used by Main Street managers to recruit new businesses is to contact successful retailers and restaurateurs within the region to determine their interest in relocating or in opening an additional location. This can be a viable and productive strategy.

Reaching out to talented entrepreneurs with solid business skills is also recommended, however. These individuals often have the passion, the vision, and the willingness to develop the types of specialized businesses necessary to meet local market needs and strengthen the community's niche identity.

We believe that the most effective place to find these entrepreneurs and "pioneers" would be within the New York City and possibly lower Westchester County markets. This does not suggest that skilled individuals do not exist in Putnam or Fairfield Counties; rather, the negative perceptions of Brewster within the region at this point may discourage investment. Moreover, prospective owners of businesses with the desired ethnic/multicultural theme are probably found in greater numbers in an urban environment.

Many Brewster residents maintain active ties to family, friends, and business partners in New York City and Westchester. Using personal and professional networks can assist in identifying leads. Reaching out to professional service providers such as attorneys, accountants, and management consultants is equally important. These individuals interact regularly with existing and prospective entrepreneurs and may be able to provide referrals. Other potential sources of leads include commercial lenders, economic development officials, real estate professionals, and business administration faculty at colleges and universities. Organizations that provide technical assistance and support to small businesses may also be able to identify entrepreneurs whose vision and goals are in alignment with those of downtown Brewster.

<u>Provide Technical Assistance to Existing Businesses</u>

The effectiveness of the Niche Marketing Plan could be greatly enhanced by assisting current Main Street businesses with retail merchandising, signage and marketing. A number of businesses have cluttered storefronts and signs in poor condition, providing a negative impression that discourages passers-by – especially those who are unfamiliar with Brewster – from coming in.

During one of the meetings for this project, it was noted that one of the markets on Main Street has an excellent lunch buffet, but "only the locals know about it." This is exactly the type of offering that needs to be advertised through a window display or a sign. Similarly, the café at the Pool Hall is "a well-kept secret." These "secrets" should be shared *outside* the Brewster community. *The appearance of the storefront must reflect, and make it very apparent, what type of business it is and what unique products or services it offers.*

In some cases, the viability of an existing business could be enhanced by diversifying or changing the way it is positioned in the marketplace. For instance, Brewster has quite a few generic delis. With a few changes to the menu, could some of them adopt a more "ethnic" feel, and market themselves accordingly? Perhaps Brewster could have an Italian deli offering panini sandwiches and homemade pasta fagioli. A Hispanic market could offer take-out foods or even cooking classes for consumers not familiar with the cuisine. We are aware of a family from Afghanistan that bought an existing pizzeria; they were much more successful when they added Afghani dishes and a lunch buffet to the menu than when they sold pizza. The idea is to offer something unique, whether it is the product itself or the cultural "experience." All of these strategies would help existing businesses cater to a broader market while strengthening Brewster's niche identity.

Technical assistance is available to new or prospective businesses, typically by appointment, through SCORE, a nonprofit organization. SCORE volunteers are working or retired business owners, executives and managers who offer a wealth of information and insights. All counseling services are free and confidential, and open to anyone; seminars and classes are offered at a nominal fee. The Putnam SCORE (www.putnamscore.org) is located in Carmel; Brewster clients have also been served by the Western Connecticut SCORE, with locations in Danbury, Waterbury, and New Milford. Other potential sources of free or inexpensive technical assistance include the Small Business Development Center (a satellite center is located in Fishkill), graduate-level business administration students at area colleges and universities, and successful Hispanic entrepreneurs in other communities who may be willing to serve as mentors.

Consider "Alternative" Business Models

In the absence of individual entrepreneurs or business owners to fill specified gaps in goods and services, consideration should be given to the development or attraction of so-called "alternative" business models. Examples include cooperatives (e.g., food co-ops), incubators, and multi-tenant markets that lease small amounts of space to multiple dealers under one roof (often seen with antiques, but increasingly with other types of goods).

The Brewster Plan listed several types of markets that would be beneficial to the Village: a farmers market, flower market, arts and crafts, music and visual arts. The seasonal farmers market now located in the parking lot of Village Hall has been quite successful. The creation of an *indoor* market located closer to the core of the downtown, however, should be considered to allow for year-round operation.

Consider Business Incentives

The Village of Brewster should consider the use of incentives to attract targeted businesses to Main Street. A small business revolving loan fund could be established with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or other grant funding to support business development. The fund could offer small loans of, say, $20,000 or less to downtown entrepreneurs for leasehold improvements, equipment purchases, inventory, and working capital.

Another option is for property owners to offer a short-term rent subsidy (typically six months to one year) to targeted businesses, to relieve start-up operating expenses until the business becomes established.

Under either option, it is important to establish specific eligibility criteria for the program and to perform the necessary due diligence to ensure that the assisted business is legitimate, has a business or marketing plan to increase the probability that the endeavor will succeed, and incentive funds are not wasted.

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing downtown Brewster is about more than simply promoting the mix of businesses and amenities; it is also about raising awareness and presenting the area in the best possible light, drowning out the voices of the "naysayers."

Establish A Web Presence for Downtown Brewster

Today, a website is an essential element of marketing and promotion. Online research revealed that there are multiple websites that include information about Brewster: those of the Village government, Brewster Chamber of Commerce, Putnam County Tourism Department, Putnam County Empire Zone, and others. Some of these websites, however, are not appropriate for downtown marketing, as they are too broad; others are outdated, listing businesses that have long since closed. *None of the existing websites has a current and accurate inventory of businesses or vacancies in downtown Brewster.*

We recommend establishing a web presence via the current website of the Coalition for a Better Brewster. This would serve as the "home page" for the study area, offering lists of merchants, restaurants, and other downtown businesses; an area map; information on special events; PDF versions of brochures and other marketing materials; the types of businesses the Village would like to attract; and an inventory of space available to lease or purchase. *It is extremely important to keep the information updated regularly, i.e., at least once a month.* The website should also provide links to the sites of local businesses, realtors/brokers, the Southeast Museum, sources of business assistance, economic development agencies, and Village and County officials.

Pursue Cooperative Marketing Opportunities

By definition, cooperative marketing refers to an agreement between two or more establishments to promote each other's products and services with their own; it is essentially a cost-sharing arrangement that benefits all partners. Cooperative advertising was conducted by the Coalition for a Better Brewster with the antique stores in the early 1990s, and should be done again. By participating in joint advertising that promotes downtown Brewster as a single entity, integrating the recommended niche identity, local businesses would be able to maximize their advertising dollars.

Revive the "Shop Putnam County" Campaign

The Village of Brewster and local businesses should work with other Putnam County communities and chambers of commerce to revive the "Shop Putnam County" campaign. Shop Putnam County is still on the web, but the site is outdated. A countywide "Buy Local" campaign would be beneficial to all of Putnam County's Main Street communities.

Print ad, Bozeman, MT

Incorporating public education, marketing, advertising, and business and community involvement, "Buy Local" initiatives have been conducted in communities across the United States to encourage patronage of locally-owned, independent businesses. The idea behind shopping locally is that it is an investment in the community; studies have found that because local retailers are more likely to purchase from *other* local businesses, service providers, and farms, buying local has a greater economic impact on the community than buying from a national retailer. Local business owners also have a vested interest in the community because they live there, and are less likely to pick up and leave. Finally, because "Buy Local" is a form of cooperative marketing, it often allows local businesses to compete with the economies of scale achieved by big-box stores and franchise companies in advertising.

Numerous examples of how communities are encouraging people to buy locally can be found at the website of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (www.newrules.org/retail/slides/index.html). Other resources, including an excellent publication about how to start a buy local campaign and a fact sheet explaining why shoppers should support local businesses, are available at no cost at http://newrules.org/retail/tools.html.

Expand Special Events

One of the best ways to change the perceptions of residents about the downtown is to give them a lot of diverse reasons to visit — and provide them with great experiences when they do. Those experiences can include special events, street festivals and programs.

Founders Day, the farmers market and the Christmas Tree lighting at Brewster Triangle already bring people into the Village, and should be continued. Other events should be added to the mix to generate activity and reinforce the community's niche identity. It is nice but not always necessary for visitors to spend money while they are participating; events provide an opportunity to raise awareness of what Main Street has to offer, and may convince those attending to come downtown at a future date. Another benefit is the "feet on the street" effect: the greater the number of people walking the sidewalks of Main Street and having a good time, the less likely they will be concerned about the day laborers.

Suggested events and festivals might include:

- A multi-cultural street festival with ethnic foods and other products from around the world, traditional music and dance performances, and displays. Arlandria, a neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia known for its diverse international character and restaurants, has had such an event every year since 2001. According to the *Washington Post*, the daylong event was attended by an estimated *40,000* people in 2006.

- A "Brewster Dines!" promotion during which participating restaurants offer a sampling of dinner options at one low price.

- Guided walking tours of historic properties in the Village (as recommended in *The Brewster Plan*), connecting Brewster's past, present and future.

- A Hudson Valley Diner Crawl, linking Bob's Diner with others in Putnam, Dutchess, and Westchester Counties. New York has many classic prefab diners; they have a nostalgic appeal, and are also of interest to "foodies" and architectural buffs.[4]

- A bicycle race that utilizes the Putnam County Bikeway, and starts and ends in downtown Brewster.

Activities that involve children and their parents can be especially effective and fun. One intriguing idea that emerged from the business focus group meeting was to have a juried art show for kids, with the artworks exhibited indoors, on the walls of an array of local businesses.

<u>Develop a Village Newsletter</u>

A newsletter issued by the Village of Brewster say, three to four times a year, could be used to circulate factual information to local residents about activities throughout the community. Its purpose would be to keep residents "in the loop" about the activities of Village government and how certain issues are being addressed, at a time when the news media is cutting back on its coverage. The content of the newsletter might range from brief notices of upcoming meetings to succinct yet informative updates on the status of various projects and proposals. While it need not be more than a few pages, a newsletter could be invaluable in combating misinformation.

Other Recommendations

- <u>Continue efforts to create a municipal parking structure</u> – The main purpose of the parking structure should be to replace the existing surface lots used by commuters. As *The Brewster Plan* succinctly stated: "The Village does not have a parking problem, but rather an opportunity to provide easier access for shoppers and commuters. The proposed parking structure will help to simplify the current confusion over parking and mitigate the perceived parking problem." We agree; the construction of a municipal parking garage would provide additional flexibility to merchants, property owners, and their customers, and would accommodate future development and special events. As the plan also suggested, parking validation could be provided to customers shopping at businesses on Main Street.

- <u>Develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities (e.g., bike racks, signage) throughout the Village</u> and establish bike and pedestrian connections with existing regional pathways – Also recommended in *The Brewster Plan*, these projects offer the potential for Brewster to become a recreational destination. Avid hikers and cyclists often seek out interesting places to eat and drink at the end of the day.

- <u>In conjunction with the Town of Southeast, continue efforts to restore the Old Town Hall</u> – The idea of presenting theater, music, and other performances in the existing auditorium of the Old Town Hall deserves to be explored further. The Village, or a group of interested

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[4] Bob's Diner is featured in a recent publication, *Diners of New York*, by Michael Engle and Mario Monti (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008).

volunteers, should consider the development of a business plan to identify potential users, management structure, funding, marketing, etc.

- Consider the development of new, upper-story housing in downtown Brewster – Brewster's zoning code allows multi-family residential uses on the upper stories of buildings in the B-1 zone in the core of the downtown. Such uses are not permitted in the B-3 zone, which extends along the north side of Main Street near Wilkes Street all the way to Route 22. More residential uses in and adjacent to the downtown would create a stronger market for local businesses.

- Work with Putnam County to hire a Main Street Circuit Rider – Putnam County could appoint or contract with an experienced Main Street manager or consultant to provide the County's hamlets, villages, and commercial centers with assistance in marketing, retail recruitment, events planning, and related services. Brewster has many dedicated, skilled, and well-intentioned volunteers who have been active in downtown revitalization, but volunteers – some of whom operate businesses full-time – can only do so much. Having a paid, professional Main Street manager serving each community for a certain number of hours per week would provide the staff resources and commitment necessary to help them implement the marketing plan.