



August 7, 2017

Chairman Jay Sheers  
and Members of the Planning Board  
City of Beacon  
1 Municipal Plaza  
Beacon, NY 12508

**Re: The Edgewater – School Impact Study**

Dear Chairman Sheers and Members of the Board,

During the course of the Public Hearing on The Edgewater, several comments were raised regarding the School Impact Study prepared by our office for that project. Those comments are summarized below, and responses provided:

***1. Justify the rent level used in the Rutgers demographic multiplier calculation.***

The Rutgers multiplier is an analytical tool used to predict the number of school-aged children that may reside in a given development. The equation employs four sources of data:

- Housing unit type (single-family detached, single-family attached, multi-family, etc.)
- Housing tenure (owned or rental)
- Number of bedrooms
- Value

The veracity of the unit value component has been questioned.

The Rutgers study<sup>1</sup> was published in 2006. The values set forth in that study reflect market conditions, in New York State as a whole, as of that

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *Residential Demographic Multipliers, Estimates of the Occupants of New Housing by State, Housing Type, Housing Size and Housing Price*; prepared by Robert W. Burchell, David Listokin, William

date. In terms of the school children calculation, the numerical figure assigned to each value is less important than the *ratio* of value to the other factors. The values could just as effectively been expressed as “low” “medium” and “high.” The numerically assigned values reflect a useful metric to discern housing types. Certainly, the Authors of the study were not implying that the value of single family home in Scarsdale is equivalent to the same home in rural Clinton County, or the value of an apartment on Park Avenue in Manhattan is equivalent to the value of a similarly sized apartment in downtown Buffalo.

The value selected to be utilized in the calculation of school aged children reflects the expectation that The Edgewater will be priced to reflect the market rate rents for new, high quality, highly amenitized transit oriented developments (the “high” category).

Arbitrarily suggesting that a lower value should be employed – for the sole purpose of exaggerating the number of school-aged children, is unjustifiable.

## **2. What are the cumulative impacts of various development projects on the School District?**

As more fully documented in the School Impact Study for The Edgewater, a series of converging demographic trends and market forces combine to depress the actual school children generation rates from multi-family projects in the City of Beacon. The following actual school children numbers reinforce this trend (Rodney to provide):

Projecting cumulative impacts is therefore, very difficult in the absence of real project data. Relying on the Rutgers multiplier is reasonable for a single development, to project “worst case” conditions. Employing this method for multiple projects would compound the overestimation of school children to such a degree where the results would be insupportably inaccurate.

However, several generalized conclusions regarding cumulative impacts can be drawn:

- During the peak academic year of enrollment in the Beacon City School District (2004 – 2005), the District supported 3,601 students – or 735 students *more* than the current reporting year.
- It is unclear if the peak 3,601 students represented an unsustainably high enrollment, or if excess capacity existed at that time.

- The delta in capacity from peak enrollment to current enrollment (735 students) represents a large buffer that would absorb additional school-aged children generation.
- Actual school children generation rates are significantly lower than the Rutgers projections, so the capacity of that buffer is in reality, quite durable.
- Fiscal analysis demonstrates that market rate residential development, similar to The Edgewater, will result in annual tax surpluses for the School District.

Should the City find it necessary to project the number of all new school-aged children potentially generated from all projects that are currently being reviewed, planned or considered in the City, a significant amount of additional data would be required, beyond that which is available to the developer of The Edgewater. Furthermore, the equity of requiring the developer of The Edgewater to undertake such an analysis, when it has already been demonstrated that The Edgewater will not result in any significant adverse impact to the Beacon City School District, is questionable.

**3. Provide citation for the representation that the Rutgers multiplier overestimates school children generation.**

While numerous sources exist to demonstrate that the Rutgers multipliers overestimate school children generation rates, the most useful are perhaps the various Environmental Impact Statements and School Impact Studies produced for development projects throughout the region, where actual school children generation numbers are compared to the Rutgers multiplier. Some examples actual school children generation rates of larger projects in the region, similar in size to The Edgewater are presented below:

<b>ACTUAL SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN RESIDING IN SELECTED COMPRABLE MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENTS</b>				
<b>Development</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>School Age Children</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
Marbury Corners	Pelham	66	3	0.045
Avalon Willow	Mamaroneck	227	15	0.066
Bank Street Commons	White Plains	502	10	0.020
Avalon White Plains	White Plains	407	15	0.037
One City Place	White Plains	311	14	0.045
Avalon at Greyrock	Stamford	306	11	0.036
Avalon at	Stamford	328	8	0.024

Stamford				
The Boulevard	Stamford	94	1	0.011
<b>Average Ratio</b>				<b>0.04</b>

If the average actual school children generation rate from these projects were utilized (0.04 children/unit), The Edgewater would generate 13 school-aged children rather than the conservative projection of 47 students derived from utilizing the Rutgers multiplier, used in The Edgewater's School Impact Study.

However, perhaps the definitive source for this position comes from Professor David Listokin, one of the original authors of the 2006 Rutgers study cited above. Professor Listokin revisited the multipliers utilized in the original study by analyzing communities in New Jersey, and concluded "*The practice of using the existing Rutgers multipliers produces an overstatement of the population generated by new development in New Jersey, especially housing with a strong transit orientation and infrastructure in place.*"<sup>2</sup>

We believe this information satisfactorily responds to the comments raised during the public hearing.

Sincerely,

Patrick Cleary, AICP, CEP, PP, LEED AP  
Cleary Consulting

cc: Rodney Weber, Scenic Beacon Developments, LLC  
Taylor Palmer, Cuddy & Feder

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<sup>2</sup> *Who Lives in New Jersey Housing – A Quick Guide to New Jersey Residential Demographic Multipliers*, David Listokin, 2010.