

The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South

200 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, Connecticut

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Introduction

VHB Engineering, Surveying, Landscape Architecture and Geology, P.C. (VHB) has been retained by The Silverman Group to prepare a School Impact Study. This study aims to ascertain the impacts that the proposed residential development known as The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would have on the local community and school district of the Town of Simsbury, Connecticut, where this project is proposed to be developed.

This School Impact Study relies primarily on a Fiscal Impact Analysis methodology in order to project the number of school children that could be generated by the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South and calculate the potential fiscal implications that this increase could have on Simsbury's budget (including the Simsbury Board of Education budget) and tax assessments. In order to accomplish this analysis, this study first explores relevant demographic and community profile information for both the Town of Simsbury, as well as the Simsbury Public School District.

Project Overview

Project History

The project site of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development lies in the southeastern quadrant of the Town of Simsbury, CT, a municipality in Hartford County, Connecticut. Specifically, the project site at 200 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut abuts Hopmeadow Street (Connecticut State Highway Route 10 and US Route 202), which serves as the main southern gateway and commercial corridor of the Town of Simsbury. The project is surrounded by protected wetlands that abut the 46-mile Farmington River.

The 175-acre property at 200 Hopmeadow Street was formerly a 645,239 square foot office complex for The Hartford Insurance Group, which closed in 2013. In 2014, the Town of Simsbury approved a form-based zoning code, titled the Hartford-Simsbury Form Base Code District (HS-FBC), for the project site. The HS-FBC divided the property at 200 Hopmeadow Street into two developable sites - the "North Hartford" site and "South Hartford" site. The "North Hartford" site was undeveloped and primarily agricultural which was directly north of the built office complex for The Hartford. The "South Hartford Site," which is the 125 acres that the Ridge at Talcott Mountain South is proposed for, contained the former buildings and parking lot of The Hartford complex.

The HS-FBC established a vision and the procedures and standards for development of the two sites. Six component zones were established for the HS-FBC District; any of which can be applied to the project sites by a proposed development: 1) Neighborhood Commercial, 2) Neighborhood Transition, 3) Neighborhood, 4) Cluster Neighborhood, 5) Mixed-Use Transition and 6) Special District.

As currently proposed, The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South's Master Site Development Plan, as required by the HS-FBC, would apply the Neighborhood Zone on 40% of the site and the Neighborhood Transition Zone on 51% of the site, with the remaining 9% dedicated to a publicly held landscape buffer. Both of these zones

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permit residential uses, with neighborhood commercial permitting residential uses only on the upper floors (not the ground floor). As part of the standards set out by the HS-FBC, the proposal of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will be an Alternative Compliance Application (Type 4 application) for development, in accordance with the HS-FBC.

In 2015, the Hartford Site (both north and south sites) was purchased by The Silverman Group, which demolished the former Hartford Office Complex in 2016 to prepare the site for redevelopment.

In accordance with the HS-FBC zoning code, The Silverman Group developed and completed The Ridge at Talcott Mountain *North* development, the counterpart to the currently proposed The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South, on the 50 acre, undeveloped "North Hartford" Site in 2019. The completed northern development features 111 townhouse units, 188 apartment units, a 120-bed assisted living space which was subdivided and sold to Anthology Senior Living, a resident clubhouse and 11,600 square-feet of retail/office space.

The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South Proposal

The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will be developed on the "South Hartford" site, which is defined as the roughly 125 acres encompassing the footprint of the demolished Hartford Office Complex and parking lot. The project would consist of 580 residential units, including 216 one-bedroom units, 296 two-bedroom units, 32 three-bedroom units and 36 four-bedroom units (See Table 1.1). A total of 10% (or 58 units) of these units will be set aside for affordable units, including 5% of units requiring affordability based on 60% of average family income and 5% requiring affordability based on 80% of average family income, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 8-30g. These units would be located in a mix of building types, including three- and four-story apartment/stacked flat buildings, duplexes and single-family homes (See Table 1.2). These buildings will be oriented with the cluster of the twelve proposed apartment/stacked flat buildings bounded by duplexes directly to the south and single-family homes to the south and east of the apartments (See Figure 1.1). In addition to these residential units, a 5,500 square foot community building, including a playground, gym, game room and other amenities, is proposed to be centrally located among the cluster of apartment buildings.

The development proposal also includes dedicated open space and recreational trails. The front lawn of the property will be dedicated to public use and include a multi-use trail system that will connect the Farmington River Trail to the offsite Farmington Canal Heritage Rail Trail. Dedicated shared open community space throughout the site for the development's residents, including a grand lawn, will enable programming such as art shows, farmer's markets, outdoor music events, nature and educational classes. Full build-out of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South is estimated to be completed by mid-2026 to 2027.

Table 1.1: The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South - Unit Mix

Unit Type	Number of Units	Number of Bedrooms
One Bedroom	216	216
Two Bedroom	296	592
Three Bedroom	32	96
Four Bedroom	36	144
Total	580	1,048

Development Trends in Simsbury, CT

The residential developments at 200 Hopmeadow Street are just two of several multi-family residential projects that have been developed or proposed for the Town of Simsbury over the past decade. Table 1.3 lists examples of recent resident development in Simsbury and the corresponding number of units built for each development¹.

Table 1.3: Recent Residential Development in Simsbury, CT

Development Name	Number of Units	Year Built	Elementary School Facility Serving Site
Mill Commons	88	2013	Central School
Kings Ridge	24	2013	Latimer Lane School
Carson Way	74	2014	Central School
Mill Pond Crossing	20	2014	Central School
The Pointe at Dorset Crossing	168	2015	Tariffville School
Highcroft Place	272	2016	Central School
Aspen Green	180	2017-2019	Latimer Lane School
The Ridge at Talcott Mountain (North)	299	2019	Central School

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Profile of Simsbury, CT

The Town of Simsbury, Connecticut, located in Hartford County, is one of the five communities that make up what is known locally as the Farmington Valley, in which the Farmington River runs through. The studied development, The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South, gets its name from Talcott Mountain which is located in the most southeastern corner of the Town. Three distinct census designated places lie within Simsbury Town – Weatogue, Simsbury Center and West Simsbury. The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South project directly abuts the southeast border of the Village of Weatogue.

Simsbury, CT has consistently been ranked as one of the best places to live in Connecticut, especially for young familiesⁱⁱ. This recognition is one reason of many for the trends detailed in this section. This profile of Simsbury, CT explores the demographics and housing characteristics and trends to provide the requisite context for fully understanding the enrollment needs and fiscal impact of the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South.

Demographics

Total Population ⁱⁱⁱ

The total population of the Town of Simsbury, CT is 24,517 residents, per the 2020 Decennial Census. There has been a 4.3% increase in the Town’s population since 2010. While a higher percentage increase than the stagnant growth observed across Hartford County or the State of Connecticut between 2010 and 2020, Simsbury, CT observed a population increase that is relatively consistent with its neighboring municipalities of similar size in and around the Farmington Valley area (See Figure 2.1). The 2020 Simsbury Parks & Open Space Master Plan projected that this growth would continue for the foreseeable future, with an estimated 2024 population of 25,278 and 2030 projected population of 26,052 residents. At a current 2023 population that is over 750 residents fewer than projected for 2024, it is likely that the population of Simsbury, while increasing, will be lower than previously projected in 2024.

Table 2.1: Population Growth, 2010 – 2020 (Data Source: US Census Bureau 2020 & 2010 Decennial Census)

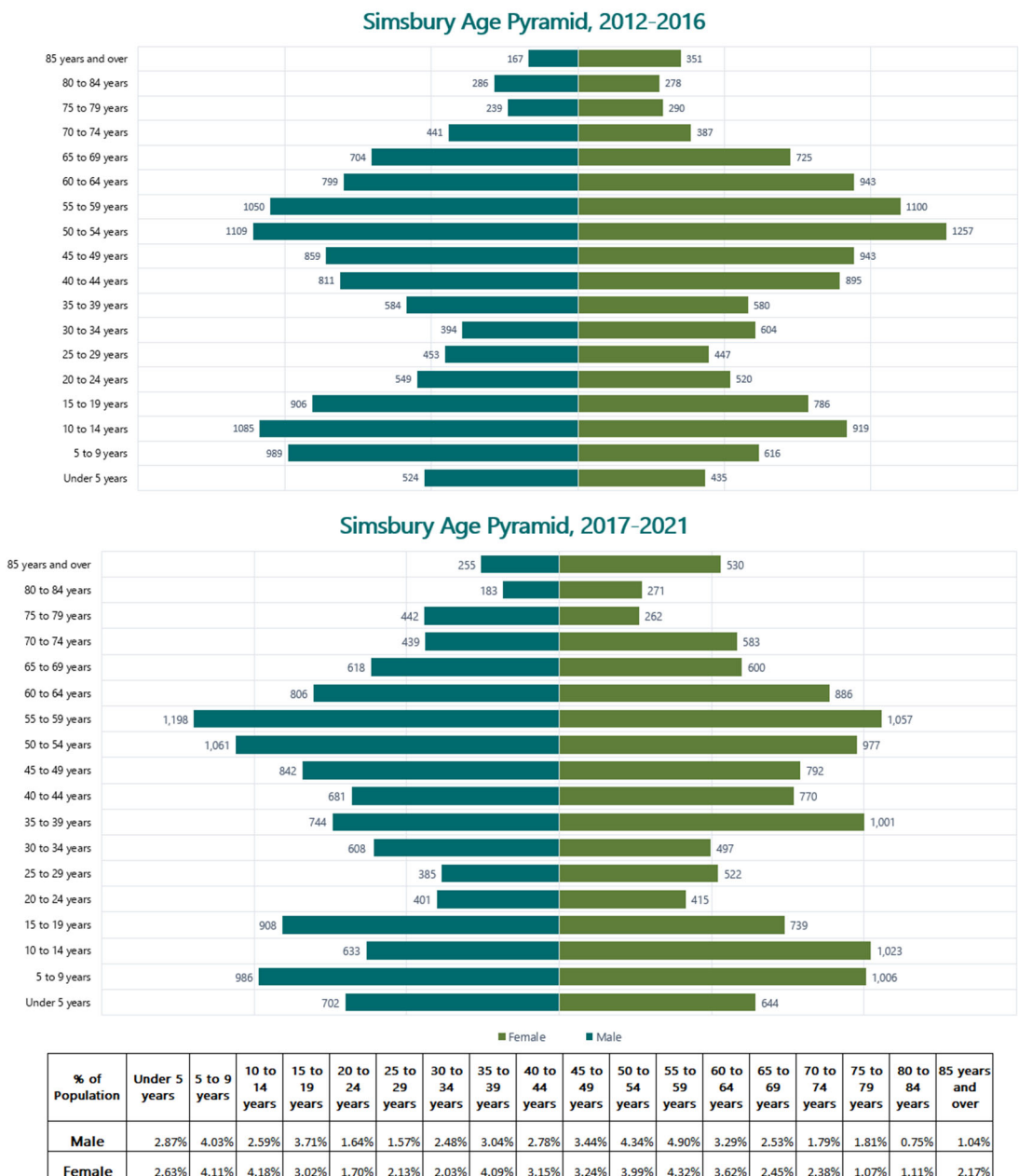
Jurisdiction	Population, 2010	Population, 2020	Percent Growth
Simsbury, CT	23,511	24,517	+4.3%
Avon, CT	18,098	18,932	+4.6%
Bloomfield, CT	20,486	21,535	+5.12%
Farmington, CT	25,340	26,712	+5.4%
Windsor, CT	29,044	29,492	+1.5%
Hartford County	894,014	899,498	+0.61%
State of Connecticut	3,574,097	3,605,944	+0.89%

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Age of Population ^{iv}

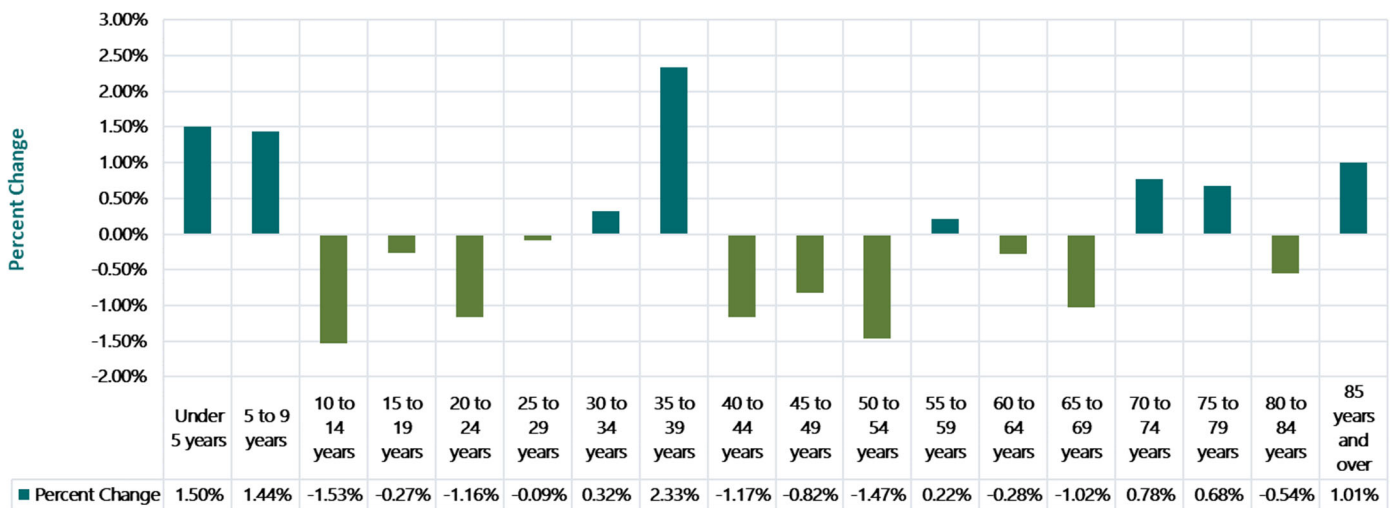
The growing population of Simsbury, CT has become younger since 2012 (see Figure 2.1). Using estimates from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey five-year estimates, the percentage of Simsbury’s population under the age of 18 years (i.e. school children) increased between the time ranges of 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 from 24.5% to 25.6%. Increases in the number of residents under the age of 5 years and between 5 and 9 years were the largest driver of growth in this age cohort (See Figure 2.2). The largest growth across the entire age distribution for Simsbury’s population was observed within the 35-to-39-year cohort (likely the primary parents group of the 0 – 9 year cohort), which increased by 2.33% over the periods of 2012-2016 and 2017-2021. With these trends, the median age of the Town of Simsbury slightly decreased between the two periods of 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 from 44.8 years to 43.4 years.

Figure 2.1: Simsbury Age Pyramids, 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 (Data Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate, Age and Sex)



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Figure 2.2: Age Cohort Population Growth (2012-2016, 2017-2021) (Data Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate, Age and Sex)



Housing and Household Characteristics ^{iv}

The Town of Simsbury has 9,492 housing units, with 96% of units occupied. Simsbury is predominantly characterized by traditional owner-occupied single-family housing, with 74% of its total units identified as single detached units. Housing units with two or three bedrooms represents over 45% of the housing stock in Simsbury and units with four or more bedrooms represents an additional 47%. In other words, over 90% of housing units in Simsbury are the most likely types to generate children. Of the 9,110 total housing units that are occupied, approximately 78% are owner-occupied. Per the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year estimates, there has been a growth in the portion of renters in Simsbury since 2012-2016. During the period of 2012-2016, rented units (1,553) represented 17.3% of all occupied housing units. The 2017-2021 period saw a rise to 22.2% (2,023) of all occupied units being rented. This is likely in part a result of the recently completed multi-family residential developments in the Town of Simsbury.

On average, 2.76 persons reside in owner occupied households and 2.14 persons reside in renter-occupied units in Simsbury. The average family size in Simsbury Town is 3.15, which is slightly below the national average of 3.20, but above the average for Hartford County (3.07). 33.5% of households in Simsbury Town have at least one child under the age of 18, compared with 27% across Hartford County. Consistent with observed age trends, including the growth of young families between the periods of 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 in Simsbury, the average family size in Simsbury has grown from 3.09 to 3.15 since 2012-2016. Despite this, the percentage of households with at least one child has remained unchanged, meaning that more families are likely having more than one child since the 2012-2016 period.

Table 2.2: Housing Units in Simsbury, 2017-2021 (Data Source: ACS Five Year Estimates, Physical Housing Characteristics)

Occupancy Status	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Housing Stock	Percent with Single Unit Detached	Percent with Two or More Units
Owner-Occupied	7,087	75%	90%	4.2%
Renter-Occupied	2,023	21%	19.3%	75.6%
Vacant	382	4%	-	-
Total	9,492	100%	-	-

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Table 2.3: Number of Bedrooms by Occupancy Type, 2017-2021 (Data Source: ACS Five Year Estimates, Physical Housing Characteristics)

Owner-Occupied Units		
Bedroom Type	Number	Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units
No Bedroom	12	0%
One Bedroom	127	2%
2-3 Bedroom	2,860	40%
4+ Bedrooms	4,088	58%

Renter-Occupied Units		
Bedroom Type	Number	Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units
No Bedroom	69	3.4%
One Bedroom	533	26.3%
2-3 Bedroom	1,254	62%
4+ Bedrooms	167	8.3%



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Profile of the Simsbury Public School District

Overview of School District

The entirety of the Town of Simsbury is served by the Simsbury Public Schools, which educates a student population of 4,104 pupils, as of the 2023-2024 school year, and oversees seven school facilities across the Town of Simsburyⁱ.

Both Henry James Memorial School (serving Grades 7 and 8) and Simsbury High School (serving Grades 9 – 12) are located within approximately four miles north of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South project site and would serve any children generated by development between the Grades of 7 and 12. Per an inventory of new construction within the Town of Simsbury provided by the Simsbury Public School District dated 10/1/2023, the elementary school slated to serve young students generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South is to be determinedⁱ.

The project site for both The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South and the completed The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North are located less than one mile south of Latimer Lane School (serving Grades K-6). However, due to concerns over capacity at Latimer Lane and in order to accommodate the 51 students generated by the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North, the Simsbury Public School District redistricted the development to be served by Central School at the elementary level^v. Therefore, it is assumed that redistricting for the Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would be possible in a similar fashion.

School Facility Renovations

Since the time of the construction of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North, the Simsbury Public School District has undertaken a considerable renovation project for Latimer Lane School as well as its other educational facilities. Starting in Fall 2022, the Latimer Lane School Building Project aims to add nearly 22,000 square feet of new facility space, including new and refurbished classrooms and special education rooms^{vi}. This improvement of the Latimer Lane School to enhance educational spaces and address capacity concerns is part of a larger district-wide effort to develop a School Facilities Master Plan and Reconfiguration Study that will include the renovation of all elementary schools in the district. Through the renovation of Latimer Lane School, the enrollment concerns for the facility that had caused students generated from The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North to be redistricted to Central School should likely be alleviated.

Simsbury School Enrollment

Total Enrollment ⁱ

The Simsbury Public School District is one of the largest school districts of its immediate neighbors in Hartford County, with 4,100 students and the administration of seven schools, including five elementary schools (i.e. Pre-K/K to Grade 6) (See Table 3.1). As of the 2023-2024 school year, 2,177 (53%) pupils were enrolled in one of the five elementary schools within the district, 634 were enrolled in Grades 7 or 8 and 1,293 were enrolled in Grades 9 – 12 (See Table 3.2). The two largest classes were Grades 7 and 12, while the two smallest classes were kindergarten and 3rd Grade.

Table 3.1: School Enrollments in Hartford County

School District	School Enrollment (2023) ^{vii}	Population Served ⁱⁱⁱ	Housing Units Served ^{iv}	Students: Population Served	Students: Housing Units
Simsbury Public School	4,100	24,517	9,492	1:6	1:3
Farmington Public School	4,100	26,712	11,599	1:7	1:3
Windsor Public School	3,300	29,492	11,872	1:9	1:4
Avon Public School	3,100	18,932	7,777	1:6	1:3
Bloomfield Public School	2,000	21,535	9,717	1:11	1:5

Table 3.2: Simsbury Public School Enrollment by Grade (Data Source: 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)

Grade Level	2023-2024 Enrollment	Grade Level	2023-2024 Enrollment
K	275	7	338
1	302	8	296
2	332	9	324
3	295	10	310
4	333	11	321
5	318	12	338
6	322	7-12 Total	1,927
K-6 Total	2,177		

Enrollment Trends ⁱ

Compared to the 2022-2023 academic year, Simsbury Public Schools observed an increase of their student body by 40 pupils, an increase supported by recent developments in the Town which contributed roughly 51 (i.e. 145 to 196 students) additional students in 2023. Despite this, 105 fewer students are currently enrolled in the School District than originally projected, including 98 fewer elementary school pupils, for the 2023-2024 school year. Based upon this, the enrollment of school age students generated by recent developments helped to prevent a decrease in overall student enrollment for Simsbury Public Schools for the 2023-2024. Without the additional 51 students in 2023 generated by recent residential development, overall student enrollment would have likely declined.

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Based upon enrollment data from 2012 to the present day, it is plausible that recent residential development in Simsbury has played a role in recent years to stem a decline in student enrollment that the Simsbury Public School District had been consistently experiencing before 2018. Between 2012 and 2018 alone, the Simsbury Public School District witnessed a decline in their student enrollment by 483 students. This trend especially affected the elementary school enrollment of the School District, with a continual decline of elementary pupils observed between 2005 and 2016, totaling 722 students. As of 2023, the Simsbury Public School District has 521 fewer elementary school students enrolled than during the 2005-06 school year. The generation of students from residential developments between 2017 and 2023, as detailed in the School District’s 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report, is likely to have contributed to restoring some of the enrolled students that were lost over the past decade and a half.

Figure 3.1: Simsbury Student Enrollment, 2005-2023 (Data Source: Simsbury 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)

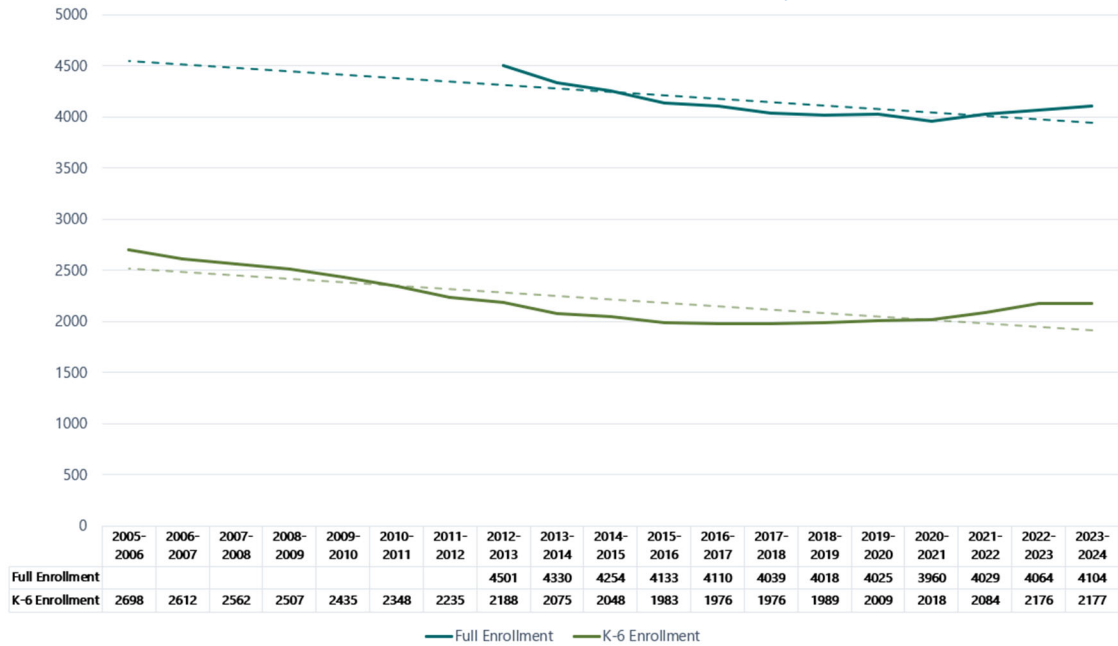


Table 3.3: Students Generated by Recent Residential Development, 2017-2023 (Data Source: Simsbury 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)

Development Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Carson Way	5	7	5	6	12	11	11
Highcroft Place/#1,2, 3	11	12	13	21	21	16	30
Mill Commons	8	12	10	7	5	2	0
Mill Pond Crossing	0	5	5	4	4	3	2
Dorset Crossing, #1	17	24	22	26	27	25	26
Cambridge Crossing	0	0	0	15	20	23	32
Kings Ridge	3	2	2	2	0	0	0
Aspen Green	13	27	27	37	40	32	44
Ridge at Talcott Mountain North	0	0	0	11	27	33	51
Total Students Generated	57	89	84	129	156	145	196
Total School District Enrollment	4,039	4,018	4,025	3,960	4,029	4,064	4,104

School Capacity and Class Size ⁱ

Compared with student enrollment levels from 2000-2009, the Simsbury Public School District has significantly fewer pupils enrolled in recent years. From 4,908 students in 2009 to 4,104 in 2023-2024, roughly 800 fewer students currently attend Simsbury Public Schools than at peak capacity. This decreased enrollment, combined with an analysis of class sizes and the expectation of alleviating capacity concerns from the completion of the Latimer Lane School Renovation project in 2024, indicate that the Simsbury Public School District has adequate resources to accommodate additional students generated from the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South project. As aforementioned, the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would be served by Henry James Memorial School (Grades 7 and 8) and Simsbury High School (Grades 9 – 12). For the elementary school level, it is assumed that the project would most likely be served by Latimer Lane School or redistricted to Central School, similar to The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North. Therefore, the below analysis of the specific enrollment and capacity of each school facility in the Simsbury Public School District places focus on these four school facilities.

Table 3.4: Student Enrollment by School Facility (Data Source: Simsbury 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)

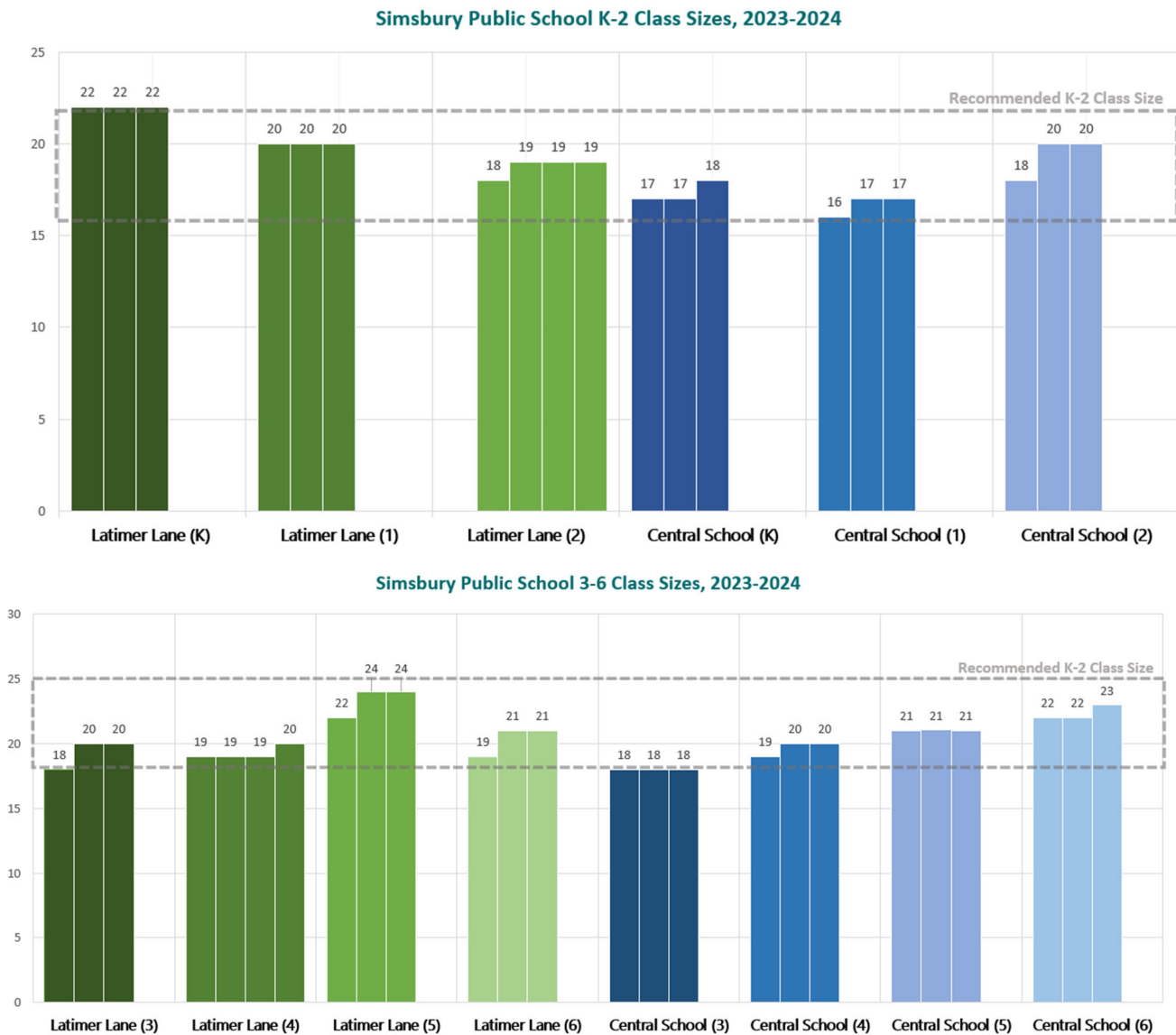
School Facility	Grade Levels	2023-2024 Enrollment
Central School	K – 6	404
Latimer Lane School	K – 6	470
Squadron Line School	Pre K - 6	655
Tariffville School	K - 6	263
Tootin’ Hills School	K – 6	385
Henry James Memorial School	7 – 8	634
Simsbury High School	9 – 12	1293
Total	-	4,104

Per the 2023-2024 Enrollment Report, dated 10/1/23, published by the Simsbury Public School District, none of the classes in any of the district’s five elementary schools exceed the recommended class size range used by the School District. The average K-2 class size for Simsbury Public Schools is 18.9 students, an increase of .01 from the previous school year, and the average Grade 3-6 class size is 20.5 students, which remains unchanged from the previous year. For Grades K-2, the recommended class size range is between 16 and 22 students, while the recommended range for Grades 3-6 is between 18 and 25 students. Four classes in the Grade 3-6 cohort were found to be below the recommended class size ranges, including two in the Tariffville School and two in the Tootin’ Hills School, meaning that there was ample capacity for students per classroom.

Of note, for Latimer Lane School, the most likely elementary school to serve The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development, each of the three kindergarten classes attending Latimer Lane had class sizes at the high end of the recommended class size range (22 students per class). All other grades were around the median of the recommended ranges. Each class size for both Central School and Latimer Lane are included below in Figure 3.2.

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Figure 3.2: Simsbury Class Sizes (K-6), 2023-2024 (Data Source: Simsbury 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)



On the middle school and high school level, more classes are below the recommended class size range than exceed it. For Grades 7 and 8 at Henry James Memorial School, 31 core classes have fewer students than the recommended range, while 10 core classes exceed the class size range. 90 core classes at Simsbury High School have fewer students than the recommended class size range, compared to just four classes that exceed the range. In other words, capacity for both Henry James Memorial School and Simsbury High School are not a concern in light of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South’s development.

School District 2023-2024 Budget^{viii}

The total 2023-2024 budget for the Simsbury Public School District, which was approved by public referendum in May 2023, is \$81,576,438, a 6.7% increase from the 2022-2023 budget. Over \$50 million of this budget or 61 percent is allocated to direct instructional-related expenses, such as salaries, textbooks and instructional supplies. Other significant expenditures include administrative costs, maintenance costs, and

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pupil transportation services (see Table 3.5). With 4,104 students enrolled in 2023-2024, the total net expenditures per student is \$19,877, a roughly 2% increase from the 2022-2023 school year.

The Simsbury Public School District Board of Education budget represents 67% of the total expenditures of the total annual expenditures for the Town of Simsbury^{ix}. To support these costs in 2023-2024, the Town of Simsbury raised \$121,948,06 in revenues, with 87% originating from local taxes.

Table 3.5: 2023-2024 Simsbury School Budget Expenditures (Data Source: Simsbury School District 2023-2024 Budget)

Budget Item	Total 2023-2024 Expenditure	% Change from 2022-2023	Percentage of 2023-2024 Budget
General Control/Administrative	\$2,451,497	+6.63%	3.00%
Instruction	\$50,024,730	+4.78%	61.32%
Health Services	\$742,608	-4.48%	.91%
Pupil Transportation Services (Contracted)	\$3,057,488	+4.4%	3.74%
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	\$6,872,797	+8.8%	8.42%
Student Body Activities	\$807,785	+6.88%	.99%
Other	\$17,619,533	-	21.60%
Total	\$81,576,438	-	100%

Table 3.6: Simsbury Public School District Net Expenditures Per Pupil (2019-2024) (Data Source: Simsbury Public Schools Historical Budgets)

Budget Year	Budget Total (A)	2023-2024 Student Enrollment (B)	Net Expenditures Per Pupil (B/A)
2023-2024	\$81,576,438	4,104	\$19,877
2022-2023	\$77,030,820	4,064	\$18,954
2021-2022	\$74,336,172	4,029	\$18,450
2020-2021	\$72,308,474	3,960	\$18,260
2019-2020	\$70,880,978	4,025	\$17,610



4

Fiscal Impact Analysis

The Fiscal Impact Analysis to determine the impact that the development known as The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South at 200 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury, CT would have on the local school district and local taxes involves three steps:

- **Calculating the Number of School Children Estimated to Be Generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South**
- **Estimate of Additional Educational Cost to Simsbury Public Schools**
- **Total Fiscal Impact on Simsbury Public Schools**

Through these steps, it is concluded that the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will generate tax revenue both to the Town of Simsbury and to the Simsbury Public School District that will exceed the costs incurred to educate the new school age children projected to move into the residential units within The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development.

School Age Children Generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South

Until a development is fully occupied, it is impossible to determine the exact number of schoolchildren that new residential units will generate. Instead, an estimate can be produced in a multitude of ways that give a broad outlook into the likely number of school children to reside in a development based on the number and type of residential units included in the development project. The first step for any methodology is to identify an appropriate multiplier which can then be multiplied by the number of units to project the number of school children generated. This Fiscal Impact Analysis explores two types of multipliers – a multiplier derived from the example of similar completed local residential developments and industry-standard residential demographic multipliers developed by Rutgers University’s Center for Urban Policy Research.

Development Comparisons

Analysis for the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South is unique due to the fact that a counterpart project on the same project site - The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North – has recently been constructed and fully occupied. In 2023-2024, The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North, with 298 occupied units, generated 51 students that attend the Simsbury Public School District¹. Based upon this, a multiplier of .17 ($298 / 51$) can be derived from this development comparison. Using a multiplier of .17, a total of 99 students would be projected to be generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development based upon this comparison. However, due to slight differences in unit mixes between the two Ridge at Talcott Mountain developments, this comparison and all of the comparisons listed in Table 4.1 can only provide a rough estimate and cannot be fully representative of the unit mix planned for The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South.

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Instead, the residential demographic multipliers developed by Rutgers University and used industry wide as standards for Fiscal Impact Analysis can much more accurately estimate the student generation based upon the specific unit mix of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development.

Table 4.1: The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South Student Generation Estimates Based on Development Comparisons (Data Source: Simsbury 2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report)

Development Comparison	Number of Occupied Units	Unit Mix	Number of School Children Generated (2023-2024)	Multiplier	School Generation Estimate (580 Units)
The Ridge at Talcott Mountain North	298	Apartments (1-2 BR) Townhomes	51	.17	100
Highcroft Place	264	Apartments (1-3 BR) Townhomes	30	.11	66
Aspen Green	169	Apartments (1-3 BR)	44	.26	151

Residential Demographic Multipliers (Rutgers University) ^x

The Residential Demographic Multipliers identify specific multipliers depending on the type of housing unit and number of bedrooms being developed. For The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South project, the 580 units will be divided among single family residences, duplexes and three- and four-story apartments. Table 4.2 itemizes the number of each type of unit that is proposed for the project.

Table 4.2: The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South Building Type and Bedroom Mix

Unit Type	Number of Units
Single Family, 3 BR	32
Single Family, 4 BR	36
Duplex, 2 BR	12
Apartment, 1 BR	216
Apartment, 2 BR	272
Total	580

As this analysis is to determine the number of public school students that will be generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development and enrolled in the Simsbury Public School District, multipliers for the generation of public school children (PSAC) can be applied to each of these unit estimates as follows:

Table 4.3: Estimate of Public School Children to be Generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South

(Data Source: Residential Demographic Multipliers (Rutgers University))

Unit Type	Number of Units	Relevant Multiplier	Students Generated
Single Family, 3 BR	32	0.59	20
Single Family, 4 BR	36	0.94	34
Duplex, 2 BR	12	0.39	10
Apartment, 1 BR	216	0.01	2
Apartment, 2 BR	272	0.11 - 0.18*	30-49
Total	580		96-115

*Residential demographic multipliers factor in unit rent amount. This multiplier assumes that apartment rents may range between \$2,050 and \$2,800+ (~\$1,300 - \$1,800+ in 2005). The multiplier could, therefore, vary depending on rent amounts of the development.

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Based upon the standard residential demographic multipliers, it is estimated that The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South project would have the potential to generate between 96 and 115 new students for enrollment at the Simsbury Public School District. It is important to recognize that these 96 – 115 students, however, would be distributed among as many as 13 grade levels (K -12) and, therefore, the overall impact on the School District would be minimized. Using the residential demographic multipliers, it is estimated that between 57% and 67% of these students would be enrolled in elementary school (K-6), with the most generated for Grades 3 – 6 (29 to 43 students total or 7 to 11 students per grade).

Table 4.4: Estimate of Public School Children to be Generated, By Grade

(Data Source: Residential Demographic Multipliers (Rutgers University))

Unit Type	Estimate of Students Generated	K-2	3-6	7-9	10-12
Single Family, 3 BR	20	6	7	4	3
Single Family, 4 BR	34	9	11	8	6
Duplex, 2 BR	10	3	3	2	2
Apartment, 1 BR	2	2	0	0	0
Apartment, 2 BR (1)	30	6	8	11	5
Total (1)	96	26	29	25	16
Apartment, 2 BR (2)	49	14	22	5	8
Total (2)	115	34	43	19	19

Per 2023-2024 class size information published by the School District, the current capacity of the Simsbury Public School and, specifically, Latimer Lane School would be able to accommodate these generated students¹. For example, the increase of between seven and eleven students in Grade 3 at Latimer Lane would be distributed among the existing three classes, which have collective space for 17 additional students before exceeding the recommended class size range. Lastly, it is important to note that these estimates for generated students would not occur at one time but be a gradual increase in student enrollment. The only grade level with potential capacity constraints, per current class sizes, for Latimer Lane School would be kindergarten. An estimated increase of roughly 2-3 students per kindergarten class would exceed the recommended range for K-2 class sizes, under current conditions. Based upon current class sizes, available capacity at Central School could accommodate The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South’s generated school age children for every grade, including kindergarten (currently available space for 14 additional students across three kindergarten classes).

It is important to note that by the time of projected full build-out in 2026, class size distribution will differ from current conditions. However, observed increases in the age 0 – 5 population for Simsbury, CT may maintain current demand levels for K-2 education in the near future. With renovations to the School District’s elementary schools, however, and available capacity in facilities like Central School, the Simsbury School District would likely be able to accommodate this demand.

Estimate of Additional Cost to Simsbury Public School

The generation of additional school children represents the potential for increased expenses for educating students. However, while the Simsbury Public School District’s cost per pupil, as aforementioned, is calculated to be \$19,877 for the 2023-2024 school year, this cost is not an accurate reflection of the additional cost that would be incurred to educate the additional students generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South. The cost to enroll a new student does not equal the traditionally calculated cost per pupil derived from the total school budget as resources that are included in this cost are already in place (i.e. teachers, maintenance,

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facility expenses, health services) and would occur regardless if these additional students were generated by new development or not. Therefore, a more accurate estimate for the actual additional cost to educate these new school children is to look specifically at the instructional expenses of the school budget. Per the 2023-2024 Simsbury Public School budget, approximately 61% of the total approved \$81,576,457 budget is allocated towards instructional cost, which is equivalent to \$50,024,730 or \$12,189 per student enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year (See Table 4.5)^{viii}.

Table 4.5: Calculation of Cost to Instruct for Simsbury Public School (2023-2024)

Metric Calculated	2023-2024 Budget	Percentage of Budget	Total Cost Divided Among Enrolled Students	2023-2024 Student Enrollment	Cost Per Pupil
Budget Expenses Per Pupil	\$81,576,457	100%	\$81,576,457	4,104	\$19,877
Instructional Costs Per Pupil	\$81,576,457	61%	\$50,024,730	4,104	\$12,189

At a total cost of \$12,189 per generated student, it is estimated that the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would add an additional \$1,170,144 - \$1,401,735 in expenses to the Simsbury Public School system based on a conservative estimate of 96-115 new project generated students.

Table 4.6: The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South's Total Estimated Cost to School System

Estimated # of Students Generated	Cost Per Student	Total Estimated Cost to School System
96	\$12,189	\$1,170,144
115	\$12,189	\$1,401,735
96	\$19,877	\$1,908,192
115	\$19,877	\$2,285,855

Total Fiscal Impact on Simsbury Public Schools

It is estimated that the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will generate an annual tax levy/income of between \$3,618,527 - \$4,018,169, per tax information provided by project developer, The Silverman Group. The low end of this range was derived by using the lump sum tax revenue generated by the Ridge at Talcott Mountain North development as a comparative example, while the high end of this range was calculated by using the average taxes per unit type (apartment, duplex and single-family residence) and multiplying this metric by the number of each type of unit proposed for the Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development.

The Town of Simsbury allocates roughly 67 percent of its general fund expenditures to education^{ix}. In total, at 67 percent, the taxes that the Town will collect from the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would provide the Simsbury Public School District between roughly \$2,424,413 and \$2,692,173 in additional revenue. At this amount, the property tax revenue that the Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Public School District will receive from the development annually will far exceed the costs for the additional school children generated that have been outlined, even in the unlikely scenario that the costs per additional student match the net expenditure per pupil amount of \$19,877. Overall, the fiscal benefits of the planned The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will far exceed the fiscal costs. At an assumed cost per student of \$12,189, the

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revenue generated by the residential development for the Simsbury Public School District will be more than double the cost of educating the students that move into this development. Overall, it is estimated that the development would generate a total fiscal benefit for the Simsbury Public School District of between \$1,022,678 to \$1,522,029.

Table 4.7: Total Fiscal Impact of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South Development

Revenue / Expense	Assumption	Total	% Allocated for Education ^{ix}	Total
Tax Revenue Collected	\$6,238.84 - \$11,957.72 Taxes Per Unit	\$3,618,527 - \$4,018,169	67%	\$2,424,413 - \$2,692,173
Cost to Instruct Generated Students	\$12,189 / Student	\$1,170,144 - \$1,401,735	-	\$1,170,144 - \$1,401,735
Total Fiscal Benefit for School District		-		\$1,022,678 to \$1,522,029

Table 4.8: Total Fiscal Benefit by Unit Type

Unit Type	Number of Units	Assumed Taxes Per Unit	Total Taxes Collected	Taxes Allocated to Education (67%)
Single Family	68	\$11,957.72	\$813,125	\$544,793
Duplexes	24	\$6,687.11	\$160,491	\$107,529
Apartments	488	\$6,238.84	\$3,044,554	\$2,039,951
Total	580	-	\$4,018,170	\$2,692,173



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Conclusion

Prior to the moment that residents start moving into a residential development, it is impossible to determine the exact number of school children that a project will generate with absolute confidence. Instead, by taking into account the existing conditions and observed trends within a community, combined with the use of informed and widely-accepted assumptions and metrics, this analysis aims to offer a glimpse into the potential impacts that The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development will pose for the Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Public School District. Through this process, this analysis concluded that the fiscal benefits that the Ridge at Talcott Mountain South will provide to the Town and School District will outweigh the costs to educate the projected 96 – 115 new students that will move into this new residential development.

Overall, the Simsbury Public School District is projected to potentially receive a \$1,022,678 to \$1,522,029 net fiscal benefit from the development of The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South, with a total of \$3,618,527 - \$4,018,169 estimated additional tax levy to be levied from the project.

Apart from the fiscal benefit, this analysis revealed that the increase in students expected to be enrolled in the Simsbury Public School District as a result of the development would not likely put the school's capacity in significant jeopardy. It is a fact that the population of Simsbury, CT is getting younger and that the population between the ages of 0 to 9 is especially growing, meaning that demand for elementary school education is growing. However, in terms of capacity, an analysis of existing class sizes combined with recent and planned improvements for Latimer Lane Elementary School and elementary schools across the School District, reveal that there would be capacity to accommodate the 96-115 children generated by The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South development as well as new students from the current 0–5-year cohort (who would be distributed among five elementary schools).

While the project site is within the service area of Latimer Lane Elementary School, an analysis of school facility capacity reveals that capacity available at Central School, especially for kindergarten, may also serve to minimize impacts on Latimer Lane, in a similar fashion to The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South's counterpart project, the Ridge at Talcott Mountain North. Having experienced a significant decline in enrollment in recent decades, The Ridge at Talcott Mountain South would be one of the many residential developments helping to contribute to a reversal of this trend and a slow return of increasing student enrollment levels that is still far below peak enrollment around in the early 2000s¹.

Sources

- ⁱ [Simsbury Public Schools \(October 2023\), "2023-2024 Enrollment/Class Size Report"](#)
- ⁱⁱ [Simsbury Town \(03/25/2022\), "Simsbury Neighborhoods Highly Ranked for Best Places to Live and Raise a Family"](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ [United States Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census and 2010 Decennial Census \(data.census.gov\)](#)
- ^{iv} [United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five Year Estimates, 2012-2016 and 2017-2021](#)
- ^v 11/27/2023 Email from Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent of Simsbury Public Schools, to George McGregor, Planning & Community Development Director of Simsbury Town, 200 Hopmeadow St Hartford South Application Referral Comments-Town of Simsbury
- ^{vi} [Latimer Lane School Reconstruction Presentation for the Board of Finance Public Hearing \(11/29/2022\)](#)
- ^{vii} [State of Connecticut, EdSight Enrollment Dashboard](#)
- ^{viii} [Simsbury Public School District, Board of Education, Historical Budgets](#)
- ^{ix} [Town of Simsbury 2023-2024 Approved Budget](#)
- ^x [Rutgers University, Center for Urban Policy Research, Residential Demographic Multipliers - Estimates of the Occupants of New Housing \(Burchell, Listokin and Dolphin, 2006\)](#)