

IX.5
Report on School Population



Village of South Blooming Grove, NY

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I. Study Purpose

The Request for Applications to Develop and Operate a Gaming Facility in New York State includes a requirement to evaluate local impact and siting factors. The purpose of this requirement is to identify and describe potential impacts that might be expected to be experienced by the community in which the casino is located and in other nearby communities. These impacts relate to the development and operation of a relatively large facility that will attract substantial numbers of patrons, visitors and employees to the area. As a result, it is necessary to examine the ability of the area's physical infrastructure and service providers to adequately handle increased demands. This information can then be utilized to identify mitigation measures appropriate to limiting possible negative effects from development of the hotel/casino complex.

In response to this requirement, VHB has prepared the following report covering Section IX.A.5. School Population.

II. Background, Qualifications and Experience

VHB is a multi-disciplinary firm employing more than 900 planners, designers, engineers, environmental scientists and support personnel in 22 offices along the East Coast. Among the firm's casino and gaming project experience is the Caesars at Suffolk Downs resort and casino in East Boston and plans for an Ameristar resort and casino in Springfield, Massachusetts. The firm recently completed transportation and site assessments on behalf of a casino operator in the New York Metropolitan area, coordinated environmental analyses and documentation for redevelopment of the Concord Resort in Sullivan County to include casino and convention space and conducted planning and environmental studies related to development of the Foxwoods Resort Casino and the Mohegan Sun Resort. Other related experience of VHB staff includes work relative to the Narragansett Casino in West Warwick, Rhode Island, the SugarHouse Casino in Philadelphia, Empire City Casino in Yonkers and several casinos in Atlantic City.

In New York State, VHB and its staff have prepared hundreds of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Typically, these documents include analyses of the costs and benefits to local municipalities of proposed developments - residential, commercial, industrial, entertainment, recreational, institutional or some combination of one or more of these uses. This entails examining the characteristics of the proposed use, identifying the demands it is expected to place on local facilities and services and comparing them with the capacity of local governments to handle possible increased demands. Where residential development is proposed, impacts on local school systems are evaluated to ascertain how the potential increase in enrollments might affect school district facilities and budgets. By its nature, the proposed hotel and casino would have specific characteristics that would affect the needs it might generate for services and facilities in the area. These characteristics have been taken into account in the analyses described below.

III. School Population

A. Relationship to Employment

Related to the issue of housing demand is the potential for any effect on those school districts that experience population growth. Analysis of local employment trends and commuting patterns, plus the applicant's experience at a similar casino, indicates that the majority of new jobs at the casino would likely be filled by current area residents. Therefore, the proposed development would generate neither substantial population growth nor substantial amounts of new school-aged children. Moreover, it is expected that employees at the hotel/casino would come from a relatively wide area, extending throughout Orange County and including portions of Sullivan, Ulster, Rockland and Dutchess Counties. This reflects current patterns of commutation within the Hudson Valley Region where people often work outside of their home counties and where journeys to work of 35 minutes or more are common. Thus, any residential growth that occurs would similarly be expected to be spread across a relatively large number of school districts rather than being concentrated in only a few.

B. Existing Conditions

Given the above, primary data from the New York State Education Department, Office of Information and Reporting Services (NYSDE) was used to analyze not only the Monroe-Woodbury School District (the district serving the site of the Live! NY Casino) but Orange County and other area schools. Several phone/email conversations were held with Jeff Schaffer from NYSDE regarding the data. NYSDE data along with US Census data and work conducted by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress reports help determine trends in the Monroe-Woodbury School District and other area school districts.

The Monroe-Woodbury School district includes the Town of Monroe, Village of Harriman, most of the Town of Woodbury and parts of the Towns of Tuxedo, Chester and Blooming Grove. Data for Monroe-Woodbury from the New York State Department of Education shows that enrollment has been declining (see Table 1) and that average class size across grades in the District, individual schools and across the County has remained steady for the last five years (Table 2: Average Class Size at the end of this report). Reviewing school enrollments reflect that the total number of students has declined the last five years from 7,459 in 2008-2009 to 7,034 in the 2012-2013 school year. In fact, in conversations with area professionals, it was felt that the district could accommodate 150-200 additional school children in the district who would come from any new households.

School Year	Enrollment
2012-2013	7,034
2011-2012	7,163
2010-2011	7,296
2009-2010	7,688
2008-2009	7,459

In addition, data from school districts in the surrounding area indicates that many have been experiencing enrollment declines. A May 2013 Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress Report entitled The Empty Classroom

Syndrome examined future enrollment projections for 114 public school districts in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties. “In 94 of the districts (82%), projections show enrollments that are either flat or in decline. Of the declining districts, half are predicted to shrink by 10% and more from their peak enrollments over the past 20 years.” For example, the most recent data on Ulster County’s School District shows that enrollments are down from a low of -2.02% in Marlboro Central District to a high of -28% in Ontereo District. Only two out of the district’s ten schools show modest increases (Highland Central and Walkill Central) at +1.98% and +4.01% respectively. These decreases do not take into account the most recent US Census estimates that show that Ulster County lost 0.8% population from 2010-2013. One could expect this trend to continue if population continues to decline. As noted in a Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress report, “According to projections through 2020, the conversation about closing schools and reorganizing districts is just beginning for many of the school districts in the Hudson Valley and New York State.”¹ Thus, to the extent that the proposed development might attract new families with school aged children to the area, they would be entering school districts where enrollments are declining and where the addition of new students is unlikely to create demand for new facilities or staff.

In Sullivan County, only 12.8% of the population is of school age according to the US Census and the median age is 41.7 with almost 30% of the population over 55 years old. This older population suggests that there may also be fewer children and, thus, excess capacity in Sullivan Country schools.

C. Property Taxes

Preliminary estimates from Beckman Appraisals, Inc. from April 2014 indicate that the Monroe-Woodbury School District (to whom school district property taxes from the casino would be paid) can expect to receive approximately \$11,000,000 annually in property taxes from the proposed development. Since the State has imposed a tax cap on property tax increases, school districts must look to new sources of revenue - such as the casino would be for the Monroe-Woodbury School District - rather than simply raising taxes.

Given the structure of school districts and taxation in New York State, districts other than Monroe-Woodbury) would not receive any of the property taxes paid by the complex. However, any new residential development that is stimulated within those districts would generate its own property tax revenues along with spin-off economic activity (i.e., new jobs, new supportive commercial development) that would positively impact local economies and tax rolls.

D. Conclusions

Based on the above, it can be concluded that:

- The number of new employees of the casino/hotel who will relocate to the area will be limited.
- To the extent that people do relocate to work at the proposed development, they will be spread over a multi-county area rather than being concentrated in the host community or those communities immediately surrounding South Blooming Grove.
- Any new school aged children will similarly be spread over a large number of school districts.

¹ Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, “The Empty Classroom Syndrome,” May 2013.

- Reflecting trends throughout the Hudson Valley, the Monroe-Woodbury School district has been experiencing declining enrollments. Thus the local district and those in the surrounding area have available capacity within their current facilities.
- The Monroe-Woodbury School District would benefit from a substantial increase in property tax revenues, well in excess of any additional costs it might incur due to the proposed development.

Table 2: Average Class Size by Select Grades

Year Data	County/District/School	Common Core	Math 8	English 8	Science 8	Social Science 8	English 10	Math 10	Science 10	Social Science 10
2009	Orange County	21	21	21	22	23	22	21	24	23
2010	Orange County	22	22	22	22	23	22	22	23	24
2011	Orange County	22	22	22	22	23	22	21	22	23
2012	Orange County	23	22	22	23	23	23	22	23	23
2013	Orange County	22	22	23	24	23	24	22	23	24
2009	Dutchess County	21	21	22	22	22	23	22	24	24
2010	Dutchess County	22	22	22	21	22	23	23	25	23
2011	Dutchess County	22	22	22	22	22	24	23	24	24
2012	Dutchess County	23	22	22	22	22	23	23	24	23
2013	Dutchess County	23	21	21	22	22	24	23	25	23
2009	Sullivan County	19	17	17	17	17	20	17	20	19
2010	Sullivan County	19	18	16	19	18	19	16	18	20
2011	Sullivan County	19	19	19	19	19	19	15	16	20
2012	Sullivan County	20	19	17	21	19	19	14	19	19
2013	Sullivan County	20	18	19	20	21	19	15	17	19
2009	Ulster County	20	21	20	20	20	22	21	21	23
2010	Ulster County	20	20	20	22	20	22	22	22	23
2011	Ulster County	21	21	20	23	21	22	21	20	23
2012	Ulster County	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	22
2013	Ulster County	22	22	21	22	22	22	21	22	21
2008	Monroe Woodbury District	24	24	25	26	26	27	25	26	27
2009	Monroe Woodbury District	23	23	26	26	26	24	24	24	26
2010	Monroe Woodbury District	23	24	24	24	24	26	25	24	24
2011	Monroe Woodbury District	23	25	24	23	25	27	24	24	26
2012	Monroe Woodbury District	23	23	23	23	24	26	26	27	26

Source: New York State Education Department, Office of Information and Reporting Services.

SOURCES:

NYS Education Department, Office of Information & Reporting Services

- DataNYSED.gov
 - Statewide Data & Reports
 - District Data

US Census, American Fact Finder

- 2000 and 2010 Census, and Census estimates , American Community Survey
 - Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics (Age, Household Types/Tenure, etc.)

Orange County Department of Planning

- A Three-County Regional Housing Needs Assessment: Orange, Dutchess and Ulster Counties, 2006 to 2020
- 2012 Building Permit Data MF, SF, 2F
- Orange County Municipal Housing and Density Characteristics, from US Census data
- Orange County Population Change 2000-2010, from US Census data
- Demographic Profile 2010
- Draft Orange County Economic Development Strategy (March 2014)

Sullivan Country Department of Planning & Environmental Management

- Building Permit Data, from Bureau of Census Construction Census Division

Ulster County Planning Department

- County Student Enrollment by District

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress

- Housing the Hudson Valley Report, September 2013
- The Empty Classroom Syndrome: A Discussion Brief on the State of School Enrollment Projections in the Hudson Valley, May 2013
- Hudson Valley School Enrollment Dilemma and Opportunities for Adaptive Reuse, March 2012

www.recordonline.com

- News article May 22, 2014 referencing US Census Data 2013