

Greens at Chester Q & A

Since the announcement of the Greens at Chester project, the Chester School District has received many inquiries regarding the financial impact this development will have on the school district. The following questions have been asked by the Chester residents.

1. What has the district done to prepare for the potential financial impact of the Greens of Chester?

The school district administration has met with representatives of the Monroe Woodbury, Washingtonville, Pine Bush and Kiryas Joel school districts. In addition, the school district has met with the developers of the Greens at Chester, the Chester Town Supervisor and the County Executive.

2. What is the district's responsibility for the education of children that attend non-public schools?

- a. As per New York State Law 3635 the school district is responsible to transport students to approved non-public schools up to fifteen (15) miles from their home.
- b. The district in which the child lives is responsible for reimbursing the school district where the non-public school is located for any mandated special education services.

3. Has the Chester School District created a short and long range cost analysis?

Yes, but any analysis at this point is hypothetical because we do not know the total number of students we will be transporting or the amount we will be reimbursing for special education costs.

4. How many school aged children are being projected for each house at the Greens at Chester?

In our discussions with the Monroe Woodbury, Washingtonville, Pine Bush and Kiryas Joel School Districts, the variable we are using is four (4) to six (6) school aged children per house. Based on this assumption, 430 units could potentially add 1,720 to 2,580 school aged children.

5. How will these assumptions impact transportation?

Currently, Chester uses nine (9) big buses to transport 980 students to Chester Academy and Chester Elementary School. Based on this same model the increased student population would mean an increase of seventeen (17) to twenty five (25) big buses.

6. Does the Chester School District receive New York State reimbursement for these transportation costs?

Yes, the Chester School District receives 61.5% of the total transportation expense from the previous school year.

7. How will this development effect special education costs?

Based on the model described in question #4 and the discussions with the other school districts, a reasonable percent of students requiring some type of special education services is around 5% of school aged children. Of this number, 4% of the school aged children would require a minimal amount of services, such as; speech therapy. The remaining 1% would require a more restrictive setting. For similar students in the district the costs can range from:

- a. Minimal services can range from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per year depending on the services.
- b. Restrictive setting can range from \$75,000 to \$150,000 and would require additional transportation services.

8. Does the Chester School District receive New York State aid to offset the special education costs?

Yes, similar to transportation aid we are reimbursed the year after the costs are incurred. The reimbursement is for costs that exceed \$37,260 per student.

9. Are there any other financial impacts to the district?

Yes, federal and state aid allocations are based on total student numbers, percent of free and reduced lunch numbers, number of English as a Second Language students and overall property values. With this increase in population we can assume that our level of aid will be changing.

10. Will the new homes at the Greens at Chester pay school taxes?

Yes, this will be based on the assessment level determined by the Town of Chester. As a reference, the average house in Chester has an assessed value of \$160,000.

11. What is the total impact on the Chester School District?

Based on 430 housing units the total impact on the Chester School District is estimated to be between \$265,000 for four (4) school aged children per household and \$1.5 million for six (6) school aged children per household. This encompasses the cost factors outlined above, less anticipated school tax revenue.

12. What is the school tax impact on the average home in Chester?

- a. Based on a \$265,000 estimate this will increase the average homes' school tax in Chester by \$92 (1.5%).
- b. Based on a \$1.5 million estimate this will increase the average homes' school tax in Chester by \$524 (9%).