

3.11 School District Services

This section discusses existing school services in the Town of Amenia, including current and projected Webutuck Central School District enrollment and school capacities. It then provides an estimate of the number of school-aged children that the project is likely to generate and describes the resulting potential impacts to school services and facilities. Mitigation measures are identified where necessary.

3.11.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed Silo Ridge Resort Community is located in the Webutuck Central School District (WCSD), which is comprised of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school, as shown below.

Table 3.11-1 Webutuck Central School District

School	Grades Served	2005 / 2006 Enrollment	Capacity	Excess Capacity
Millerton Elementary School	Pre-K and Alternative / Special Education	23	234	211
Amenia Elementary School	K to 2	193	271	78
Webutuck Elementary School	3 to 5	191	432	241
Eugene Brooks Middle School	6 to 8	199	344	145
Webutuck High School	9 to 12	296	490	194
TOTAL		902	1,771	869

Source: Information received from the WCSD District Clerk on January 9, 2006.

Capacity and Enrollment Trends

Based on information provided in the Webutuck Enrollment Forecast, the WCSD is expected to decrease in enrollment over the next 10 years. However, please note that the above-referenced report did not include consideration of the proposed Silo Ridge Resort Community. While the exact reason for the decline in student enrollment is not stated in the report, it may be attributed to a declining population in the Town of Amenia (the Town of Amenia experienced a 22% decline in population between 1990 and 2000, from 5,195 to 4,048)⁴⁰, a rise in age of the general Town population, and a decreasing average household size.⁴¹ Furthermore, the number of one-person households in Amenia grew by 25% between 1990 and

⁴⁰According to U.S. Census Bureau information obtained from the Dutchess County website, <http://www.dutchessny.gov>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

2000. Please refer to Section 3.18, “Demographics,” for additional analysis of the trends in population, age, and housing in the Town of Amenia.

With a current enrollment of 901 students and a full capacity of 1,771 students, the WCSD has an excess capacity for 870 students. However, with an anticipated decline in enrollment, the WCSD is expected to have a student population of 812 students by the 2012 / 2013 school year,⁴² resulting in an even greater projected excess capacity of 959 students. As previously stated, the projected enrollment does not include consideration for the proposed Silo Ridge Resort Community. The proposed project’s potential student generation is discussed in Section 3.11.2 below.

Expansion Plans

During the spring and summer of 2004, the WCSD Board of Education initiated the process of creating a Long Range Facilities Plan to provide a clear direction for the future of the School District. In doing so, the Board of Education gave nine public presentations and held two community feedback forums to provide community members and groups an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns. Community comments and desires were subsequently incorporated into the Board’s Long Range Facilities Plan.

As the WCSD is currently below capacity, the Plan focuses on an enhancement of educational programs and facilities, rather than an expansion of capacity. The following are guiding principles represented in the Long Range Facilities Plan⁴³:

- Desire to support excellence in education:

All facilities decisions are to be made in the context of the District’s overriding commitment to provide excellent educational opportunities for all students.

- Expanding student opportunities:

All facilities decisions are to be made in the context of providing additional opportunities for all students. It is the Board’s intention to provide opportunities that are consistent with the needs, abilities, and aspirations of all students at all levels of ability.

⁴² Based on the *Webutuck Central School District Long Range Facilities Plan*, dated June 13, 2005. See http://www.webutuckschools.org/long_range.html.

⁴³ Ibid.

- Centralizing the District's core educational program:

The Board of Education supports the consolidation of core educational programs and related support services on a central campus.

- Maintaining all District properties in excellent condition:

A strong and effective maintenance program is necessary to protect taxpayer investments in school facilities.

- Serving as an important community center:

It is the Board's intention to increase the usefulness and use of District facilities by taxpayers at times when facilities are not needed for core educational purposes and activities. In furthering this intent, school facilities will serve as an important emergency center for neighboring communities, as a center for arts, sports, recreation, family and senior citizen programs, and as a center for continuing education programs.

Specific measures intended to advance these goals include the potential for a grade level reconfiguration to best meet the education needs of all students, the creation of a central campus on WCSD properties along Haight Road in Amenia, an upgrade to the District's athletic fields and facilities, and a review of the WCSD's Vocational-Agriculture program to address long-term educational needs.⁴⁴

Existing School Transportation Routes

The WCSD currently operates and maintains 21 buses, with a total capacity of 1,387 students. There are currently 1,022 children that utilize the School District's transportation resources, including public, private, special needs, and BOCES students, leaving an excess capacity for approximately 365 students. Existing WCSD bus routes service the residential areas adjacent to the project site, including those along US Route 44, NYS Route 22, and Lake Amenia Road.

The buses operate during AM and PM schedules and serve to accommodate the varying grade levels and needs of the student population. Peak levels of transportation generally occur in the morning between 6:30 AM and 8:30 AM and in the afternoon between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM.⁴⁵ There is no mid-day bus schedule, as kindergarten students attend Amenia Elementary School for a full school day.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Based on the *Webutuck Central School District Long Range Facilities Plan*, dated June 13, 2005. See http://www.webutuckschools.org/long_range.html.

⁴⁵ Based on correspondence received from the WCSD District Clerk dated January 9, 2006.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

3.11.2 Potential Impacts

The evaluation of the proposed project’s potential impacts to school district resources is based on a conservative, worst-case scenario involving year-round occupancy of all proposed homes at the Silo Ridge Resort Community; however, as previously described, the proposed development is being marketed as a second-home resort community and would therefore generate fewer school children than are typically generated by townhomes and/or single-family homes.

At full build-out, the proposed project could introduce up to approximately 128 public school-age children (see Table 3.11-2). While the demographic multipliers are specific to school-aged children attending public schools, the percentage of school-age children attending public school typically varies according to age, housing type, and area of residence. Given the nature of the proposed development, there could be a higher-than-usual number of children enrolling at private schools. Nevertheless, the project’s potential impacts to school services are based on the conservative assumption that all 128 children would attend WCSD schools. The information presented below was determined according to demographic multipliers for new housing in New York State.

Table 3.11-2 Maximum Estimated Public School Children Generated by the Proposed Action

Housing Type	Maximum Number of Units Proposed	Demographic Multiplier	Maximum Estimated Number of Public School Children at Full Build Out
4 Bedroom Single-family	41	0.87	36
3 Bedroom Townhouse	328	0.28	92
TOTAL			128
Source: Burchell, Robert W., Listoken, David, et al. Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research, Residential Demographic Multipliers - Estimates of Occupants of New Housing (New York State), June 2006. [Multipliers for public school-aged children were used.]			

The introduction of the maximum 128 additional students from the proposed project would bring the total School District enrollment to 1,029 students. Even with the additional 128 students, the School District will still maintain an excess capacity of 742 students. Again, it should be stressed that the estimate of project-generated school children is highly conservative and in all likelihood, the actual number of students enrolled in the WCSD will be considerably less than the projections provided here.

Table 3.11-3 Projected Enrollment with Silo Ridge Resort Community

WCSD Enrollment*	WCSD Capacity*	Estimated Public School Children Generation from Silo Ridge	Enrollment with school children from Silo Ridge	Excess Student Capacity
901	1,771	128	1,029	742

*Based on correspondence received from the WCSD District Clerk dated January 9, 2006.

Buses

The introduction of up to an additional 128 public and private school students from the proposed project that may utilize the School District’s transportation resources will bring the total utilization to 1,150 students. Even with these additional students, the School District’s bus service will still maintain an excess capacity of 237 students.⁴⁷

Potential Fiscal Impact

The proposed project is expected to introduce a conservative estimate of 128 students to the WCSD, which would require an additional \$1,365,250 in revenues to meet the cost of these additional students. Please refer to section 3.17, “Fiscal Resources” for additional analysis of projected costs and revenues associated with the Silo Ridge Resort Community. As shown in Table 3.11-4 below, the proposed project will provide approximately \$3,505,660 in school tax payments, which will more than offset the operational cost of the project-generated students.

Table 3.11-4 Projected School District Tax Revenues

WCSD 2006 Tax Rate*	Current Taxes	Projected Taxes	Increase in Taxes
\$19.37	\$112,061	\$3,505,663	\$3,393,602

* Refer to Section 3.17, “Fiscal Resources,” for more information.

3.11.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures

The cost of educating the 128 additional students will require the School District to receive an additional \$1,365,250 in property tax revenues to meet this cost (see Section 3.17 for more detail). As outlined in Table 3.11-4, the Silo Ridge Resort Community is expected to pay a total of approximately \$3,505,663 in annual tax revenues to the WCSD. Thus, based on the cost projections outlined above, the proposed project will result in a net surplus of approximately \$2,140,400 annually to the WCSD.

⁴⁷ Information received from the WCSD District Clerk on January 9, 2006.

Buses

It is anticipated that the existing resources of the WCSD Transportation Department would be able to accommodate the additional school children from this proposed project. In addition, the proposed development will be constructed in accordance with applicable local, State, and federal regulations to ensure safe and adequate site access. The Applicant will coordinate with the WCSD to ensure safe locations for busses to pick up and drop off children within the new development.

As the proposed project will not significantly affect School District transportation resources or capacity, no mitigation measures are necessary.