



**CRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

*Achieving Excellence*

# **Potential Impact of the 750 Walnut Avenue Development on the Cranford Public Schools**

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## Potential Impact of 750 Walnut Avenue Development

There is currently a proposal to go before the Cranford Planning Board for a major housing development to be built at 750 Walnut Avenue. This development will comprise 905 rental apartments to be built in two phases. Of these 905 units 776 will be market rate and 139 designated as affordable. To the best of our knowledge none of these units will be designated as age-restricted.

Based upon the current attendance zones the impacted schools would be Walnut, Livingston and Hillside. Table 1 shows the potential number of school-aged children who would impact these three schools based upon current attendance zones.

**Table 1: Phase 1 and 2 Potential School- Aged Children**

<b>750 Walnut Avenue Phase 1</b>									
	0.09	0.58		0.09	0.75	1.05		Total Units	Total Students
	Market Rate			Affordable Units				Phase 1	Phase 1
Bedrooms	1 BR	2 BR	Total	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	Total		
Units	210	155	365	14	40	14	68	433	
Students	19	90	109	1	30	15	46		155
<b>750 Walnut Avenue Phase 2</b>									
	0.09	0.58		0.09	0.75	1.05		Total Units	Total Students
	Market Rate			Affordable Units				Phase 2	Phase 2
Bedrooms	1 BR	2 BR	Total	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	Total Units		
Units	170	231	401	14	42	15	71	472	
Students	15	134	149	1	32	16	49		198

Table 1 shows the potential impact of this development on the schools. We estimate that by the time that these units are completed there is the potential for 353 school aged children to be added to the Cranford Schools. On average this is a yield of approximately 39% in total. It is our understanding that there has also been a projection of approximately 136 school aged children. The projection of 136 school aged children (approximately a 15.35% yield on average) was based upon the use of what has commonly been referred to as the Rutgers Study.<sup>1</sup>

The Rutgers Study has long been held as the "gold standard" for projecting school aged children based upon different types of housing units. In the past few years we have refrained from using this study because it was written in 2006 and that was based upon data collected prior to 2006. Not only has 12 years transpired since that study was done but a number of events, including the collapse of the housing market, changes in the rules governing affordable units and changing economic trends have impacted the validity of the study. Further, about two years ago in speaking with the author of the study we learned that it has not been updated nor is there any plan to update the study. About five years ago our company made the decision to not use this

<sup>1</sup> "Who Lives in New Jersey," Rutgers Center for Urban Studies, David Listokin, 2006

study in projecting school aged children but to use community based data, or data based upon Districts with similar DFG's. For Cranford we looked at the impact of similar types of units in Monroe Township (Middlesex County), Ridgewood, Summit, Westfield and Fair Lawn. These are all Districts that we have provided multiple projection reports to and have found our results, based upon the parameters we used to be within an acceptable range over time (approximately 3% +/- over five years).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2: Distribution of Students by Grade Level**

School Aged Children by Grade Level			
K-5	6-8	9-12	Total
0.7	0.2	0.1	
247	71	35	353

Table 2 shows the projected distribution by grade level. This is based upon a 70:20:10 ratio between lower, middle and upper grades. It is based upon our experience working with more than 125 New Jersey school districts during the past 22 years.

**School Impact**

**Table 3: Summary of Enrollment Changes (Potentially Impacted Schools)**

Enrollment Changes 2017-18 through 2022-23				
	2017-18	2022-23	Change	Av Cl Sz
District	3943	3935	-8	
Hillside	714	712	-2	24
Livingston	260	292	32	22
Walnut	320	322	2	23

Table 3 shows the enrollment projections for the potentially impacted schools. This table shows the normal cohort survival growth at each of the schools in the area where 750 Walnut Avenue Development is to be built. It is also important to note that the across the board average class sizes are at the high end of where the District would like to be.

It is clear that the District would have major issues in absorbing even the 136 students projected (which in our opinion is extremely low based upon 905 units) much less 353 students. Clearly this level of students would require both construction (possibly a new school building) and a major shift in the current attendance zones. It is extremely important that the Planning Board and the Board of Education fully understand the potential impact on the schools.

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<sup>2</sup> There are a number of variables which impact accuracy. There are cases where approval are given by planning boards but for whatever reason the developments are never built.