

### **BOROUGH OF CLIFTON HEIGHTS – IMPACT STATEMENT**

Upper Darby School District 217 North Springfield Road Clifton Heights PA, 19018



Submitted To:

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#### SECTION 1: IMPACT STATEMENT

The Upper Darby School District (UDSD) hereby submits this Impact Statement for the development project to improve existing school facilities and alleviate overcrowding in the two existing middle schools in Upper Darby School District.

#### SECTION 2: MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis was not performed for this project since this project does not involve commercial or industrial use.

#### SECTION 3: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

#### A. ENCROACHMENT MAP

As required by the Environmental Impact Analysis an Encroachment Map has been included as Appendix 1. This Exhibit includes a Natural Features Plan and a Disturbance Plan.

The EIS Natural Features Plan clearly shows the locations of trees on the existing property and areas on the property that are in excess of 8% slope, as required. There are no floodplain and floodway areas, no wetlands, no rock outcroppings and no swales or gullies on the existing property.

The EIS Disturbance Plan shows the proposed development of the subject property with the above Natural Features overlain.

#### B. GEOLOGICAL, TOPOGRAPHICAL, SOIL AND HYDROLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### **Topography/Regional Drainage**

The subject property is located on the Lansdowne, Pennsylvania 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle at an approximate elevation of 219 feet above mean sea level. Surface water on the subject property is expected to percolate into pervious surfaces throughout the subject property and also drain into storm drains located within the surrounding streets. Regionally, the area is drained by Darby Creek, which is located approximately 0.19 miles to the northwest of the subject property.

#### Soils

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's publication of the Web Soil Survey, published by the United States Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), the soils present on the subject property consist primarily of Made Land schist and gneiss materials (Me) and Made Land silt and clay (Mc). A Soil Map is included with this Impact Statement as Appendix 2. Made Land consists of areas in which the profile of the normal soil has been destroyed or covered by other materials or has been moved about or removed to provide materials for urban or industrial development. The soils on the subject property are the result

of altering and mixing soils which have been formed from weathered schist and gneiss materials. These soils tend to be highly variable and irregular, consisting of a mixture of grayish brown material from the surface layer, silt loam from the subsoil, and partially weathered micaceous schist and gneiss rocks. These soils are strongly acid with medium to low natural fertility and medium moisture capacity and runoff.

#### **Geology/Underlying Formation**

Based upon review of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ("DCNR"), Bureau of Topographic and Geological Survey's Physiographic Provinces of Pennsylvania map, the subject property lies within the Piedmont Upland Section of the Piedmont Physiographic Province. The Piedmont Upland Section consists of broad, gently rolling hills and valleys. Views from uplands often give the viewer the impression that the uplands comprise the remnants of a once continuous sloping surface that is now dissected by the valleys eroded into it. Most of the uplands have unconsolidated material which has been deposited as part of fluvial processes above the bedrock formation beneath the surface. This upland area is developed mainly on metamorphic rocks called schists. These rocks usually have a very well-developed plane (schistocity) that was formed during metamorphism. This plane dips at moderately steep angles to the south and stream erosion is often either parallel to or normal to the plane of schistocity. In some places the drainage pattern has a very pronounced rectangular orientation, but for the most part the drainage pattern is dendritic. Local relief is generally less than 300 feet, but it can be as much as 600 feet. Elevations in the section range from 100 to 1,220 feet, but are generally between 400 and 600 feet.

#### **Pennsauken Formation**

The Pennsauken Formation overlies the Bridgeton Formation. It consists of yellow to dark reddish-brown cemented and extensively crossbedded feldspathic quartz sand. Coarse gravel is interbedded throughout the formation with boulders (up to five feet in diameter) a common occurrence. Its maximum thickness is approximately 30 feet. This formation is crudely fractured with widely spaced, vertical breaks. The Pennsauken Formation provides good surface drainage with high porosity and permeability. The formation is generally an important source of groundwater and yields as much as 7,000 gal/min.

#### **Bridgeton Formation**

The Bridgton Formation occurs as remnants of a terrace at an altitude of between 10 and 175 feet above sea level. It is composed of extensively crossbedded reddish brown stained clayey felspathic sand, below which is yellow or white and irregularly stained reddish brown zones. Locally, beds of gravel (vein quartz, chert, and quartzite) are present. The formation is approximately 30 feet thick, well bedded, deeply weathered, with no fracturing apparent. The formation has high porosity and medium permeability, with good surface drainage. Groundwater production varies based upon location within the formation; values between 2 and 1,200 gallons per minute have been reported.

#### **Bryn Mawr Formation**

The Bryn Mawr formation is typically comprised of white, yellow, and brown gravel and sand. It is reddish-brown locally and contains some silt. The maximum thickness of the formation is reported to be 20 feet. The formation is moderately bedded and deeply weathered, with no apparent fracturing. The Bryn Mawr formation has good surface drainage with moderate to high porosity and permeability. The average groundwater yield from this formation is 50 gallons per minute.

Review of the Geologic map of Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Geological Survey indicates that the bedrock beneath the site is mapped as the Wissahickon Formation. The Wissahickon Formation is a crystalline metamorphic rock with four members consisting of albite-chlorite schist, oligiclase-mica schist, mica-chlorite-quartzite schist, and metavolcanics. The Wissahickon Schist has a fissile to thin, steeply dipping foliation. Cleavage is present, highly abundant, and has a platy pattern. Joints are irregular, poorly-formed, widely spaced and steeply dipping. The joints and cleavage provide a low secondary porosity.

#### Groundwater

Based on review of the topography of the site, groundwater is expected to flow to the northeast toward the Darby Creek, or to the south-southeast toward a tributary of the Darby Creek. Depth to water may be up to 40 feet below grade and the groundwater flow direction will be variable if groundwater flows within the bedrock beneath the site.

#### Water Migratory Pathways

Potential migratory pathways for surface water and groundwater entering and exiting the subject property are important in establishing the potential for surrounding areas to impact the subject property or for the subject property to impact neighboring properties that are downgradient. Local topography slopes to the east/southeast. Surface water and groundwater, therefore, are expected to migrate from the properties located to the west/northwest. Storm drainage and surface water flow into storm drains located along the streets bordering the subject property, which connect to the Clifton Heights Borough storm sewer system.

#### C. BIOLOGICAL, VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

The 14.3-acre subject parcel currently exists as athletic fields and park area and is vegetated with grass and clover. Several oak and hemlock trees are located along the northern side of North Springfield Road and in the area of the playground. A review of A Natural Heritage Inventory of Delaware County, Pennsylvania determine that the subject parcel is not a Natural Heritage Area. Natural Heritage Areas are habitats that contain plant or animal species considered rare, threatened or endangered at state or federal levels.

Due to the size of the subject parcel and its location within a suburban development, and associated human disturbance, wildlife diversity is low. A formal wildlife survey was not completed by Pennoni; however, based on our knowledge of the subject parcel it is expected that wildlife would include gray squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis), raccoon (Procyon lotor), red fox (Vulpes Vulpes), striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis), as well as other generalists species of

mammals. The subject parcel would be expected to be a habitat for many common birds and as a resting stop for migratory birds traveling along the Atlantic Flyway.

A review of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) indicates that no wetlands are present on the subject parcel. A review of the USFWS Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) indicated that subject parcel is not a Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Hazard Map, the subject parcel is not located within a flood plain. A Biological Resources Map is included with this Impact Statement as Appendix 3.

#### **References:**

- A Natural Heritage Inventory of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, June 2011, Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program
- Common Trees of Pennsylvania, Online edition, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry: http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr 20029752.pdf
- Wetlands Online Mapper website published by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Available on-line at: <u>http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/wtlnds/launch.html</u>

#### D. HISTORIC RESOURCES

The subject parcel was improved with two residential dwellings and two farm barns as early as 1922 according to historic Sanborn maps. The eastern portion of the parcel was improved with athletic fields around 1945, as determined by aerial photographs. The two dwellings were present on the subject parcel until approximately 1965, when the remaining portion of the parcel was improved with two baseball fields and park area. A review of the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places did not identify any historic resources on the subject parcel.

#### E. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE DISCUSSION

A review of a Radius Map Report obtained from Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) of Shelton, Connecticut and a review of regulatory agency files and records, including records maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), determined that no hazardous waste sites are located on the subject parcel.

#### F. VISUAL RESOURCES DISCUSSION

This section describes the applicable existing visual conditions and resources on the subject property area. This discussion focuses on the visual resources of the subject property and the adjacent neighborhood.

Visual resources include scenic areas, vistas or thoroughfares and locations that provide naturalappearing or aesthetically pleasing places or views. This includes natural views such as shorelines, seascapes, cliffs and man-made views such as unique buildings, landscaping, parks, and other types of cultural features. Typically, visual resource descriptions focus on those that are recognized as highly valued. For instance, they may be specific places, vistas, and scenic overlooks identified by a visitor's association. Views are generally composed of, and often described in terms of foreground, middle-ground and background depending on the site.

The current use of the subject property is an open space. The area contains a track, sports fields, indigenous trees and man-made structures. There are currently no high value visual resources associated with the subject property.

A photo log of the site is included with this Impact Statement as Appendix 4. This photo log was recorded on March 21, 2019 as part of a Phase I investigation of the subject property. This photo log serves to preserve the existing visual resources of the site and each photo is described in the photo log.

#### G. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The Environmental Impacts due to the proposed development are minimal. For this project, as discussed throughout this Environmental Impact Analysis, the subject property is not a National Heritage Site, does not contain wetlands, is not located within a Floodplain, does not contain a Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species and does not contain historic resources that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since the proposed development will not affect any of these resources, mitigation is not required.

In addition, the Visual Resources that are being affected by the proposed development are resources that are not typically considered high value. No shorelines, seascapes, cliffs, unique buildings and other types of significant cultural features are being affected. The subject property after the proposed development is completed, will be returned largely to the current state. There will be landscape improvements to the property and ball fields will be rebuilt and available for use, viewing and enjoyment by the community.

Finally, the proposed development will adhere to applicable local, state and federal Environmental rules and regulations. The project team will evaluate the project scope and ensure that required permits are obtained and will comply with terms and conditions thereof.

#### SECTION 4: TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY

See Appendix 5 – Traffic Impact Study (Submitted under separate cover)

#### SECTION 5: COMMUNITY AND FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This report evaluates the Community and Fiscal Impact of Upper Darby School District's proposed Clifton Heights Middle School project. The analysis includes the following information:

A. An analysis of the social and demographic characteristics of the proposed development in terms of future residents and users

- B. An analysis of the potential cost/benefits of the development, including a profile of any possible Borough, county and/or school district revenues which the proposal may generate and any respective costs which it may create
- C. An analysis of the proposed impact of the development on the community's facilities, including schools, parks and recreation areas, libraries, hospitals, fire protection and ambulance and rescue services. In the case of parks and recreational needs, the analysis should explain how these needs will be met on site.
- D. Identification of the utility needs of the future residents and users of the site, including water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage and electric transmissions. The analysis should discuss:
  - 1) The ability of existing utility installations to meet the projected needs of the development:
  - 2) The need for additional or expanded utility installations:
  - 3) The ability to achieve an adequate system for storm drainage and stormwater management

This report is based on the most complete and up to date information available to EConsult Solutions Inc. (ESI) from UDSD and other sources as of the date of publication and within the time frame provided for analysis. Supplemental information and/or refinements in project details could impact the calculations and estimated potential impacts identified and delineated in this report.

In addition, ESI has not had the opportunity to independently verify the representations attributed to various jurisdictions over the course of this analysis. Our analysis contains and uses information provided by the Upper Darby School District and other parties We have reviewed this information for reasonableness but have not independently evaluated the data and project alternatives reviewed by the UDSD.

#### Background

#### 1.1 Clifton Heights Middle School

Upper Darby School District currently has two middle school locations. Beverly Hills Middle School, located at 1400 Garrett Road in Upper Darby in the northeast portion of the district, has a current enrollment of more than 1,500 students. Drexel Hill Middle School, located at 3001 State Road in Drexel Hill (Upper Darby Township) in the northern portion of the district, has a current enrollment of nearly 1,400 students. Students from the elementary schools serving Clifton Heights Borough go on to attend Drexel Hill Middle School. Each of these middle school facilities is several decades old.

The School District reports that current conditions are overcrowded at both schools, with large class sizes and classrooms housed in basements and other inappropriate locations.<sup>1</sup> Currently more than 100 middle school classes are running with more than 30 students. Further, middle school (grades 6-8) enrollment in the District is projected to increase from 2,920 in the 2017-18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See: "Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed New Middle School in Clifton Heights," Question 1. Upper Darby School District, Updated March 5, 2019. (Referred to in this document as "Project FAQ".)

school year to 3,150 in the year 2024-2025, part of a projected overall increase of 600-700 students across the district in all grades.

In 2016, the Upper Darby Board of School Directors created a Facilities Committee charged with improving current facilities and infrastructure in accordance with education specifications and class size planning guidelines, developing a capital improvement and facilities plan, and investigating and developing a plan to have all District schools located within current school district boundaries.<sup>2</sup> The facilities committee identified middle school enrollment needs as the District's most pressing facilities issue, and provided the Board in April 2018 with 40 different scenarios to address this issue.<sup>3</sup> From these scenarios, the Board agreed to move forward with costing out a new middle school of at least 500 students to accommodate growth and relieve the overcrowding of the existing facilities.

In November 2018, the School Board approved a resolution to hire KCBA Architects to determine the viability and cost of building a new middle school in Clifton Heights Borough. The study evaluated a 14.3 acre property owned by the School District and currently leased back to the Borough for \$1 per year for use as athletic fields and park space. In February 2019, KCBA and the school district administration presented preliminary plans for the site, which could accommodate 750-950 students along with various potential configurations of fields and athletic space.<sup>4</sup> Preliminary construction costs estimates for the project were reported at \$57.9 million for approximately 148,000 square feet of facility space to accommodate 750 students and \$64.7 million for approximately 166,500 square feet of facility space to accommodate 950 students.<sup>5</sup>

The plan envisions a rebalancing of middle school enrollment among the existing and new facilities. Under the larger capacity plan, enrollment would be reduced by around 500 students at Beverly Hills Middle School and more than 400 students at Drexel Hill Middle School (see Figure 1).

#### Figure 1: Projected Middle School Enrollment with Clifton Heights Middle School

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See: Upper Darby School District Facilities Study: <

https://www.upperdarbysd.org/domain/1574>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See: Upper Darby School District Middle School Presentation, April 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Note that these plans have continued to be refined, and this analysis relies on the most recent versions available as of May 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See: "Middle School Feasibility Study Presentation" Upper Darby School District, February 13, 2019.



Source: Upper Darby School District, February 2019

This reduction would be achieved by adjusting catchment areas for elementary schools feeding into the respective middle schools (as part of a broader package of proposed elementary school changes). While precise assignments have not been determined, areas in the southern portion of the school district (including Clifton Heights) served by Primos Elementary School and Westbrook Park Elementary School would be expected to be assigned to the new Clifton Heights Middle School. The school is envisioned to be open in August 2022.

We understand that the Clifton Heights Middle School is one potential component of what may be a much larger capital program. This impact study examines the proposed Clifton Heights Middle School as a stand-alone project, though some of the impacts might change if the collection of schools in the UDSD changes.

#### A. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

## A.1. Statistical Profile of Clifton Heights Borough, Upper Darby School District and Delaware County

Delaware County is a County of the third-class located in southeastern Pennsylvania. The County has a population of more than 563,000 as of 2017. Adopted General Fund expenditures for the Delaware County government for 2019 are \$355 million.

Upper Darby School District serves the residents of Upper Darby Township, Clifton Heights Borough and Millbourne Borough within Delaware County. The population of this area totals more than 90,000 as of 2017. Upper Darby is one of the largest school districts in Pennsylvania, with more than 12,600 students and a staff of approximately 1,760 administrators, teachers, professional staff, and support personnel. Adopted operating expenditures for Upper Darby School District for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 are \$213 million.

Clifton Heights Borough is located in Delaware County and served by Upper Darby School District. The Borough is situated on 0.63 square miles and has a population of more than 6,600 as of 2017. General Fund expenditures for the Clifton Heights Borough government were \$3.6 million in 2017.<sup>6</sup>

Figure A.1 on the following page provides a statistical summary of the total population, age distribution, income, home value and housing type for each jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup>

|                                  |                 | Upper Darby      | Clifton Heights |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Year                             | Delaware County | School District  | Borough         |
| Population                       | 563,384         | 90,934           | 6,688           |
| Children Under 5 (%)             | 6%              | 8%               | 10%             |
| Children 5-9 (%)                 | 6%              | 6%               | 5%              |
| Children 10-14 (%)               | 6%              | 6%               | 8%              |
| Children 15-19 (%)               | 7%              | 6%               | 2%              |
| Children (Total Under 20)        | 25%             | 26%              | 24%             |
| Working Age (20-64)              | 59%             | 63%              | 65%             |
| Elderly (65+)                    | 15%             | 11%              | 11%             |
| Number of Households             | 204,870         | 33,239           | 2,582           |
| Median Household Income          | \$69,839        | n/a <sup>8</sup> | \$45,726        |
| Mean Household Income            | \$97,523        | \$69,158         | \$61,562        |
| Median Owner Occupied Home Value | \$235,200       | n/a              | \$130,900       |
| Mean Owner Occupied Home Value   | \$285,411       | \$167,122        | \$140,065       |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units     | 70%             | 56%              | 61%             |
| Renter Occupied Housing Units    | 30%             | 44%              | 39%             |

#### Figure A.1: Statistical Summary

Source: 5 Year American Community Survey, 2013-2017

The project does not have direct implications on the residential demographic makeup of the County, School District or Borough in the short-term, as it reassigns existing students to different schools than they otherwise would attend. Over the long-term, the quality and boundaries of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As described in Section B.1, ESI has been unable to obtain the Borough's 2019 approved budget, and therefore relies on the Borough's publicly available 2017 Municipal Annual Audit and Financial Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Note that while each of these jurisdictions has a distinct tax base and distinct responsibilities for public service provision, the smaller jurisdictions are wholly contained geographically within the larger jurisdictions. Accordingly, the population and demographic characteristics of Clifton Heights Borough are fully contained within the population and demographic information for Upper Darby School District, and the population and demographic information for Upper Darby School District is fully contained within the population and demographic information for Delaware County.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Upper Darby School District is computed as the sum of ACS data for Upper Darby Township, Clifton Heights Borough, and Millbourne Borough. Due to the statistical properties of the median, it is not possible to combine median values for each of these jurisdictions into a single School District median given available ACS data.

educational options may impact the mix of residents within each jurisdiction through the normal functioning of housing markets and consumer choice.

## B. POTENTIAL PUBLIC COSTS AND BENEFITS TO THE BOROUGH, SCHOOL DISTRICT AND COUNTY

Fiscal impact studies of the public costs and benefits of a capital project such as Clifton Heights Middle School seek to identify categories of public revenues and expenditures that may be impacted by the project. These studies are a standard way to understand the potential fiscal impacts to various government jurisdictions. Importantly, these impacts may vary between jurisdiction for the same project, since jurisdictions have distinct tax bases and are responsible for different layers of public services. This study considers fiscal impacts to Clifton Heights Borough, Upper Darby School District and Delaware County. It does not consider impacts on other potentially impacted jurisdictions (such as Upper Darby Township and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania).

An important consideration in defining fiscal impact is the "counterfactual," or baseline against which the impact of the project in question is measured. Typically, the "counterfactual" assumes that if the project does not proceed, the nature of the site and community will remain unchanged, and accordingly public sector impacts should be measured relative to current revenues and expenditures. In addition to this "steady state" baseline, it is also relevant in this context to consider the possibility that the School District will address the issue of Middle School enrollment in another manner (whether through development of a new Middle School at an alternative site or expansion of one of the existing Middle Schools), each of which would have a different set of fiscal implications. However, it is outside the scope of this analysis to consider the full implications of all potential alternatives.

This section considers, in turn i) fiscal implications for Clifton Heights Borough, ii) fiscal implications for Upper Darby School District, and iii) property value impacts, which are relevant to the tax base of Clifton Heights Borough, Upper Darby School District, and Delaware County. Apart from property value impacts and their related impact on property and transfer taxes, there are not major impacts to Delaware County beyond the impacts to the Borough and the School District.

#### B.1. Borough Revenues and Public Service Costs

Clifton Heights Middle School would have potential impacts on the tax base of Clifton Heights Borough, and on its public service needs. Accordingly, the project could have both revenue and expenditure implications for the Borough.

Assessing the incremental fiscal impact of a project on a government entity requires an understanding of its public service model and cost structure. Public service provision typically has some portion of fixed costs that are required to deliver the service at all but are not necessarily sensitive to the level of demand, and then some portion of variable costs that are dependent on the level of service needs. The fiscal impact of a project that changes service demand depends largely on the level and nature of these variable costs, which in turn depend on the service delivery structure and the manner in which the incremental demand would be addressed.

Detailed current budget information from Clifton Heights Borough was not available. As a result, budget information used in this analysis is drawn from the Borough's 2017 municipal annual audit and financial report, which was the most recent year publicly reported to and available from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development.<sup>9</sup> This document, along with other publicly accessible information, provides an order of magnitude understanding of the major revenue sources and cost categories for the Borough as of a recent year. However, it does not provide any detail on the nature of these costs, providing, for example, only a single total figure for police expenditures. The absence of this granular detail greatly limits ESI's ability to assess with any precision the potential incremental service costs to the Borough associated with the Clifton Heights Middle School project.

According to the Borough's 2017 audited budget, revenues and expenditures through the Borough's general fund and special revenues funds were around \$3.8 million.<sup>10</sup> The largest revenue source, real estate taxes, raised \$3.1 million. The Borough also collected \$166,600 in business tax, \$91,500 in real estate transfer tax, and \$66,500 in Local Services Tax.

Major expenditures categories out of the general fund and special revenue fund include public safety (including police and fire services), public works (including sanitation and highways and street), general government operations, and debt service on prior borrowing. The Borough's largest expenditure is police, which had a budget of \$2.1 million in 2017, representing more than 60% of general fund expenditures.

#### **Revenue Implications**

Most directly, additional employees working at the site would result in additional Local Services Tax (LST) collection for the Borough. The LST is levied at \$52 per employee working in the Borough per year. Data from Upper Darby School District indicates that the typical student to employee ratio for school sites is roughly 10:1.<sup>11</sup> If enrollment at Clifton Heights Middle School reaches 950 students, this ratio would suggest 90-100 employees at the site, resulting in annual LST revenues of around \$5,000 for the Borough.

In addition, the school could have impacts on property values within the Borough, which would impact the tax base for both the real estate tax (to the extent that market value changes are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See: "2017 Municipal Annual Audit and Financial Report, Clifton Heights Borough, Delaware County." Retrieved from Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development, Municipal Statistics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;http://munstats.pa.gov/Reports/ReportInformation2.aspx?report=mAfrForm>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In addition, the Borough operates enterprise funds for services like waste water and solid waste collection, which are self-sustaining through fees for services, and undertakes periodic capital projects, leading to debt service to repay capital borrowing. Inclusive of these inflows and outflows, Borough revenues for 2017 totaled \$7.9 million.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Based on the Upper Darby School District staff directory, Drexel Hill Middle School and Beverly Hills Middle School have approximately 270 staff members for a combined 2,800 students, yielding a ratio of roughly 10:1.

reflected in assessed values) and the real estate transfer tax, which is based on sales volume and price. The potential property value impacts of the project are discussed in detail in Section B.3.

#### **Cost Implications**

The presence of a new school facility within the Borough can also create additional demand within the Borough for services like public safety and road infrastructure, increasing the cost of service provision to the Borough.

Most material from a cost perspective is police, given its status as the largest cost driver for the Borough. Upper Darby School District provides security for its schools and would do so at Clifton Heights Middle School.<sup>12</sup> Local law enforcement also responds to certain incidents and provides supplemental assistance.

Upper Darby School District has existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the police departments of the jurisdictions in which it operates, including an existing agreement with the Borough of Clifton Heights Police Department. The MOUs establish procedures in response to certain incidents that may occur on school property, which include notifying the law enforcement authority with jurisdiction following those incidents.<sup>13</sup> For example, data provided by the District indicates that, between September 2018 and March 2019, the Upper Darby and Clifton Heights Police Departments at Drexel Hill Middle School.

The School District is not requesting any increase in the Clifton Heights Police Department, and has stated that it will work with Borough officials on potential police needs and services.<sup>14</sup> However, the Borough may wish to increase its public safety presence in response to the additional service demand generated by new activity at the site. Specifically, the Borough has suggested that it intends to increase its daily police patrol during school hours from two to four officers on duty per shift.<sup>15</sup>

According to its organizational chart, the Clifton Heights Police Department currently has 16 members, including a chief, five sergeants, and 10 officers.<sup>16</sup> All except the chief and one sergeant assigned to investigations are listed as "patrol." Given current staffing levels and availability, it is unclear whether providing additional on duty officers would require additional hiring, or could be absorbed within current staffing.

Assuming that school is in session for effectively half of the days in a given year (around 180 days), and that the period of heightened school activity covers about one-third of a day (around 8 hours), any heightened staffing needs during school hours would cover about one-sixth of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See: Project FAQ, Question 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See: Memorandum of Understanding Between Borough of Clifton Heights Police Department and Upper Darby School District, Effective July 1, 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See: Project FAQ, Question 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Joseph Lombardo, Jr., "From the Mayor: Impact of a New Middle School on the Borough." Clifton Quarterly, Spring 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> See: Clifton Heights Police Department, "CHPD Organizational Chart." Retrieved May 22, 2019 from <a href="http://cliftonheightspolice.com/department/chpd-chart/">http://cliftonheightspolice.com/department/chpd-chart/</a>

total time in a given year. Even if absorbed by existing staff, if additional on-duty officers are utilized during this time period, variable costs will likely increase for the District. Absent any budget detail from the Borough, these potential incremental costs relative to the \$2.1 million in current costs cannot be reliably estimated.

Other significant operating cost categories for the Borough include General Government (\$356,000 in General Fund and Special Revenue Expenditures in 2017), Fire (\$205,000) and Public Works – Highways and Streets (\$339,000). General Government operations are unlikely to be materially impacted by the project. Fire response costs could conceivably increase given the addition of a major activity center within the Borough, though incremental increases are likely to be modest. Impacts on highways and streets expenditures are also possible given potential changes in traffic patterns, which could impact wear and tear and related maintenance costs. As discussed in Section C.1, it is also possible that changes in traffic demand could require additional road infrastructure such as traffic signals, crosswalk, and signage, which would have a cost to implement and maintain.<sup>17</sup>

#### **B.2.** Upper Darby School District Fiscal Impacts

The project also has fiscal implications for the Upper Darby School District. Net fiscal impacts for the District include potential increases or savings in ongoing operating costs, potential increases in revenues through property value impacts (discussed in Section B.3) and potential differences in upfront development cost between scenarios. While operating and capital costs are differentiated below, upfront development costs will ultimately be reflected in ongoing operating costs through debt service utilized to fund capital investments. In March 2019, the District's Finance & Operations Committee presented preliminary information from RBC Capital Markets on potential financing for the project, along with other borrowing. This analysis included potential implications of this financing plan for taxpayers in the form of an increased real estate tax rate.

#### **Operating Cost Impacts**

Anticipated revenues and expenditures for the Upper Darby School District for FY 2019 total around \$200 million. About two-thirds of these expenditures (\$133 million) go to instructional functions, including staff salary and benefits. Support services total around \$54 million, while debt service on previous borrowing currently totals \$6-7 million per year.

Different configurations of facilities, enrollment and staff allocations will produce different operating cost outcomes for the District. Operating costs are also impacted by a broad set of forces across sites. The anticipated growth in student enrollment over the next decade will result

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> As discussed in Section C.1, the District is undertaking a traffic study as part of the planning process associated with the project, and has stated that it "will make changes as required by the traffic study."

See: "Frequently Asked Questions New Middle School in Clifton Heights, Aronimink Renovation and Addition, K-Center moving to Aronimink temporarily, and Walter M. Senkow moving to the K-Center temporarily." Question 13. Upper Darby School District, Updated April 23, 2019. (Referred to in this document as "Facility Plan FAQ".)

(all else equal) in increasing operational costs. In addition, inherent in the School District's and School Board's goal of reducing class sizes and overcrowded conditions within the Middle School is some degree of increased staffing relative to the student population.

The reallocation of students from Drexel Hill Middle School and Beverly Hills Middle School to the proposed Clifton Hill Middle School would allow for some reallocation of existing staff and administration to the new site.<sup>18</sup> Operational projections prepared by the School District indicate that some net new staff would be required at the site, including both professional and support positions. Annual costs for these positions are estimated at an additional \$1.6 million relative to current expenditures. However, some portion of these costs may be applicable in any scenario in which the current enrollment and class size issues are addressed (whether at the Clifton Heights site, an alternative site, or through expansions of existing facilities).

The addition of a new facility will also generate new building costs, such as utilities, janitorial, and building maintenance. Operational projections from the School District anticipate these costs to total around \$425,000 annually. It is possible that alleviating the overcrowded conditions at the existing Drexel Hill and Beverly Hills facilities could generate reductions in operating costs at these sites to partially offset these increases.

Another major operating cost category is transportation. Costs for this category vary depending on the number and location of sites, and catchment areas which dictate travel distances and schedules. The addition of a third Middle School requires drop offs and pick-ups at an additional location. However, (as discussed in Section B.3 below), the proposed new catchments shorten commutes on net by assigning students in the southern portion of the district (including Clifton Heights) to a site closer to their residence. Operational projections from the School District anticipate net transportation costs for Middle Schools to decrease by around \$10,000 under this scenario, offsetting some of the operating cost increases.

Importantly, the proposed Clifton Heights Middle School is one component of a broader package of proposed capital investments and reconfigurations of schools within the District. Concurrently, the District is planning a renovation of Aronimink Elementary School, including an expansion of around 36,000 square feet with the addition of classrooms and a gym, and to close Walter M. Senkow Elementary School, a site currently leased and operated outside of the boundaries of the district. The elimination of leased space provides an offset of operating dollars for newly created or expanded space.

#### **Development Scenarios**

The Upper Darby School District and School Board have identified middle school enrollment as a priority issue within their Facilities Study, based on overcrowded current conditions at the District's two middle schools and anticipated enrollment growth. Through an ongoing process, the Facilities Committee of the School Board has considered a number of options to address this issue, including scheduling changes, the expansion of existing facilities, and multiple sites for a new school facility.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> See: Project FAQ, Question 13.

Different potential approaches to address this issue bring with them different capital costs, which are then translated into operating costs in the form of debt service. These cost differentials are a relevant consideration for the fiscal impact of the project to the District.

A number of factors influence the viability and fiscal cost of a potential school site. The first is space, with the need for the facility to be large enough to absorb the projected enrollment, along with space for parking, athletic facilities, and other needs. Smaller sites, or those with suboptimal layouts can force additional design and construction costs to work around the space limitations, or may be infeasible. Other factors impacting feasibility include accessibility, site safety and stability, and supporting infrastructure, with additional complications potentially adding development cost.

From a fiscal standpoint, land costs are also a crucial consideration. For sites that are not currently owned by the School District, the cost of obtaining the site will directly increase the cost of development. Further, if any site has pre-existing construction, removing or rehabilitating those buildings will also directly add cost to the development.

As part of its facilities study, Upper Darby School District has asked KCBA Architects to evaluate several potential sites for development, including but not limited to the proposed Clifton Heights site. KCBA provided documentation on four different options that were reviewed in addition to the Clifton Heights site, each with their own specific considerations:

- *Expand Beverly Hills Middle School*: KCBA assessed the feasibility of building on the currently operational Beverly Hills Middle School. KCBA's analysis indicates that the current structure cannot be expanded vertically, and there is not sufficient room to expand outward. According to their analysis, any expansion is not feasible due to these concerns.
- Expand Drexel Hill Middle School: KBCA reports that due to structural limitations, Drexel Hill Middle School also cannot be expanded vertically, limiting potential expansion options significantly. Potential expansion plans would involve a new structure either 2 or 3 stories high with additional classroom space. However, there would not be sufficient room to expand common spaces (gyms, cafeteria, etc.) which are currently over capacity and contributing to undesirable academic conditions which could be exacerbated. The school is currently over capacity and has been using trailers outside of the school to temporarily expand classroom space. The KCBA analysis also found this site to not be viable.
- *Penn Pines Park*: With site acreage of 5.4 acres, KCBA considered the Penn Pines Park location too small to accommodate the size of facility that the District is seeking. The site is also located along Darby Creek, and is situated within a floodplain which poses serious concerns for development. The KCBA analysis also found this site to not be viable.
- *Primos Elementary School and Saint Eugene's Catholic Church*: This site currently houses both a school and a church, which restricts available site space for a new middle school and would create an adverse community impact through the displacement of an active

church. KCBA also reports that the area available for development is situated along Muckinipattis Creek, which exposes that area of the site to flooding risk. The layout of the site and the pre-existing uses also complicate stormwater management for the site, which could greatly impact development costs. In addition to community concerns, orchestrating a sale agreement between the District and Church could delay the construction process, increasing costs and prolonging/exacerbating the District's existing middle school enrollment concerns.

Other sites, including privately owned sites, have been suggested by the community and examined by the District to varying degrees.<sup>19</sup> Many of these sites are too small to house the facilities needed, while others would require land purchase or demolition of existing facilities.

The KCBA analysis identified the 14.3-acre Clifton Fields parcel as the most viable location in the District for a new middle school. The site is owned by the district, eliminating acquisition costs and sale delays. The site has a viable size, layout and location, and does not have significant buildings or nearby bodies of water. Preliminary construction costs estimates for the project were reported at \$57.9 million for approximately 148,000 square feet of facility space to accommodate 750 students and \$64.7 million for approximately 166,500 square feet of facility space to accommodate 950 students.<sup>20</sup>

#### **B.3.** Property Value Impacts

Real estate taxes are the largest source of revenue for Delaware County, Upper Darby School District and Clifton Heights Borough. Figure B.1 below shows aggregate assessed value, the millage rate and anticipated real estate collections for each jurisdiction for its most recently available budget year.<sup>21</sup> Real estate tax collections represent approximately half of the total General Fund revenue for the County and School District, and around three-quarters of General Fund revenue for Clifton Heights Borough.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> See: Tustin, Kevin, "Sizing up the school property game for U.D., Clifton." Delaware County Daily Times, May 6, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See: "Middle School Feasibility Study Presentation" Upper Darby School District, February 13, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Anticipated real estate tax collections and General Fund revenues are drawn from the following budget years: Delaware County calendar year 2019 budget, Upper Darby School District 2019-2020 budget, Clifton Heights Borough 2017 Municipal Annual Audit and Financial Report.

| Year                                   | Delaware        | Upper Darby     | Clifton Heights |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | County          | School District | Borough         |
| Aggregate Assessed Value <sup>22</sup> | \$25.45 billion | \$2.16 billion  | \$172 million   |
| Millage Rate (2019)                    | 5.4610          | 37.1395         | 15.5010         |
| Real Estate Tax Collections            | \$171 million   | \$104 million   | \$2.8 million   |
| General Fund Revenues                  | \$335 million   | \$207 million   | \$3.8 million   |
| RE Share of General Fund               | 51%             | 50%             | 73%             |

#### Figure B.1: Assessed Value and Real Estate Tax Collection by Jurisdiction

#### Source: County Assessment Data, Budget Documents by Jurisdiction

Public schools represent an important part of the "amenity package" associated with a residential property, and therefore a contributor to its value. Changes in the quality and structure (via potential revisions to school catchment areas) of the educational experience associated with a given home therefore may have material impacts on the market value of that property. However, due to nature and timing of the property assessment process, these changes in values may not reflect directly on the tax base of various jurisdictions over the short-term. Potential property value impacts include:

- Changes in school quality from new facilities and reduced crowding
- Changes in commute times associated with the proposed Middle School
- Increases in local traffic
- Reduction of open space coupled with enhanced facilities at remaining open space
- Increase in millage rates

There is also the issue of how and when changes in property values affect property tax receipts.

#### School Quality and Housing Prices

A significant amount of research has sought to establish a connection between school quality and property values. While the correlation between these two elements is clear, the precise causal impact of improvements in school quality on housing prices is more difficult to establish. Research indicates the improvement in school quality will, all else equal, lead to increases in housing value.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> This analysis is based on county assessment data obtained by ESI for a prior analysis and is current as of 2017. Aggregate valuation has likely grown slightly since that time due to new investment. As discussed below, existing properties that do not undergo investment, change in use or catastrophic loss are not regularly re-assessed, meaning that 2017 assessed values remain applicable for the vast majority of properties.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> From an analytic standpoint, efforts to establish these impacts are complicated by the fact that higher performing schools are generally located in higher income communities. Scholars have addressed these issues through a number of research designs, including comparing homes directly on both sides of district boundaries (Black, Kane et. al), examining value impacts from

The Clifton Heights Middle School project could potentially improve school performance for students and property values for homeowners within the Borough and within the District in several ways:

- The new Clifton Heights Middle School will represent new facilities designed and built as modern learning environments and equipped with new technology. Multiple studies have correlated newer, better school buildings—those equipped with better lighting, more advanced libraries and laboratories, and better thermal comfort and air quality—with improved student achievement and test scores.<sup>24</sup>
- Existing middle schools within the District (Drexel Hill Middle School and Beverly Hills Middle School) will see a reduction in enrollment and class sizes, better matching their student population to the existing facilities. While educational research varies on the precise extent of class size impacts, there is general consensus as to the beneficial nature of class size reductions, particularly when implemented in earlier grades.<sup>25</sup>

We note that these two factors are implications of investment in school facilities in general and are not related to the specific school location.

houses impacted by a rezoning of catchment areas (Ries and Somerville) and comparing longitudinal price trends relative to neighboring schools after a dedicated educational intervention (as in Steif's analysis of the Penn Alexander catchment in West Philadelphia).

Black, Sandra. E. 1999. "Do Better Schools Matter? Parental Valuation of Elementary Education." The Quarterly Journal of Economics. 114 (2): 577-599.

Kane, Thomas J., Douglas O. Staiger, Gavin Samms, Edward W. Hill, and David L. Weimer. 2003. "School Accountability Ratings and Housing Values [with Comments]." Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs. 83-137.

Ries, John and Tsur Somerville. 2004. "School Quality and Residential Property Values: Evidence from Vancouver Rezoning." The Review of Economics and Statistics. 92 (4): 928-944.

Steif,Ken. 2013. "Can the Success of Penn Alexander be replicated?" The Notebook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See: "The Importance of School Facilities in Improving Student Outcomes," Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis, Pennsylvania State University College of Education, June 2015, which summarizes key research on the subject. In addition, research from Gibson directly connects these factors to observed property value increases through a study of school facility age, perceived school quality and housing prices in Orlando, Florida.

Gibson, Huston. 2011. "The Value of New: Elementary School Facility Age and Associated Housing Price." Journal of Housing Research. 20 (1): 67-86.

Lewis, Morgan. 2001. "Facility Conditions and Student Test Performance in the Milwaukee Public Schools." Scottsdale, AZ: Council of Educational Facility Planners International.

Schneider, Mark. 2002. "Do School Facilities Affect Academic Outcomes?" Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Woods, Darian. The Class Size Debate: What the Evidence Means for Education Policy. Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California Berkeley.
<https://gspp.berkeley.edu/research/featured/the-class-size-debate-what-the-evidence-means-for-education-policy>

#### Impact of Increased Proximity

In addition to school quality considerations, the proposed Clifton Heights Middle School will change commute patterns through the addition of a new location and the reassignment of school catchments. Students from the southern part of the district (including Clifton Heights) that currently attend Drexel Hill Middle School are anticipated to attend the new Clifton Heights location. Many of these students and families would likely see a reduction in their commute distance due to this reassignment.



Figure B.2: Commute Locations

ESI undertook a spatial analysis which defined the distance from the centroid of each block in Clifton Heights to Drexel Hill Middle School and to the Clifton Heights Middle School site.<sup>26</sup> Next, commute data was drawn from Google Maps to estimate current daily commute times for each of these trips.<sup>27</sup> These results were weighted by the number of households in each block to define average distance and time savings for Borough residents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> A "centroid" is the exact spatial midpoint of a geographic area, in this case the geographic shape of each block in the Borough as defined in the 2010 decennial Census. Measuring the distance from the centroid is a commonly used spatial analysis technique that produces results that are imperfect for any precise address but highly accurate "on average" for the given area.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Importantly, Google Maps commute time estimates for any trip are based on current conditions. The construction of Clifton Heights Middle School could alter these patterns, meaning that while the differences in travel distance defined above would be retained, differences in commute times may shift with changing demand.

The average differential in distance from households in Clifton Heights to the proposed Clifton Heights Middle School relative to Drexel Hill Middle School is a savings of 2.3 miles, which translates into a commute difference of 7.9 minutes per trip. Applied to a full year (assuming 180 school days and two trips per day), this reduction equates to an average annual time savings of 47 hours for a Clifton Heights family with children attending the Middle School.

Since potential homeowners place a value on their time, this savings should produce a positive impact on property values within the Borough. Similar effects could be seen in other portions of the District that see a reduction in commute distance and time.

#### Traffic

As a new center of activity within the Borough, the school could impact traffic patterns and generate noise, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times. Increases in traffic and congestion are correlated with decreases in property values, all else equal, though the amount of value change depends greatly on the specifics of the situation.<sup>28</sup> The impacts are generally highly localized, so that properties near the increased traffic and congestion are affected, whereas houses a street or two distant are not, though the location of the site near the Borough's main intersection of Springfield Road and Baltimore Pike suggests that traffic changes could impact other commutes. As described in Section C, traffic impacts will be a subject of further study as the project is developed and are therefore not precisely known at this time.

#### **Open Space**

The change in use of the site from its current use as a parks and recreation space to a school use, inclusive of new fields and athletic facilities covering about half of the property, could potentially reduce the utility of the site as an amenity for certain users. As described in Section C, the School District is undertaking efforts to ensure the continuation of community uses of the site to the extent possible, and the community could see benefits from the enhanced facilities on-site.

#### Tax Rates

Increases in millage rates to support the financing of the project are themselves relevant to the property value of a household, since the stream of future payments of property tax are one of the financial factors that potential buyers will utilize in determining an appropriate purchase price for a home. An increase in taxes without a commensurate increase in the value of public services, such as schools, will lower property values. On the other hand, if the value of additional public service paid for by increased taxes is greater than the additional tax payments, property values will increase. Individual homeowners may be differently situated in terms of how the relative value they place on community services and their willingness to pay more in taxes for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> See: Wilhelmsson, Mats, "The Impact of Traffic Noise on the Values of Single-family Houses." Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 43(6), 799-815, 2000.

quality improvements. Economy theory would suggest some re-sorting of households over time based on changes in the amenity mix through the normal operations of the housing market.<sup>29</sup>

#### Impact on Assessed Property Values

The discussion above focuses on potential impacts of the project on housing *prices*, and accordingly the fair market value of property within the Borough and School District. However, the fiscal impact for the Borough, School District and County is driven largely by *assessed* values, which comprise the tax base for the Real Estate Tax, which is the largest revenue source for each of these jurisdictions.<sup>30</sup>

Under normal circumstances, properties maintain their assessed value until they are reassessed individually or as part of a countywide reassessment. According to state laws, reasons for reassessment are limited to: (1) a property has been subdivided; (2) a physical change has been made to a property, such as new construction or removal or change of existing improvements; (3) a catastrophic loss has occurred to the property; or (4) a change in use of the property (e.g., tax-exempt status) has taken place. The county assessment office is prohibited from engaging in "spot" reassessment of an individual property even if it is the subject of a transaction that differs materially from its assessed value.<sup>31</sup>

Delaware County is currently in the midst of its first reassessment in two decades, based on a court order finding that changes in market values since the last reassessment have created inequities in assessed values within the county.<sup>32</sup> The reassessment process is intended to be "revenue neutral," meaning that while assessed values for given properties will change, millage rates at the County, School District and Municipality level will be reset when new values take effect in order to collect an equivalent amount of total revenue. However, the distribution of the tax burden between properties in a given jurisdiction will change based on new estimates of market value.

Importantly, the reassessment process and evaluation of new market values is already in process. According to information published by Delaware County, consultants Tyler Technologies have already begun the process of verifying of property information<sup>33</sup> and of "collecting and verifying

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> See: Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." The Journal of Political Economy. 64 (5): 416-424. (p. 418), which sets forth a foundational model in which ""consumer-voter may be viewed as picking that community which best satisfies his preference pattern for public goods."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> An exception is the Real Estate Transfer Tax (collected by the Borough, County and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania), which is based on a portion of transaction prices, and would therefore see immediate impacts from changes in market values.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Pennsylvania Legislator's Municipal Deskbook*, Fourth Edition (2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Delaware County Reassessment, *Frequently Asked Questions* <http://delcorealestate.co.delaware.pa.us/DelcoReAssessment/Portals/0/REASSESSMENT%20 %20FAQ%20.pdf>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The most recent "data mailer update" issued by the County indicates that Clifton Heights Borough residents have already received data mailers from the County, which provide the basic

dates and sales prices for all property sales within an approximate two to three-year period."<sup>34</sup> Analysis of this information for the purpose of determining new assessed values will focus on identifying recent comparable sales, with the County stating that "for each residence that is valued, three to five recent sales of similar properties will be considered as part of the valuation process."<sup>35</sup> This (standard) approach of relying on recent comparable sales is by nature backward-looking and will therefore rely on transactions taking place largely or entirely before any change in market conditions and values attributable to the Clifton Heights Middle School project. Accordingly, the project is unlikely to materially impact assessed values applicable as of January 1, 2021 through this reassessment process.

Once new values are reestablished, potential changes in market conditions attributable to the project could impact the Real Estate Tax base through changes in investment patterns and could impact the Real Estate Transfer Tax base through changes in prices for houses that transact on an ongoing basis. However, value impacts on properties that do not transact, change use or undergone a subdivision or physical change will not change until a future reassessment by the County. The timing of such a future reassessment is unknown at this time. Notably, while value changes for such properties may not be reflected in assessed values on therefore on the fiscal position of various jurisdictions, these changes are still relevant to the asset values held by residents, who may see a benefit (or loss) from a change in asset values without a correspond change in tax liability.

#### **Property Value Impacts - Summary**

A significant body of research indicates that school quality is an important component in determining housing choice and therefore housing values. While evidence is mixed and issues of causality are difficult to disentangle, enhancements to school facilities should be expected to positively impact school quality. The proposed Clifton Heights Middle School will also shorten school commutes for families in Clifton Heights and across the district, contributing additional value. However, the project may be associated with localized disamenities on and around the site, and changes in the millage rate associated with funding the project may have an offsetting impact on values. Finally, the analytical portion of the County's property reassessment process is already underway and is unlikely to reflect new value associated with the project, meaning that it is uncertain when market value effects associated with the project will be reflected in the assessed values that define the County, School District and Borough tax base.

information recorded for each property. See: Delaware County Reassessment, *Data Mailer Update*, Week of May 22, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;http://delcorealestate.co.delaware.pa.us/DelcoReAssessment/Portals/0/Data%20Mailer%20U pdate%205\_22\_19.pdf>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Delaware County Reassessment, What are the Steps in the Reassessment? <http://delcorealestate.co.delaware.pa.us/DelcoReAssessment/Portals/0/What%20are%20the %20Steps%20in%20Reassessment%20%282%29.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

Given these countervailing forces and the uncertainty of future reassessments, it is not possible to attribute a specific impact from the project on the tax base of assessed property values in Clifton Heights Borough, Upper Darby School District, or Delaware County.

#### C. IMPACT ON COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN CLIFTON HEIGHTS BOROUGH

In addition to operating cost impacts discussed in Section B, a capital project such as Clifton Heights Middle School may have impacts on the use of various facilities within the community. These changes may have implications both for long-term capital costs (if for example, additional usage leads to additional wear and tear or merits expansion of facilities) and for the utility that residents derive from these existing facilities or services. This analysis considers impacts on schools, parks and recreation areas, libraries, hospitals, fire protection, ambulance and rescue services, and road infrastructure. Particular focus is given to parks and recreational needs previously met at the site.

#### C.1. Community Facilities and Services

#### **Road Infrastructure**

The Clifton Heights Middle School will engender changes in traffic patterns that may have implications for the road infrastructure in Clifton Heights. As reviewed in Section B, the creation of a third Middle School in the southern portion of Upper Darby School will reduce overall commute lengths and times for some middle school students and families across the district. This includes students and families from Clifton Heights, who will no longer have to commute to Drexel Hill Middle School in the northern portion of the district, and who in some cases may be able to walk to the Middle School.

However, while overall travel distances would be reduced, there may be localized traffic increases in Clifton Heights in the vicinity of the school. First, some students residing in Upper Darby Township who currently attend Drexel Hill Middle School would be assigned to the Clifton Heights Middle School, and would therefore commute into the borough on a daily basis, creating additional traffic volume in the Borough (though not necessarily additional traffic in the School District). Second, the concentration of activity around the site may create new traffic and infrastructure needs within the Borough. The District reports that an estimated eight buses would be required to provide transportation to students.<sup>36</sup> Additional traffic volume would be generated by staff and parent pick up and drop offs.

The potential implications of these changes in traffic patterns are yet to be determined. The District reports that a traffic study is included in the scope of work authorized as part of the planning process for the project.<sup>37</sup> The District has stated that it "will make changes as required by the traffic study."<sup>38</sup> At minimum, the area will become a school zone, and certain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> See: Project FAQ, Question 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> See: Tustin, Kevin. "Candid Camera? Traffic study done near proposed school site in Clifton." Delaware County Daily Times, April 26, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See: Facility Plan FAQ", Question 13.

requirements must be met.<sup>39</sup> At this time, the existence or extent of any additional road infrastructure needs (traffic signals, crosswalks, signage, etc.), changes in normal wear and tear, and utility value to impacted drivers within the Borough is to be determined.

#### **Hospitals and Libraries**

Based on initial research, Clifton Heights is not served by a hospital or library within its boundaries. While the new school location could potentially impact usage patterns of hospitals or libraries in nearby communities, impacts within the Borough or on its citizens are negligible.

#### Fire, Ambulance and Rescue

As discussed in Section B.1, Clifton Heights Middle School could potentially generate additional demand for fire, ambulance and rescue services. While service calls related to the school could generate additional operating costs, it is unlikely that their frequency would create undue strain on the availability of these services. Additionally, we are not aware of any new capital needs associated with these services due to the project.

#### Schools

Impacts on the community's schools and students are discussed throughout this analysis. To summarize, students from elementary schools in the southern portion of the School District, including those from Clifton Heights Borough, who currently attend Drexel Hill Middle School are expected to attend Clifton Heights Middle School, and other catchment assignments will be adjusted to balance enrollment at the three locations. This change will reduce commute times for Clifton Heights students, and provide relief to the overcrowded conditions for students that remain at Drexel Hill Middle School and Beverly Hills Middle School. The modern Clifton Heights Middle School and Beverly Hills Middle School is have the potential to result in an improved educational experience for all middle school students in the District.<sup>40</sup>

As discussed below, Clifton Heights Middle School will also serve as a facility for community events and recreational activities.

#### Parks and Recreation

The Clifton Heights Middle School site is the current location of the 14-acre Clifton Athletic Fields, which are owned by Upper Darby School District and leased to Clifton Heights Borough. The fields are used as a parks and active recreational space, hosting community and athletic events including youth sports, fireworks, carnivals and "cow drop" contests. Development plans for the school envision approximately half of the parcel being retained for field use, with the remaining half as buildable area for the educational facilities. This change would upgrade the quality of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> As noted in Section B, impacts in this analysis are compared to the current conditions in the District, and not to all potential alternatives to address the problem of Middle School enrollment identified by Upper Darby School District and its School Board.

athletic facilities but would impact their accessibility at certain times due to the nature of the educational activity onsite.

While exact configurations of the field area at the site remain under development, the new fields are anticipated to include a multipurpose football-sized field, four baseball/softball diamonds, and two youth-soccer sized fields.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the building facility will include a new gymnasium. This new construction and the ongoing maintenance by the School District should result in upgraded facility quality.

The construction schedule envisions modifying and upgrading the fields as the first phase of the project.<sup>42</sup> Fields would be inaccessible for a period of approximately 12-16 months during this phase.

The School District has begun a process of establishing access to the field once modifications are complete to community groups like the Police Athletic League (PAL) of Clifton and the Clifton Boys Club. An MOU provided by the District to the Clifton PAL notes that the District intends to make available both the fields and gymnasium facilities and outlines those potential uses.<sup>43</sup> Considerations discussed in the MOU include scheduling, insurance and liability, and other such logistical issues. The MOU specifically references community events such as fireworks, carnivals and contest in addition to athletic competitions.

These proposed changes to the parks and recreational uses of the site have both benefits and drawbacks for the community. Relative to the current configuration, outdoor recreational space will be smaller but should be upgraded in quality and will feature a gymnasium in addition to the outdoor athletic fields. Upper Darby School District represents that it intends to maintain access to these amenities to the extent possible but will face some limitations during the construction period and on an ongoing basis due to district prioritization of the space.

#### D. IDENTIFICATION OF UTILITY NEEDS

The proposed middle school will require water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage and electric service as part of the development. Existing uses of the site require water supply, sewage disposal and electric service while storm drainage appears to be overland into adjacent streets. The existing utility services are not adequate for the intended use.

#### D.1. Existing Utility Installations

Our investigation to date has included outreach to the affected utility owners requesting "Will Serve" letters as well as survey and PA One-Call notifications to determine utilities type, size and location.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> See: Project FAQ, Question 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> See: "Middle School Feasibility Study Presentation" Upper Darby School District, February 13, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> See: Memorandum of Understanding Between the Police Athletic League of Clifton Heights and the Upper Darby School District, Drafted April, 2019.

- a. Water Aqua Pennsylvania (Aqua PA) owns and maintains the public water system in the Borough and is in the middle of an upgrade program in the Borough judging by the PA One-Call plans received. In Springfield Road, there is a 12" cement pipe main from Oak Avenue to Church Street, which continues eastward split into 12" cast iron and 6" cement pipes. Aqua PA when contacted did not have flow-data for these mains and is in the process of obtaining the data. A Will Serve letter has been received and is attached to this report.
- b. Sewage Disposal The Borough maintains an 8" sewer in Springfield Road which eventually connects to the Darby Creek Joint Authority (DCJA) interceptor along Darby Creek. At the request of the DCJA Engineer, Charles Catania, we submitted a letter describing the anticipated flows and requesting the Will Serve letter. The Authority is under an agreement with PaDEP to only grant approval for additional flow to the sewer system if the applicant provides sewer improvement projects that reduce the inflow and infiltration (I & I) by some predetermined amount. Further investigations will be completed as to this subject.
- c. Electric PECO Energy Company (PECO) provides overhead electricity distribution to this property. PECO has also been contacted and is in the process of preparing a Will Serve letter for the project.
- d. Storm Drainage The property currently flows to two (2) drainage watersheds: one to the north towards Wyncliffe Avenue and one to the south towards Springfield Road. There is a 24" reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) storm sewer in Wyncliffe Avenue that appears to extend to the north. Springfield Road on the other hand does not have any storm sewer system to a new service will be required, it appears, to be extend from that in Baltimore Avenue. Runoff from the site today does appear to flow along the roads network to Baltimore Avenue where PennDOT maintains a stormwater collection and conveyance system. As the proposed discharge will be reduced in all storms up to the 100 year storm, as required in the Borough Chapter 167 regulations, the sewer demand on the existing sewers should be reduced through implementation of required stormwater management.

#### D.2. Additional Utility Installations

- a. With upgrades that Aqua PA has been making and will be making along Springfield Road, and the close proximity of the Clifton Heights Tank and Booster, we do not anticipate problems with water flow and pressure. If testing indicates either do not meet the development needs, a water booster pump can be designed into the school system.
- b. The Applicant will need to work with the Borough to confirm available capacity in the Springfield Road main. Given that it is 8" diameter, we anticipate it will be adequate for the additional sewage loads. As to obtaining capacity from the DCJA, additional discussion is again required to develop a repair plan for the Borough and/or Authority systems to reduce I and I as required.
- c. Storm drainage in Springfield Road will require design and approval of PennDOT infrastructure as Springfield Road and Baltimore Avenue are State routes, SR2009 and SR2016, respectively. The District will begin investigating this infrastructure improvement project with PennDOT upon submission of land development plans to the Borough.

#### D.3. Storm Drainage and Stormwater Management

As stated above, the site drainage flows in two directions with approximately 4.82 acres towards Wyncliffe Avenue and 9.82 acres towards Springfield Road.

Wyncliffe Avenue has storm sewers in place. As discussed above, the Springfield Road drainage eventually ends up in the PennDOT storm sewer remaining in Baltimore Avenue, either directly or through joining side streets. A storm sewer extension is proposed in Springfield Road.

Whether drainage area to the north or south, flows will be reduced by the new construction through implementation of the Darby Creek Act 167 Plan, approved 10/24/2005. The project site falls within the B2 Flood Management District which requires the following:

| POST-CONSTR | PRE-CONSTR |
|-------------|------------|
| 2yr         | 1yr        |
| 5yr         | 2yr        |
| 10yr        | 5yr        |
| 50yr        | 10yr       |
| 100yr       | 100yr      |

The reduction in flows will in part be a result of infiltrating a significant quantity of runoff. Whether above-or below-ground, proposed stormwater retention basins will be design to take advantage of the site soils porosity. The Delaware County Soil Survey indicates all site soils are "Made Land" with the most limiting zones to infiltration varying from 0.05 in/hr. to 0.06 in/hr.

In addition to total volume reduction, the flow-rates will also be reduced, thereby reducing downstream sewer and channel overflows.



May 2, 2019

Thomas Friese Pennoni Associates Inc

Re: Water Availability 217 N Springfiel Rd Clifton Heights Boro, Delaware County

In response to your request, this letter will serve as confirmation that the above referenced property is situated within Aqua Pennsylvania Inc. service territory.

Domestic and fire water service is available to this property and will be provided in accordance with Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc. Rules and Regulations. For further details, visit <u>www.aquaamerica.com</u>.

With regard to our capacity for domestic and fire service for this area, flow data information can be obtained upon written request to Lisa Thomas-Oliva of our Control Center at <u>LATHOMAS-OLIVA@AQUAAMERICA.COM</u>. Include the address with town or township and the nearest intersecting street.

Should you have any further questions or need to request an application for service, contact me at (610) 541-4160 or <u>dlciotti@aquaamerica.com</u>.

Regards,

Dana Linth

Deanna L. Ciotti Special Services Coordinator-New Business Applications Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc 700 W Sproul Rd Springfield, PA 19064 O: 610.541.4160

700 W. Sproul Road, Springfield, PA, 19064 • 610.328.7718 • AquaAmerica.com

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## Appendix 1 – Encroachment Maps







![](_page_33_Picture_3.jpeg)

# Appendix 2 – Soil Map

![](_page_35_Figure_0.jpeg)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey National Cooperative Soil Survey

![](_page_36_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_36_Picture_2.jpeg)

### Map Unit Legend

| Map Unit Symbol             | Map Unit Name                          | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------|----------------|
| Мс                          | Made land, silt and clay<br>materials  | 2.5          | 17.8%          |
| Ме                          | Made land, schist and gneiss materials | 11.6         | 82.2%          |
| Totals for Area of Interest |  | 14.2         | 100.0%         |

![](_page_37_Picture_3.jpeg)

# Appendix 3 – Biological Resources Map

![](_page_39_Picture_0.jpeg)

## Appendix 4 – Subject Property Photo Log

![](_page_41_Picture_0.jpeg)

<u>Photograph 1</u>: Publicly available aerial view of the subject property. The current use of the subject property is an open space. The area contains a track, baseball fields, indigenous trees and man-made structures. There are currently no high value visual resources associated with the subject property.

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|--------|---|
|        |   |
|        |   |

Pennoni 1900 Market Street, Suite 300 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources 217 North Springfield Road Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018

Job No. UDSDX19002 Date Taken: March 21, 2019

Site Photographs

![](_page_42_Picture_0.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 2:*</u> View of the central portion of the subject property, looking west. Adjacent neighborhood is visible in the background.

![](_page_42_Picture_2.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 3:*</u> View of the entrance to the subject property, looking southwest. Adjacent neighborhood is visible in the background.

| Pennoni<br>1900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Philadalphia, Bonnsylvania 19102 | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources<br>217 North Springfield Road |
|--|--|
|  | Chiton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018   |
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002 Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019                          | Site Photographs   |

![](_page_43_Picture_0.jpeg)

<u>Photograph 4</u>: View of the southeastern portion of the subject property adjacent to Building 1, looking east toward North Sycamore Avenue. Adjacent neighborhood is visible in the background.

![](_page_43_Picture_2.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 5:*</u> View of Building 1 within the southeastern portion of the subject property, which is utilized as a concession stand.

|                       | Pennoni   | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources                  |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Pennoni               | 1900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 | 217 North Springfield Road<br>Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018 |
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002 | Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019                                     | Site Photographs  |

![](_page_44_Picture_0.jpeg)

*Photograph 6:* View of the central portion of the subject property, looking north.

![](_page_44_Picture_2.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 7:*</u> View of a baseball field on the northwestern portion of the subject property, looking northwest. Adjacent neighborhood is visible in the background.

| Pennoni 1<br>Phi      | Pennoni<br>900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Iadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources<br>217 North Springfield Road<br>Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018 |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002 | Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019  | Site Photographs  |

![](_page_45_Picture_0.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 8:*</u> View of unutilized space along the northern portion of the subject property, looking north. Adjacent neighborhood visible in background.

![](_page_45_Picture_2.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 9:*</u> View of the northern portion of the track, looking northeast. Adjacent neighborhood visible in background.

| Pennoni<br>1900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 |                               | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources                  |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
|  |                               | 217 North Springfield Road<br>Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018 |
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002  | Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019 | Site Photographs  |

![](_page_46_Picture_0.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 10:*</u> View of the main baseball field, looking south.

![](_page_46_Picture_2.jpeg)

<u>*Photograph 11:*</u> View of the track from the baseball field, looking north.

| Pennoni               | Pennoni<br>1900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources<br>217 North Springfield Road<br>Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018 |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002 | Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019  | Site Photographs  |

![](_page_47_Picture_0.jpeg)

Photograph 12: View of Building 2, utilized as a concession stand, office and restrooms.

![](_page_47_Picture_2.jpeg)

*Photograph 13:* View of Building 3, looking north.

| Pennoni               | Pennoni<br>1900 Market Street, Suite 300<br>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 | Environmental Impact Analysis – Visual Resources<br>217 North Springfield Road<br>Clifton Heights, Pennsylvania 19018 |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Job No.<br>UDSDX19002 | Date Taken:<br>March 21, 2019  | Site Photographs  |

## Appendix 5 – Traffic Impact Study (Submitted under separate cover)