

FROM HOMES TO CLASSROOMS

The Relationship Between Housing Development and School Enrollment in New Hampshire



NEXUS OF BIRTHS, SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, & POPULATION GROWTH IN NEW HAMPSHIRE 1995-2023

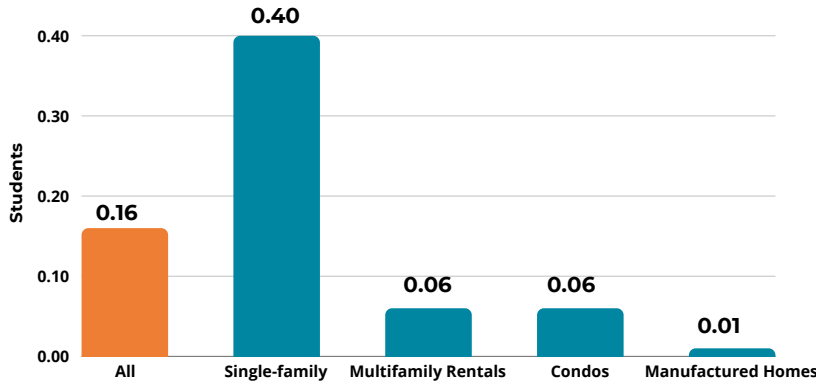


The relationship between housing development, school enrollment, and property taxes has long been debated. While past studies found little correlation between new housing and increased enrollment, concerns about its impact on budgets persists. This new study confirms previous findings.

KEY FINDINGS: STUDENT PER UNIT DATA

The study shows a decline in the ratio of public school students per housing unit in New Hampshire, dropping from 0.39 to 0.29 since 1990. In the four case study communities - Deerfield, Dover, Dunbarton, and Merrimack - the average was even lower, with 0.25 students per unit.

New Construction Case Study Impacts: Students-per-Unit

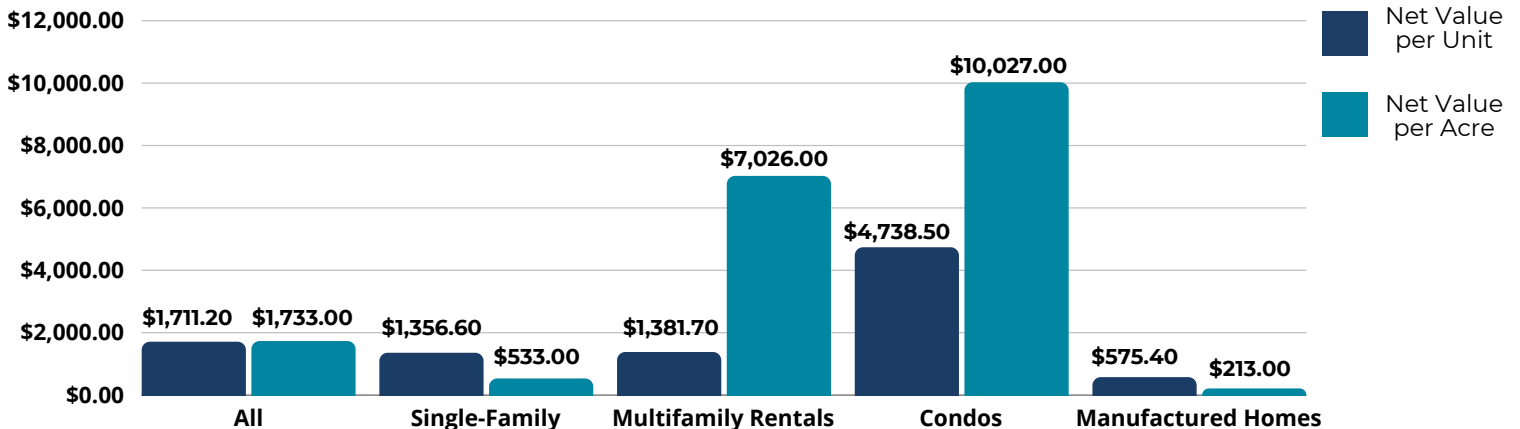


Housing built between 2014 and 2023 had a student-to-housing ratio of 0.16. Students were more likely to live in single-family homes (0.40 per unit) than in multifamily rentals or condos (0.06 per unit).

FISCAL IMPACTS OF HOUSING ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CASE STUDY COMMUNITIES

- Housing built from 2014 to 2023 generated a net fiscal benefit of \$1,711 per unit for local school districts, compared to \$190 per unit from older housing (built in 2013 or earlier).
- All housing types (single-family, multifamily rentals, condos, and manufactured housing) generated positive net value.
- Rental and condominium multifamily housing showed greater net positive impacts than single-family or manufactured homes.

Case Study Communities: Public School Students per Unit in New Construction (2014-2023)

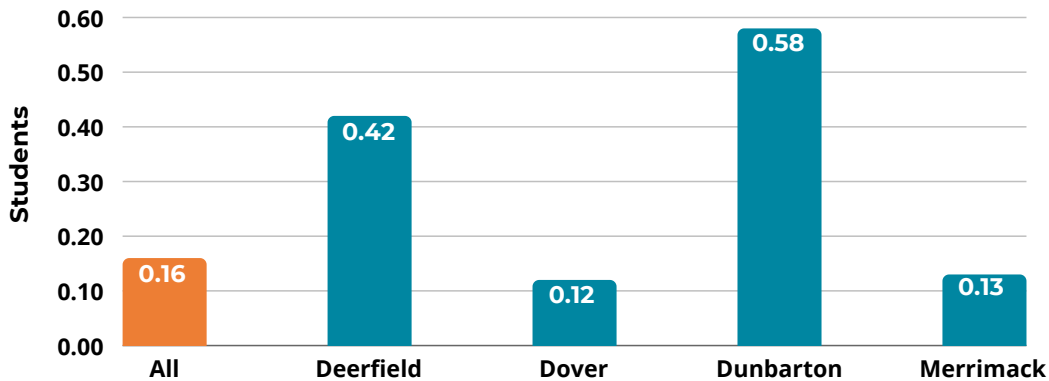


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Case Study Communities: Public School Students per Unit in New Construction (2014-2023)

In communities like Dunbarton and Deerfield where single-family homes are more prevalent, student-per-unit ratios were higher (0.58 and 0.42 students per unit, respectively).



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A range of factors contribute to whether a housing unit will have a net positive fiscal impact. The detailed findings from this analysis show:

- Under most circumstances new construction housing of all types and densities across a wide range of prices and community types have net positive impacts.
- Both rental and condominium multifamily housing have greater net positive impacts than single family or manufactured homes.
- Housing that is most likely to generate the highest net positive impacts for school districts are those located in large communities with a sizeable commercial property sector.

Finally, this study provides recommendations to improve net value relative to new construction housing development. Key recommendations include:

- Developing standard fiscal impact methodologies for planning decisions.
- Encouraging municipalities to control their tax burden by diversifying their tax base and promoting the construction of denser housing types, which are likely to yield more fiscal benefit.
- Developing a state housing development gap fund to support the construction of lower-cost housing that meets identified state priorities.

The full report is available at NHHousing.org.
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