

Town and Gown

An Impact Study on Municipal Services

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Mansfield is unique among all the towns in Connecticut; it is the home to the University of Connecticut with a daytime student population in excess of 22,000 individuals, or nearly twice the size of the host community. When we add the Bergin Correctional Facility into the mix and all the staff, visitors, and vendors that populate Mansfield during the day because of these two institutions, we estimate that our daytime population is close to 40,000 people. But, unlike state office buildings, which bring no residents with them, Mansfield's state owned buildings are populated 24 hours per day with a high demand for services. Our problem is very simple, we are trying to provide services to a town with a nighttime population of approximately 25,000 people and a daytime population of 35,000 to 40,000 people with a tax base of a town of approximately 12,500 people. For many years this anomaly worked because substantial state aid offset the lack of a larger tax base. But, two things have changed that delicate balance between the services needed for this large of a community and the ability to fund those services. First is the advent of UCONN 2000 and the expansion of the University. Second is the rapid reduction in a major state grant (Pequot/Mohegan) the town had used to maintain its infrastructure and meet the needs of a growing population. Between FY 2003 and FY 2009 the Pequot/Mohegan grant declined from a little over \$3,000,000 to a little more than \$300,000, or by 1000 percent.

The following report examines the impact that the University of Connecticut (UConn) and Bergin Correctional Facility collectively have on municipal services within the Town of Mansfield. The service areas that demonstrate the most noteworthy impact are:

1. Police Services
2. Emergency Medical Services
3. Public Works
4. Education

ABILITY TO PAY

The selected towns in these tables are meant to reflect communities similar to Mansfield in population when all of our residents living in dormitories are included.

What this study will show is that while Mansfield has the crime, traffic, emergency service calls and auto accidents of much larger communities, it does not have the tax base that goes along with those communities. Table 1 is the equalized net grand list (ENGL) for Mansfield and our comparison communities. What is clearly evident is that Mansfield's ENGL is approximately one third of the other communities. Another measure of our ability to pay is our median family income, which is 141st in the state. Our next closest comparison community is Southbury at 79th and then South Windsor at 37th. In Table 2 we have added Intergovernmental Revenues (primarily state grants) to the Tax Levy and removed what is spent on education to see what is available to finance all the other functions of municipal government. Mansfield's ability to pay for police, fire, emergency response, and public works

ranges from a low of 35% of South Windsor's ability to a high of 72% in comparison with Monroe.

Because Section 10-261(7) of the Connecticut General Statutes actually causes Mansfield's state grant revenues to decrease as students at the University of Connecticut increase, the town finds itself in the unenviable position of having its costs go up while its revenues go down.

Table 1: Comparative Municipality "Ability To Pay"

Town	Population	2005 Equalized Net Grand List	2005 Total Property Taxes
Mansfield	24,558	\$1,192,413,029	\$18,325,498
South Windsor	25,985	\$3,274,707,719	\$61,262,523
Simsbury	23,656	\$3,346,109,612	\$66,306,205
Monroe	19,650	\$2,882,295,437	\$46,258,850
Southbury	19,677	\$3,302,064,453	\$44,621,819

Municipal Fiscal Indicators, November 2006

Table 2: Comparative Municipality "Available for Municipal Services"

(2005)	<u>South Windsor</u>	<u>Simsbury</u>	<u>Mansfield</u>	<u>Monroe</u>
Revenue: Taxes	\$61,262,523	\$66,306,205	\$18,325,498	\$46,258,850
Revenue: Intergovernmental	\$13,423,560	\$4,658,404	\$15,580,254	\$7,903,684
	\$74,686,083	\$70,964,609	\$33,905,752	\$54,162,534
Education Expenditures	\$49,919,405	\$51,756,275	\$25,077,649	\$41,845,171
Other Expenditures	\$24,766,678	\$19,208,334	\$8,828,103	\$12,317,363

Municipal Fiscal Indicators, November 2006

POLICE SERVICES

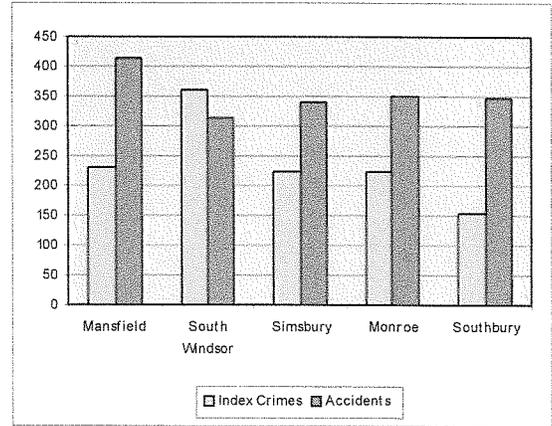
According to the State Department of Public Safety in their most recent publication of Uniform Crime Statistics for 2004, 229 index offenses occurred within the Town of Mansfield (excluding the UConn campus) in that calendar year. These crime statistics are federally mandated and are consistent in the manner in which they are recorded throughout all towns in Connecticut. Additionally, the State Department of Transportation collects traffic accident data for all towns in Connecticut. Results from their most recent report in 2004 are also presented in Table 3. Similar data has been collected for towns comparable in size and composition to Mansfield.

As is evident from Table 3 index crimes in the Town of Mansfield with the exception of South Windsor are generally equal to or greater than towns of similar size. However, accidents are significantly higher. This undoubtedly can be attributed to the heavy daytime population produced from the university and correctional facility. We estimate that the average daytime population for Mansfield is nearly 35,000. This figure includes the UConn population of 26,910 (students and employees), the Bergin population of 1,302 (inmates and employees), and the non-student population of 12,500. From these numbers it is clear that the daily traffic observed within Mansfield is comparable to a small city.

Table 3: Comparison of Crimes & Accidents

Towns 2006	Population 2006	Index Crimes 2003/2004	Accidents 2004
Mansfield w/students	24,558	229	412
South Windsor	25,985	361	315
Simsbury	23,656	223	341
Monroe	19,650	224	349
Southbury	19,677	155	346

Chart 1

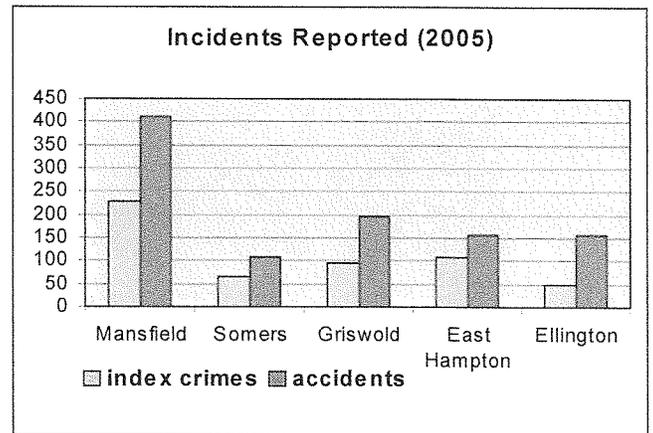


When individuals who reside in group housing, such as dormitories, are not counted as being part of Mansfield’s population, the impact of the university and correctional facility are all the more evident. Table 4 and Chart 2 below present data from towns comparable in size and composition to Mansfield when those living in group housing were not counted as being residents.

Table 4: Comparison of Crimes & Accidents

Towns 2006	Population 2006	Index Crimes 2004	Accidents 2004
Mansfield not including students	12,500	229	412
Somers	10,877	65	107
Griswold	11,254	94	196
East Hampton	12,194	107	157
Ellington	14,217	48	155

Chart 2



The presence of UConn and Bergin Correctional has a clear impact on the number of index crimes and accidents in the Town of Mansfield. The data in Table 4 indicates that index crimes are more than double those found in comparable towns. Accidents are more than triple. It is also important to note that the index crimes do not capture all crimes. For example, an arrest for an open container of alcohol in a public space, simple assaults and vandalism, which are common infractions found in college towns, are not included in these statistics. If they were, one could expect these disparities to widen further.

What has not been included in any of Mansfield's crime statistics are index crimes that take place on the UConn campus itself. It is reported that 360 index crimes occurred on the Storrs campus in the year 2003. Adding this to Mansfield's 229 crimes for the same year results in a total of 589 index crimes. Glastonbury with a population of 32,604 had only 408 reported index crimes. South Windsor with a population of 24,970 had 361 index crimes. These figures demonstrate the significance of the university's impact.

It is evident from the data presented above that both institutions place a significant burden on police services in the Town of Mansfield. This is also evident when one compares expenditures for emergency medical services between towns.

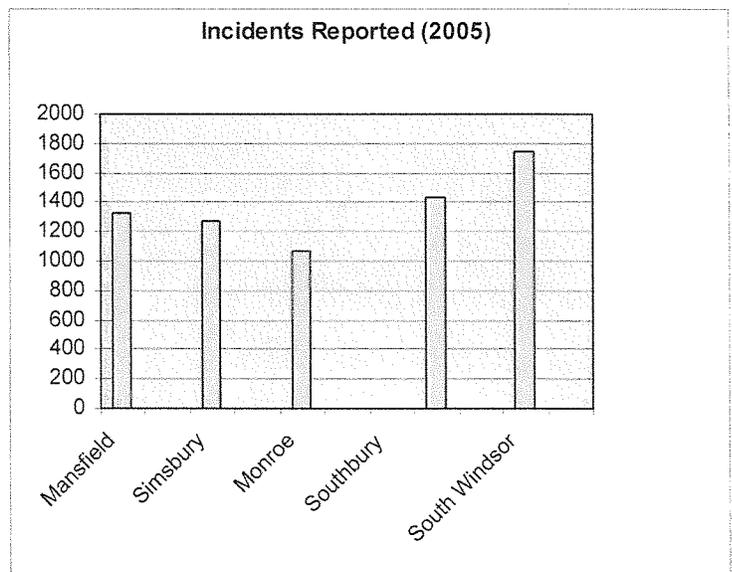
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (Ambulance)

Data has been collected on ambulance responses from the State Department of Public Health for Mansfield and other towns comparable in size and composition to that of Mansfield. The response statistics are consistent in the manner that they are recorded throughout all towns in the state.

Table 5: Comparison of Emergency Responses

Towns 2006	Population 2006	Ambulance Responses 2006
Mansfield w/students	24,558	1321
Simsbury	23,656	1277
Monroe	19,650	1063
Southbury	19,677	1435
South Windsor	25,985	1745

Chart 3



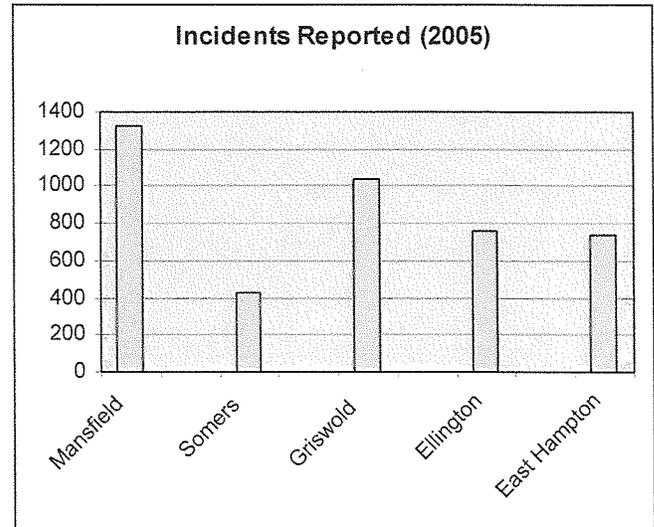
As is evident from the table and graph, ambulance responses in the Town of Mansfield are equal to towns with populations that compare to that of Mansfield.

Even more dramatic is when the population of individuals residing in group homes is not counted as being part of Mansfield's population. Then the impact of the university and correctional facility are all the more evident. Table 6 presents data from towns comparable in size and composition to Mansfield when not counting those living in group housing.

Table 6: Comparison of Emergency Responses

Towns 2006	Population 2006	Ambulance Responses 2006
Mansfield w/o students	12,500	1321
Somers	10,877	432
Griswold	11,254	1041
Ellington	14,217	757
East Hampton	12,194	742

Chart 4



PUBLIC WORKS

The infrastructure of municipal roadways is bearing the brunt of aforementioned vehicular traffic. The main state highways approaching the correctional facility and the university campuses are two-lane roads. As traffic gets congested with the amount of normal daily traffic patterns, both automobile and truck traffic spill onto local roads finding back ways through residential neighborhoods.

The Town of Mansfield has been proactive on the issue of building bikeways. These bikeways are also considered walkways for student pedestrian traffic from off-campus housing. This is a public safety issue as there are concerns over pedestrian competition with vehicular traffic. The town has appropriated \$475,000 for the Hunting Lodge Road Bikeway and another \$600,000 for the Separatist Road Bikeway. These projects are important for both the viability of the off-campus housing and the safety of the students. Because of the loss of the Pequot / Mohegan grant the Town will not be able to sustain this effort.

In addition to the influx of automotive traffic on a daily basis, it should be noted that there are twenty to twenty-five collegiate basketball events annually at Gampel Pavilion. While Storrs was crowned “College Basketball Capitol of the World” in 2004, it has averaged nearly 20 sold out events each season this decade at the 10,027-seat arena. Eighteen other varsity sports play their home competitions on the Storrs campus. Popular amongst these include the nationally ranked men’s and women’s soccer teams at the 7,700 seat Morrone Stadium hosting twenty-five games this season, as well as the men’s and women’s ice hockey teams which will play thirty-six times this winter at the 1,669-seat Frietas Ice Forum. Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts seats 2,630 for cultural events, shows, and concerts throughout the year.

Mansfield has also partnered with the Windham Regional Transit District paying close to \$14,000 in prepaid fares in the current fiscal year and also budgets another share of approximately \$30,000 to keep the bus line sustainable. Statistics from 2006-07 reveal that 78% of riders are associated with the university, while Mansfield residents make up only a partial share of the 22% attributed to “other riders” utilizing the bus line along Route 195.

EDUCATION

In 2005, according to the State Department of Education, the Town of Mansfield's per pupil expenditure was \$12,731.¹ Currently, there are approximately 10 children enrolled in the Mansfield school system, grades K-8, and Region 19: grades 9-12, whose parents or guardians reside on the University of Connecticut property. This fact is important in that individuals residing on university property are exempt for paying property taxes. Given that property taxes are the primary revenue source for funding public education in the town, UConn places a significant burden on Mansfield in terms of financing educational services. The town is subsidizing the education of the 10 children enrolled in grades K-12 for a total of approximately \$127,000.

CONCLUSION

The Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut have worked closely together for many years, with enumerable partnerships. In the fall of 2007, Mansfield began undertaking a strategic planning initiative which has highlighted the various inter-relationships the town has with the university. The strategic plan, Mansfield 2020: A Unified Vision, demonstrates that the university is a stakeholder in the future of the Town of Mansfield and there exists a symbiotic and collaborative relationship between town and gown.

For budgetary purposes, Mansfield is heavily dependent on state intergovernmental revenue. With a significant portion of the area of Mansfield covered by the Main Campus of the University of Connecticut, the Depot Campus of UConn, the Bergin Correctional Facility and Mansfield Hollow State Park, the state has been largest provider of revenue for the municipal budget. Reduction of state grants through complicated formulas applied indiscriminately across all municipalities without taking into account circumstances can cause significant hardship to a community dependent upon its revenue streams. Over the past few years, Mansfield has seen a steady reduction in its share of Pequot-Mohegan grant monies from a high in 2003 of \$3,000,000 to this current year (08/09) of a little more than \$300,000. This reduction significantly exacerbates the budgetary pressures currently borne by the town, and undermines our ability to provide police, fire and ambulance services to the thousands of University students moving throughout the community.

The state has invested more than \$1 billion into the University of Connecticut to build a world-class research and teaching institution. It is counter productive to the goals of the state, and the state's investment is eroded, when the host community cannot provide essential services such as education, public safety, public works, and recreation, which in part help to recruit prospective students, faculty and administration to the state's flagship university.

Revised: November 2008

¹ *Mansfield School District Strategic School Profile 2005-06*, Connecticut State Department of Education, pg 5.
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