



# WELCOME HOME WESTCHESTER: “2 in ‘22” Agenda

**The problem: According to the Westchester County Housing Needs Assessment, we need 11,703 new units of housing just to meet present day-need.**

Each city, town, and village within Westchester County has established land use boards to review issues related to housing development, including site plan reviews, subdivisions, variances, and special use permits. But wide and uneven variation between how boards function in different communities can create unnecessary barriers to the creation of much-needed housing, particular multifamily dwellings and housing that would be affordable to middle-class families. Given the scale of the problem, statewide action is needed to support the development of specific types of housing to help meet the needs of various community members including seniors, millennials, working families, and those who care about climate and reliable public transportation.

**The Welcome Home Westchester Supports the Following 2 Proposals in Governor Hochul’s Budget That Can Help Build the Housing We Need in 2022:**

## **1.) Support the Creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**

Many other states have turned to accessory dwelling units as a way to provide more affordable housing options while supplementing incomes to middle-class and senior homeowners, providing a boost to local contractors and employment, and increasing home values for a sustained boost to the local economy. These can be garage conversions, backyard cottages, converted attics or basement apartments -- any space on an existing lot that can be repurposed into a fully separate living place.

With adequate regulations, ADUs are typically unnoticeable from the street, nor do they noticeably transform the neighborhood character of a single-family zone. This proposal would empower local municipalities to shape local rules to fit individual circumstances, ensure that outdated regulations do not unnecessarily stifle accessory dwelling unit creation, and sets reasonable timetables for approval of accessory dwelling units. It's a small measure that could have a big impact on affordable options in our communities!

## **2.) Support Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Near Our Metro-North Stations**

Study after study shows that allowing for mixed-use, mixed-income, and multi-family housing close to public transit is deeply enriching to our environment and our local downtowns, and our overall economy, as well as a potential game-changer for young people and families who live and work in Westchester but have trouble finding housing in their price range. They result in less dependence on cars, more use of public transit, more walkable and revitalized downtown centers, more educational opportunities for children, and entices more businesses and jobs to locate near our transit hubs – to say nothing of providing a funding boost to the Metro-North Railroad so many Westchester residents rely on. But all too often, these transit-oriented communities get tied up in lengthy review processes or saddled with outdated and climate-unfriendly parking requirements -- which defeat the purpose!

This bill would allow as-of-right development of 25 units per acre within an average 10-minute walk of Metro North and other MTA stations. This would allow for more suburban-friendly options at the size and scale of existing houses (not mid or high-rise apartment buildings) like townhouses, duplexes, bungalow courtyards, etc. At least 10% of the housing units in these projects would be required to have fixed rents pegged to a certain affordable income level, but they would be spared from parking requirements to encourage public transit use and other climate-friendly alternatives.

