



WELCOME HOME WESTCHESTER: “2 in ‘22” Agenda for Towns, Villages, and Cities

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 site plan reviews, subdivisions, variances, and special-use permits. But there exists a wide and uneven variation between how boards function in different communities, both because the municipal code requirements are different and because of the personalities and interests of the board members, including the chair. This variation can create unnecessary barriers to the creation of much-needed housing, particularly multifamily dwellings and housing that would be affordable to middle-class families.

The Welcome Home Westchester Campaign Supports the Following 2 Municipal Reforms That Can Help Build the Housing We Need in 2022:

1.) Pass a Resolution Establishing a “Core Curriculum” for Volunteer Land Use Board Members

State law requires land use board members to undergo a few hours of training each year on a topic of their choice related to the issues that will come before them. However, there is no set of suggested topics or “core curriculum” for new volunteers to follow. Given the twin problems of the Westchester housing shortage and working to overcome systemic and unconscious bias, more focused and prioritized education could greatly help avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

We urge each municipality **to pass a resolution** to encourage each new land use board member to take the following two trainings within their first year serving on the board:

- A full report on the community profile for their city, town, or village, as outlined in the 2019 Westchester County Housing Needs Assessment, including which of their neighbors struggle with housing affordability.
- A historical review to promote awareness of how the tools of zoning, planning, and land use have been intentionally or unintentionally contributing to exclusionary zoning and residential segregation by race, including up to the present day.

2.) Revise the Municipal Code to Promote Pre-Application Meetings for Fair and Affordable Housing Projects

Most Westchester County communities have passed an ordinance to promote fair and affordable housing, requiring at least 10% of the housing units in a new development to have fixed rents pegged to a certain income level. Fourteen communities went even further by establishing an expedited project review process for affordable housing.

We think every municipality should do the same and **require the use of pre-application meetings for affordable housing**. These meetings include staff from each municipal agency and board that reviews proposals for housing with 10% or more Fair and Affordable Housing units:

- These meetings can help identify issues, concerns, and other coordination issues up front so they can be solved in advance, rather than bogging down the review process, wasting time and money.
- These meetings should also establish a clear, comprehensive review process, including a proposed meeting schedule, so the developer has some confidence that the review process wouldn't become so unpredictable and costly as to make these public benefits impractical.

Learn more about the Welcome Home Westchester:

For updates on how YOU can support housing in your local community, go to: www.welcomehomewestchester.org.

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