



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.

Mayor Office

SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD, MPA
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January 22, 2026

City Council
City Hall
One Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

RE: Request for Legislation to Establish an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Affordable Housing Assistance Fund

Honorable City Councilmembers,

I am writing to respectfully request that the City Council enact legislation establishing an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requiring that all future market-rate residential developments set aside no less than ten percent (10%) of total dwelling units for multi-family development with 10+ units as fair and affordable housing. This ordinance will ensure that as Mount Vernon grows, new residential development contributes directly to meeting the City's housing affordability goals while promoting economic diversity and long-term community stability.

This inclusionary approach has been successfully implemented throughout Westchester County, including in the cities of Yonkers, White Plains, and New Rochelle, where a comparable program has generated more than **\$9 million** in affordable housing resources. Consistent with the Westchester County Model Ordinance, this policy is intended to support workforce housing, making new units accessible to teachers, firefighters, police officers, healthcare workers, and other essential professionals whose incomes often exceed traditional subsidy thresholds but fall short of prevailing market rents.

To effectively administer this program, the legislation should establish a Mount Vernon Affordable Housing Assistance Fund Board responsible for oversight, policy guidance, and implementation. The Board shall consist of five (5) voting members: the Mayor of the City of Mount Vernon or his/her designee; the President of the City Council or his/her designee; and the President Pro Tem of the City Council or his/her designee; the Commissioner of Planning and Development or his/her designee; the Commissioner of Assessment or his/her designee. The Board's responsibilities would include recommending funding priorities, reviewing developer contributions and affordability proposals, ensuring compliance with ordinance requirements, and advancing best practices consistent with regional housing goals.

With the recent completion of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Mount Vernon is well-positioned to attract significant new housing investment, including market-rate and luxury development. This ordinance ensures that the workforce supporting the City's economy has meaningful opportunities to live in these new developments. The legislation should further require robust affirmative marketing

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plans to guarantee that affordable units are widely advertised and accessible to eligible residents, consistent with fair housing principles and County guidelines.

The ordinance should also provide developers with opportunities to earn density bonuses or regulatory incentives by delivering community benefits aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. Such incentives may be granted for the following actions:

- Creating new, publicly accessible open space within or adjacent to the development area
- Reducing parking requirements for housing developments located within 0.25 miles of transit stations
- Implementing green building features, including solar energy systems, high-efficiency heating and cooling, and on-site stormwater management
- Providing community facility space for local nonprofit or civic organizations
- Investing in a City-managed Community Benefits Fund for infrastructure improvements
- Providing affordable units at deeper levels of affordability than required by the ordinance
- Supporting affordable homeownership opportunities, including cooperatives
- Incorporating historic preservation elements in surrounding areas
- Redeveloping brownfield or underutilized sites
- Contributing to off-site infrastructure improvements
- Prioritizing housing opportunities for municipal employees

Alternatively, developers may satisfy inclusionary obligations through a fee-in-lieu contribution of five percent (5%) to the City's Affordable Housing Assistance Fund, as established by this legislation. Mount Vernon's proposed fee-in-lieu structure is consistent with established practices in Westchester County, particularly in the Cities of Yonkers and White Plains. Yonkers permits developers to satisfy their inclusionary housing obligation by providing affordable units equal to five percent (5%) of total allowable units, combined with a per-unit cash contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Assistance Fund, in lieu of constructing the full on-site set-aside. White Plains similarly allows a fee-in-lieu alternative, calculated as a per-unit contribution for each required affordable unit, with proceeds dedicated to its Housing Assistance Fund to support citywide affordability initiatives. In both cities, the fee-in-lieu option has proven to be an effective tool for generating flexible funding while maintaining development feasibility and advancing long-term affordable housing goals.

Funds generated through the Affordable Housing Assistance Fund may be used to support a range of housing initiatives modeled after successful programs in Yonkers and White Plains, including but not limited to: down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time homebuyers; preservation of existing affordable housing; gap financing for new affordable or mixed-income developments; rehabilitation of aging housing stock; and targeted programs to support workforce and senior housing.

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These investments will ensure that Mount Vernon's growth remains inclusive, equitable, and responsive to community needs.

The City of Mount Vernon remains committed to advancing housing policies that promote opportunity, affordability, and economic vitality. I respectfully request the City Council's consideration of this legislation and welcome the opportunity to provide additional information as needed.

In Service,

Shawyn Patterson-Howard, Mayor
City of Mount Vernon, NY