



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.

Mayor Office

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January 22, 2026

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

RE: Request for City Council to enact legislation to update City Municipal Code to permit and regulate land use on specific Retail and Storefront Classifications. For consideration on the agenda for January 28, 2026.

Honorable City Councilmembers,

In January 2024, the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) submitted a formal request for legislation to limit the concentration of certain uses within the City's commercial districts. The request was made in response to an oversaturation of certain types of retail businesses, non-retail storefront uses, and other commercial uses, including:

- Neighborhood Convenience Stores (Corner stores/Bodegas)
- Small Box Discount Stores (Dollar stores)
- Smoke and Hookah Retail Shops
- Storefront Faith-Based Organizations
- Auto Repair Service Shops
- Liquor Stores
- Carry-out Restaurants
- Customary Personal Services

This initial request was originally considered in tandem with the City's work on the (now adopted) Comprehensive Plan, to remedy a growing imbalance in our commercial corridors. We have observed an oversaturation of certain storefront types that do not contribute significantly to our sales tax base yet demand a disproportionate share of public safety and health resources. Our goal is to preserve the unique character of our neighborhoods and business districts while ensuring a sustainable economic future.

While no legislation was enacted in response to the IDA's 2024 request, the oversaturation of these types of uses remains an issue. As the City enters the critical phase of updating our zoning code to align with the Comprehensive Plan, I am requesting that this issue be reviewed at this time, along with the consideration of new zoning provisions to address this oversaturation. These new zoning provisions can be implemented in the short-term through a new Ordinance or Local Law, while the City works through the broader changes to our Zoning Ordinance throughout the rest of this year.

Initial review would be conducted by staff in the Department of Planning and Community Development (PCD), who have decades of experience with Zoning Ordinances in Westchester County. There have been several instances where our neighboring municipalities have successfully limited the overconcentration of similar uses through zoning amendments. Mount Vernon should do the same by utilizing PCD's expertise in these matters to

"The Jewel of Westchester"



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help develop targeted regulations that can be applied across all of the City's non-residence and mixed-use districts.

Most likely, these regulations would take the form of special permit criteria, spacing requirements, or limits on uses within certain zoning districts or geographic areas. However, the type of regulation may ultimately vary according to the type of use that is considered. For example, PCD staff has seen examples of smoke shop regulations that are different than regulations limiting dollar stores or carry-out restaurants. The difference in these regulations has more to do with how these businesses operate, how much land they need, how much parking they require, etc. These nuances can be parsed by PCD staff, and recommendations for each set of regulations can be provided by PCD. PCD staff will also need to work with Corporation Counsel to ensure the legality of certain regulations. This is particularly important with respect to faith-based or religious uses, which may have specific protections under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). PCD staff will evaluate these concerns in conjunction with Corporation Counsel.

In addition, as part of this effort, it will be important for any new regulations to avoid impacting certain assets that the City currently enjoys, such as the restaurant districts on Lincoln Avenue or on Gramatan Avenue in Fleetwood. It should not be the intention of any new zoning regulations to cause existing, successful businesses in these areas with regional customer bases to become non-conforming. The purpose is to be deliberate in assuring that residents of Mount Vernon have in-city access to services they need by addressing market saturation, proximity issues and the impact on public welfare.

PCD staff have confirmed that there have been no applications in front of any of our three Land Use Boards for the commercial uses listed above in the past year. The only exception is an application for one car detailing business, which is scheduled for approval resolution at the February 4, 2026 Planning Board meeting. Due to this low volume of current applications, the City should not need to impose a moratorium on these uses while PCD staff works with Corporation Counsel to draft the regulations.

The City of Mount Vernon remains committed to fostering a vibrant, diverse, and safe commercial environment that supports long-term economic growth and neighborhood quality of life. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact my office directly.

Respectfully submitted,

In Service,

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