

2024

Legislative Agenda

Building a more equitable and affordable New York requires every town and neighborhood to commit to building their fair share of housing. At Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County, we believe it is simple – our crisis must be addressed as a collective, beloved community through equitable housing policies that create opportunities for all New Yorkers to have access to safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Our region is heavily impacted by our housing shortage and lack of opportunities for first-time homeownership.

All municipalities and communities must do their part.

We are challenged with an unprecedented number of neighbors struggling with housing insecurity. We must advance policies that promote inclusion, equity and justice to meet their needs.

All municipalities and communities must do their part. From Northern Westchester to Staten Island, all are integral to our blueprint for a more just housing future where New Yorkers have more opportunities to own a piece of their neighborhood. Federal, State, and Local government policies are essential to achieve this vision and we implore government officials to implement policies that serve all New Yorkers.

Habitat NYC and Westchester presents the following policy actions that will invest in communities while building inclusive neighborhoods for generations to come.

Municipal Priorities

■ **Pass and operationalize the City of Yes zoning text amendments.**

Zoning changes can unlock and expedite homebuilding opportunities – ensuring more families are served faster. Critical changes include:

- Allow additional housing to be built in all neighborhoods
- Density bonuses for affordable housing developments
- Removal of parking mandates
- Legalization of Accessory Dwelling Units
- Enable housing development on faith community and campus land

■ **Fully fund and streamline housing and planning agencies to successfully partner with non-profit homebuilders.**

Non-profit affordable housing development must be prioritized in municipal budgets, staffing, and approval schedules to ensure non-profit affordable homebuilders are supported to meet our region's housing need. Persistent delays and bureaucratic inefficiencies have put severe strains on non-profit balance sheets. Developments must be approved and financed more quickly in order to advance critically needed affordable housing and sustain the operations of non-profit partners.

State Priorities

■ Pass the Martin Act Amendment to permanently preserve inclusionary affordable homes.

A6921-A/S3566-A Allows subsidized mixed-income buildings built using programs like 421-a to convert the luxury units to homeownership in exchange for making expiring affordable units permanently affordable – increasing the percentage of affordable units, and transferring them to qualified non-profits. Without extending public benefits to private, predominantly luxury property owners, the bill could add affordable housing in high cost communities and save thousands of affordable units from going market rate. It would also increase tax revenues to the budget-strapped City and State, bolstering the portfolios of non-profit and community housing organizations.

■ Unlock and increase housing supply.

We must pass ambitious proposed policy changes that would unlock new opportunities for affordable housing across the state. Policies that will help increase our housing supply include:

- Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act (FBAHA - **S7791**) legislation to support faith-based institutions seeking to develop affordable housing
- Creating Transit Oriented Development around MTA stations
- Instituting a Fast Track Approval (builder's remedy) process for developments in communities that do not achieve housing targets
- Legalizing Accessory Dwelling Units statewide
- Requiring all municipalities contribute and provide housing at an increased rate

■ Ensure fair and sustainable taxation of affordable homeownership.

Existing tax exemptions, abatements, and assessment practices are insufficient to ensure the long-term and preserved affordability of low-income homeowners. Non-profit built and Community Land Trust homes throughout the state are vulnerable to unfair tax assessments. To preserve this critical housing stock, the State must take action to maintain affordability of affordable and resale restricted homes by passing A6176, A1894, and an as-of-right partial tax exemption for income restricted homes.

Federal Priorities

■ Expand Federal support for affordable housing nationally and internationally

For information on Federal housing priorities supported by the national network of Habitat for Humanity affiliates, visit: www.habitat.org/about/advocacy.