



“THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK”
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For Immediate Release:

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EXPANSION OF AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING PROGRAM PROPOSED

WHITE PLAINS, NY – February 27, 2019. White Plains Mayor Tom Roach today announced a proposal to expand the City’s Affordable Rental Housing Program. When implemented, the program would be the most progressive in Westchester County.

The City of White Plains has shown a strong commitment to affordable housing. Its program, which has been in place since 2003, requires multi-family developments to provide a 10% set-aside of affordable units reserved for those at 80% of the Westchester County Area Median Income (AMI) range. Alternatively, a developer could seek Common Council approval to provide 6% affordable units at the lower 60% AMI range. AMI is determined annually by HUD.

“While this program has certainly been successful in creating affordable rental housing units in the city, we recognize that maintaining White Plains as an affordable place to live for people of all income levels strengthens our city. It also requires our consistent attention to ensure that our program is meeting the housing needs of our residents,” said Mayor Tom Roach.

Council Member Nadine Hunt-Robinson said, "We are always looking for ways to improve our City, and the expansion of our affordable housing program ensures that White Plains remains accessible to people of varied income levels. This is vital to maintaining the diversity that makes our City a great place to live, work and play. In addition, after championing an increase to SCRIE/DRIE protections a few years ago, I am pleased that we are now raising the income eligibility limit further to the state maximum."

(More)



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The proposal being put forward, which was presented to the Common Council at its work session on February 25th, would expand the City’s Affordable Rental Housing Program (ARHP) in several ways. First, it would make the program applicable citywide in areas where multi-family housing with 10 or more units is permitted by the Zoning Code. Currently, the program applies primarily in the downtown area.

Second, the proposal expands eligibility for the program to those whose incomes are 50% of AMI. The City’s current Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice reveals that there are few housing options for those in this income range. Subsidized housing exists for those whose income is below the 50% AMI threshold, and the ARHP is available to those whose income is above this threshold. This change would close an important identified gap in the current program.

Third, the proposal would increase affordable set aside amounts to 12% of units at 80% AMI and to 8% at 50% and 60% AMI. Fourth, the proposal would establish a buy-out of the required affordable rental units as an option for developers. The funds generated from the buy-out option would go into the city’s existing Affordable Housing Assistance Fund (AHAF) and would be used to create a range of housing assistance programs and more affordable units. For example, the funds could be used for down payment assistance, the rehabilitation of existing properties, to subsidize existing housing stock, to purchase properties for public-private partnerships, and to defray a portion of the city’s administrative costs associated with management of the program.

Finally, the proposal includes increasing the annual income eligibility limits under the Senior Citizen Rental Income Exemption (SCRIE) and Disabled Rental Income Exemption (DRIE) programs. These are state programs in which the city has participated for many years. Several years ago the city increased the income eligibility limit to its current \$30,000 level. In an effort to encourage more participation in these programs, the proposal would increase the income eligibility limits to the current state maximum of \$50,000/year. These programs apply to those who live in Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) buildings, of which there are many in the city. Tenants in ETPA buildings who are participating in the SCRIE or DRIE programs are protected from rent increases and building owners receive a tax credit for their participation in the program.

The proposal is currently being discussed by the Common Council and will ultimately require the passage of a local ordinance and amendments to the City’s Zoning Ordinance.



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