

TO: Sunday Vanderberg
FROM: Hon. Anant Nambiar, Legislator
District 7
DATE: May 27, 2026
RE: Memorandum of Legislation - Leveraging County Property to Improve Cell Phone Coverage

Title: Leveraging County Property to Improve Cell Phone Coverage

Sponsor: Hon. Anant Nambiar

Purpose or General Idea of Bill:

- Currently, across many areas of Westchester, cell phone coverage is lower than acceptable levels (75% 5G coverage as measured by the FCC 5G-NR national broadband map, link below)
 - https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/location-summary/mobile?version=dec2024&lon=-73.782542&lat=40.944414&addr_full=40.944414%2C+-73.782542&zoom=13.12&vlon=-73.775016&vlat=40.952575&env=0&tech=tech5g_spd2
- In those areas, Westchester residents and visitors are in danger of not being able to get proper cell reception in case of emergencies or other challenging situations, unless they have a land line available
- Due to local municipal regulations, deployment of cell reception infrastructure has been slow and insufficient
- These “cell reception deserts” are a safety hazard that needs to be addressed, especially as land line usage is rapidly shrinking. Imagine a situation that a resident could not call 911 due to lack of cell coverage. That is an easily avoidable situation that the County can take a lead on addressing

Intent:

- The proposal is for the County to work with cell tower infrastructure companies to utilize the latest technology on County owned property to improve cell coverage. This will

avoid potential resistance from local municipalities to deliver immediate improvements while also offering municipalities (and possibly NY State) a chance to partner with cell tower providers and the County to improve their residents' cell reception

Justification:

- Westchester County residents are currently at safety risk due to inadequate cell phone coverage. While the various municipalities have been slow or resistant to implement technical options to improve coverage, the County can implement options to improve this issue.
- As examples, within District 7, the FCC map shows cell deserts around Playland and Weaver St in Larchmont, both County properties that could host small cell or other technologies to improve cell reception
- The County can also generate revenues by hosting the technology by renting space or property to 3rd party cell phone providers. This is already happening in other New York Counties.
 - Currently, Nassau, Suffolk and Schenectady Counties all use County property to host cell phone technology and generate revenues from 3rd party providers
- We have had preliminary conversations with representatives of cell tower and wireless networks to gauge interest, and the initial responses are positive
- Implementing this solution will also generate de novo revenues for the County as we can charge land use or rent for use of County property

Present Law: None

Fiscal Impact: To be determined