

Tyrae Woodson-Samuels**Legislator, 13th District**

Chair, Committee on Budget & Appropriations

**Committee Assignments:**Infrastructure & Housing
Public Safety & Veterans
Intergovernmental Affairs
Small Business

FROM: Legislator Tyrae Woodson-Samuels

DATE: 7/6

RE: Westchester Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment Initiative for Housing and Economic Development

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this legislation is to establish a countywide initiative to identify, assess, and support the redevelopment of underutilized properties impacted by actual or perceived environmental contamination. Through leveraging existing State and Federal programs, we can encourage economic development, expand housing opportunities, strengthen the County tax base, promote environmental remediation, and facilitate the productive reuse of properties that have remained vacant or underutilized for an extended period of time.

This legislation does not create new environmental regulations, nor does it duplicate existing State cleanup programs. Rather, it positions Westchester County as a facilitator and partner in identifying redevelopment opportunities and maximizing available resources.

By creating a comprehensive understanding of existing brownfield conditions throughout the County, we will be better equipped to support future redevelopment efforts and make informed land-use and infrastructure decisions.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

This legislation would direct the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and relevant staff, to coordinate a countywide assessment of brownfield and potentially contaminated properties located within Westchester County and submit a comprehensive report to the Board of Legislators within twelve (12) months of the effective date of the Local Law.

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The assessment shall:

- Inventory known brownfield sites and potentially contaminated properties throughout Westchester County;
- Identify properties suitable for redevelopment, including residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, and community-serving uses;
- Evaluate redevelopment opportunities located near transit infrastructure, downtown business districts, employment centers, and existing public infrastructure;
- Identify available State and Federal grants, tax incentives, financing tools, and technical assistance programs that may support remediation and redevelopment efforts;
- Assess barriers to redevelopment and recommend strategies to overcome such barriers;
- Evaluate the housing, environmental, economic development, and tax-base benefits associated with redevelopment opportunities;
- Recommend County actions that may facilitate redevelopment and productive reuse of underutilized properties; and
- Specifically identify former gasoline service stations, former dry cleaning establishments, former industrial properties, former manufacturing facilities, and other underutilized sites that may present opportunities for remediation, redevelopment, housing production, economic development, or community revitalization.

LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

- Brownfield properties often occupy strategic locations within established communities and commercial corridors;
- Redevelopment of such properties may support housing production, economic development, environmental remediation, and tax-base growth;

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- New York State has established significant programs and incentives designed to facilitate brownfield redevelopment;
- A coordinated countywide assessment will better position Westchester County and its municipalities to take advantage of available resources and redevelopment opportunities; and
- Establishing the Westchester Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment Initiative for Housing and Economic Development serves a valid public purpose and advances the health, safety, welfare, and economic vitality of Westchester County residents.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Within twelve (12) months of the effective date of this Local Law, the Commissioner of the Department of Planning, or his or her designee, shall submit a comprehensive Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment Report to the Board of Legislators.

The report shall include, to the extent practicable:

- An inventory of known brownfield sites and potentially contaminated properties located within Westchester County;
- Identification of properties suitable for redevelopment;
- Assessment of redevelopment opportunities near transit infrastructure, downtown business districts, employment centers, and existing public infrastructure;
- A summary of available State and Federal funding opportunities and redevelopment incentives;
- Recommendations regarding County participation, coordination, technical assistance, or policy initiatives;
- Identification of barriers to redevelopment and proposed solutions; and
- An evaluation of anticipated economic, housing, environmental, and fiscal benefits associated with redevelopment opportunities.

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In preparing the report, the Commissioner of the Department of Planning, or his or her designee, shall consult and coordinate, as appropriate, with:

- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation;
- The New York State Department of State;
- The Westchester County Department of Planning;
- The Westchester County Department of Health;
- The Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities;
- Local municipalities;
- Industrial Development Agencies;
- Economic development organizations; and
- Other relevant public and private stakeholders.

EXISTING LAW

The New York State Brownfield Cleanup Program, administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation pursuant to Article 27 of the Environmental Conservation Law, provides a framework for the investigation, remediation, and redevelopment of contaminated properties.

The Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, administered by the New York State Department of State, provides planning and redevelopment assistance to communities impacted by concentrations of brownfield properties.

This legislation complements existing State programs and does not alter, supersede, or duplicate State environmental authority.

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FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact associated with this legislation is anticipated to be minimal and primarily limited to staff time associated with coordination, data collection, stakeholder engagement, and report preparation.

To the extent practicable, the County shall seek to leverage existing State and Federal resources, grants, and technical assistance opportunities.

Long-term fiscal benefits may include increased property values, expanded economic activity, job creation, and growth in local tax revenues resulting from successful redevelopment projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This legislation is expected to have a positive environmental impact by encouraging the identification, assessment, remediation, and productive reuse of properties impacted by actual or perceived contamination. The Initiative may further support environmental restoration efforts, improve public health outcomes, and promote sustainable redevelopment practices throughout Westchester County.

HOUSING IMPACT

This legislation will positively impact housing production by identifying redevelopment opportunities on currently underutilized parcels located within existing developed areas. Redevelopment of brownfield properties may create opportunities for additional residential and mixed-use development while minimizing pressure to develop open space and environmentally sensitive lands.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

The Initiative is expected to support economic development by encouraging private investment, facilitating redevelopment, creating employment opportunities, increasing commercial activity, strengthening municipal business districts, and returning vacant or underutilized properties to productive use.

INTENT OF THE LEGISLATION

It is the intent of this legislation to leverage existing State and Federal brownfield remediation and redevelopment programs and not to create a duplicative environmental regulatory framework.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed as granting Westchester County regulatory authority over environmental remediation activities otherwise governed by State or Federal law.

The County's role shall be to facilitate coordination, identify redevelopment opportunities, assist municipalities and stakeholders in accessing available resources, and promote the productive reuse of underutilized properties throughout Westchester County.

SUNSET REVIEW

Following submission of the twelve-month report, the Board of Legislators shall review the findings and recommendations and may consider additional legislative, policy, budgetary, or programmatic actions to advance brownfield redevelopment efforts throughout Westchester County.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyrae Woodson-Samuels".

Tyrae Woodson-Samuels

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