



Westchester County Legislator
CATHERINE F. PARKER
Proudly Serving the 7th District



800 Michaelian Office Building
 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
 White Plains, New York 10601
 (T) 914-995-2802; (F) 914-995-3884
 Parker@westchesterlegislators.com

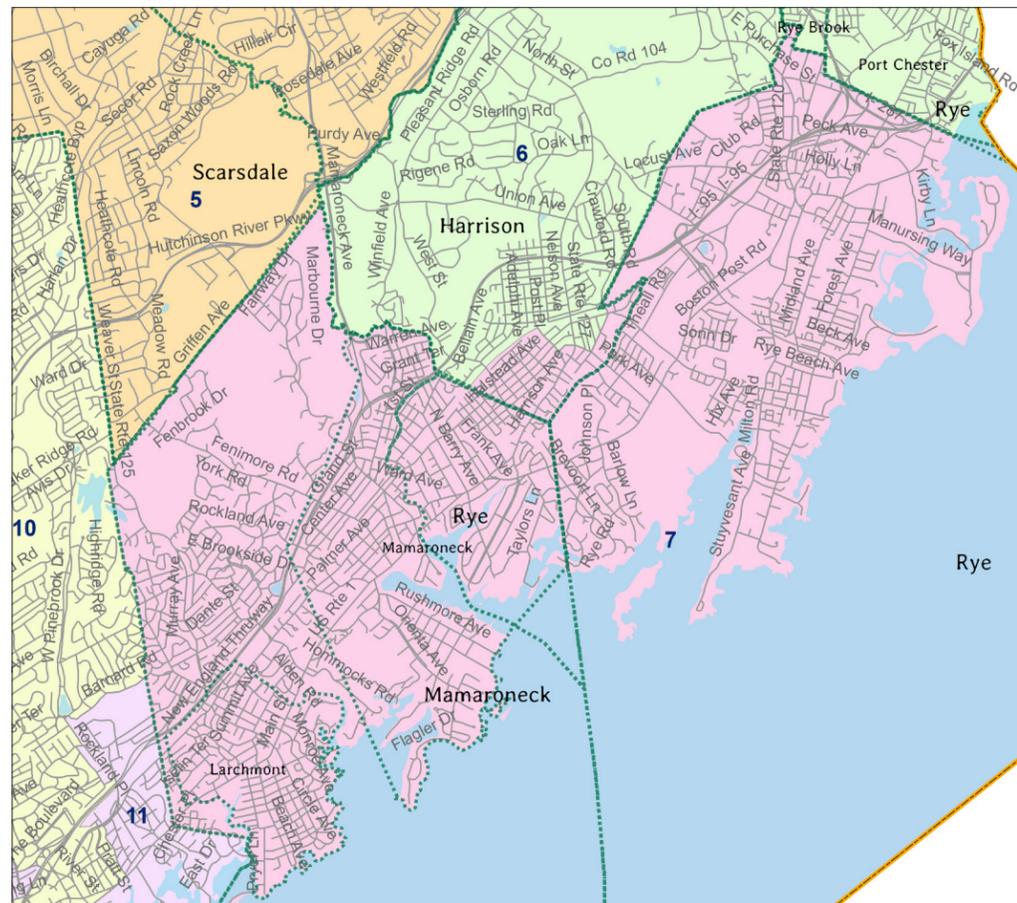
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Redistricting and District 7

Westchester experienced significant population growth over the last decade, and for the first time ever we are now just over a million residents. As county legislative districts go, the Sound Shore saw an even greater gain percentage-wise than almost any other area of the County. Legislative districts have to be fairly and evenly distributed among 17 representatives and District 7 had to lose several thousand people. For those living in Larchmont, Mamaroneck or Rye nothing will have changed for you and I will continue to represent you, but sadly I will be losing my friends in New Rochelle. There has been some shift in Harrison, but most of you will continue to be represented by me.

[District 7 Redistricted Map >](#)



Winter 2022/23 Newsletter

Legislator Catherine F. Parker

District 7 ~ Mamaroneck, Rye, Larchmont,
 part of New Rochelle, part of Harrison
 Chair ~ Human Services, Human Rights & Equity



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I hope that this newsletter finds you and your family well. As 2022 is now in the proverbial rearview mirror, I want to recap some of the work that went on at the Westchester County Board of Legislators and what was accomplished. Our two chief responsibilities are appropriating funds and setting policy so you will see a recap of the budget highlights for 2023 and legislation that I think you will find meaningful. Bear in mind, these are the highlights and there is much work that happens to assist constituents with issues that intersect with government. I want to thank my Legislative Aide, John Filiberti, for once again answering many of your calls and emails and connecting residents to resources. In addition, we have held several virtual meetings with residents to provide information on opportunities to learn about programs for economic and workforce development, the newest sustainable best practices, how government at all levels can work together to best serve, and finally a district budget hearing so that you can share what you would like to see prioritized as we plan for the year ahead.



Honoring Jeanhee Chung at our AAPI Heritage Celebration

I look forward to working for you through the remainder of this term. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, needs, or thoughts.

Sincerely,

Catherine F. Parker

Join me for a Virtual Discussion

We all have busy lives, and I think maybe one good thing to come out of the pandemic was the use of technology to “meet” and connect while discussing an issue that is meaningful to many of my constituents. Our next webinar will be with experts in the field of cutting edge home renovations to reduce costs and maintenance. The date is still TBD, but if you reach out to my office we will make sure to send you the link to join.

Now is the Time to Make Sure you are Receiving Crucial Information by Email

During the course of the year, we have sent out important notices on a regular basis. Many of the announcements are also provided in Spanish. Topics have included:

1. Flood Assistance
2. Mental Health Speakers Forum for Veterans, Individuals, and Families
3. Affordable Housing Opportunities
4. Webinar for Business Grants
5. Upcoming Civil Service Examination Notices
6. COVID-19 Vaccine and Flu Shots

Sign up at Westchesterlegislators.com/subscribe-to-district-7-enews or scan the QR code to make sure that you are in the know.

County Surplus Results in Inflation Relief for Taxpayers

Record-high inflation wreaked havoc on the economy beginning late spring of 2022. To counteract price increases, the County was able to use surplus sales tax revenue to fund relief measures aimed at keeping more money in your pocket. In partnership with County Executive George Latimer, we were able to deliver the following money-saving policies:

- **Gas Tax Holiday**, capping tax at \$0.12 per gallon from June 1 – August 31, 2022
- **No-Fare Bee-Line Buses** from June 1 – August 31, and December 7 - December 26, 2022
- **Free Weekday Admission to County pools and Glen Island Beach** from July 5 - August 31, 2022
- **Free Commuter Parking** at the North White Plains Commuter Lot and the County Center parking lot from July 1 – August 31, 2022.
- **County Civil Service Exam Fee-Waivers** through December 31, 2022
- **Convened Round Table with Utility Companies** to combat spiking energy prices
- **Elimination of the Sales Tax on Residential Energy**, such as home heating oil, propane, natural gas, electric, coal, and wood, on a quarterly basis beginning December 1, 2022. The savings applies not only to homeowners, but to renters as well, depending on the structure of the unit's heat and electric use.
- **The BOL Unanimously Approved the Annual Budget for SUNY Westchester Community College with a 0% Tuition Increase.** The budget includes an additional investment from the County of \$557,000 to maintain tuition affordability for its largest academic institution amid record-high inflation. This marks the second consecutive year without a tuition rate increase. The total budget appropriated is roughly \$149.5 million.

Protecting Our Health, Safety and Well-Being

After two years centered around the COVID pandemic, it was necessary for the Board to seek other ways to help keep the general public healthy in mind and body. We passed extensive and substantial legislation to address public health, safety, and well-being.

- **Flood History Disclosure Law Passes – Renters now have Protection –** A legislative priority for me was seeing to the passage of a law to ensure that renters would be notified of previous flood events in their prospective premises before signing a lease. Landlords must give detail as to whether there was any flooding due to natural or stormwater events over the course of the last 10 years, and must give an estimate of inches and feet of water within those premises. This is a good law with protections for everyone including the landlords, and could certainly save lives. As someone who recognizes that many people with very limited means are often living in the most flood prone areas, this law helps to address the environmental justice aspect of flooding.



- The **Reproductive Healthcare Facilities Access Act**, a law that protects health care facility workers and people seeking medical treatment from being physically prevented or otherwise intimidated while trying to obtain rightful, private services from their health care providers, including pregnancy terminations. It bars physical harassment of people entering or exiting, damage to the premises, or attempts to intimidate people within 25 feet of the building. The bill, which took roughly over a decade to pass, was signed immediately into law by County Executive George Latimer on June 27th.



- State statistics show hate incidents have been on the rise since November 2016. The majority of serious hate incidents are not addressed by federal and state laws because they do not rise to the level of criminality. It is for this reason that the Board passed a **Hate Incident Reporting law** requiring local police departments to report all bias-related crimes and incidents to the Commissioner of Public Safety. These incidents will also be tracked by the County's Human Rights Commission.
- Studies show that households of lawful firearm owners are at a greater risk of victimization than households that do not own firearms. Understanding these statistics, the Board was able to pass a commonsense **Firearm Warning Label law**. This measure requires guns stores to post signs warning of the significantly increased risk of suicide, homicide, death during domestic disputes, and the accidental deaths of children or others to those who own firearms. The label also adds contact information for the County's Crisis Prevention and Response Team and the National Suicide Hotline. Besides being displayed at retailers, the warning would also be given to people seeking gun licenses in Westchester.



With winners of the Lions Club Peace Poster Contest



Celebrating ArtsWestchester Juneteenth Grantees



With League of Women Voters of Mamaroneck



Highlighting the importance of shopping local during the holiday season on Mamaroneck Ave. with County and Local Officials

The 2023 County Budget

On Monday, December 12, 2022 my colleagues and I passed the County budget for 2023. There is much good news in the budget:

- A reduction to the tax levy by \$6 million dollars
- \$90 million to incentivize affordable housing
- An expanded program through our public safety department that focuses on mental health specialists as part of a way to keep crime down
- \$5 million added to our fund to help communities with flood mitigation
- An addition of over \$68 million to our reserve funds for a total of \$192,000,000
- Anticipated sales tax revenues of \$216 million that will be shared with local municipalities and school districts to help reduce reliance on property taxes to pay for services

Additionally, through the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**, Westchester County was allocated \$187,926,698 in March 2021 and received its second installment of \$93,963,349 in June 2022. The County has until December, 31, 2024 to obligate the funds according to the Federal guidelines, and has allocated them to these critical areas:

- Public Health Investment
- Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby Home Visiting Program
- Non-Profit Grant Program
- Small Business Development Assistance
- Tourism & Hospitality Development and Promotion
- Workforce Development Job Training
- Affordable Housing Development & Multi-Family Unit Rehabilitation
- Wastewater Infrastructure
- Revenue Replacement
- \$750,000 for Economic Development and a program for Digital Equity Now

And specifically for District 7:

- \$12 million dollars to fund any local share if required for the Army Corps of Engineers project for flood mitigation for Mamaroneck
- \$1 million for Larchmont for Flint Park drainage improvements
- \$300,000 for the Town of Mamaroneck to study the stormwater drainage system
- \$152,000 for Community Resource Center's workforce development program and a new program to prevent domestic violence
- \$50,000 for a mental health program for Rye High School working with Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) and the Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health
- \$20,000 for Coalition for Understanding Racism through Education (CURE) in conjunction with our district's five libraries

I thank my colleagues at the Board of Legislators as well as County Executive George Latimer and his administration for the vision and dedication to achieve this landmark budget for 2022.