



Westchester County Legislator
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Proudly Serving the 12th District



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What County Government Does for You

Two thirds of Westchester County's budget pays for services mandated by the State and Federal governments. Our non-mandated services are also things that our communities cannot do without.

Services provided by Westchester County include the following:

- transportation infrastructure (including 140 miles of road and numerous bridges, the County airport, the BeeLine bus system, and paratransit for disabled residents);
- mainline sewers, wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal;
- the criminal justice system (including courthouses, prosecutors and defense attorneys, probation and juvenile justice services, and the County jail);
- preschool special education, early intervention, and Westchester Community College;
- emergency services and County police;
- parks, nature centers, golf courses, and trails;
- restaurant inspections, rabies and other disease control;
- social services (including Medicaid, assistance to needy families, homeless shelters, and child protective services);
- community mental health services;
- programs for senior citizens, at-risk youth and victims of domestic violence;
- land use planning;
- our elections system.

If you'd like to me to attend a meeting of your local organization to discuss what County government does, please contact my office.




Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2019 Newsletter

MaryJane Shimsky

District 12 ~ Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Edgemont, Greenburgh,
Hartsdale, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's been another busy year at the Board of Legislators. We have passed legislation protecting the environment, domestic violence victims, displaced workers and domestic animals. We also have worked closely with our counterparts in Albany and in County agencies to implement reforms passed by the State government – including Raise the Age, criminal justice reform and early voting.

In cooperation with the administration of County Executive George Latimer, we have made major strides in maintaining the County's infrastructure, and made a big dent in our \$1.8 billion capital projects backlog. As chair of the Public Works Committee, I am proud of our work to make County roads, bridges, wastewater treatment, buildings and parks operate better. However, anyone who drives on the Bronx River Parkway or bicycles on the South County Trailway knows that we have much more to do; and I will continue being a vocal advocate for our infrastructure.

To continue doing the good things that the people of Westchester County expect of us, however, we have had to restabilize our finances. Years of fiscal irresponsibility during the last administration reduced our fund balance by half, endangered our bond rating and decimated the workforce on which we rely to insure the public health and safety. This year, the Board of Legislators approved a one percentage point sales tax increase by a bi-partisan vote of 12-0. The proceeds will help the County rebuild its fund balance, continue infrastructure investments and provide essential services.

The new sales tax rate – which is equal to or less than the sales tax rates in Westchester's major cities and in most counties in our State – will also help our municipal governments and school districts. In 2020, the new rates are projected to provide the Village of Ardsley with an additional \$238,000 in revenue, and the Ardsley school district with \$257,000 more; the Village of Dobbs Ferry with \$581,000 and the Dobbs Ferry schools with \$254,000 more; the Town of Greenburgh with nearly \$2.3 million, the Edgemont schools with \$199,000 and Greenburgh Central 7, \$583,000 more. The Village of Hastings-on-Hudson is projected to receive \$419,000 in added revenue and the Hastings schools, \$227,000 more; and the Village of Irvington, \$343,000 and the Irvington schools, \$246,000.

I look forward to continuing my work on your behalf. Please contact me with your questions and concerns.

Sincerely,

MaryJane Shimsky

Honoring Women Who Led the Way



With Muriel Fox, co-founder of the National Organization for Women



With Congresswoman Nita Lowey

Protecting Our Youth From the Dangers of Nicotine

As smoking rates among young people declined, parents thought that abuse of tobacco products was behind us. Then came e-cigarettes, vaping products – and, worst of all, the Juul. Suddenly, large numbers of our college-age, high school-age, and even middle school-age youth were getting hooked on nicotine. Many of our young people ingest the equivalent of 4 or 5 cigarette packs' worth of nicotine a day.



To parents and others who care for children — this is what a Juul looks like

The battle against cigarette use focused on the dangers of tar – the agent that caused most of the lung cancer associated with smoking. But nicotine also has its hazards. It has been shown to compromise brain function in young people, and can lead to addiction to other substances. There also may be harmful substances in the vaping liquid itself, with health effects that we might not fully understand for many years.

The Board of Legislators has been working with health advocates and communities ravaged by decades of targeting by tobacco companies to draft laws to prevent another generation of nicotine addicts. While the BOL is considering a comprehensive ban on all flavored tobacco and tobacco products (including menthol), the State is also entertaining legislation. We stand ready to work with our State partners to protect Westchester residents to the fullest extent legally possible. ■

Parks Roundup

The County has completed many badly-needed projects in our parks system, but there is still more maintenance and restoration work to be done. Here's information about some of our local achievements and challenges:

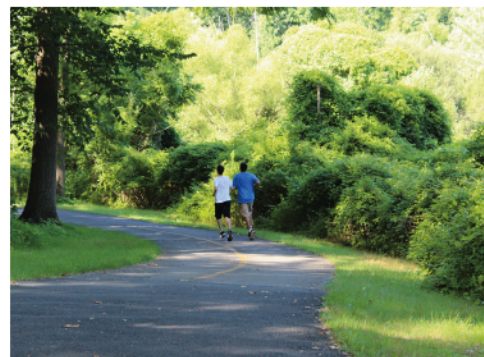


SPRAIN RIDGE POOL: This July, the Sprain Ridge Pool complex became fully operational for the first time since 2010. Construction of the diving/competition pool was completed, and we look forward to hosting swim meets there again next summer. With a zero-depth entry to the activity pool and a new splash deck yards away, Sprain Ridge Pool is again the perfect place for families and summer campers to enjoy the water.



THE MILLER HOUSE/WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS: For years, this gem in North White Plains was a window on life

for Westchester residents during the American Revolution. But it had been shuttered and left to rot during the last administration. This October, the lovingly-restored farmhouse and new visitors center (paid for by a grant from New York State) were officially opened. Local historic preservation groups are organizing programs for the general public.



THE SOUTH COUNTY TRAILWAY: My constituents have been alerting the County to the increasingly problematic conditions along the section of the South County Trailway running from the Hastings-Yonkers border to Route 119 in Elmsford. The new Administration has made temporary repairs while preparing plans for the South County Trailway's repaving. I am cautiously optimistic that the repaving will be done in 2020. With the imminent completion of the North County Trailway, the County's longest trailway system will soon be good as new, for the first time since the 1980s. ■

The Recreation of the Future

You don't have to be a fan of the X-Games, cyclocross and halfpipe to know that younger generations of Westchester residents are pursuing new sports. In recent months, I have met with residents interested in cricket and disc golf. Fortunately, we can provide facilities for such new sports at a tiny fraction of the cost of our traditional offerings.

The 2020 budget includes the first County recreational study since 2008. Making sure that our recreational offerings match what our residents want will make our people happier and healthier, and help ease the cost to taxpayers.

Any organization that would like to educate me about potential new recreational offerings should contact my office. ■

Energy and You

Our tribulations with ConEd never seem to end. On the positive side, my work with the United Westchester task force seems to have paid off. The New York State Public Service Commission agreed with most of the coalition's recommendations to improve electric companies' response to power outages. Hopefully, before the next big storm, ConEd will have more local line crews and better communications with local governments and the public.

On the minus side, ConEd's moratorium on new gas hookups risks home improvements and needed economic development. Unless reversed by State regulators or the courts, the ConEd moratorium will last until 2023.

What can homeowners do to improve their chances in an unreliable energy market? Alternative energy sources may provide an answer. Sustainable Westchester – a collaboration of local Westchester County governments – has launched programs to increase the use of solar power and ground source heat pumps. Many of these initiatives involve home installation, but some do not. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) can also help homeowners find alternative energy solutions. To learn more, go to sustainablewestchester.org or NYSERDA.ny.gov, or call my office. ■



Paying tribute to America's fallen, Memorial Day weekend 2019

PHOTO GALLERY



Helping to feed the hungry at the Mav Market food pantry at Mercy College



Sharing a light moment with the Father of our Country, at Philipse Manor Hall



Celebrating student achievements at Italian Heritage Night



Listening to constituents at Coffee and Conversation



Honoring years of service to Groundwork Hudson Valley and The Science Barge