

VILLAGE OF LARCHMONT

The Village of Larchmont has not adopted the County model zoning ordinance for affordable housing, nor does it in any way promote fair and affordable housing (FAH). It allows multifamily apartment buildings and townhouses in some areas but with limitations that constrain their development as a practical matter. Regarding lower density opportunities, accessory and cottage-style housing are not allowed. The Village has nonetheless made considerable progress towards satisfying its benchmark obligation under the unadopted Affordable Housing Allocation Plan; roughly half of the approximately 100 unit benchmark obligation has been built. The County has identified potential development sites that theoretically can accommodate all of the remaining units, but practical restraints make this unlikely. In reality, additional opportunities for affordable housing development seem limited in the absence of actions by the Village to provide mandates and incentives for FAH housing and to broaden the opportunities for various housing types.

Model Zoning and County Benchmark

- The Village has not adopted the model affordable housing zoning ordinance.
- The unadopted Affordable Housing Allocation Plan produced in 2005 by the County's planning department called for 105 affordable housing units in Larchmont, of which roughly half (51 units) have been built in the interim, leaving a balance of 54 units.

Zoning Ordinance

- Multifamily apartments and townhouses are allowed as-of-right in one residential and two commercial districts, the Multifamily (MF), Retail Business (RB) and Retail Center (RC) districts. They are permitted by special permit in one additional residential district.
- Apartments above stores are permitted in the RB and RC districts.
- Accessory apartments are not allowed.

Restrictive Practices

- Multifamily buildings cannot be larger than 20 units in size or taller than 2.5 stories. These two restrictions forestall economies of scale without hard-to-assemble large sites. They also make a number of existing residential buildings nonconforming, and thus seem to be purposefully limiting.
- Townhouses are restricted to sites of six or more acres, and there are no available sites of that size.
- There can be no more than two bedrooms per townhouse dwelling, constraining the ability to accommodate larger families.
- No single-family house can be smaller than 1,000 square feet outside of the multifamily districts, and 1,400 square feet in most of the Village. These square footages prohibit cottage-style housing.
- Accessory housing is not allowed. Boarders and roomers are, but with no more than two per building, with an added homeowner occupancy requirement.

Incentives and Mandates

- There are no mandates or incentives for affordable housing.

Zoning Map, Development Pattern and Development Potential

- Zoning districts that permit multifamily housing as-of-right are mapped in seven areas, covering 10 percent of the Village.
- These seven areas contain 12 identified development sites, which can accommodate a total of 53 housing units. The sites are small, averaging a fifth of an acre and covering about two acres in total, meaning that townhouse development would be prohibited on all of them.
- Five of the 12 identified development sites are located in an area that appears to be dominated by industrial uses. The potential for soil contamination in this area is high, and environmental remediation would increase the cost of redevelopment exponentially, making affordable housing development unrealistic.
- Two of the zoning districts that permit multifamily development and contain available sites already have relatively high percentages of minority residents. Approximately one-third of the estimated housing units that can be accommodated on available sites would be in the RC and MF districts, which have existing populations that are 13 and 12 percent minority respectively, compared with 5 percent in the Village as a whole. In order to comply with the Settlement, a racial analysis must be conducted at the census block level. High concentrations of people of color will disqualify some sites for additional affordable housing development.
- At the right densities, housing values are sufficient to induce multifamily development and mixed-income housing without incentives.
- Currently 1.84 percent of the residential acreage is occupied by multifamily housing, inclusive of two- and three-family housing, equivalent to one percent of total land area.

Master Plan

- The master plan dates to 1966 with an update in 1987. UNAVAILABLE.

Implications

- The Affordable Housing Allocation Plan produced in 2005 by the County's planning department calls for just over 100 affordable housing units in Larchmont, of which roughly half have been built in the interim, yielding a net benchmark of 53 units. The Village has thus made considerable progress.
- Although the current zoning regime provides the theoretical opportunity to develop the remaining 53 affordable units needed to meet the County's Affordable Housing Allocation plan benchmark, practical impediments make that number of affordable units unlikely, let alone the hundreds of units that would be required in the case of mixed-income development (e.g., 530 units under a 90 percent market-rate / 10 percent affordable format, which represents the minimum affordable housing component under the County's model zoning ordinance).

- The available development sites are all small, either too small to accommodate mixed-income development or too small to allow economies of scale.
- Although the Village can theoretically accommodate 53 units of new housing on available land, that number may be an overestimate because some of the identified development sites may actually be inappropriate for affordable housing. The five lots located along the northern edge of the Village are in an area that appears to be dominated by industrial uses. The potential for soil contamination in this area is high, and environmental remediation would increase the cost of redevelopment exponentially, making affordable housing development unrealistic. High nearby concentrations of people of color may also disqualify some of the identified sites for FAH development.
- The lack of incentives or mandates decreases the likelihood that any new multifamily units will be affordable.
- At the right densities, housing values are sufficient to induce multifamily development and mixed-income housing without incentives. The very high value of apartments and condo units in the Village should even be sufficient to promote 80/20 mixed-income housing (which is more aggressive than the 90/10 mix that represents the maximum permitted ratio of market-rate to affordable units under the County's model zoning ordinance.) The 80/20 ratio would provide less development pressure than 90/10 mixed income housing, and unlike 90/10 developments would be eligible for federal tax incentives.
- Additional actions will likely be needed for the Village to meet its affordable housing obligation under the Settlement. These might include, in some combination, mapping additional areas for multifamily housing, providing mandates and zoning incentives for affordable housing, permitting accessory housing units (especially if affordable accessory units are listed on a Countywide registry of FAH units), and providing opportunities for additional types of low-density development (such as cottage-style housing or quadraplexes).

LARCHMONT FACT SHEET

a. Total acreage of the Village	687 acres	100%
b. Total acreage in zoning districts where multifamily housing is permitted as-of-right	66.3 acres	9.6%
c. Undeveloped area in these zoning districts	2.3 acres	0.3%
d. Undeveloped area not subject to wetlands, floodplain and steep slopes	2.3 acres	0.3%
RB	1.55 acres	
RC	0.63 acres	
MF	0.14 acres	
e. Order of magnitude area available for development*	1.9 acres	0.3%
RB	1.24 acres	
RC	0.50 acres	
MF	0.11 acres	
f. Number of sites available for development	12 sites	
g. Average size of sites	0.2 acres	
h. Theoretical number of multifamily units that can be developed as-of-right	53 units	
RB	35 units	
RC	14 units	
MF	4 units	
i. Average selling price for multifamily (condo) units	\$630,000**	
j. Order of magnitude value for land, per condo unit	\$189,000	
k. Order of magnitude total cost of development, per condo unit	\$375,000	
l. Percent minority population (0.7% Black, 4.5% Hispanic)	5%	
m. Percent minority population in the zoning districts permitting multifamily housing and containing available development sites		
RB	0.4% Black, 5.4% Hispanic	6%
RC	2.6% Black, 10.6% Hispanic	13%
MF	1.5% Black, 10.2% Hispanic	12%
n. Number of units needed to meet the 2000-2015 Allocation Plan benchmark	54 units	
2015 Allocation	105 units	
Number of units created since 2000	51 units	

* After applying a factor of 80 percent to account for irregular site configuration, setbacks, building form restrictions, and the like.

** Regional value employed where data was not provided for the municipality, employing the County's definition of North, Central and South for what is meant as region. Weighted averages were calculated using available data for each region.