

# **Workforce Housing Coalition**

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**[www.workforcehousingcoalition.org](http://www.workforcehousingcoalition.org)**

Monday, February 23, 2014

Mr. Thomas F. Prendergast  
Chairman  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
347 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-3739

## **Re: Harrison Transit Oriented Development**

Dear Mr. Prendergast:

Please distribute this letter to all MTA Board members for the Wednesday meeting.

It has been two months since we made our presentation before the MTA Board and you made your remarks recognizing the MTA's responsibility to insure that its resources serve all of its ridership in an equitable way, including land. We have requested that at least 20% of the apartments in the MTA's transit oriented development projects be affordable to the region's workforce adjusted by family size. For instance, affordability in Westchester County is defined as a two-bedroom apartment for a family of three with income up to \$56,000, and rent no more than about \$1,400 per month. We feel this is a reasonable request.

The MTA's first development in Harrison, New York as currently envisioned, would charge rents of about \$3,500 for a two-bedroom apartment, or more than double what working families can afford. We understand that Avalon has never objected to including 10% affordable units in its Westchester County developments, although it has said nothing publicly.

In December, your Counselor Stephen Morello asked us to be patient while the agency attempted to negotiate a solution with Harrison and the developer to insure that Harrison includes affordable housing in its development plan. Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino publicly endorsed affordable apartments in Harrison and sponsored a meeting between the parties. In addition, the HUD Monitor in the Westchester County federal consent decree also weighed in, demanding that the county insure affordable apartments in a town among the least diverse and most discriminatory in zoning.

However, despite these sincere efforts, we have heard of no progress in reaching a solution and at this point we feel the MTA must back up its words with action. We respectfully ask the MTA Board on Wednesday to pass a resolution that states in no uncertain terms that affordable workforce housing must be part of every transit oriented development in which the MTA participates. We would like it to specify a 20% affordability component. By passing such a resolution, the MTA would send a message that basic fairness cannot be sacrificed for a town nearly the size of Manhattan that has not done one affordable apartment in 25 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex H. Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "R".

Alexander H. Roberts, Community Housing Innovations, Inc.  
James Killoran, Westchester Habitat for Humanity  
Lena Anderson, White Plains/Greenburgh NAACP  
Graciela Heymann, Westchester Hispanic Coalition  
Dennis Hanratty, Mount Vernon United Tenants  
David Schwartz, Working Families Party  
Veronica Vanterpool, Tri-State Transportation Campaign  
V. Elaine Gross, Erase Racism  
Greg Maher, The Leviticus Fund  
Nada Khader, WESPAC  
Mara Winokur, ULI Westchester/Fairfield  
Richard Hyman, Urban Planner  
Charles Pateman, Developer  
Timothy Lewis, Greenburgh Town Attorney