

HOUSING

(Adopted 1983, Revised 1992)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports planning and zoning regulations that would provide a broad mix of housing options, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of various income and age groups.*

Explanation:

1. We support the concept of **cluster housing** as an effective use of open space, an efficient use of marginal land, and as a way to reduce the cost of owning a single-family house. We recommend adoption of a regulation permitting construction of a limited number of small, single-family houses clustered to permit shared use of roads and services.
 - a. We recommend that clusters be permitted on any parcel of open space large enough to accommodate a minimum of three legal building lots.
 - b. We propose perimeter setbacks to be in conformance with each zone.
2. We encourage conversions of existing **commercial buildings**, or other large buildings, in areas tied to adequate sewer facilities for multi-family use.
3. We support the following **zoning regulations** regarding housing:
 - a. Provision to encourage retention of optimum proportion of open space to land covered.
 - b. Provision that aesthetic characteristics harmonize with the surrounding neighborhood (e.g., scale, landscape, height, parking and traffic flow).
 - c. Provision for density control as to maximum units per acre and bedrooms per unit.
4. LWV Westport recognizes that accessory **apartments** in houses and out buildings are meeting certain housing needs in our community, and supports the legalization and regulation of such apartments.
 - a. The problem of illegal apartments must be addressed. If allowed to proliferate without regulation, these apartments are likely to cause problems in the future (e.g., sewage, traffic, police and fire protection). The Town has no means of insuring the health, safety or welfare of these tenants.
 - b. Accessory apartments serve a need in Westport: They provide housing for tenants who might otherwise be unable to live here and income to help landlords maintain their properties. Accessory apartments are a means by which smaller families can utilize large houses. They generally serve the young and the elderly--age groups that find it increasingly difficult to secure appropriate housing in Westport.
 - c. To ignore the existence of apartments is to deny reality. These apartments should be recognized and regulated. Criteria recommended by the League for consideration in the formulation of a regulation include:
 - i. off-street parking
 - ii. renewable permits
 - iii. not restricted to relatives
 - iv. owner in residence
 - v. adherence to Westport-Weston Health District sanitary codes
 - vi. size limits
 - vii. one apartment per lot
 - viii. retention of single family appearance

- ix. certificate of occupancy
- d. Following a reasonable grace period, all existing apartments should be identified and regulations strictly enforced. Permit fees should be used to defray enforcement costs.
- 5. We support the establishment of continuing care facilities in Westport with the following criteria:
 - a. A facility should provide all three levels of continuing care (i.e., independent living, assisted living and nursing care.)
 - b. The acreage on which the facility resides must be adequate for indoor and outdoor activities.
 - c. A variety of unit sizes should be available so that at least some are moderately priced.
 - d. Local transportation should be provided by the facility.
 - e. Appropriate social and recreational programs should be available to residents.
 - f. Three meals a day should be made available by the facility.
- 6. All housing regulations should conform to the LWV Westport criteria for good planning, zoning and water use.

* Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Westport's position on Health and Human Services.