Construction Workers Compensation Insurance Group Reports a 30 Percent Dividend for its Members

Real Estate Group Also Announces a 30 Percent Dividend

PELHAM

New York State Workers Compensation Group 458, the workers compensation insurance group of The Builders Institute (BI), recently announced a 30 percent dividend that will be issued in 2025 for the policy year ending Jun. 29, 2024. The dividend was announced at the group's Annual Meeting on Apr. 1 in Pelham.

Levitt-Fuirst Insurance & Bonding, the manager of Group 458 and the insurance manager of The Builders Institute (BI), made the announcement. The dividend is in addition to a 32.5 percent maximum advance discount that group members may be eligible to receive, spokesmen said.

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Impact

Serving Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region

News for the Building and Realty Industry

79 *Years of Providing Knowledge to the Building Community*

BRI

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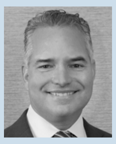

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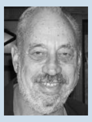


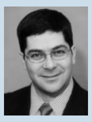

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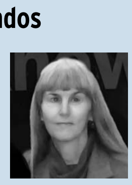

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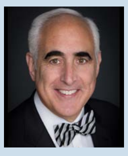

By Paul Adler, Esq.

NAHB Reacts to President Trump's Tariff Announcement

NAHB Reps Also Stress That Eliminating Excessive Regulations Will Ease the Nation's Housing Affordability Crisis

WASHINGTON

Representatives from The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) recently issued their assessments on President Trump's recent Tariff announcement.

Buddy Hughes, chair of NAHB and a home builder and developer from Lexington, N.C., issued a statement on Apr. 2 after President Trump announced a wide range of reciprocal tariffs on several nations.

"While the complexity of these reciprocal tariffs makes it hard to estimate the overall impact on housing, they will undoubtedly raise some construction costs," Hughes said.

Hughes, however, said that NAHB is pleased that President Trump recognized the importance of critical construction inputs for housing and chose to continue current exemptions for Canadian and Mexican products, with a specific exemption for lumber from any new tariffs at this time.

"NAHB will continue to work with the administration to find ways to increase domestic lumber production, reduce regulatory burdens, and create an environment that allows builders to increase our nation's housing supply," Hughes said.

Additional Critical Points

Hughes, on Apr. 1, told Congress that eliminating excessive regulations will ease the nation's housing affordability crisis. He stressed that excessive government regulations are frustrating the efforts of home builders and multifamily developers to build more housing and address the nation's housing affordability crisis.

Testifying before the House Small Business Committee during a hearing focusing on deregulation, Hughes said that residential construction is one of the most heavily regulated industries in the country.

"Regulatory costs, which include complying with building codes, zoning issues, permitting roadblocks and other costly challenges, make up nearly 25 percent of the cost of building a single-family home and more than 40 percent of the cost of a typical apartment," Hughes said. "Congress and the Trump administration must look for ways to reform the regulatory rulemaking process while also eliminating excessive or unnecessary regulations so that more Americans can achieve homeownership and have more affordable rental options."

Amid a nationwide shortage of roughly 1.5 million housing units, NAHB has put together a 10-point housing plan to get at the heart of the problem by removing barriers that hinder the construction of new homes and apartments. At the top of the list is the need to eliminate excessive regulations and reform the regulatory process, Hughes said.

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BRI Legislative Breakfast Highlights Key Issues Facing the Building and Realty Industry

EASTCHESTER

On Friday, Mar. 7, 2025, the Building and Realty Institute (BRI) hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast at Mulino's at Lake Isle in Eastchester. This highly anticipated event provided a crucial forum for dialogue between members of the building and real estate industry and key state legislators.

The breakfast brought together members of the New York State Assembly and Senate delegation to engage directly with BRI members, allowing for a meaningful discussion on the most pressing legislative and regulatory issues impacting the industry. The attending legislators included Assemblymembers Matt Slater, Dana Levenberg, Amy Paulin, Gary Pretlow, MaryJane Shimsky, and Steve Otis, along with State Senator Shelley Mayer. Adding to the significance of the event, newly-elected Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins made a special appearance.

During the breakfast, the BRI, association officials said, presented its 2025 Legislative Agenda, outlining critical concerns and policy recommendations for lawmakers to consider during the current legislative session in Albany. The discussion focused on several key issues, including:

- **"Good Cause" Eviction Law** – A controversial proposal that could drastically alter the landlord-tenant dynamic, potentially discouraging property investment and development.
- **Housing Stability and Tenant Protection**

Continued on p. 10

Con Edison's Rate Hikes Spark Backlash from Lawmakers, Advocates, and Property Owners

ARMONK

For Con Edison customers, the financial burden of keeping the lights on may be about to grow.

The utility's latest proposed rate hike, if approved by the Public Service Commission, would increase electric bills by an average of 11.4 percent and gas bills by 13.3 percent starting in 2026, according to representatives of the business community and media reports.

The proposal has sparked widespread concern from residents, business owners, and property managers. With affordability already a major issue in New York, these steep hikes raise serious questions about the impact on both households and the broader housing market. The main driver of these increases are not the cost of the electricity or gas itself, but so-called "delivery charges" that now run several times the cost of the actual energy usage, business leaders have said.

The frustration over these rising costs was on full display at a recent press conference in White Plains, where more than 100 Westchester County residents, lawmakers, and advocates gathered to demand action. The event, led by Sen. Shelley Mayer and

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New Report Finds That 82,000 Current Housing Units Could Be Lost Due to Flooding by 2040

Regional Plan Association Study Suggests Current Zoning Only Meets 45% of Housing Needs; New York City and Surrounding Counties Need to More Than Double Current Zoning Capacity to Meet Future Housing Needs

NEW YORK

The Regional Plan Association (RPA), in collaboration with the National Zoning Atlas, released on Apr. 7 an extensive analysis assessing how the increasing risk of future flooding - triggered by both storms and sea-level rise - in New York City and surrounding communities can impact housing in years to come.

The report titled, Averting Crisis: Zoning to Create Resilient Homes for All, underscores the urgent need for zoning reforms and supportive policies to address both housing and climate adaptation challenges across the study area of New York City and the suburban communities of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties.

Key Findings on Flood Risk

With nearly one million homes and multifamily buildings in the New York City metropolitan area at high risk of flooding, the crisis is accelerating. Key statistics of the report find:

- Approximately 78 percent of municipalities stand to lose housing due to flooding. 77,300 acres of residential-zoned land (10.5 percent) in New York City and its suburbs will face high risks of flooding by 2040. Up to 82,000 housing units would face significant risk of loss due to chronic and coastal flooding - potentially rising to 160,000 by 2070.
- Suffolk County has the largest percentage of residential acreage exposed to flooding, with 37,800 acres - approximately 10 percent - vulnerable.
- The highest percent of the potentially affected population resides in the urban core and regional downtowns, with about 63 percent of at-risk residents in higher-density urban areas.

Of the 1.2 million homes RPA estimates will be needed to address current and prospective housing gaps, 362,000 of those housing units are to address immediate needs to address low-vacancy rates, strained affordable housing supply and transitioning residents from temporary shelters into more permanent housing.

Within the report's area study, 150,000 people remain homeless, with the number of families experiencing homelessness nationally increasing by 39 percent from 2023-2024, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Continued on p. 4

From the Editor's Desk

Hanley's Highlights

by Jeff Hanley
Associate Executive Director, Building and Realty Institute (BRI), *Impact* Editor

A Goodbye To A Good Friend

ARMONK

Goodbyes, most definitely, are a part of life.

Some are extremely difficult. The real estate community of the New York metropolitan area recently experienced that situation after learning about the death of Leah Caro, a well-known Realtor and a well-respected member of our region's real estate sector.

Leah, who died on Apr. 6, was a member of the Board of Managers of One Key Multiple Listing Service. She was also a Past President of The Westchester-Putnam Association of Realtors (WPAR), which is now The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR).

Leah was a regular guest on "Building Knowledge with the Building and Realty Institute (BRI)," one of the BRI's former radio shows. The program aired on the former 1460 WVOX AM and wvox.com from June of 2017 through September of 2023. She was also a regular guest on the BRI's current Podcast Series, which retains the same name as our association's former radio show on 1460 WVOX AM.

Pictured above during the Oct. 18, 2019 segment of "Building Knowledge with the Building and Realty Institute (BRI)" on the former 1460 WVOX AM and wvox.com are the late Leah Caro and Jeff Hanley, the host of "Building Knowledge" and the Associate Executive Director of the BRI.

The BRI was very fortunate to have Leah serve as our "go-to source" for "Building Knowledge" evaluations of the real estate markets of the New York metropolitan area. She analyzed the data of HGAR and the One Key Multiple Listing Service in flawless ways during her many guest appearances on our programs.

As the host of the BRI's former radio shows and its current Podcast Series, I can say that Leah was always a great guest on our programs. She was extremely upbeat, knowledgeable and professional during her appearances. And, from time-to-time, she would add some humor to her real estate industry evaluations during her guest spots.

Leah was a great person. A great friend. A great colleague. And, without question, a valuable member of our region's real estate community. I will always treasure the many episodes of the BRI's radio shows, as well as the BRI's podcasts, that we did together. She was the best. The very best. The condolences of everyone on the BRI's staff go out to her family, and to her friends and colleagues.

Goodbye Leah. Goodbye, my friend. And, for the record, this is, without question, an extremely difficult goodbye.

Insurance Insights

By Ken Fuirst and Jason Schiciano
Levitt-Fuirst Insurance and Bonding

These Optional Insurance Coverages May Not Be Optional for Your Business

TARRYTOWN

Buildings (office buildings, warehouses, apartments, condominiums, etc.) are typically insured against many "standard" risks, including:

- ◆ Liability (e.g. claimant sustains injury from slip/fall at the building, and sues the owner);
- ◆ Building damage/destruction, and business income loss, when occurring due to a fire, pipe break, or certain types storm damage.

Construction contractors are typically insured against many "standard" risks, including:

- ◆ Workers Compensation (pays compensation and medical expenses for injured employees);
- ◆ Liability (e.g. bystander trips over jobsite construction equipment, sustains injury, and sues contractor);
- ◆ Commercial Auto (pays for repairs to a company-owned vehicle damaged in accident, and for liability if at-fault to others for injury or property damage).

Building and Realty Institute (BRI) members continue to suffer from increasing insurance premiums, so it's easy to ignore an insurance proposal that offers "optional coverages," since "options" equate to "additional costs." True, but...

Can you or your business afford to pay out-of-pocket for a loss or liability that would have been covered by insurance IF you had the applicable optional coverage?

Here are some common optional coverages (coverages are subject to policy terms), and explanations why you should carefully consider whether or not to include them in your insurance program:

BUILDING OWNER OPTIONAL COVERAGE EXAMPLES:

- ◆ **Flood, Back-up of Sewers/Drains, Underground Water Supply Mains, Earthquake** – Building damage and business income loss resulting from these perils are usually excluded, UNLESS your Property policy includes optional endorsements for these coverages.
- ◆ **Mechanical Equipment Breakdown (Boiler & Machinery)** – This coverage addresses damage to building mechanical equipment (e.g. boiler, HVAC, electrical panels, etc.), and resulting damage to the building, due to sudden/accidental events, such as a lightning strike or power surge. The deductible for this coverage is often lower than the standard Property policy deductible (important, since many insureds are increasing their standard deductible to save on premium.) The coverage is typically available by endorsement to the Property policy, but can also be purchased as a stand-alone policy.
- ◆ **Environmental/Pollution** – The cost to clean-up either an unknown pollution condition on your property (e.g. old underground storage tank that is leaking), or an accidental event such as a fuel oil or pesticide spill on your property, along with the potential related legal liability is not covered by your Property, General Liability, or Umbrella policies. A separate Environmental/Pollution policy is required. This coverage is especially important if you have fuel oil tanks (underground or above-ground).
- ◆ **Tenant Discrimination** – A tenant lawsuit against you for wrongful eviction due to discrimination (race, religion, etc.) is not covered by your General Liability or Umbrella Liability policy. A separate Tenant Discrimination policy is required.
- ◆ **Ordinance or Law** – Coverage limits for the additional costs (separate from the Property policy Building Replacement Cost limit) to demolish and re-build a building to current building codes are often not sufficient, or excluded, on a Property policy. You may need to purchase additional Ordinance or Law coverage to be sufficiently protected. This is especially important if you own an older building that is not compliant with many current building codes (e.g. electrical, life-safety [fire sprinklers, means of egress], disability act compliance, etc.)

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR OPTIONAL COVERAGE EXAMPLES:

- ◆ **Environmental/Pollution** – If your contracting company deals with materials or work that may result in pollution liability claims (e.g. excavation that causes a rupture/leak to an abandoned underground oil tank; asbestos or other hazardous materials; painting that disturbs old lead paint; alleged defective materials or work resulting in mold; etc.) then you need an Environmental/Pollution policy. The policy covers clean-up and legal liability resulting from certain environmental/pollution events.
- ◆ **Professional Liability** – If you have anything to do with design/build or value-engineering of a project - even if you are not the licensed architect or engineer that provides the approval stamp - you could be sued for problems resulting from an alleged error or omission relating to your recommendations or ideas on a project. A Professional Liability policy will respond to such lawsuits.

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Building Industry Report:

A Decline in Mortgage Rates Helps To Increase New Home Sales Across the U.S. During March

WASHINGTON

A modest decline in mortgage rates and lean existing inventory helped boost new home sales across the U.S. in March even as builders and consumers contend with uncertain market conditions, according to an analysis by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

The NAHB analysis, released on Apr. 23, said that sales of newly built, single-family homes in March increased 7.4 percent to a 724,000 seasonally adjusted annual rate from a revised January number. The NAHB analysis is based on newly released data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Census Bureau. The pace of new home sales in March was up six percent when compared to a year earlier, the analysis said.

"The March new home sales data shows that demand continues to be present in the market, provided affordability conditions permit a purchase," said Buddy Hughes, chairman of NAHB and a home builder and developer from Lexington, N.C. "An increase in economic certainty would be a big boost to future sales conditions."

"Lower mortgage interest rates helped boost the pace of new home sales in March," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "In February, the average 30-year fixed rate mortgage was 6.84 percent, while in March it fell to 6.65 percent."

The NAHB analysis said that a new home sale occurs when a sales contract is signed, or a deposit is accepted. The home can be in any stage of construction: not yet started, under construction or completed. In addition to adjusting for seasonal effects, the March reading of 724,000 units is the number of homes that would sell if this pace continued for the next 12 months.

New single-family home inventory in March, the analysis said, continued to rise to a level of 503,000, up 7.9 percent compared to a year earlier. This represents an 8.3 months' supply at the current building pace. This level of supply continues to be reasonable given that the resale, single-family months' supply remains lean at just 3.4. The count of completed, ready-to-occupy homes available for sale increased to 119,000, up 34 percent from a year ago.

The median new home sale price in March was $403,600, down 7.5 percent from a year ago. Sales were particularly strong at lower price levels. Compared to March of 2024, new homes sales were 33 percent higher for homes priced below $300,000 and 28 percent higher for new homes priced between $300,000 and $400,000, according to the analysis.

Regionally, on a year-to-date basis, new home sales are up 12.9 percent in the South, but are down 32 percent in the Northeast, 18.3 percent in the Midwest and six percent in the West, the analysis added.

Construction Workers Compensation Insurance Group Reports a 30 Percent Dividend for its Members, Continued from p. 1

Group 458 officials said that the group has now had 74 consecutive years of dividends. Group 458 was formed in 1951. A total of 565 construction industry members participate in the program. Contractors, Sub-Contractors, Suppliers and Renovation/Remodeling companies are eligible to be members of Group 458, group officials added.

Group 530 Announces Its Dividend

New York State Workers Compensation Group 530, the workers compensation insurance group for The Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC), The Apartment Owners Advisory Council (AOAC) and The Advisory Council of Managing Agents (ACMA) of The Building and Realty Institute (BRI), recently announced a 30 percent dividend that will be issued in 2025 for the policy year ending Jun. 1, 2024.

Group spokesmen said the dividend is in addition to the maximum advance discount of 30 percent that group members may be eligible to receive.

The announcement was made during the group's Annual Meeting on Jan. 29 in Tarrytown. A total of 446 cooperatives, condominiums, apartment buildings and office buildings participate in the program, spokesmen said. Group 530 was formed in 1990.

News for the Building and Realty Industries **Impact**

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The Builders Institute/Building and Realty Institute
80 Business Park Drive, Suite 309
Armonk, NY 10504
914.273.0730 www.BuildersInstitute.org

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Report: Builder Confidence Falls on Cost Uncertainty

WASHINGTON

Economic uncertainty, the threat of tariffs and elevated construction costs pushed builder sentiment across the U.S. down in March even as builders express hope that a better regulatory environment will lead to an improving business climate.

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 39 in March, down three points from February and the lowest level in seven months, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) released on Mar. 17.

"Builders continue to face elevated building material costs that are exacerbated by tariff issues, as well as other supply-side challenges that include labor and lot shortages," said NAHB Chairman Buddy Hughes, a home builder and developer from Lexington, N.C. "At the same time, builders are starting to see relief on the regulatory front to bend the rising cost curve, as demonstrated by the Trump administration's pause of the 2021 IECC building code requirement and move to implement the regulatory definition of 'waters of the United States' under the Clean Water Act consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's Sackett decision."

"Construction firms are facing added cost pressures from tariffs," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "Data from the HMI March survey reveals that builders estimate a typical cost effect from recent tariff actions at $9,200 per home. Uncertainty on policy is also having a negative impact on home buyers and development decisions."

The latest HMI survey also revealed that 29 percent of builders cut home prices in March, up from 26 percent in February. Meanwhile, the average price reduction was five percent in March, the same rate as the previous month. The use of sales incentives was 59 percent in March, unchanged from February, the survey added.

Derived from a monthly survey that NAHB has been conducting for more than 35 years, the NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI gauges builder perceptions of current single-family home sales and sales expectations for the next six months as "good," "fair" or "poor." The survey also asks builders to rate the traffic of prospective buyers as "high to very high," "average" or "low to very low." Scores for each component are then used to calculate a seasonally adjusted index where any number over 50 indicates that more builders view conditions as good than poor, the report said.

The HMI index gauging current sales conditions, the report said, fell three points to 43 in March, its lowest point since December of 2023. The gauge charting the traffic of prospective buyers dropped five points to 24, while the component measuring sales expectations in the next six months held steady at 47.

Looking at the three-month moving averages for regional HMI scores, the Northeast fell three points in March to 54, the Midwest moved three points lower to 42, the South dropped four points to 42 and the West posted a two-point decline to 37, according to the survey.

HMI tables can be found at nahb.org/hmi. More information on housing statistics is also available at Housing Economics PLUS, NAHB officials said.

Home Builders from Across the U.S. Tell Congress How Permitting Roadblocks Raise Housing Costs

WASHINGTON

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) told Congress on Feb. 19 that federal permitting inefficiencies delay housing projects, raise construction costs and exacerbate the nation's housing affordability crisis.

Testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, NAHB Chairman Carl Harris, a custom home builder from Wichita, Kan., told lawmakers that "most land developers have been forced to step away from particular parcels of land due to the uncertainty of being able to obtain the necessary permits."

On this issue, Harris noted that the Clean Water Act (CWA) stands out among the regulated community because it is unclear which parts of the land parcel may be considered "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) and, therefore, require a federal wetland permit.

"Obtaining a CWA Section 404 permit takes upwards of one year, and completing an Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation when required can take several more," said Harris. "When considering these implications, it's clear why we need to make the unwieldy permitting process more straightforward for home builders."

According to a 2021 NAHB study, regulatory costs at the federal, state and local levels account for 24 percent of the final price of a new single-family home built for sale. Achieving predictability and certainty in the federal permitting process will help reduce the overall cost of construction, which will help increase the nation's housing supply, the study added.

With the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers blatantly overstepping their federal authority regarding jurisdictional waters of the U.S., NAHB officials said, NAHB is urging Congress to consider the following improvements:

If the agencies continue to refuse to provide regulatory definitions for "relatively permanent" water flow or what constitutes a "continuous surface connection," Congress must step in and define these terms. Or conversely, lawmakers should identify features that cannot, by statute, be considered WOTUS.

Congress must ensure the agencies prioritize responding to requested jurisdictional determinations and processing CWA Section 404 permits in a timely manner.

Regulatory changes to the definition of WOTUS should not invalidate prior approved jurisdictional determinations.

Like the CWA, the ESA's Section 7 consultation process requires builders to first consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration before they can start construction if their project may impact endangered species. This process usually results in permitting delays, project reconfiguration, and possibly the loss of buildable lots, NAHB officials stressed.

Regulatory changes, NAHB officials added, that establish clear timeframes for the agencies to complete the Section 7 consultation process, as well as the expanded use of programmatic Section 7 consultations, would help ensure ESA consultations are completed in a timely manner and eliminate some of the uncertainties and permitting delays that have plagued the Section 7 consultation process since its inception.

"Enacting common sense regulatory reforms that will make compliance more efficient and less onerous will help home builders to better safeguard the environment and expand the availability of attainable, affordable housing for all Americans," Harris said.

Con Edison's Rate Hikes Spark Backlash from Lawmakers, Advocates, and Property Owners, Continued from p. 1

other elected officials, highlighted the financial strain these increases will place on working families and businesses. The event was attended by Tim Foley, chief executive officer (CEO) of The Building and Realty Institute (BRI), among others. As utility expenses climb, maintaining and upgrading rental housing becomes even more challenging - impacting affordability and housing quality across the region, building and realty industry officials said.

The BRI, association officials said, is not standing idly by. As a staunch advocate for property owners, co-op and condo boards, and building managers, the organization is preparing to take its case to the Public Service Commission (PSC). The BRI will push for greater transparency and a more balanced approach to rate increases - one that does not unfairly shift the burden onto property owners and renters.

BRI officials said its members should look for updates as the organization continues to fight for fair and sustainable energy policies.

Counsels' Corner

Co-op/Condo Business Judgment Danger


Ken Finger


Dorothy M. Finger


Carl Finger


Dan Finger

By Kenneth J. Finger, Esq., Dorothy M. Finger, Esq., Carl L. Finger, Esq., and Daniel S. Finger, Esq.

WHITE PLAINS

Every member of the Board of Directors of a Cooperative or the Board of Managers in a Condominium should be familiar with the "business judgment" principle.

The leading case for the business judgment is Matter of Levandusky v. One Fifth Ave. Apt. Corp., 75 N.Y.2d 530, 554 N.Y.S.2d 807, 553 N.E.2d 1317 [1990], where the Court of Appeals held that the business judgment rule is the proper standard of judicial review when evaluating decisions made by residential cooperative corporations (or also residential condominiums).

Levandusky established a standard of review analogous to the corporate business judgment rule for a shareholder-tenant challenge to a decision of a residential cooperative corporation. The business judgment rule is a common-law doctrine by which courts exercise restraint and defer to good faith decisions made by boards of directors in business settings. The rule has been long recognized in New York.

As was stated in the case of 40 West 67th Street Corp. v. Pullman, 100 N.Y.2d 147 (2003), "[in] the context of cooperative dwellings, the business judgment rule provides that a court should defer to a cooperative board's determination so long as the board acts for the purposes of the cooperative, within the scope of its authority and in good faith."

Thus, if a Board (of Directors or Managers) acts in good faith and within the dictates of its bylaws and the law, in furtherance of a legitimate corporate purpose the actions of the Board are protected. So long as they are in good faith and without any bad faith, arbitrariness, favoritism, discrimination or malice, the Board's actions will withstand judicial scrutiny, and the Court will generally defer to the Board's decision.

However, this deference is not without limit. There may be cases where the Board acts irrationally and /or not in good faith, or arbitrarily and the Board's action will not be upheld by the Court. In such case can the cooperative's actions be overturned and what are the consequences?

Background

In a recent case, Gilbert et al v. Winston et al and Parc Vendome Condominium, 2024 NY. Slip Op. 34088 (Nov.19, 2024), the Supreme Court, New York County (the trial court in New York) confirmed an underlying lawsuit (Parc 56 LLC v. Board of Managers of Parc Vendome Condominium, 217 AD3d 416 (1st Dep't, 2023), which underlying lawsuit found that the board of directors acted in bad faith and breached the condominium documents.

Plaintiff had submitted an alteration agreement which the Court deemed approved. A prior owner of the unit had already obtained certain changes to the certificate of occupancy but among other things, the Board required the Plaintiff to indemnify the Condo for every cost incurred as a result of the amendment to the CO.

> ***"Thus, Board members should be certain that when they make any decision or take any action it is in good faith, non-discriminatory and in accordance with the law and the entity's governing documents."***

Also in the prior case the court had determined that the board violated the bylaws and a settlement agreement with the prior owner of the unit and misled the court in, among other things, seeking to impose obligations on the plaintiff from an unadopted amendment to the declaration, refused to consent to a ministerial change to the CO that it had approved for a prior owner and in requiring the Plaintiff to agree to certain obligations that were not in the Condo's governing documents.

As to the unamended bylaw, the Board attempted to require the unit owner to comply with the unamended bylaw which had never been officially adopted. In addition, the board failed to act within the bylaw's time frame as to a right of first refusal.

The residential unit owners of the Condominium brought this Supreme Court action to have the Board members personally responsible for the costs incurred as a result of their bad faith actions and breach of fiduciary duty and to avoid the payment of those costs by all the Condominiums' unit owners. The unit owners in the condominium argued that the defendant individual board members owed fiduciary duties to the condominium and the plaintiffs and were responsible for the costs incurred by the plaintiffs in the underlying action.

Claims

The individual Board members claimed that they could not be held responsible for actions by the board so as to impose liability upon them individually. The Supreme Court (New York's trial court – the lower court) held, among other things, that it confirmed that the board members' conduct was without authority and in violation of the condominium governing documents (and a prior settlement agreement) and in "bad faith" and in a manner in which the condo's unit owners had not approved.

The Supreme Court, based on the prior Appellate Division decision, did not allow the board members to relitigate the prior decision that they had not acted in good faith and also had breached their fiduciary duties in regard to the underlying lawsuit. Ultimately the court found that the board members, individually, acted in bad faith by participating in and ratifying many bad faith breaches of their fiduciary obligations.

Thus, the Court held that the costs incurred in defending the first lawsuit (which were substantial) as well as the damages assessed by the Court were to be personally borne by the individual board members.

This case is a lesson for all board members to assure that their actions are in conformity with the law and the entity's (coop or condo) governing documents, and are in good faith. The Parc Vendome case is a significant example of what should not be done by Board members if they expect to have the protection of the "business judgment" rule. Thus, Board members should be certain that when they make any decision or take any action it is in good faith, non-discriminatory and in accordance with the law and the entity's governing documents.

***Editor's Note:** The authors are attorneys with Finger and Finger, A Professional Corporation. The firm, based in White Plains, is Chief Counsel to The Building and Realty Institute of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region (BRI).*

Co-op and Condo Corner

Federal Regulations Disadvantage Co-ops and Condos

Jane Curtis

By Jane Curtis, Chair, Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC)

MOUNT VERNON

Previous columns in Co-op & Condo Corner have highlighted misperceptions of co-ops and condos that have led to inappropriate and harmful county and state legislation. These mis-categorizations and exclusions exist at the federal level, as well.

Disaster Recovery

In this era of extreme weather events, property owners rely on FEMA for financial assistance in recovery from severe damage. Remarkably, this assistance is not available to co-ops and condos. Direct appeals to the agency have thus far been unsuccessful. Bills H.R. 6108 and H.R. 3777 have been introduced to assure access to funding for debris removal and infrastructure repair after natural disasters, and to provide equitable support for co-ops, condos, and their residents.

Reserves and Budgeting

In the wake of the condo collapse in Surfside, Fla., Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the federal entities that provide a vital secondary market for mortgages, instituted overly stringent eligibility requirements for co-ops and condos that are shutting them out of the market, to the extent that gaining approval is an endeavor requiring extraordinary effort and direct involvement of Congressional representatives. Lobbying of these agencies has thus far not resulted in modification.

Governance

Finally, there is the Corporate Transparency Act, requiring every co-op and condo to provide sensitive personal information for members of their Boards of Directors, considered the 'beneficial owners' of the property. The application of this law, designed to prevent funding of terrorists and money laundering, is almost comical when considered in relation to our housing sector. Yet, a decision on the obvious need for exemption has been in flux for months, leaving co-ops and condos in a dilemma of whether to report to meet the latest deadline, or wait for definitive legislative, regulatory or judicial decisions. Some boards have lost valuable members who found the reporting requirements invasive of their privacy. While a bill has been introduced in Congress and the Senate to repeal the act in its entirety, there is no carve-out legislation for co-ops and condos. The Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC) ally, The Community Associations Institute (CAI), has filed a lawsuit seeking judicial relief. In recent weeks, rulings have determined that entities do not need to meet the requirements of the Corporate Transparency Act, for the time-being.

What can we do here in Westchester County? Co-ops and condos are encouraged to contact their U.S. Senators and Congressional representatives to bring attention to these inequities.

***Editor's Note:** Jane Curtis is Chair of The Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC) of the Building and Realty Institute (BRI). The CCAC, formed in 1979, represents hundreds of co-ops and condos that are based in the Westchester and Mid-Hudson Region.*

These Optional Insurance Coverages May Not Be Optional for Your Business, Continued from p. 4

- **Equipment Floater** – This Property-related policy covers your tools and equipment on a jobsite from losses due to theft, fire, etc.
- **Installation Floater** – This Property-related policy covers building materials awaiting installation (to which you have title) that are damaged/destroyed due to fire, weather, etc.
- **Ocean Marine** – This Property-related policy covers damage/loss to material and equipment (to which you have title) during transport (e.g. container of custom ornamental metal imported from Europe is lost when cargo ship sinks).

OTHER OPTIONAL COVERAGE EXAMPLES (applicable to any business):

- **Employment Practices Liability** – Covers actions alleging employment-related acts, such as wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, hostile work environment, etc. and allegations by third-parties against your company for wrongful acts of your employees (e.g. harassment). This coverage is usually included on condo/co-op Directors & Officers Liability policies.
- **Hired/Non-Owned Auto Liability** – Covers your company's liability for an auto accident caused by your employee while using a vehicle not owned/insured by your company (e.g. a personally owned or rented vehicle). Condos/co-ops should always have this coverage.
- **Crime/Employee Dishonesty** – Covers Property losses due to theft and other crimes by your employees or third parties. Condos and co-ops should always have this coverage, and coverage for the managing agent should be included.
- **Umbrella Liability** – Provides additional liability coverage limits, but typically over-and-above only the General Liability, Employers Liability, and Commercial Auto Liability policies. (An Umbrella policy is not a "catch-all" policy that covers "everything.")
- **Cyber Insurance** – A comprehensive Cyber policy can pay for: repair to your computer systems, databases, etc; ransom money to regain access to your data; costs to notify those whose personally identifiable information has been breached and monitor their credit; liability associated with harmful emails sent from your company computers that cause loss to another business; and many other costs related to a cyber-attack.
- **Directors & Officers Liability** – If your company has multiple shareholders, including minority shareholders, and/or the directors and officers of the company make decisions or provide information that could be the subject of an errors or omissions claim (e.g. inaccurate financial information provided to minority shareholders or a lender), then you may need a D&O policy. Consult with your lawyer and insurance broker. Condos and co-ops should always have this coverage, and coverage for the managing agent should be included.
- **Fiduciary Liability**–If your company offers ERISA-related employee benefit plans, such as healthcare or 401K, then you may need Fiduciary Liability insurance. Consult with your lawyer and insurance broker.
- **Volunteer Accident** – If your company or condo/co-op utilizes volunteers for events (e.g. charity events, community beautification, etc.), consider a volunteer accident policy, which pays for certain medical expenses, and other costs, associated with a volunteer's injury. This policy could help avoid a claim against your General Liability policy.

Importantly, if you have a mortgage, construction loan, or lease, your lender or landlord may require that you maintain certain types and/or amounts of insurance.

In summary, "optional" insurance policies and coverages may be "essential" to properly protecting your building, condo/co-op, or company. For more details to make informed decisions on optional coverages, contact your insurance broker or Levitt-Fuirst Insurance and Bonding at (914) 457-4200.

***Editor's Note:** Levitt-Fuirst Insurance and Bonding is the Insurance Manager for The Building and Realty Institute of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region (BRI). Ken Fuirst and Jason Schiciano are co-presidents of Levitt-Fuirst Insurance and Bonding. The firm is based in Tarrytown.*

New Report Finds That 82,000 Current Housing Units Could Be Lost Due to Flooding by 2040, Continued from p. 1

Utilizing a first-of-its-kind database of zoning laws created by the National Zoning Atlas, the gap analysis that has been produced reveals a significant shortfall in residential zoning development capacity, which currently accounts for only 45 percent of the total housing needed by 2040. RPA suggests zoning capacity must increase by a factor of 2.2, or more than double.

"In the middle of an ongoing housing crisis facing metropolitan regions across the U.S., this report highlights the increased danger that climate-influenced flooding poses to communities," said Tom Wright, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Regional Plan Association (RPA). "To meet current and future demand, the region's total housing needs could reach 1.2 million units by 2040. Our leaders must step up with bold and innovative policies and investments to address this challenge, before it becomes even worse."

"Our climate and housing crises are deeply intertwined, and we can't solve one at the expense of the other. Through smart and targeted interventions, we can make progress on them in tandem, and by doing nothing, both will only grow worse," said Moses Gates, one of the report authors and vice president of housing and neighborhood planning at RPA.

A Proactive Approach

"As the impacts of climate change – including flooding – continue to worsen, we cannot allow communities, already facing housing shortages, to be caught unaware or unprepared," said Robert Freudenberg, vice president, energy and environment at RPA, and one of the report authors. "By proactively planning for the realities of the future we've inherited, we can ensure that our region's residents have safer and more resilient places to call home."

"People deserve to understand the impacts of zoning on their lives and livelihoods," said Sara C. Bronin, Cornell University professor and founder of the National Zoning Atlas. "This report, with its first-of-a-kind zoning buildout of key parts of the NYC metro area, illuminates how our land-use policies have to be much more responsive to our housing needs in the age of climate change."

"This report transforms abstract climate risks into concrete policy opportunities," said Patrick Beary, the Bruce H. Bailey senior director of strategic partnerships at the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability. "By supporting collaborative assessments like this one, Cornell Atkinson aims to ensure that all communities—especially those most vulnerable—have the data and tools they need to take meaningful action against flood risks while addressing critical housing needs."

"The negative effects of climate change have made extreme weather a far more frequent part of life here in New York," said New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas. "As Regional Plan Association's report makes clear, the impact of a warming climate is going to make our housing crisis more dire in the decades ahead without proper planning and direct action. At HCR, we are committed to building resilient communities that can better withstand major storms before they happen and we appreciate those who join our fight against both the climate crisis and housing crisis."

"Our region's housing and climate crises are inextricably linked and require cohesive strategies that put us on a better path to meet urgent housing and resiliency needs," said the City of New York's Executive Director for Housing, Leila Bozorg. "RPA's Averting Crises report sheds important light on the realities our region will face in the years to come, and the realistic solutions that will help us manage both crises for the benefit and safety of all New Yorkers."

"This report underscores the importance of tackling two of our biggest challenges—housing and climate change—together," said DCP Director Dan Garodnick. "Through forward-thinking, coordinated action at the municipal and regional levels, we can continue to build the housing New Yorkers need and ensure that our communities are more resilient to climate risks."

"There is no community in Westchester that hasn't been directly affected by or heavily concerned by the now routine flooding from extreme weather events," said Tim Foley, CEO of The Building & Realty Institute (BRI) and one of the Partners of the Welcome Home Westchester Campaign. "While some have used this as a cudgel to stymie efforts to address our housing shortage in favor of preserving the status quo, this new report by RPA demonstrates how dire the status quo is with regard to flood risk. Building multifamily housing where appropriate with substantially better infrastructure and stormwater management and a boost to local property taxes can help us deal with the twin crises of housing and climate resilience."

Key Zoning Findings

The report assesses policy solutions with a focus on zoning, as many municipalities, such as those within the New York Metro Area, can unlock residential development in locations with good transportation access, job opportunities, and limited flood exposure. Key findings related to the region's housing deficit include:

When looking at potential development of additional housing, zoning in the region only unlocks 45 percent of the housing needed by 2040. Potential areas for residential development will need to more than double to afford future needs.

In Long Island and Westchester, over 95 percent of residential land is zoned to exclude multifamily housing, limiting development in transit-accessible areas that are less vulnerable to flooding.

Many commuter rail stations in these suburbs are located in predominantly white, affluent neighborhoods with restrictive zoning that discourages multifamily development, pushing new housing into high-risk flood zones.

Multifamily development with four units or more is only allowed on less than five percent of residentially-zoned land in the region's suburbs; This is compared to the ability to develop the same type of housing on 61 percent of New York City residentially-zoned land.

Under current zoning regulations, New York City has the capacity to build-out approximately 386,000 housing units; the New York region's suburbs have the capacity to build-out approximately 190,000 units.

To assess policy solutions and resiliency efforts to address flood risk and loss, the report emphasizes that a regional approach that accounts for changing conditions over time is required. By categorizing regions into four area types (high growth potential and low flood risk; high growth potential and high flood risk; low growth potential and low flood risk; and low growth potential and high flood risk), the report prioritizes policy needs for the study area, RPA officials said.

A snapshot of suggested solutions - contingent on the area type - include:

- Housing assessment programs that integrate climate risks and future population shifts, rather than relying on outdated benchmarks
- Investing in transit-oriented development
- The implementation of inclusionary zoning
- Ensuring standards prioritize resiliency by updating building codes to withstand and recover from extreme weather
- Green infrastructure that leverages natural systems and engineered solutions that manage stormwater, mitigate coastal flooding, and enhance resilience
- Buyout programs that require the permanent removal of properties from high-risk areas

Comprehensive, forward-thinking assessments will be critical in guiding effective land use reforms. Likewise, proactive climate investments, including flood protections, updating infrastructure, and climate-smart policies, must be made to mitigate risks before disasters strike, the report said.

A coordinated effort between policymakers, urban planners, and community stakeholders is essential in fostering equitable and climate-resilient communities. By aligning land use policies with climate adaptation strategies, New York City and its suburbs can ensure that all residents, regardless of income or background, have access to safe and secure housing. If left unaddressed, this crisis will intensify housing scarcity, affordability concerns, and community displacement, further exacerbating social and economic disparities, the report added.

A full copy of the report can be found here.

***Editor's Note:** This article was written by Sam Bowden Akbari, Director of Communications, The Regional Plan Association (RPA).*

Disaster Preparedness in Westchester County: Historic to Modern

By Lisa Scherrer

PORT CHESTER

Westchester County has a rich architectural tapestry with everything from centuries-old historic homes to sleek, contemporary commercial structures and all demand a refined, forward-thinking approach to disaster preparedness. With the advent of advanced automation and retrofit technologies, developers, general contractors, and restoration professionals are shifting from reactive repairs to proactive disaster planning and management.

Such a diverse environment requires a tailored strategy and in Westchester County we find older construction that requires specialized preservation and retrofitting techniques next to modern commercial buildings that incorporate cutting-edge design and technology. Yet each face their own unique vulnerabilities and this diversity challenges traditional one-size-fits-all disaster responses, necessitating nuanced plans that consider each structure type.

Local government such as the Westchester County Department of Planning has employed several measures to better understand and mitigate flood risk. These actions highlight the county's commitment to education and to property owners, managers and residents on disaster preparedness strategies.

To follow suit, we need to shift from reactive repair to proactive planning. Historically, restoration efforts have been reactive and addressed damage response only after a disaster or when it is visible. However, with the rising frequency and severity of natural events and hypersensitivity health-related concerns, today's real estate professionals must adopt a proactive model that emphasizes risk assessment, early intervention, and a coordinated response.

With a proactive approach and standard in place, we will see a minimization of damage as well as reduced recovery time and cost. The development of emergency response and call protocols allows owners and managers a faster claim processing time, expedited debris removal for the health and protection of occupants, and will ensure that the restoration processes will begin promptly. This Emergency Plan protocol is supported by developers and industry experts who advocate for pre-planning which has been proven effective in reducing overall losses and increasing tenant satisfaction.

Innovative automation technology in newer buildings plays an increasingly vital role in modern disaster preparedness. The introduction and employment of smart systems enables optimized energy management, real-time monitoring of water or valve pressure release, and predictive maintenance are just a few that can be implemented at the development and architectural stage.

Additionally, with the integration of sensors and automated control systems which detect early signs of water intrusion or structural stress, video and 3D Twin image techniques, in conjunction with an active Emergency Response Plan, combine to increase operational efficiency and protect structures and the public against threats to property and health when damage occurs.

The benefits from automated fire suppression and security systems can significantly mitigate damage during a disaster and have proven their value despite the initial sticker shock. The technology behind these advancements is detailed and discussions on retrofitting for automation demonstrate that even older properties can be brought up to modern safety standards while preserving their unique character.

In conclusion what are the best practices to protect your property and the public when disaster occurs?

- **Comprehensive Risk Assessments:** Evaluate each property's vulnerabilities—be it flood-prone areas in historic neighborhoods or potential fire hazards in modern commercial zones.
- **Customized Emergency Plans:** A tailored disaster response protocol, created by an IICRC restoration professional, to address the specific needs of your building. This process starts with an emergency call tree but includes consideration of historic structures, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), WELL Building Standard (WELL), and RESET which focuses on the indoor air quality of a building's occupants.
- **Integration of Automation Technologies:** Investing in smart building systems that offer real-time monitoring and automated controls to promptly address emerging issues.
- **Risk Management Training:** Companies such as CHUBB actively work with municipalities and business partners to reduce the risk of loss and strengthen strategies to keep operations safer and more profitable. A scheduled visit to the New Jersey facility provided much education and insight.

By embracing these practices and working with Westchester County's restoration and construction professionals, together we can transition from merely repairing damage to a collaborative prevention.

Editor's Note: Lisa Scherrer is the Chief Executive Director of New Crystal Restoration (NCR), a women-owned water damage restoration company serving New York and Connecticut. The company is celebrating 65 years of service in 2025. Lisa Scherrer's experience focuses on operation standards and education, particularly to the insurance industry. Lisa and the NCR team provide expert restoration, remediation, and reconstruction services to residential and commercial properties, company officials said.

Report: Remodeling Market Sentiment Across the U.S. Improves in the Fourth Quarter of 2024

WASHINGTON

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) on Jan. 16 released its NAHB/Westlake Royal Remodeling Market Index (RMI) for the fourth quarter of 2024, posting a reading of 68, up five points compared to the previous quarter, according to NAHB officials.

The NAHB/Westlake Royal RMI survey asks remodelers across the U.S. to rate five components of the remodeling market as "good," "fair," or "poor." Each question is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, where an index number above 50 indicates that a higher share views conditions as good than poor. The results of the RMI are seasonally adjusted, the index said.

The Current Conditions Index, the index added, is an average of three components: the current market for large remodeling projects, moderately-sized projects and small projects. The Future Indicators Index is an average of two components: the current rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in and the current backlog of remodeling projects. The overall RMI is calculated by averaging the Current Conditions Index and the Future Indicators Index. Any number over 50 indicates that more remodelers view remodeling market conditions as good than poor.

"Remodelers are more optimistic about the market than they were earlier in the year (2024)," said NAHB Remodelers Chair Mike Pressgrove, a remodeler from Topeka, Kan. "Demand in many parts of the country was stronger than usual for the fall season, especially demand for larger projects, with leads coming in after the uncertainty about the November elections was removed."

"The increase in the fourth quarter RMI was driven to a great degree by demand for large projects," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "Not only did the current conditions index for $50,000-plus projects show the greatest increase during the quarter, but the share of remodelers doing whole house remodeling reached a record high of 62 percent. This has significant implications for supply chains because large remodeling projects are more likely to use building products purchased directly from the manufacturer, or a manufacturer's distribution center, rather than a retail outlet."

The Current Conditions Index averaged 75, increasing three points compared to the previous quarter. All three components remained well above 50 in positive territory: the component measuring large remodeling projects ($50,000 or more) rose eight points to 75, the component measuring moderate remodeling projects (at least $20,000 but less than $50,000) increased two points to 73, and the component measuring small-sized remodeling projects (under $20,000) inched down one point to 76, the index said.

The Future Indicators Index averaged 61, up six points compared to the previous quarter. The component measuring the current rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in jumped nine points to 62, and the component measuring the backlog of remodeling jobs rose two points to 59, the index added.

The full RMI tables can be seen at nahb.org/rmi, NAHB officials said.

INDUSTRY EXPERTS:
Remodeling Market Poised for Growth in 2025

LAS VEGAS

An aging housing stock, record levels of home equity and favorable demographics will create positive-growth prospects for the remodeling sector across the U.S. in 2025.

That was the assessment of building industry experts at a panel hosted by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) on Feb. 25 during the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas.

The panel said that the outlook bodes well for the remodeling sector. Consumer inflation remains a concern as shelter costs continue to be sticky despite tightening measures by the Federal Reserve. And while lower mortgage rates are potentially on the horizon, the process will be bumpy, as long-term interest rates could remain flat or even increase with larger fiscal deficits. These ongoing housing affordability challenges signal that the demand for remodeling projects will remain solid in 2025, the panel added.

The NAHB/Westlake Royal Remodeling Market Index (RMI), a quarterly survey of NAHB remodeler members that provides insight for the remodeling industry, continues to exhibit positive sentiment, especially when compared to other housing sectors.

"Remodeler sentiment has remained in positive territory, well above the break-even point of 50, since the second quarter of 2020," said NAHB Economist Eric Lynch. "One of the key factors for growth in the remodeling market is the aging housing stock, which continues to drive renovation projects. Homeowners are increasingly choosing to tap into their home equity and invest in improvements rather than relocate, creating long-term growth prospects for the industry."

The RMI survey also showed that 98 percent of remodelers cited that most or some of their consumers are familiar with the aging-in-place concept. That share was 75 percent in the fourth quarter of 2004, indicating a significant increase in awareness among consumers over the last two decades and thus creating additional opportunities for growth in the market.

Lynch noted that while the industry has seen gradual improvements in the availability of labor and materials over the past few years, both remain ongoing challenges for remodelers. According to RMI

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NAHB Report: Builder Confidence in February Decreases on Tariff and Housing Cost Concerns

WASHINGTON

Builder sentiment across the U.S. fell sharply in February over concerns on tariffs, elevated mortgage rates and high housing costs, according to a building and realty industry report.

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes was 42 in February, down five points from January and the lowest level in five months, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). The index was released on Feb. 18.

"While builders hold out hope for pro-development policies, particularly for regulatory reform, policy uncertainty and cost factors created a reset for 2025 expectations in the most recent HMI," said NAHB Chairman Carl Harris, a custom home builder from Wichita, Kansas. "Uncertainty on the tariff front helped push builders' expectations for future sales volume down to the lowest level since December of 2023. Incentive use may also be weakening as a sales strategy as elevated interest rates reduce the pool of eligible homebuyers."

"With 32 percent of appliances and 30 percent of softwood lumber coming from international trade, uncertainty over the scale and scope of tariffs has builders further concerned about costs," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "Reflecting this outlook, builder responses collected prior to a pause for the proposed tariffs on goods from Canada and Mexico yielded a lower HMI reading of 38, while those collected after the announced one-month pause produced a score of 44. Addressing the elevated pace of shelter inflation requires bending the housing cost curve to enable adding more attainable housing."

The latest HMI survey also revealed that 26 percent of builders cut home prices in February, down from 30 percent in January and the lowest share since May of 2024. Meanwhile, the report added, the average price reduction was five percent in February, the same rate as the previous month. The

> ***"Uncertainty on the tariff front helped push builders' expectations for future sales volume down to the lowest level since December of 2023."***
>
> *— NAHB Chairman Carl Harris, a custom home builder from Wichita, Kansas*

use of sales incentives was 59 percent in February, down from 61 percent in January.

Derived from a monthly survey that NAHB has been conducting for more than 35 years, the NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI gauges builder perceptions of current single-family home sales and sales expectations for the next six months as "good," "fair" or "poor." The survey also asks builders to rate the traffic of prospective buyers as "high to very high," "average" or "low to very low." Scores for each component are then used to calculate a seasonally adjusted index where any number over 50 indicates that more builders view conditions as good than poor, NAHB officials said.

The index said that all three of the major HMI indices posted losses in February. The HMI index gauging current sales conditions fell four points to 46, the component measuring sales expectations in the next six months plunged 13 points to 46, and the gauge charting the traffic of prospective buyers posted a three-point decline to 29.

Looking at the three-month moving averages for regional HMI scores, the Northeast fell three points in February to 57, the Midwest moved two points lower to 45, the West edged one-point lower to 39 and the South held steady at 46.

HMI tables can be found at nahb.org/hmi. More information on housing statistics is also available at Housing Economics PLUS, NAHB officials said.

Mamaroneck Self-Storage Breaks Ground

MAMARONECK

The Murphy Brothers, Chris and Sean, surrounded by many community supporters, family and friends, celebrated a groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 29 for their Mamaroneck Self- Storage extension after a seven-year long approval process, officials recently announced.

Said their land-use attorney, Anthony Gioffre of Cuddy & Feder: "This project was the culmination of many years of planning, investment and commitment to realize the Murphy Brothers' vision. It was an honor to be a part of an amazing development team, and this groundbreaking was an important milestone to bring this project to life."

Located in the Village of Mamaroneck, the 43,000-plus square foot building will connect to the existing 40,000 square foot facility which opened its doors in 2015. It will house the new Murphy Brothers Contracting headquarters, along with additional self-storage capacity, officials said.

"Self-Storage helps people manage their lives," said New York Self-Storage Association (NYSSA) Chief Executive Officer Peter Ferraro Sr. "The NYSSA is delighted to see the project finally take ofMf."

The project, officials said, is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

Officials said the Project Approval Team included Kristen Motel and Tony Gioffre, Cuddy & Feder, Architect Kim Martelli, KTM Architects, Michael Stein of Hudson Engineering, Brian Dempsy, DTS Provident, and Bill Canavan, HydroEnvironmental Solutions. The Project Construction Loan Team included Jeff Bonville and Will Dunkel of Tompkins Community Bank, Ken Meccia of Statewide Abstract and Richard Klein, Esq., of Dorf Nelson Zauderer.

Hudson Valley Women in Construction Hosts An Empowering Event on MWBE Certification

MOUNT KISCO

On Tuesday, Mar. 25, 2025, the Building and Realty Institute's Hudson Valley Women in Construction group held a powerful and informative luncheon at Hotel MTK in Mount Kisco, BRI officials said.

The event, led by Chairs Stacey Tompkins of Tompkins Excavating and Jane Anne Cavallaro of Renu Contracting and Restoration, Milburn Flooring, and Renu Energy, was an inspiring gathering that served as both a professional development opportunity and a tribute to Women's History Month, BRI officials added.

The gathering, BRI officials said, was particularly significant as it coincided with Equal Pay Day, a reminder of the ongoing fight for wage equity and the importance of economic empowerment for women. The event focused on the challenges and opportunities that women face in the construction and contracting industries, with a special emphasis on the process of obtaining Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) certification in New York State.

Guest speaker James P. Youngs of Hancock Estabrook, LLP led an engaging discussion on MWBE certification, compliance, utilization, and appeals. Attendees gained invaluable insights into the steps necessary to become certified, as well as strategies for leveraging certification to access state, county, and local government contracting opportunities. In addition, women who have navigated the MWBE process shared their experiences, offering practical advice and encouragement to those looking to pursue certification, BRI officials said.

The event, BRI officials added, underscored the importance of MWBE certification in advancing women-owned businesses and breaking down barriers in traditionally male-dominated industries. Certified MWBEs gain access to government contracts, development assistance, and financing programs, which can be critical in scaling their businesses and securing long-term success.

The Hudson Valley Women in Construction Lunch Program is part of a new series designed to support and elevate women in the homebuilding, remodeling, construction, and contracting industries. Events like this provide essential resources, networking opportunities, and knowledge-sharing to help women overcome challenges and thrive in their fields, BRI officials said.

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An Important Summary for Employers on Prenatal Care Leave

By Matthew Persanis, Esq.

EASTCHESTER

Matthew Persanis, Esq.

Effective Jan 1, 2025, New York State Labor Law § 196-b (New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law), requires all New York employers to provide 20 hours of paid prenatal personal leave per 52-week period.

Employees may use this paid leave to get health care services during their pregnancy or related to such pregnancy, including physical examinations, medical procedures, monitoring and testing, and discussions with a health care provider related to the pregnancy.

- This leave is in addition to paid sick leave accruals of up to 40 to 56 hours (depending on employer size) that is already required.
- The leave may be taken in hourly increments, is paid in hourly installments, and need not be accrued before being used.
- Employees receive their leave pay at their regular rate of pay or the applicable minimum wage, whichever is greater.
- An employer need not pay out unused prenatal leave upon separation from employment.
- Just as with other provisions of the PSLL, an employer may not require the disclosure of confidential information relating to an employee's illness, injury, or health condition as a condition of providing paid prenatal personal leave.
- Just as with other provisions of the PSLL, an employer is prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against an employee for exercising their rights under the law, including requesting or using paid prenatal leave (including a prohibition on discharging, threatening, or penalizing that worker for those reasons).
- Employees have the legal right to restoration to their position with the same pay and terms and conditions of employment after taking such paid leave.

***Editor's Note:** Matthew Persanis serves as Labor Counsel to The Building and Realty Institute (BRI). He is regarded as an expert in Labor Relations. He is a principal at Elefante and Persanis, LLP. The firm is based in Eastchester.*

Report: Housing Starts Up in February as Builders Still Contend with Rising Costs

WASHINGTON

Limited existing inventory helped single-family starts to post a solid gain in February across the U.S., but an analysis from The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) shows that builders are still grappling with elevated construction costs stemming from tariff issues and persistent shortages related to buildable lots and labor.

The Mar. 18 analysis said that overall housing starts increased 11.2 percent in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.50 million units. The analysis is based on a report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Census Bureau, NAHB officials said.

The February reading of 1.50 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if development kept this pace for the next 12 months (from March on). Within this overall number, single-family starts increased 11.4 percent to a 1.11 million seasonally adjusted annual rate, the highest pace since February of 2024. The multifamily sector, which includes apartment buildings and condos, increased 10.7 percent to an annualized 393,000 pace, according to the analysis.

"While solid demand and a lack of existing inventory provided a boost to single-family production in February, our latest builder survey shows that builders remain concerned about challenging housing affordability conditions, most notably elevated financing and construction costs, as well as tariffs on key building materials," said Buddy Hughes, chairman of NAHB and a home builder and developer from Lexington, N.C.

"Despite elevated interest rates and policy uncertainty, ongoing lean levels of single-family existing home inventory helped to boost single-family production in February," said Jing Fu, NAHB senior director, forecasting and analysis. "NAHB forecasts that single-family starts will remain effectively flat in 2025 as prospects of a better regulatory business climate are offset by uncertainty on the tariff front. Meanwhile, multifamily construction is expected to remain soft in early 2025 due to challenging financing conditions, before stabilizing in the second half of the year."

Key Data

On a regional and year-to-date basis, combined single-family and multifamily starts were 4.7 percent lower in the Northeast, 21.5 percent lower in the Midwest, 8.3 percent lower in the South and 20.2 percent higher in the West, the analysis said.

The analysis added that overall permits decreased 1.2 percent to a 1.46-million-unit annualized rate in February and were down 6.8 percent compared to February of 2024. Single-family permits decreased 0.2 percent to a 992,000-unit rate and were down 3.4 percent compared to the previous year. Multifamily permits decreased 3.1 percent to a 464,000 pace.

Looking at regional permit data on a year-to-date basis, the analysis said that permits were 30.1 percent lower in the Northeast, 2.3 percent higher in the Midwest, 2.1 percent lower in the South and 12.5 percent lower in the West.

The number of single-family homes under construction in February was down 6.7 percent from a year ago, at 640,000 homes. In February, the count of apartments under construction increased 0.3 percent to an annualized 772,000 pace. That data marks the first gain after 18 months of consecutive declines. But it was down 20 percent from a year ago, the analysis said.

Industry Experts: Remodeling Market Poised for Growth in 2025, Continued from p. 5

survey results, the top five fields that remodelers reported labor shortages in include: carpenters-finished, carpenters-rough, framing crews, bricklayers/masons and concrete workers.

Remodelers report the products most difficult to get are appliances, windows and doors, HVAC equipment, plumbing fixtures and fittings and cabinets.

"Although the remodeling industry faces certain headwinds, favorable demographics and characteristics of the current housing stock will boost remodeling activity in 2025," said Lynch. "NAHB is forecasting residential remodeling activity to post a five percent gain in 2025, and a nominal gain of three percent in 2026."

Attendees also heard from Alan Hanbury, Jr., president of House of Hanbury Builders Inc., based in Newington, Conn., who presented on best practices for remodelers to grow and manage their businesses profitably.

For remodelers, a few best practices stand out in ensuring sustained success. "Many business owners overlook budgeting, yet establishing a clear financial strategy is crucial for controlled growth," said Hanbury. "By tracking expenses and forecasting needs, business owners can maintain healthy financial practices and avoid unnecessary strain."

Hanbury noted that focusing on the quality of work over discounting will also be a better driver of leads, growth and revenue for those in the remodeling industry.

Remodelers who consistently track the true billable hourly cost of employees will gain invaluable insights into their operations' profits, Hanbury said.

"Without monitoring it, you'll never understand the true cost of your workforce," noted Hanbury. "It's also very important to have financial targets, which allow you to benchmark against your competitors as well as your past efforts and know where your business stands in the marketplace."

Housing in Surprising Places: A Recap of the BRI's March General Membership Meeting

HARRISON

On March 20, 2025, the Building and Realty Institute (BRI) hosted its March General Membership Meeting at the Harrison Meadows Country Club, spotlighting an increasingly relevant topic: "Housing in Surprising Places."

The event brought together industry leaders, developers, and local officials to explore how suburban communities, once resistant to new housing – particularly affordable housing – are rethinking their approach to development, BRI officials said.

For decades, conventional wisdom held that suburban towns with excellent schools and convenient Metro North Railroad access were among the toughest places to pursue new multifamily housing projects. However, that narrative is shifting. The meeting dove into two powerful case studies from New Canaan (Conn.) and Pelham, offering insight into how thoughtful, well-integrated development projects are emerging in traditionally unlikely locations, BRI officials added.

CASE STUDY: New Canaan's Approach to Affordable Housing

David McCarthy, president of Heritage Housing, Inc., and Scott Hobbs, chairman of the Housing Authority of New Canaan and President of Hobbs, Inc., presented New Canaan's innovative affordable housing projects, including Canaan Parish and Riverwood. These developments exemplify how affluent communities can embrace inclusionary zoning and public-private partnerships to create affordable housing opportunities while maintaining the character and appeal of the area, event officials said.

The presentation, event officials added, detailed the financial strategies behind these projects, highlighting a mix of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), state tax abatement programs (like New York's PILOT program), and developer incentives to make housing accessible to families across a range of income levels. Notably, the developments prioritize sustainability, energy efficiency, and a design aesthetic that blends seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhoods.

CASE STUDY: Pelham's Revitalization Journey

Mayor Chance Mullen of the Village of Pelham shared the inspiring story behind the Pelham House project, a $77 million public-private partnership designed to breathe new life into the village's struggling downtown, event officials said.

In 2017, Pelham faced a challenging landscape: declining commercial values, fiscal instability, and a downtown dotted with what Mullen described as "broken teeth" - empty, neglected storefronts undermining the area's vibrancy, event officials said.

Fast forward to today, and Pelham has not only stabilized its budget and doubled its reserves but is also on track to expand its housing stock by eight percent, adding over $50 million in new value to the community. The revitalization project includes a new municipal center, significant infrastructure improvements, and a focus on creating smaller, more affordable units to mitigate school impacts while meeting the housing needs of seniors, empty nesters, and young professionals, Mullen said.

The BRI's March meeting provided a forward-thinking look at how suburban housing development is evolving. By showcasing real-world examples and practical strategies, the event empowered attendees to rethink what's possible in their own communities, BRI officials said.

BRI officials added that, as the demand for housing continues to rise, particularly in high-opportunity areas, events like this play a crucial role in fostering collaboration and innovation among builders, policymakers, and community stakeholders. The stories from Pelham and New Canaan are proof that with vision, commitment, and creative problem-solving, housing can indeed happen in surprising places.

Why the Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill is Essential for New York's Cooperatives

By Geoffrey Mazel, Esq.

NEW YORK

The proposed Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill (NYS Senate S1745), introduced in the New York State Legislature by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Assembly Member Edward Braunstein, is a crucial step forward for protecting cooperative housing in New York. This legislation seeks to codify the exemption of cooperative corporations from laws designed to address traditional landlord-tenant relationships, such as the Tenant Protection Act (TPA) of 2019 and the Good Cause Eviction Bill. By doing so, it ensures that cooperatives remain distinct under the law, shielding them from the unintended consequences of regulations that are ill-suited for their unique housing model.

This article will explain why this bill is necessary, the benefits it provides to cooperative housing, and the compelling reasons why it must be supported.

Cooperatives, or "co-ops," are fundamentally different from rental housing. In a co-op, residents are shareholders in a corporation that owns the property. Instead of being tenants who rent their units, co-op shareholders hold shares in the corporation, coupled with a proprietary lease granting them the right to occupy their apartment.

This structure is inherently democratic, with residents electing a board of directors to manage the building and make decisions in the collective interest of the shareholders. Co-op boards are fiduciaries, responsible for maintaining financial stability and enforcing the community's rules.

Unlike landlords, co-op boards do not generate profit from tenants. Instead, they oversee the cooperative's financial and operational needs, funded entirely by maintenance fees paid by shareholders. This distinct model is not a traditional landlord-tenant relationship and should not be regulated as such.

The need for the Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill arises from a recurring problem: cooperatives have been unintentionally swept into legislation designed for rental housing. Two notable examples illustrate the problem:

The TPA was intended to protect tenants in rental housing from excessive rent increases, predatory eviction practices, and unfair security deposit requirements. However, the language of the law inadvertently included cooperatives. This misapplication created unnecessary burdens for co-ops, such as requiring co-op boards to comply with notice requirements for "rent" increases, even though maintenance fees are not rent. The cooperative community had to invest significant resources to secure an exemption for co-ops from the TPA, which was ultimately granted.

The Good Cause Eviction Bill proposed limiting evictions and restricting rent increases in rental housing. If applied to co-ops, it would have severely hampered the ability of boards to enforce proprietary leases and collect maintenance fees. Cooperatives would have been unable to remove shareholders who fail to pay their fees or comply with house rules, threatening the financial health and governance of co-op buildings. Through substantial advocacy, co-ops were carved out of this legislation.

A Solution

These examples highlight a troubling pattern: laws designed for rental housing unintentionally encompassing co-ops due to broad or ambiguous language. Each time, co-op boards, shareholders, and advocacy groups have had to mobilize to correct these misapplications. This has consumed significant time and resources that could have been better spent improving and managing cooperative communities.

The Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill provides a fair, practical, and lasting solution. By codifying cooperatives' exemption from laws like the TPA and Good Cause Eviction Bill, it ensures that co-ops are treated as distinct entities under New York law. Future legislation affecting landlord-tenant relationships would explicitly need to name cooperatives to apply to them.

This approach prevents future misapplications of rental housing laws to co-ops and eliminates the need for continuous advocacy to secure carve-outs. It strikes a balance by allowing lawmakers to regulate co-ops when necessary but only when they make that intention clear.

Co-op boards need the authority to manage their buildings effectively. They must be able to enforce proprietary leases, collect maintenance fees, and address shareholder conduct without the constraints of laws designed for landlord-tenant relationships. The bill protects this autonomy, allowing co-ops to continue operating democratically and efficiently.

Cooperatives rely on maintenance fees paid by shareholders to cover operating costs. Laws like the TPA or Good Cause Eviction Bill, if applied to co-ops, would limit boards' ability to adjust these fees, jeopardizing the building's financial health. The bill ensures that co-ops can manage their finances flexibly and responsibly.

The bill provides clarity for lawmakers, cooperative boards, and shareholders by formally recognizing the distinction between cooperatives and rental housing. This reduces the risk of future legislative overreach or unintended consequences.

The cooperative community has spent considerable time and energy lobbying for carve-outs from laws that should not have applied to them in the first place. The bill eliminates the need for repeated advocacy, allowing co-ops to focus on their communities rather than fighting unnecessary battles.

The Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill is not about granting co-ops special treatment - it is about fairness. It ensures that co-ops are only included in legislation when lawmakers specifically intend to regulate them. This aligns with principles of good governance, ensuring that laws are applied thoughtfully and deliberately.

The Permanent Co-op Carve-Out Bill is essential to protecting the unique and democratic nature of cooperative housing in New York. It codifies cooperatives' distinct status, preserves their self-governance, safeguards their financial stability, and prevents future misapplications of landlord-tenant laws. By supporting this bill, lawmakers can provide clarity, fairness, and stability for the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who live in cooperatives.

This legislation is a reasonable and just solution that respects the cooperative model while ensuring legislative intent is clear. It deserves the full support of New York's elected officials and legal community.

Editor's Note: Geoffrey Mazel is an attorney with the law firm of Hankin & Mazel, PLLC, which is located in midtown Manhattan and Great Neck, N.Y. He is the Legal Counsel for the Presidents Co-op & Condo Council (PCCC), a think tank of Co-op and Condo Presidents that represents 100 buildings with more than 100,000 residents. Member Presidents of the PCCC are located throughout New York City. This article recently appeared in the Queens Bar Bulletin and is reprinted with permission.

Geoffrrey Mazel, Esq.

Communications Processes Covered at the March 27 Membership Meeting of the CCAC

ARMONK

"Enhancing Communications Processes Between Boards and Shareholders/Unit Owners" was the topic of the Mar. 27th Membership Meeting of The Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC).

Tina Larsson, the principal of The Folson Group, was the event's speaker. The Folson Group, based in New York City, is a well-known Co-op and Condo consulting company. More than 40 CCAC and Building and Realty Institute (BRI) members participated in the meeting, which was held on Zoom, CCAC officials said.

The program, CCAC officials added, covered a series of effective communication strategies for Boards of Directors of Co-op and Condos, including situations involving:

- ◆ Increases in Maintenance and Common Charges
- ◆ Key Changes in Board Leadership
- ◆ Upcoming Board Initiatives and Board Priorities

CCAC officials said that members of Boards of Directors of Co-ops and Condos "walked away with actionable insights to improve transparency and trust with Shareholders and Unit Owners." Board members, CCAC officials added, learned how to deliver critical updates - on topics such as Maintenance/Common Charges Increases or Leadership Changes - through clear, proactive, and multi-channel communication methods.

"By adopting these strategies, boards can foster a more engaged, informed community while minimizing misinformation, rumors, and frustration," Larsson said.

Larsson reviewed communications strategies for Boards of Directors through the uses of newsletters, e-mails and memos, special meetings and online portals. She also stressed the importance of building trust between boards and the building's community, as well as strengthening a building's overall community.

The CCAC is an affiliate organization of the BRI. Formed in 1979, the CCAC represents hundreds of Co-op and Condo complexes in the Westchester and Mid-Hudson Region. Members of the CCAC receive a series of membership benefits, including Meetings and Seminars, as well as Group Insurance, Referral Services, Legislative Updates and consistent communications on issues affecting their buildings, association officials said.

Wahlquist Named the CEO of IREM

CHICAGO

The Board of Directors of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) recently announced that Zack Wahlquist will serve as IREM's Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Executive Vice President.

Zack Wahlquist

IREM officials made the announcement on Jan. 6.

Dawn Carpenter, 2025 IREM President, said: "The IREM CEO Search Task Force has found the very best person to lead the talented international IREM headquarters team. While the Task Force was impressed with the outstanding group of candidates, Zack's experience within the real estate industry, along with his background in association management, makes him the right fit for IREM. We couldn't be more excited for what's to come under his leadership."

Wahlquist comes to IREM from the Chicago Association of Realtors (CAR), where he served as the organization's Chief Operating Officer (COO) since 2022. He also served as CAR's Executive Vice President from 2019 to 2022, IREM officials said.

IREM officials said that Wahlquist holds an M.S. in Higher Education and Student Affairs and a B.A. in Political Science. He's a fellow of the American Society of Association Executives (FASAE) and holds the organization's Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation. He has also earned the Realtor Association Certified Executive (RCE) certification from the National Association of Realtors (NAR).

Wahlquist was recognized with the Association Forum's Professional Achievement Award in October of 2023. He also serves as a Board Member of the Illinois Chapter of the LGBTQ+ Real Estate Alliance and as a Board Member of Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Inc. In addition, he volunteers with the American Society of Association Executives, Association Forum, and local arts organizations, IREM officials said.

When asked about leading IREM, Wahlquist said: "Since transitioning into the world of real estate five years ago, I've come to love the people in this industry. And the IREM leaders and community I've met so far are no different - incredibly thoughtful, kind, and committed to the industry and to IREM. I'm honored to have the opportunity to lead such a well-regarded organization already doing incredible things. I'm excited to see what the future holds for IREM and its members."

IREM officials said that IREM, for more than 90 years, has been a strong voice for the real estate management sector. Almost 18,000 leaders in commercial and residential management call the organization home for education, support, and networking, IREM officials added.

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial Announces the Sale of A Commercially Zoned Property in Yorktown Heights

RYE BROOK

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial recently announced the sale of 1.6 acres of vacant land located on Saw Mill River Road in Yorktown Heights.

The 1.6-acre site, which is located in the Highway Commercial Zone, is directly across from the Yorktown Green Shopping Center and was purchased on an as-is, non-contingent basis, officials said.

The site was previously approved for the construction of a bank with a drive-through. However, those approvals have lapsed. The purchaser is a developer who will be submitting an application to the town for the approvals for a commercial freestanding building, officials added.

Officials said the seller was represented by Garry Klein, regional manager of Houlihan Lawrence Commercial. The purchaser was represented by Feirstein Properties.

Hudson Valley Women in Construction Hosts An Empowering Event on MWBE Certification, Continued from p. 6

As the industry continues to evolve, BRI officials said, initiatives like this serve as a testament to the resilience and determination of women in construction. By advocating for equal opportunities, supporting one another, and staying informed on policies and certifications like MWBE, women are paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future in the field.

Event officials urged members of the building, realty and construction sectors to look out for future Hudson Valley Women in Construction events, where women in those sectors can continue to learn, grow, and support one another on their paths to success.

A Building and Realty Institute (BRI) Member Commentary:

The New Crystal Restoration Marks A Milestone!

By Lisa Marie Scherrer, Chief Executive Director, The New Crystal Restoration Enterprises, Inc.

PORT CHESTER

This year, The New Crystal Restoration is celebrating a remarkable milestone.

Our company is marking 65 years of serving the Westchester County and tri-state communities with unparalleled dedication and expertise. Established in 1960, New Crystal has become a trusted name in water and fire restoration, mold remediation, capital improvements, and asbestos abatement. As Westchester County's oldest restoration company, we take immense pride in our history, our people, and our contributions to the communities that we serve.

A Legacy of Leadership

Founded by Louis Cordasco Sr., and on the principles of quality, trust, and innovation, New Crystal has remained steadfast in its commitment to delivering exceptional service. Over the decades, we've navigated industry changes, embraced new technologies, and earned accolades, including being named the 2024 Best Commercial General Contractor.

In 2008 Lisa Cordasco and Rosemary Cordasco, daughter and daughter-in-law to Louis Sr., stepped in as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and New Crystal blossomed as a women-owned business. New Crystal Restoration represents resilience and forward- thinking leadership, which has allowed us to thrive and adapt to evolving industry needs to include being a leader in Green-technology for the restoration industry.

Innovation and Expertise

"Our services have grown over the years, but our mission remains unchanged: to restore properties and provide peace of mind to our clients," said Lisa Cordasco. "From handling water, fire, and mold restoration to managing capital improvements and asbestos abatement, New Crystal Restoration has tackled every challenge with integrity and expertise. With our team's certifications, considerable experience and genuine empathy, we ensure we consistently meet and exceed industry standards and client expectations."

A Heart for Community

Our success would not be possible without the trust and loyalty of our clients. From property managers and contractors to insurance adjusters and building owners, we're grateful to be the go-to partner for those who need restoration and improvement solutions.

New Crystal Restoration's legacy is built not only on the projects we complete, but on the relationships we've nurtured along the way. We are proud to have played a role in restoring homes, businesses, and lives after unexpected disasters.

Looking to the Future

As we celebrate our 65th anniversary, we also look ahead. New Crystal Restoration is committed to continuing our tradition of excellence while embracing innovation to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Whether it's introducing new services, forging new partnerships, or expanding our reach, our goal is to remain the trusted leader in restoration for decades to come.

A Thank You For 65 Years

To our clients, partners, and community: thank you for being part of our journey. Your support has made this milestone possible. Here's to the next 65 years of service, growth, and excellence.

A rendering of the apartment building at 60 S. Kensico Avenue in White Plains.

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial Announces Sale of Development Site in White Plains for $1,030,000

Site Approved for the Construction of a New Multifamily Building

RYE BROOK

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial has announced the recent sale of a fully approved 12-unit multifamily development site at 60 S. Kensico Avenue, White Plains.

The purchase price was $1,030,000, officials said.

The purchaser was represented by Garry Klein, regional manager of Houlihan Lawrence Commercial. The seller was represented by Rahul Soni, principal broker of NestEdge Realty, officials added.

Officials said the purchaser, Larry Regan of Regan Development Corporation, will be developing the site with a three-story building consisting of 12-units of affordable housing with covered parking. Funding for the project will come from a variety of sources, including the City of White Plains Affordable Assistance Fund, the New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) agency, the Westchester County New Homes Land Acquisition Fund, Westchester County's Housing Flex Fund and Webster Bank.

The 8,712-square-foot site, officials said, formerly used as a parking lot, will now provide much-needed affordable housing to the community. The new, modern designed building will consist of three studio apartments and nine one-bedroom apartments available to households whose incomes are at, or below, 50 percent and 60 percent of the Westchester County Area Median Income.

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial, a full-service division of Houlihan Lawerence, specializes in Investment Opportunities, Office, Multifamily, Industrial and Retail Sales and Leasing, Land Acquisition, Development, and Municipal Approval Consultation. With local expertise in the markets north of New York City, the Commercial Group has a database of buyers and sellers throughout the country to effectively market commercial properties and opportunities on a national level, company officials said.

Houlihan Lawrence, company officials added, is the leading real estate brokerage serving New York City's northern suburbs. Founded in Bronxville in 1888, the company is deeply committed to technological innovation and the finest client service. The company has 32 offices and 1,450-plus agents serving Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, Ulster and Orange counties in New York and Fairfield County in Connecticut.

STUDY: Affordability Headwinds Driving Home Buyers' Interest in Smaller, More Personalized Homes in 2025

WASHINGTON

Home buyers across the U.S. continue to look toward smaller homes, with the median home size dropping from 2,200 square feet in 2023 to 2,150 square feet in 2024 — the lowest in 15 years — after holding strong at 2,300 square feet from 2019-2022. The same thing is happening to median lot sizes, which has dropped about 1,000 square feet in the last 15 years to 8,400 square feet.

Those assessments were contained in a Feb. 26 report from The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Meanwhile, townhomes are also becoming increasingly popular, comprising a record 17 percent of the single-family market compared to 10 percent in 2009, the report said.

"There's a simple reason this is happening: townhomes are more affordable as material, lot and labor prices continue to increase," said Rose Quint, NAHB assistant vice president of survey research.

Quint highlighted that the premium buyers pay for new homes is shrinking. In 2024, the median price for existing homes increased five percent to $412,000 — the first time it has crossed the $400,000 threshold — while the median price for new homes dropped two percent to $420,000, the report said.

Builders, the report added, are increasing overall living space by tacking on more porches and patios, with 68 percent and 64 percent of new homes, respectively, incorporating these features. In addition to building smaller homes, they are also trying to address affordability concerns by offering sales incentives (64 percent) and cutting home prices (33 percent).

Differences

Although home size preferences in general are trending smaller, exact sizes differ by generation. Millennials prefer larger homes, with a median of 2,408 square feet, while boomers are looking to downsize to an average of 1,869 square feet. Both Gen X and Gen Z are looking for homes around 2,250 square feet, the report said.

The report said that each generation is progressively more open to having a smaller home with higher-quality products and amenities versus a larger home with fewer amenities. More than half of Gen Z (53 percent) and millennials (52 percent) are willing to make that compromise, with that percentage increasing to 61 percent for Gen X and 70 percent for boomers. The same trend is true for incentivizing each generation to purchase a townhome of similar size and quality instead of a single-family home, with Gen Z looking for a 20 percent discount while boomers would need a discount of least 30 percent.

There's no major consensus among generations for exterior styles, with Gen Z and millennials leaning slightly more contemporary and Gen X and boomers preferring more traditional home styles. Builders and designers are adapting to this plurality with a mid-century modern, or "retro revival" style, mixing clean lines with warm textures and accents. Builders can find simple solutions, such as gable windows or mixed materials, to scale these trends down to an affordable scale, according to the report.

A Key

Flexibility, the report said, is also key for home buyers. Whether it's designing for longevity and addressing different life stages at the onset or creating spaces that can be used for a variety of wellness activities or increased connection to nature, today's homes need to reflect their owners and provide them with a place to rejuvenate.

"People are being less influenced by influencers," said Doug Cummins, senior associate/project manager at DAHLIN Group Architecture and Planning. "Buyers are becoming more sophisticated in what they want to see in their home and make it personal to them. A really simple idea can turn that house into a home for that home buyer. It makes them feel more connected to the space that they have."

The report said that certain preferences are common across all generations because they just make sense. Top technology features for all home buyers, for example, include security cameras, wireless security systems and video doorbells, highlighting a key interest in safety.

Consistently popular features, the report noted, such as the great room, laundry room and garage storage, remain important for most buyers of all generations. Other top amenities and design options include:

- Drinking water filtration
- Special storage racks for wine/spices in the kitchen
- Both a shower stall and a tub in the primary bath
- Pull-out shelves in the kitchen

Additional information on home buyer trends can be found in NAHB's What Home Buyers Really Want, available at builderbooks.com, NAHB officials said.

NAHB Reacts to President Trump's Tariff Announcement, Continued from p. 1

"The prospect of an improved regulatory climate where federal agencies are limited to regulations that follow the letter and spirit of the law and are tailored to meet the needs of small businesses can lead to more informed, less burdensome rules and unleash home builders to increase supply and address the nation's housing affordability crisis," Hughes said.

Hughes stressed that increased regulations - especially energy building code requirements such as the Biden administration's mandate by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that requires them to insure mortgages for new single-family homes only if they are built to the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and HUD-financed multifamily housing be built to 2021 IECC or ASHRAE 90.1-2019 - are making it much harder for home builders and multifamily developers to build housing that is attainable and affordable for American families.

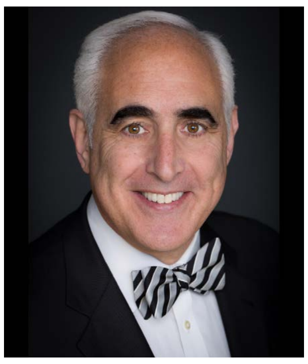
According to Home Innovation Research Labs, compliance with the 2021 IECC can add more than $22,000 to the price of a new home, but in practice, home builders have estimated increased costs of up to $31,000. Furthermore, it can take as long as 90 years for homeowners to see a payback on this investment, NAHB said.

NAHB, association officials said, is urging Congress to introduce and pass legislation to fix the situation by preventing HUD and USDA from adopting a minimum energy standard that harms housing affordability.

"In these challenging economic times, the significant undersupply in housing coupled with rapidly increasing home prices clearly indicate the need to reduce the regulatory burden on the housing industry," said Hughes. "NAHB stands ready to work with Congress to reform our broken regulatory rulemaking process, unburden and empower small businesses and make housing attainable for all Americans."

GUEST COMMENTARY:

What Trump's Tariffs Could Mean for Commercial Real Estate in the Hudson Valley



Paul Adler, Esq.

By Paul Adler, Esq., Chief Strategy Officer, Rand Commercial

WHITE PLAINS

The business outlook for the Hudson Valley has been largely positive in the wake of Donald Trump's return to the White House, with optimism stemming from promises of favorable conditions for domestic growth, business taxation, and a reduction in regulatory burdens. These factors were expected to create a climate ripe for economic expansion, offering significant opportunities for sectors like commercial real estate (CRE). However, an increasingly aggressive tariff policy, compounded by the planned deportation of immigrant labor, threatens to upend this positive outlook. The impact of these policies, particularly on the construction industry, cannot be overstated.

The Hudson Valley's real estate market has long been intertwined with both national and international trade and labor forces. As a region deeply connected to New York City's broader economic dynamics, the influx of labor and materials has been essential to the area's robust growth, particularly in the residential and commercial construction sectors. From imported flooring and roofing materials to essential appliances and lumber, the availability and cost of these materials are directly influenced by tariffs. Trump's aggressive stance on tariffs—targeting imports from China, the European Union, and other trading partners—has driven up the costs of these materials, putting additional strain on construction budgets already struggling with inflationary pressures.

The construction sector, particularly in the multi-family housing market, has been a cornerstone of economic growth in the Hudson Valley. Even as the commercial real estate market adapts to new realities post-pandemic, multi-family housing remains a leading investment sector. The demand for residential units continues to outpace supply, driven by the influx of residents fleeing high-cost areas like New York City. However, a troubling forecast looms over the construction pipeline. According to industry projections, construction starts in the region are expected to be 30 percent below pre-pandemic levels by mid-2025, a direct result of a combination of factors including inflation, supply chain disruptions, and most concerning, the growing financial burden of tariffs.

Tariffs have always been a contentious issue, but their impact on the Hudson Valley's CRE market has been uniquely detrimental. Imported goods, such as the aforementioned flooring, lumber, and roofing materials, have become significantly more expensive due to Trump's tariffs. The increase in material costs, coupled with labor shortages in construction, is squeezing developers and investors who rely on an efficient supply chain to meet growing demand. These tariff-induced price hikes could be the breaking point for many small- and medium-sized construction projects that are already operating with razor-thin margins.

To compound the problem, Trump's policies regarding immigration and the planned deportation of immigrant labor are particularly concerning for the construction industry. Immigrant workers, especially those from Latin American countries, have long played an indispensable role in the trades, particularly in the construction of multi-family residential buildings. The loss of this labor force would result in significant delays and increased costs for developers and contractors, further driving up the overall cost of construction projects. Even before these potential deportations, the construction industry was facing challenges in securing enough skilled labor, and now, the future looks even more uncertain.

New York State, and specifically the Hudson Valley, has a unique sensitivity to immigration and tariff policies that stray too far from the status quo. The region has a rich history of immigrant communities contributing to both its economic and cultural fabric. An attack on the labor force that fuels construction and development would reverberate throughout the local economy. Moreover, the region's dependence on affordable materials from overseas makes it vulnerable to tariffs, which can further exacerbate the rising costs that already plague builders, developers, and investors.

> ***"For the Hudson Valley's commercial real estate market to thrive, it is essential for policymakers to reevaluate the impacts of Trump's tariff policies and immigration reforms. The vitality of the region's construction sector and its associated industries depend on it. Without a thoughtful approach to trade, immigration, and labor, the future of commercial real estate in the region could remain uncertain."***

At A Crossroads

When combined with the economic realities of tariffs, immigration restrictions, and increasing material costs, the commercial real estate market in the Hudson Valley finds itself at a crossroads. While multi-family construction remains strong, its future is tied to more than just consumer demand; it is now tethered to the broader economic forces at play. Developers are already making tough choices—scale back on projects, delay construction, or absorb the increased costs, all of which have a significant impact on the overall economic ecosystem.

The path forward requires more than just a favorable tax climate or deregulation. It demands a careful balancing of policies that protect both the economic interests of domestic businesses and the essential role that immigrants and international trade play in fueling growth. Until these issues are addressed in a meaningful way, the Hudson Valley's CRE market will likely continue to face headwinds that could stymie the potential for the region's post-pandemic recovery.

For the Hudson Valley's commercial real estate market to thrive, it is essential for policymakers to reevaluate the impacts of Trump's tariff policies and immigration reforms. The vitality of the region's construction sector and its associated industries depend on it. Without a thoughtful approach to trade, immigration, and labor, the future of commercial real estate in the region could remain uncertain.

***Editor's Note:** The above article originally appeared in The Rockland County Business Journal. It is reprinted with permission.*

REPORT: Remodeling Market Sentiment Was Down in the First Quarter

WASHINGTON

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) on Apr. 10 released its NAHB/Westlake Royal Remodeling Market Index (RMI) for the first quarter, posting a reading of 63, down five points compared to the previous quarter.

While the reading of 63 - for areas across the U.S. - is still in positive territory, this is only the second time since the first quarter of 2020 that the RMI has been as low as 63, the study said.

The NAHB/Westlake Royal RMI survey asks remodelers to rate five components of the remodeling market as "good," "fair" or "poor." Each question is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, where an index number above 50 indicates that a higher share view conditions as good than poor. The results of the RMI are seasonally adjusted, according to NAHB officials.

The Current Conditions Index is an average of three components: the current market for large remodeling projects, moderately-sized projects and small projects. The Future Indicators Index is an average of two components: the current rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in and the current backlog of remodeling projects. The overall RMI is calculated by averaging the Current Conditions Index and the Future Indicators Index. Any number over 50 indicates that more remodelers view remodeling market conditions as good than poor, the report said.

"Rising homeowner equity and limited opportunities to move into other homes is still supporting the home improvement market and keeping remodeler sentiment positive," said NAHB Remodelers Chair Nicole Goolsby Morrison, a remodeler from Raleigh, N.C. "Sentiment is not quite as positive as it was last quarter, however, as some remodelers are reporting that uncertainty about tariffs and the direction of the economy are making customers hesitant to spend on larger projects."

"The five-point decline in the RMI likely reflects consumer uncertainty, fueled by rising costs and tariff concerns," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "Although almost all the data for the first quarter RMI were collected before the release of specific reciprocal tariffs, the debate and uncertainty over tariffs has had an effect on consumer confidence. Indeed, remodelers responding to the RMI survey reported that their suppliers have already increased prices by an average of 6.9 percent since January, due to the anticipated effect of tariffs."

The Current Conditions Index averaged 71, dropping four points compared to the previous quarter. All three components remained above 50 in positive territory: the component measuring large remodeling projects ($50,000 or more) fell 11 points to 64, the component measuring moderate remodeling projects (at least $20,000 but less than $50,000) inched down one point to 72, and the component measuring small-sized remodeling projects (under $20,000) remained unchanged at 76, the report said.

The Future Indicators Index averaged 55, down six points compared to the previous quarter. The component measuring the current rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in fell 11 points to 51, and the component measuring the backlog of remodeling jobs dipped one point to 58, the report added.

The full RMI tables can be found at nahb.org/rmi.

Officials: 2024 Was A Record Year for the Yonkers IDA

YONKERS

Building on the momentum of a banner year in 2023, the Yonkers Industrial Development Agency (YIDA) ended 2024 with another record year, officials recently announced.

The YIDA voted for the preliminary and final approval of financial incentives for residential projects representing a total private investment of approximately $1 billion. The developments are projected to create approximately 2,100 new residential units and approximately 2,400 construction jobs, officials said.

Since 2019, the Yonkers IDA has voted financial incentives for development projects representing a total private investment of approximately $3.6 billion. The developments are projected to create more than 7,500 new residential units and more than 8,800 construction jobs. Ten percent of all new residential units are set aside for affordable housing, officials added.

"2024 was another tremendous year for the continued redevelopment of Yonkers, with nearly $1 billion in private investment," said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, who serves as YIDA chair. "This extraordinary investment in our city is creating thousands of construction jobs, as well as new housing units, both market rate and affordable. We are looking to build on the momentum of 2024 with another record year of success in 2025."

Developments that received preliminary and final approval of incentives from the Yonkers IDA in 2024 included:

NORTH BROADWAY DEVELOPMENT
Developer: AMS Acquisitions
Location: 18 North Broadway
Total Private Investment: $306.7 million
Number of Units: 650
Construction Jobs: 800

325, 335 AND 337 SOUTH BROADWAY
Developer: Urban Builders Collaborative
Location: 325, 335 and 337 South Broadway
Total Private Investment: $162 million
Number of Units: 185
Construction Jobs: 300

PARK SQUARE
Developer: Titan Real Estate Development
Location: Bounded by St. Joseph Place, Cavalli Circle and Vineyard Avenue 18 North Broadway
Total Private Investment: $159.5 million
Number of Units: 340
Construction Jobs: 572

THE PARKER
Developer: MacQuesten Development
Location: 632-636 South Broadway
Total Private Investment: $116.2 million
Number of Units: 160
Construction Jobs: 260

ABBEY ON THE PARK
Developer: Kearney Realty & Development Group Inc.
Location: 21-23 Park Avenue
Total Private Investment: $57.7 million
Number of Units: 82
Construction Jobs: 150

WARBURTON AVENUE APARTMENTS
Developer: Center for Urban Rehabilitation and Empowerment, Inc. and Conifer Realty, LLC, in partnership with the City of Yonkers
Location: 322 Warburton Avenue
Total Private Investment: $53.3 million
Number of Units: 93
Construction Jobs: 179

221 BUENA VISTA
Developer: MSY Group
Location: 221-223 Buena Vista Avenue
Total Private Investment: $39.1 million
Number of Units: 94
Construction Jobs: 100

HILTON HOTEL
Developer: 555 Storage Group Inc.
Location: 559 Tuckahoe Road
Total Private Investment: $2.3 million
Construction Jobs: 30

FINIAN SULLIVAN TOWER
Developer: Sacred Heart Associates
Location: 1 Father Finian Sullivan Drive
Total Private Investment: $12 million
Number of Units: 150
Construction Jobs: NA

CROMWELL TOWERS
Developer: Metropolitan Realty Group
Location: 77 Locust Hill Avenue
Project Cost: $91 million
Number of Units: 317
Construction Jobs: 35

Established in 1982, the Yonkers Industrial Development Agency (YIDA) is a public benefit corporation that provides business development incentives to enhance economic development and job growth in the City of Yonkers.

More information about the Yonkers IDA can be found at www.yonkersida.com

Report: Despite Economic Uncertainty, Westchester's Commercial Market Finished Quarter One With "Generally Positive Results"

RYE BROOK

Despite uncertainty over the economy, Westchester County's commercial real estate market finished the first quarter of 2025 with generally positive results, according to the Houlihan Lawrence Q1 Westchester Commercial Market Report.

Multifamily rents gained strength due to continued brisk demand. In the office market, demand exceeded supply with a small reduction in vacancies. The retail sector continued to strengthen with a resurgence for well-managed regional malls, The industrial sector remains healthy with limited new supply and low vacancies. The volume of transactions was weaker than in the previous quarter, the report said.

According to the report, uncertainty has certainly escalated for businesses and consumers. However, for Commercial Real Estate (CRE) investors, uncertainty is not a new companion. Heightened uncertainty has been part of the CRE's investment landscape for more than two years. CRE has faced fierce headwinds, and it will continue forward, delivering for wise investors, despite the surrounding noise, the study added.

Below are the highlights of the report:

Westchester Residential Apartments – New Deliveries at a Slower Pace

In early 2024, the pace of new multifamily deliveries in Southern Westchester stepped up to over 1.5 percent of stock. This supply boost slightly weakened multifamily rental pricing. Over the last two quarters, the rate of deliveries has halved and is running closer to current demand growth. As a result, rents increased one percent quarter over quarter in Q1 2025, despite this being a seasonally weak quarter. Looking forward, the report said industry officials see a development pipeline that has declined significantly. This bodes well for a balanced market and pricing power for multifamily owners. Westchester multifamily occupancy remains tight, although it has dipped under 95 percent for the first time in several quarters. Both asking and effective rents gained strength in the first quarter of 2025, suggesting continued brisk demand and less pressure from new deliveries, the report said.

The study stressed that Housing Affordability is one of the major challenges that Westchester faces. Tight zoning regulations, favorable demographics and outstanding infrastructure support a continued growth in the number of households that want to reside in the area. Apartments are a cost-effective option for small households and developers have recognized this opportunity.

However, the report said, high construction costs, labor shortages and zoning restrictions are becoming more significant hurdles to continued development in the area. New tariff regimes could also impact projects that have yet to break ground. A fresh inflation shock in construction raw materials pricing could derail many new projects in this high-cost region (Westchester), the study added.

Westchester Offices – Stable, But Improvement In Occupancy Is Around the Corner

The Office Leasing Market south of I-287, the report said, appears to have stabilized. Q1 2025 was the second consecutive quarter where demand exceeded supply, leading to a small reduction in vacancies. Leasing activity was not strong, in fact, Q1 2025's leasing activity was only 63 percent of the prior quarter. Despite this, less departures led to a favorable balance. A better balance included direct as well as sublet space. Leasing rates remained stable.

After analyzing 4,350 direct leases with terms of at least five years CBRE found that effective rents at class-A and trophy office buildings had increased by 5.2 percent since 2023, while rents at -B and -C buildings had declined by 1.2 percent, the report said.

Attracting strong office tenants, the study added, is increasingly challenging for weaker owners as the cost of tenant incentives has escalated considerably. In general, owners of B and C buildings often lack the financial capability to provide Tenant Incentives when writing new leases. This may further hinder the recovery of these properties.

Westchester Retail – Evolving as Consumer Demands

The report said that Retail Assets have continued to strengthen. The region's resilient economy and robust household incomes provide support to retail fundamentals. However, the strength in this real estate market segment ebbs and flows.

Currently, well-managed regional malls, the report added, are experiencing a resurgence. Strong categories taking space in mall settings include cosmetics and fragrances, grocers, automotive, fast casual, and quick service concepts, as well as medical. The full-service restaurant segment is softer, and some national chains are likely to close stores in 2025. Several big-box retailers closed stores in Westchester during 2024. These include, Party City, GameStop, CVS and Dollar Tree, among others. The vacant space left by these closures is in the process of being marketed and re-leased, creating an opportunity for new concepts to find suitable options in Westchester.

The report said that Retail Space Net Absorption turned negative in Q1, 2025, likely due to Big Box closures. This quarter's decline in occupancy follows two quarters of improving prints. Sublet space absorption was positive. Overall, the well-located retail space is experiencing strong demand. Underscoring an overall progress in fundamentals, retail rents increased from Q4, 2024 and from twelve months ago.

Westchester Industrial and Flex - Stability During the First Quarter

Industrial space demand, the study said, was healthy during the first quarter of 2025. Supply and demand of space were in balance. Few departures helped occupancy and fewer deals were completed. Pricing remained stable with no increases recorded from the last quarter of 2025. It is possible that trade disruptions impact new lease signings. However, this segment of the market is enjoying strong demand, very limited new supply and low vacancy. It is unlikely that Southern Westchester will experience major tenant departures even with the backdrop of a trade war, the report added.

Westchester Transactions Remain Subdued

The study stressed that CRE transaction volumes are still subdued. The first quarter was weaker than the fourth quarter of 2024, which is not surprising as transaction volumes typically improve in the fourth quarter. Median prices declined modestly. Anecdotally, larger banks have begun to lend again to CRE. Smaller banks are open to lending to their best customers and those who are willing to keep deposits with the institutions. Price discovery continues.

Assets priced below Replacement Value immediately attract investor attention, but those that require negative leverage are slow to move as investors know that rental growth alone will not be able to provide the targeted return. Looking forward to 2025, the report said that the building and realty industry needs the interest rate environment to stabilize, and new economic policies to be announced and absorbed by the market, before we see a meaningful increase in investment transaction volume.

Houlihan Lawrence Commercial is a full-service division specializing in Investment Opportunities, Office, Multifamily, Industrial and Retail Sales and Leasing, Land Acquisition, Development, and Municipal Approval Consultation, company officials said.

With local expertise in the markets north of New York City, the Commercial Group has a database of buyers and sellers throughout the country to effectively market commercial properties and opportunities on a national level, company officials added.

Houlihan Lawrence, company officials said, is the leading real estate brokerage serving New York City's northern suburbs. Founded in Bronxville in 1888, the company is deeply committed to technological innovation and the finest client service, company officials added.

The company has 32 offices and 1,450-plus agents serving Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, Ulster and Orange counties in New York and Fairfield County in Connecticut, company officials said.

Luxury Homebuyers in Key Markets in New York and Connecticut Remained Highly Active in the First Quarter of 2025, Report Says

RYE BROOK

Despite macroeconomic uncertainty and lingering volatility in interest rates, luxury homebuyers remained highly active in the first quarter of 2025, reinforcing the strength of the luxury residential market across key markets in New York and Connecticut, according to the Houlihan Lawrence Q1 2025 Luxury Market report released on Apr. 15.

"From the $2 million entry point in Westchester to the $10 million-plus estates of Greenwich (Conn.), the luxury segment continued to outperform broader market trends in both pricing and pace" said Liz Nunan, president and chief executive officer of Houlihan Lawrence.

Westchester County saw a 32 percent year-over-year increase in luxury home sales at $2 million and above, with 98 transactions recorded in Q1. However, the median sale price ticked down 4.8 percent to $2.64 million, reflecting a slight broadening of the luxury base. Notably, activity in the $2M to $3M bracket surged by 55 percent. Days on the market increased to 101, but homes continued to trade near list price, with an average sale-to-list ratio of 99.7 percent. High-demand areas included Scarsdale, Rye, and Bedford, the report said.

Putnam and Dutchess Counties, defined here by the $1 million threshold, held steady in transaction volume with 31 luxury sales, identical to Q1 2024. However, the dollar volume fell nearly 16 percent, and the median sale price dropped 6.7 percent. This softness may reflect seasonal variations, fewer ultra-high-end trades, or a more cautious start to the year in rural and second-home markets. Still, properties in Garrison, Millbrook, and Red Hook anchored the high end of activity, the report added.

The study said that Greenwich delivered one of the strongest quarters on record for homes priced at $3 million and above. Sales increased 12 percent to 46 closings, while dollar volume surged nearly 50 percent, driven by multiple transactions exceeding $10 million. The median sale price reached $5.56 million, up over 20 percent year-over-year. Notably, the days on the market fell below 110, and sale-to-list price ratios remained competitive at 96.1 percent. High-end waterfront and estate properties continued to draw interest from both local and out-of-state buyers.

Darien, Rowayton, and New Canaan (all Conn.), also performed well. Darien saw luxury sales rise 88 percent year-over-year, with a median price of $3.55 million and homes selling on average in just 34 days. New Canaan remained consistent, with a modest five percent sales increase and strong pricing momentum. In Rowayton, luxury homes moved faster than any other market in the report, averaging just 14 days on market, the report said.

The study noted that across all markets, demand remained concentrated in the $2M–$5M range, though ultra-luxury activity, particularly in Greenwich and parts of Northern Westchester, gained traction. In Greenwich alone, $10M+ sales quadrupled compared to Q1 last year. Meanwhile, Westchester recorded no sales above $10M this quarter, despite notable activity in the $5M–$9.9M bracket, the study added.

"As spring unfolds, the supply-demand dynamic in the luxury segment remains tight. Inventory levels are not keeping pace with demand in most submarkets, especially in Darien and lower Fairfield County, where multiple price bands are experiencing a 1:1 ratio of listings to pendings. The implication is clear: well-priced homes in coveted areas continue to move swiftly," Nunan said.

Nunan said that luxury buyers in 2025 are not chasing discounts.

"Instead, they are prioritizing location, design, and lifestyle alignment," Nunan said. "With fewer homes meeting elevated expectations, competition remains high. For sellers, the message is equally clear, presentation and precision pricing are paramount. The Q1 2025 luxury market confirms that despite economic complexity, demand at the top remains confident, capable, and committed."

Q1 2025 LUXURY MARKETS AT A GLANCE (Q1 2025 vs Q1 2024)

WESTCHESTER COUNTY LUXURY HOME SALES $2M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: Up 32.4 percent

Median Sale Price: Down 4.8 percent

Q1 Highest Sale Price: $8,300,000 Bedford

PUTNAM AND DUTCHESS COUNTY LUXURY HOME SALES $1M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: 0 percent

Median Sale Price: Down 6.7 percent

Q1 Highest Sale Price Putnam: $3,875,000 Garrison

Q1 Highest Sale Price Dutchess: $3,600.000 Millbrook

GREENWICH LUXURY HOME SALES $3M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: Up 14.6 percent

Median Sale Price: Up 20.7 percent

Q1 Highest Sale Price: $21,000,000 Greenwich

DARIEN LUXURY HOME SALES $2M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: Up 87.5 percent

Median Sale Price: Down 4.2 percent

Q1 Highest Sale Price: $7,050,000

NEW CANAAN LUXURY HOME SALES $2M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: Up 5 percent

Median Sale Price: Up 7.4 percent

Q1 Highest Sale Price: $7,400,000

ROWAYTON LUXURY HOME SALES $2M AND HIGHER

Homes Sold: Up 50 percent

Median Sale Price: Up 3.5 percent

BRI Legislative Breakfast Highlights Key Issues Facing the Building and Realty Industry, Continued from p. 1

Act (HSTPA) – The ongoing impacts of this sweeping 2019 rent regulation law and the need for reforms to ensure a balanced approach to landlord-tenant relationships.

- **NY's Housing Shortage** – Strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing while maintaining economic viability for developers and property owners.
- **The Co-op Exclusion (Carve-Out) Proposal** – The proposed bill calls for protecting cooperative housing in New York. The proposal stresses the need to exempt cooperative corporations from laws designed to address traditional landlord-tenant relationships.

The Legislative Breakfast underscored the importance of direct engagement between policymakers and industry leaders. BRI members had the opportunity to voice their concerns, share firsthand experiences, and advocate for policies that support economic growth, fair regulations, and sustainable development in the region, BRI officials said.

The event reinforced the BRI's commitment to serving as a strong advocate for the real estate and construction sectors, ensuring that lawmakers understand the challenges faced by property owners, managers, and industry professionals. As the legislative session progresses, the BRI will continue working closely with elected officials to safeguard the interests of its members and promote sound housing policies, BRI officials added.