

Series 281 Westchester 2000, 1957 – 1988. (13.67 cu.ft.)

Processed by: Thomas Pillar, 2010

Administrative History: Westchester 2000 was a public and private partnership established in September 1983 between the Westchester County Government and the Westchester County Association. Its purpose was to address the issues the county would face as it entered into the 21st century, which included housing, economic development, arts, health and government. The entire initiative involved approximately 800 participants and lasted until August 1987, when the final report was released. It was inspired by two sister studies also sponsored by Westchester County Government: the County / City Task Force and the County / Town / Village Task Force.

The mandate of those two Task Forces was to examine the relationships between local governments, and to propose ways in which those relationships could be improved to the benefit of all¹. The County / Town / Village Task Force contained the following three committees: Legislative, Services, and Financial Matters. The County / City Task Force included the following two committees: Legal and Charter. The collection only contains documents on the aforementioned committees; further ones may or may not have existed.

Like Westchester 2000, these two commissions looked to resolve issues of Westchester County such as: interaction between county governments, taxes and finances, and industrial development. However, the County / City and County / Town / Village Task Forces were narrow in scope and only dealt with concerns of the day; Westchester 2000 was a much more ambitious and forward-thinking endeavor. Nine areas of focus were identified by the project, and a committee was created to address each:

- Arts (*originally a sub-committee of Education*)
- Economic Development
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Homeless
- Housing
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Open Space, Planning, Zoning and the Environment (*originally separate committees*)
- Transportation

Westchester 2000 was organized in the following way²:

- Office of Westchester 2000 – administrative and oversight entity. Created in January 1986.
- Board of Westchester 2000 – consisting of 25 members, with a five member Executive Board³. Its purpose was to establish policy and pass judgment on all recommendations. The Executive Board was the oversight entity until the creation of the Office of Westchester 2000.

¹ Hoffman, Milton For Westchester, it's time to face the music, Gannett Westchester Newspapers, Sunday, May 5, 1985, A section, p. 1, 16.

² Mission of Westchester 2000, A Promotional Supplement to the Gannett Westchester Newspapers, January 10, 1988, p. 3.

³ Sidney P. Mudd, the initial head of Westchester 2000, was Chair of the Executive Board.

- The nine committees.

Within the Westchester 2000 committees, the following sub-committees existed:

- The Education committee had two sub-committees: Minorities and Libraries.
- The Intergovernmental Relations committee had three sub-committees: Services, Finance, and Powers.
- The Transportation committee had a Long Term Planning sub-committee.

Further sub-committees may or may not have existed; the collection only contains documents on the aforementioned.

In its final report⁴, Westchester 2000 made a total of 82 recommendations for change that were felt would improve the quality of life in Westchester County for the year 2000 and beyond. To ensure that its recommendations were enacted, Westchester 2000 created five subsequent implementation commissions⁵ in August 1987:

- Advisory Board of Intergovernmental Relations
- Education Consortium
- Health and Human Services Forum
- Office of Cultural Affairs
- Charter Revision Commission

The collection shows that the Health and Human Services Forum included committees for AIDS, Health Care, Youth, and Collaboration in the Health Field. Committees for the other commissions may or may not have existed, but no documentation exists for them with the exception of the Charter Revision Commission.

The Charter Revision Commission was a comparable undertaking to Westchester 2000 itself. In total, the Commission proposed 84 revisions to the County Charter and Code. The Commission was comprised of the following committees:

- Steering, Executive and Advisory Committees
- Auxiliary Services
- Budget and Finance
- Common Services Functions
- County Executive and Legislative Concerns
- Cultural and Educational Activities
- Legal and Policy Issues
- Public Safety and Facilities
- Future Role of County and Local Governments
- Separation of Charter and Code

⁴ The final report of Westchester 2000 is not in this Series, but may be found in Series 275.

⁵ The collection's documents show two further commissions, a Housing Advocates and a Private Sector Development Corporation, were planned but never created.

A person of distinction in Westchester 2000 is Dr. Sal Prezioso. He was appointed head of Westchester 2000 in February 1986 with the creation of the Office of Westchester 2000, replacing Sidney P. Mudd. In addition, Dr. Prezioso headed both the County / City and County / Town / Village Task Forces, and was also in charge of the later Charter Revision Commission. Additional documents about Westchester 2000 are interspersed in the personal papers of Dr. Prezioso, which are held by the Westchester County Historical Society.

The success of Westchester 2000 and the Charter Revision Commission is not reflected in the documents of the collection. However, in interviews in 2003 and 2007⁶, Dr. Prezioso stated that the overriding theme to the recommendations of Westchester 2000 and the Charter Revision Commission was consolidation of government entities and services – “Everybody wants to be a big shot, everybody wants a City Hall. Everybody wants this, everybody wants that. And you’re going to have to consolidate some of that stuff.” He further lamented that none of the significant proposals were implemented, primarily because they lacked political backing – “I was disillusioned, to be honest with you. It didn’t happen because the political will that we needed to back us wasn’t there.”

Collection Description: Westchester 2000 consists of three sub-series:

1. The County / City and County / Town / Village Task Forces (1 cu. ft.)
 - The County / City Task Force - September 1983 to April 1984.
 - The County / Town / Village Task Force - September 1984 to May/June 1985.
2. Westchester 2000 itself, including its nine committees – September 1983 to August 1987 (4.67 cu. ft.)
3. The five ensuing commissions – created August 1987. The records do not show how long the commissions lasted except for the Charter Revision Commission, whose proposed revisions were finalized circa August 1988, with public information hearings held September 1988. (8 cu. ft.)
 - Advisory Board of Intergovernmental Relations (.33 cu. ft.)
 - Education Consortium (.67 cu. ft.)
 - Charter Revision Commission (7 cu. ft.)

The County / City and County / Town / Village Task Forces: Files of the County / City and County / Town / Village Task Forces are distinguished by the name of the respective Task Force in the folder heading. Folders are arranged by the Task Force committees and by functional topics / areas of concern (e.g. meetings, issues, recommendations, research materials). Documents include reports and analyses (including both final reports), meeting agendas and minutes, correspondence, press clippings and newsletters, and Task Force recommendations. Additional documents on these two Task Forces may be found in Series 275.

Westchester 2000: Files of Westchester 2000 are arranged both by the operational entities (i.e. the Board, the committees, or the sub-committees) and by functional topics / areas of concern (e.g. meetings, issues, recommendations, debates). Documents within the files typically include reports (both those produced by Westchester 2000 and those produced by other institutions that were used as resource materials), lists (committee members, contacts), correspondence (letters, memos) with

⁶ Fitz-Gibbon, Jorge Prezioso had a Long, Varied Career in Public Service, The Journal News, May 28, 2008. Editorial Honoring Sal J. Prezioso, The Journal News, May 28, 2008.

attachments, meeting agendas and minutes, press clippings, newsletters and news releases. The collection includes the final reports of the nine committees. The Final Report of Westchester 2000 is not included in this Series, but may be found in Series 275.

The Five Ensuing Commissions: The collection contains files on the Advisory Board of Intergovernmental Relations, the Education Consortium and the Charter Revision Commission. Files on the Health and Human Services Forum are limited (two folders). The collection is lacking any documents on the Office of Cultural Affairs.

Files of the five ensuing commissions, particularly the Charter Revision Commission, are arranged similarly to the other two Sub-series; by the operational entities and by functional topics / areas of concern (e.g. Public Information Hearings, proposed charter revisions, meetings). Documents within the files are likewise very similar to the other two, and include the proposed charter revisions themselves, reports, responses to the proposals, resource materials (e.g. sections of Westchester County code; charters and charter revisions of other municipal entities such as Suffolk, Erie, Onondaga, and Monroe counties), legal opinions on the charter proposals, correspondence, meeting agendas and minutes, press clippings, newsletters and news releases. Files on the Charter Revision Commission are as voluminous as those on Westchester 2000 itself.

Notes on conventions within the collection:

- The original name for Westchester 2000 was “Future 2000”. This title appears in some of the documents, especially the earlier ones.
- The terms “committee” and “task force” are both used within the documents to describe the nine committees of Westchester 2000. To avoid confusion, folder headings refer to them solely as “committee”.
- The terms “Education Consortium” and “Education Coalition” are both used within the documents to describe that ensuing commission. To avoid confusion, folder headings refer to it solely as “Consortium”.
- Some of the committees of Westchester 2000 have similar names to the ensuing commissions. To avoid confusion, when the term “committee” appears on a folder heading, it refers only to the Westchester 2000 committee. The files for the ensuing commissions do not use “committee” as a descriptor.

Westchester 2000

Education Committee

Health and Human Services Committee

Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Ensuing Commission

Education Consortium

Health and Human Services Forum⁷

Advisory Board of Intergovernmental Relations

⁷ There are only two folders on the Health and Human Services Forum; both are interfiled with the Health and Human Services Committee folders of Westchester 2000 according to the original order of the collection.