

# How can land banks turn vacancy into value?



This installment of the One Region Forward Learning Series was organized by Niagara County, the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation, and the Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation.



Photos: Niagara Gazette and Google Images.

**10:00 a.m.**

## Welcome and Opening Remarks

**Benjamin Bidell, AICP, GISP**, Niagara County Department of Economic Development

**10:05 a.m.**

## Introduction to Land Banking

Learn what land banks are, how they are created, and how they work.

**Jocelyn Gordon**, BENLIC

**10:20 a.m.**

## Local Land Banks

Learn how area municipalities have successfully partnered with local land banks to address problem properties.

**Amy Fisk, AICP**, Niagara County Department of Economic Development and Niagara County Brownfield Development Corporation

**Jocelyn Gordon**, BENLIC

**Andrea Klyczek**, NORLIC and NCIDA

**11:00 a.m.**

## Zombie Homes

Regional experts on foreclosure will share strategies to prevent and address "zombie homes."

**Kate Lockhart**, WNY Law Center

**Chip Nolan**, M&T Bank

**11:30 a.m.**

## Panel Discussion

Moderated by **Benjamin Bidell, AICP, GISP**, Niagara County Department of Economic Development

Including **Michael Zimmerman**, LCDC and City of North Tonawanda

**11:55 a.m.**

## Closing Remarks

**Benjamin Bidell, AICP, GISP**, Niagara County Department of Economic Development



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American Planning Association  
**New York Upstate Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

# ABOUT THE LEARNING SERIES

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Introduced in 2020, the One Region Forward Learning Series is part of ongoing efforts to support local action around the One Region Forward Plan's vision. Each session focuses on a topic related to One Region Forward's implementation agenda and includes information, resources, and case studies on how ideas can move into implementation at the local level.

To learn more about the One Region Forward Plan, please visit: [oneregionforward.org](https://oneregionforward.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The next Learning Series event will be in June 2021; a full list of tentative dates and topics for upcoming Learning Series events can be found below. To be the first to know about these and future events in the Learning Series, please subscribe to the One Region Forward mailing list by visiting [oneregionforward.org](https://oneregionforward.org) and clicking on "Subscribe to eNews" in the upper right-hand corner. Please also follow us on Twitter ([@OneRegionFWD](https://twitter.com/OneRegionFWD)) and Facebook.

**JUNE 2021    COASTAL RESILIENCE**

**AUGUST 2021    FOOD SYSTEMS**

**OCTOBER 2021    AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**DECEMBER 2021    UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

# TODAY'S SPEAKERS

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## **BENJAMIN BIDE LL, AICP, GISP**

*Planning Manager, Niagara County Department of Economic Development*

Benjamin Bidell is the Planning Manager for the Niagara County Department of Economic Development, where he is responsible for county and regional planning, project management, GIS application development, print and digital media production, data analysis, and technical assistance on land use regulations. Prior to joining the Department of Economic Development fifteen years ago, Ben worked in the Office of Strategic Planning at the City of Buffalo, where he helped implement the management accountability program CitiStat Buffalo, overseeing the development and analysis of performance metrics for city department operations.

Ben holds master's degrees in geography and urban planning and a bachelor's degree in environmental design. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and a certified Geographic Information Systems Professional, and has held leadership positions with the Western New York Section of the American Planning Association, Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, and Western New York GIS Users Group.

## **AMY FISK, AICP**

*Brownfield Program Manager, Niagara County Department of Economic Development and President, Niagara County Brownfield Development Corporation*

Amy Fisk is the Brownfield Program Manager for the Niagara County Department of Economic Development and President of the Niagara County Brownfield Development Corporation. Amy has managed Niagara County's brownfield programs and various county planning programs for over eighteen years.

Amy holds a master's degree in urban planning with a specialization in environmental and physical planning and a bachelor's degree in geology. She is a certified planner through the American Institute of Certified Planners and a member of the American Planning Association national organization and Upstate New York Chapter.

## **JOCELYN GORDON**

*Executive Director, Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC)*

Jocelyn Gordon has served as the first Executive Director of the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC) since 2014. As one of New York State's ten original Land Banks, BENLIC has grown exponentially over the last seven years and returned more than 150 properties to productive use throughout Erie County.

Jocelyn holds both a master's degree in urban planning from the University at Buffalo and a master's degree in business administration from Canisius College. Her experience includes more than two decades as an urban planning consultant shaping revitalization efforts throughout the United States, Canada, and the Middle East.

# TODAY'S SPEAKERS

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## **ANDREA KLYCZEK**

***Executive Director, Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC) and Assistant Director, Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA)***

Andrea Klyczek is the Assistant Director of the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA) and the Executive Director of the Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC). Andrea has spent ten years with the NCIDA; during her tenure, she has been responsible for leading numerous economic development projects which have yielded significant job creation and new capital investment in the county. Andrea has overseen the buildout and development of Vantage International Point, a 158-acre industrial park.

With build out completed at the NCIDA park, Andrea turned her focus to the creation of the Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC). NORLIC is a municipal partnership that works with communities to acquire vacant and abandoned properties, with an emphasis on industrial land. In her capacity as Executive Director, Andrea has overseen the establishment of the Corporation and its mission statement and continues to contribute leadership and perspective to the direction of the organization going forward.

## **KATE LOCKHART**

***Vacant and Abandoned Property Program Director, Western New York Law Center (WNYLC)***

Kate Lockhart is the Vacant and Abandoned Property Program Director at the Western New York Law Center (WNYLC). She tracks and analyzes data relating to foreclosure filings as well as incomplete, or “zombie,” foreclosures in Erie and Niagara counties, and works with municipalities to identify and implement solutions for vacant and abandoned properties. She also chairs the Distressed Properties Task Force, a collaboration of local not for profits, government entities, community groups, and local officials, organized by the WNYLC, that meet to discuss the issues and solutions for vacant and abandoned properties in the City of Buffalo. Kate has held several positions during her time at the WNYLC, including Paralegal and Data Manager, and originally joined the WNYLC as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer.

Kate holds a bachelor’s degree in history and political science.

## **CHIP NOLAN**

***Assistant Vice President and Property Preservation Lead, M&T Bank***

Chip Nolan is an Assistant Vice President and Program Lead for Property Preservation at M&T Bank. He is a member of the Erie County Zombie Property Task Force and Buffalo Distressed Properties Task Force, and has been appointed to the Monroe County Vacant Property Advisory Committee. Chip also co-founded the New York Mortgage Bankers Association Loan Servicing Committee and chairs its “Boots on the Ground” subcommittee, which promotes collaboration and communicates best practices with local Mortgage Bankers Associations, and identifies local issues related to vacant and abandoned properties and mortgaged properties in New York State.

Chip is passionate about improving communities through active public/private partnerships with state and local leaders, code enforcement, consumer advocacy groups, and the NYS Department of Financial Services.

# TODAY'S SPEAKERS

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## **MICHAEL ZIMMERMAN**

***Executive Director, Lumber City Development Corporation (LCDC) and Director of Community Development, City of North Tonawanda***

Michael Zimmerman is the Executive Director of Lumber City Development Corporation (LCDC), and the Director of Community Development for the City of North Tonawanda. During his ten years working in North Tonawanda, Michael has directed a wide variety of economic development, planning, and community development initiatives for the City. Under his direction, LCDC has focused on developing “downtown” North Tonawanda into a thriving tourist and entertainment district with an emphasis on historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and small business development. This has included managing over \$11 million in public grant funds, a revolving loan fund, business assistance programs, and public infrastructure projects.

Michael holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in urban planning from the University at Buffalo. He is also a recent graduate of the Leadership Niagara program.