

Live Webcast of Forum on Urban Blight

Introduction of the Impact of Blight on Communities: Definitions, Effects & Programs

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

10:00am– 1:00pm

301 Crosby Hall

University at Buffalo South Campus

Blighted and vacant properties represent a persistent and costly problem for New York State communities. In order to better understand blight at the community level this Forum will provide a conceptual awareness of urban blight and examples of solutions from throughout the country. Specifically, the Forum will address the following questions: *What are the variety of definitions of blight? What are the conditions that led to blight and what can communities do to address the blight? What is the impact of the problem? What are the neighborhood, city/municipal, and statewide effects of blight? What are the strategies that communities can take that change the conditions that led to the blight? What are the programs and techniques (data and data gathering) are being used to combat blight?*

From Albany

Keynote Address: Alan Mallach, Ph.D, Fellow, The Center for Community Progress and Fellow, Brookings (retired)

Panel 1

1. George Galster, Ph.D., Wayne State University, Michigan (via video)
2. Mayor Gary McCarthy, City of Schenectady
3. Henry Louis Taylor, Ph.D., Urban Studies Program, University at Buffalo/SUNY
4. Nora Yates, NYS Governor's Office, Executive Chamber
5. A Representative from Olean Economic Development
6. Alan Mallach, Ph.D, Fellow, The Center for Community Progress and Fellow, Brookings (retired)

From Buffalo

Following the Albany webcast, a panel of local experts will discuss the implications of blight on the development of the Greater Buffalo metropolitan region. Dr. Robert Silverman will moderate the panel discussion.

Panel 2: The Impact of Blight on Metro Buffalo

1. *Moderator:* Robert Silverman, Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
2. Art Hall, Office of Strategic Planning, City of Buffalo
3. James Pitts, Pitts Development Corporation
4. Aaron Bartley and Rahwa Ghirmatzion, PUSH Buffalo

Hosts

Rockefeller Institute of Government/SUNY; Center for Urban Studies, University at Buffalo/SUNY; The Center for Technology in Government of the University at Albany/SUNY

2.0 AICP Certification Maintenance credits pending

For more information please visit www.centerforurbanstudies.ap.buffalo.edu

Speaker and Panelist Biographies



KEYNOTE SPEAKER Alan Mallach, is a senior fellow at the Center for Community Progress in Washington DC. A city planner, advocate and writer, he is known both for his research and his practical engagement with housing, economic development and urban revitalization, and has worked with local governments and community organizations across the country to help them frame creative policies and strategies to rebuild their cities and neighborhoods. He has spoken on housing and urban issues across the United States, in Europe, Israel and Japan. A former director of housing & economic development in Trenton, New Jersey and executive director of the Atlantic County Improvement Authority, he currently teaches in the graduate city planning program at Pratt Institute in New York City, and was a visiting scholar at the University of Nevada Las Vegas for the 2010-2011 academic year.



PANELIST George Galster, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, Wayne State University, Michigan earned his Ph.D. in Economics from M.I.T. with undergraduate degrees from Wittenberg and Case Western Reserve. He has published over 125 peer-reviewed articles and 29 book chapters on topics ranging from metropolitan housing markets, racial discrimination and segregation, neighborhood dynamics, residential reinvestment, community lending and insurance patterns, neighborhood effects, and urban poverty. Dr. Galster provides a wealth of experience in academic, governmental, non-profit, and for-profit circles.



PANELIST Mayor Gary McCarthy, City of Schenectady assumed the role of Acting Mayor of the City of Schenectady in April 2011, bringing with him more than three decades of experience in government and a reputation as a hands-on, accessible, public servant who believes that government can be a force for positive change in the lives of its residents. He was elected to a full four-year term as Mayor in November 2011. Mayor McCarthy co-chairs the Center for Economic Growth's Capital Region Local Government Council (LGC), and serves on the New York State Conference of Mayors' Executive Committee.



PANELIST Henry Louis Taylor, Ph.D., Urban Studies Program, University at Buffalo/SUNY. Dr. Henry Louis Taylor's research focuses on a historical and contemporary analysis of distressed urban neighborhoods, social isolation and race and class issues among people of color, especially African Americans and Latinos. Within this framework, Dr. Taylor's research also focuses on these issues in Cuba, the Caribbean Islands and Latin America. Lastly, Dr. Taylor is concerned with the redevelopment of shrinking cities and metropolitan cities, with a focus on social, economic and racial justice.



PANELIST Nora Yates, NYS Governor's Office, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Human Services and Director of the CORE Initiative. Ms. Yates was most recently an Empire State Fellow in the Executive Chamber. Before the Fellowship, she served as Executive Director of the Pride Center of the Capital Region and Field Director for the Empire State Pride Agenda, in Albany. Ms. Yates earned an M.S. in Public Administration from Sage Graduate School, and an M.A. and B.A. from the University at Albany.



PANEL MODERATOR Theresa A. Pardo, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Technology in Government at the University at Albany, State University of New York, where she also holds research professor appointments in the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Under Dr. Pardo's leadership the Center partners with governments around the world on research and innovative problem solving projects focused on the intersections of policy, management, and technology.

Panel 2: The Impact of Blight on Metro Buffalo



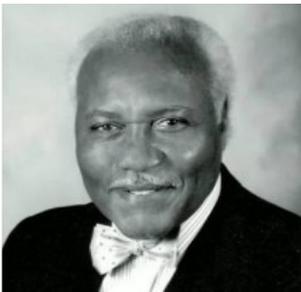
Moderator: Robert Silverman
Professor, Department of
Urban and Regional Planning

Robert Silverman is a Professor and Ph.D program director in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo (UB). He is also a Senior Research Associate in the Center for Urban Studies at UB. His research focuses on community development, education reform, and inequality in inner city housing markets. He is co-author of *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development* (Routledge, 2015). He is co-editor of: *Affordable housing in US shrinking cities: From neighborhoods of despair to neighborhoods of opportunity?* (Policy Press, 2016); *Schools and Urban Revitalization: Rethinking Institutions and Community Development* (Routledge, 2013); and *Fair and Affordable Housing in the US: Trends, Outcomes, Future Directions* (Brill, 2011). He is also editor of *Community-Based Organizations: The intersection of Social Capital and Local Context in Contemporary Urban Society* (Wayne State University Press, 2004).



Art Hall
Office of Strategic Planning,
City of Buffalo

Mr. Arthur Hall Jr is a Community Planner with the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA). He received his Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning as a HUD Fellow Student. Mr. Hall has facilitated many of the civic, cultural, community planning and development initiatives within Buffalo urban neighborhoods. Prior to returning to Buffalo, Mr. Hall began his professional career as a Senior Planner for the Orange County Government in Orlando, Fl. During that time Mr. Hall served in both Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Departments for implementing community development strategies for substandard neighborhoods.



James Pitts
Pitts Development

Mr. Pitts is the President and CEO of the J. W. Pitts Planning & Development LLC, a community planning and real estate development consultancy located in the City of Buffalo NY. As a professional urban planner he has extensive experience and success in completing a broad range of public and private projects. These projects involve; revitalizing central city neighborhoods, redeveloping abandoned and obsolete public housing, cultural and historic preservation, brownfield remediation, downtown and waterfront planning and clean economic development. Research Mr. Pitts' work includes research in the areas of; affordable housing, place based and sustainable community development, brownfield revitalization, ecological and green design, clean business growth and workforce development.



Aaron Bartley
PUSH Buffalo

Aaron Bartley is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH Buffalo), which mobilizes residents to create sustainable neighborhoods with quality affordable housing, green jobs and next generation infrastructure. PUSH's Green Development Zone, which combines green housing, job training, storm-water management and urban agriculture in a district on Buffalo's West Side, was named the winner of the global Sustainable Housing competition sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Brazilian Ministry of Cities and HUD. Aaron grew up in Buffalo and attended Buffalo Public Schools. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, where he co-founded the Harvard Living Wage Campaign, which resulted in \$10 million in annual wage and benefit increases for the low-income campus workers it represented.



Rahwa Ghirmatzion
PUSH Buffalo

Rahwa Ghirmatzion is the Director of Programs for People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH Buffalo), a local membership-based community organization that combines green affordable housing construction, community-based renewable energy projects, housing weatherization, green jobs training, green infrastructure, and vacant land restoration projects toward the goal of creating pathways to employment for neighborhood residents while, reducing our carbon footprint. Rahwa was born in Asmera, Eritrea in the middle of a civil war. She came to WNY at the age of 8 by way of Sudan as a refugee. She was educated in Buffalo Public Schools and then the University at Buffalo. Over the past fifteen years, Rahwa has worked with community-based organizations throughout WNY that promote community development across sectors. Rahwa primarily works in underserved and underrepresented communities to ensure that alternative voices are heard, fostered and encouraged to participate in building a more just, equitable and civically engaged community.