Creating State Policy Change to Support Blight-Fighting Innovation
Session Description

As blight-fighting systems are created and developed, local leaders strive to ensure that these systems are effective, efficient, and equitable and responsive to residents’ and neighborhoods’ concerns. But this is not enough—the systems also need to comply with state law. What can a community do when it develops an idea for an innovative approach but state law prohibits a key component of the program? What if a community in one state needs a state law change to replicate a best practice model from another state? What are the key strategies to employ and what are the common missteps to avoid in advocating for effective policy change at the state level? Attendees will hear from panelists who have seen state-law changes enable communities to accomplish effective, efficient, and equitable reform in Louisiana, New Jersey, and Ohio.
Ohio

Lavea Brachman
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
Creating State Policy Change to Support Blight-Fighting Innovation

New Jersey

Diane Sterner
New Jersey Community Capital
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Louisiana

Brenda Breaux
New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
FIGHTING BLIGHT AND ADVANCING PROSPERITY: INTEGRATED STATE POLICY PLATFORM FOR CORE & METRO REGROWTH

LAVEA BRACHMAN
VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS
RALPH C. WILSON, JR. FOUNDATION
(FRMR EXEC. DIR. GREATER OHIO POLICY CENTER)
RECLAIMING VACANT PROPERTIES CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 2016
GREATER OHIO POLICY CENTER VISION

Statewide non-profit organization developing and implementing policies and practices to:

- Revitalize Ohio’s urban cores and metropolitan regions
- Achieve sustainable land use and economic growth
GOPC’S INTEGRATED POLICY PLATFORM

- Revitalize our neighborhoods and cities
  - Ohio should leverage our greatest asset—our unique places and regional strengths

- Diversify our transportation options
  - The market demands a range of transportation options

- Modernize water and sewer infrastructure
  - Ohio must maintain safe water quality to remain competitive
GOPC’S CURRENT POLICY PLATFORM

- Maintain and regrow communities in which people want to live and businesses want to locate
  - Amend public nuisance statute to include commercial & industrial properties
  - Strengthen oversight of land contracts
  - Strengthen scrap metal laws to dissuade people from destroying vacant, but viable homes
  - Establish a brownfield redevelopment program
  - Adjust federal rules for the use of Hardest Hit Funds to include residential rehabilitation activities as an eligible use of these resources.
Build a competitive transportation system

- Undertake a comprehensive funding reform through the 2017 ODOT Budget.

- Increase Federal Highway Administration funding for public transportation from $20 million to $50 million.

- Adopt a Complete Streets /Active Transportation policy so that all users can safely access Ohio’s roadways

- Create a dedicated funding stream for transit
GOPC’S CURRENT POLICY PLATFORM

- Water is one of Ohio’s most lucrative and important assets
  - Support asset management
  - Foster regionalization
  - Establish a Property-Assessed Stormwater Efficiency program.
  - Enact a public private partnership statute specifically for water sector projects.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVING STATE POLICY REFORM

- Work in a bipartisan way
- Propose policies that are pragmatic
- Work for incremental gains instead of a one-shot major reform
- Offer data-driven recommendations
MOVING THE AGENDA

- Conduct targeted research – data-driven; peer state policy solutions
- Develop strategy around policy milestones (e.g. budget, elections)
- Identify actionable policy recommendations
- Strategically disseminate
- Cultivate legislative champions; testify
- Advance simultaneous executive branch strategy
- Grow and leverage local support
MOVING THE AGENDA: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- Identify relevant agencies
- Meet directly with agency officials to inform them, and request feedback, about research and policy recommendation(s)
- Convene these meetings before publicly stating policy intentions
  - “never surprise those higher up the food chain”
- Refine research and memos based on feedback
MOVING THE AGENDA: ENGAGE LOCAL LEVEL PARTNERS

- Build/steward a Cross-sector Coalition that includes the private sector, nonprofit groups, local leaders

- Craft a Communications Strategy to reach and persuade a variety of stakeholder groups

- Strengthen partnerships with local officials—they can be your best advocates with legislators

- Highlight local efforts around policy recommendations that demonstrate “local skin in the game”
AN INTEGRATED POLICY PLATFORM: ATTACKING BLIGHT AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY

- 2010: Land Bank bill
  - Coalitio-led authorized 44 of 88 counties to create county land banks

- 2013-15: “Neighborhood Infrastructure Assistance Program” a tax credit that 15 other states use to incent private investment in challenged neighborhoods

- 2015: improved program design for remediating abandoned gas stations
AN INTEGRATED POLICY PLATFORM: ATTACKING BLIGHT AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY

- **2014:** Advisory Committee member for influential Transit Needs Study that became a touchstone document in transportation budget debates

- **2015:** Advocated for **2 policies** that lay the tracks for a more comprehensive transportation system:
  - Established performance metrics
  - Creation of a Legislative Taskforce to further study DOT’s current funding priorities and sources

- **2015-6:** Co-lead Policy Working Group -- DOT/Dept of Health effort to establish **statewide Complete Streets policy** (i.e. all roads have bike lanes, sidewalks, transit accessibility, etc)
For more information, contact the Greater Ohio Policy Center office:

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Creating State Policy Change to Support Blight-Fighting Innovation

2016 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference
September 29, 2016
Mission Statement

The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority is a catalyst for the revitalization of the city, partnering in strategic developments that celebrate the city’s neighborhoods and honor its traditions.

NORA Program Areas

- Affordable Housing Development
- Commercial Corridor Revitalization
- Land Stewardship

Policy and Program Change Through Intergovernmental Partnership and Negotiation

You can change a lot without changing the law!
RESTORE PROPERTIES TO COMMERCE

NORA empowers residents and developers to restore vibrancy to formerly blighted properties. The Lot Next Door program enables residents to buy and beautify adjacent vacant properties, while public auctions and agreements with developers spur the construction and restoration of housing and commercial properties.

LOT NEXT DOOR 1,375+

INDIVIDUAL SALE 1,350+

DEVELOPMENT 1,000+

TOTAL PROPERTIES 3,750+
since 2006
RE-INVEST IN COMMUNITIES

NORA spurs neighborhood revitalization by investing in residential and commercial development projects. In collaboration with its Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) partners and through other programs, NORA catalyzes the development of affordable housing for rent and ownership. To spark redevelopment along key commercial corridors, NORA provides direct investment and capital to transformative commercial projects.

PROJECTED OUTCOMES:

500+ units of affordable housing over next two years
385,000+ square feet supported through commercial investment

$32+ Million direct investment in affordable housing
$9+ Million direct investment in commercial development

$90+ Million leveraged investment for affordable housing
$100+ Million leveraged investment for commercial corridors
MANAGE LAND & PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

NORA maintains and leverages its diverse inventory of properties for neighborhood and strategic initiatives. Through its Community Use program, NORA leases land-banked properties for community projects, such as urban gardens and art spaces. Land allotted for stormwater mitigation provides space to explore innovative land use strategies and future planning initiatives.

2,000+
NORA-owned properties

$15+ Million
awarded for stormwater mitigation pilot projects
Road Home Property Inventory

AS OF 01/01/2013

- Returned, 2560, 46%
- Inventory, 3025, 54%

AS OF 07/01/2016

- Returned, 3755, 65%
- Inventory, 2027, 35%
Road Home Property Dispositions

- Alternative Land Use, 18, 0%
- Auction, 1365, 36%
- Development, 997, 27%
- Lot Next Door, 1375, 37%
NORA’s partnership with the Louisiana Land Trust and State of Louisiana Office of Community Development has resulted in policy and program changes to address blight through land acquisition and disposition, as well as flexible development financing for affordable housing, commercial revitalization, and green infrastructure.
Affordable Housing Development

NSP2

City Soft Second Program

Project 1330

Residential Construction Lending
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Cumulative Impact

2,363 PROPERTIES

$32,535,299 INVESTED

$90,379,514 LEVERAGED

$11,059,765 IN LAND SUBSIDIES FOR AFFORDABILITY
Commercial Corridor Revitalization

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LAND STEWARDSHIP
Cumulative Impact

161,000
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CUTS

155 ACRES
OF ENHANCED GREEN SPACE

$9,900,000
INVESTED IN LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
CUMULATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

$233 MILLION
IN TOTAL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

$4.9 MILLION
ESTIMATED IN NEW PROPERTY TAXES ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES RETURNED TO COMMERCE
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Creating State Policy Change to Support Blight-Fighting Innovation

*Baltimore, MD*

Diane Sterner, Community Strategies Advisor
September 29, 2016
Issues in NJ

• Smaller, older industrial cities
• Longstanding abandoned property problem preceded foreclosure crisis
• Inadequate state tools to address problem
• No one was taking the lead
• Needed solutions to properties in various types of legal limbo
HCDNNJ STEPS UP

• Statewide association of community development groups
• History of advocacy & relationships with legislators
• Previous legislative battles won to create:
  - State rehabilitation code
  - Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit
  - State rental assistance program
DEVELOPING LEGISLATION & CAMPAIGN

- Creating a strong proposal
  - Shooting for the moon & making the best case
- Building an effective coalition
  - Developing a strategy to deploy them
- Using the media
• Final statute - key elements:
  - Four new tools to gain control of abandoned properties:
    - Accelerated tax foreclosure
    - Special tax lien sale
    - Spot blight eminent domain
    - Vacant property receivership

• Ability to enter & repair properties on municipal abandoned property list

• Ability to go after other assets of owners for cost recovery
INTERESTED PARTIES WE DEALT WITH

- NJ Bankers Association
- NJ Realtors Association
- Home Builders Association
- NJ Office of the Courts
- State League of Municipalities
- NJ Urban Mayors Association
- State Attorney General’s Office
- Tax Collectors & Treasurers Association of NJ
WHAT CONCESSIONS WERE MADE?

• Land bank provision eliminated
• Tools apply to structures, not vacant lots
• Pilot to rebate rehab costs to buyers who renovate abandoned homes to live in eliminated
• Remove nonprofits’ ability to initiate receivership independently of municipality
• Forging alliances with key partners
• Anticipating & preparing for opposition
• Dealing with other bumps in the road
• Impact of legislation
CONNECT WITH US

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**REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUCTION</td>
<td>NORA makes selected residential properties available for purchase via auction to the highest bidder.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS</td>
<td>NORA makes selected residential or commercial properties available for purchase to individuals or organizations by requesting proposals for development on NORA-owned properties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOT NEXT DOOR</td>
<td>NORA makes selected properties available for purchase to owners of property that share a common boundary with a NORA-owned property.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE LAND USE</td>
<td>Development on NORA-owned property that is ‘alternative’ to traditional residential or commercial development, such as urban agriculture, pocket parks and play areas.</td>
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<td>AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCING</td>
<td>NORA makes funding available for affordable housing development in underinvested markets.</td>
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<td>COMMERCIAL GAP FINANCING</td>
<td>NORA finances certain commercial projects in targeted corridors that will catalyze additional investment and lead to continued revitalization.</td>
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<td>FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS</td>
<td>NORA makes competitive, matching grants available to business and property owners to make exterior improvements to their properties. Also includes grants made to certified Main Street Organizations for placemaking grants for public space improvements.</td>
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<td>STORMWATER MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>Use of NORA-owned vacant lots for bioswales, raingardens, and urban wetlands to reduce flooding and beautify neighborhoods.</td>
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<td>LAND MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>NORA maintains thousands of properties throughout the city, including regular maintenance and inspection of vacant lots and unoccupied structures.</td>
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