



37th Annual Planning Symposium

March 19, 2026 – Marriott Syracuse Downtown

PRESENTERS

KEYNOTE PRESENTER



J. Gregory Connors,
President and CEO,
Saratoga Economic Development Corporation
Keynote: *How to Kickstart Planning Action
in Your Community*

J. Gregory Connors is the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). As a life-long Saratoga County resident, Greg has established experience and professional credentials in both the private and public sectors, specifically, economic development, government relations, real estate sales and community service.

For 11 years, Greg served as a member of the senior leadership team at GlobalFoundries in the Office of Government Relations, responsible for state, regional and local government interaction and regulatory affairs in both New York and Vermont. Prior to his time at GFUS, Greg was the elected Town/County Supervisor for the Town of Stillwater and, with Malta Supervisor Dave Meager, created the land use regulations that created the Luther Forest Technology Campus now home to GlobalFoundries Fab 8.

Greg has served on several philanthropic, non-profit and business development organizations throughout his professional career including the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society, and the Stillwater Area Community Center. He is a Past President of the NYS Association of REALTORS and has enjoyed leadership positions on the Center for Economic Growth, CAPTAIN-Community Human Services, Saratoga County Water Authority, Mechanicville-Stillwater Industrial Development Agency and served as a member of the NYS Real Estate Board. In 2025, Greg was appointed by Governor Hochul to serve as a member of the SUNY Empire University Council. Greg and his wife Marilyn reside in the Town of Malta and are the parents of two sons and grandparents to four, all residents of Saratoga County.

BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS

Eric Ameigh, Managing Partner, Director of Operations and Special Projects, czb, LLC

Session: *Building Momentum: Great Housing Opportunities for Onondaga County*

Eric Ameigh has been a planner, local government professional, and special projects manager for nearly two decades. At czb, he manages the firm's business operations, serves as the lead on various projects, and supports his colleagues with specialized analysis and strategy insights. Before joining czb, Eric held senior positions with the cities of Geneva, New York and Boulder, Colorado working on policies and programs related to a variety of subjects such as waterfront planning, economic development, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, redevelopment, and utility rate structures, just to name a few. Eric is a proud native of western New York State. He was educated as a geographer and urban planner by the State University of New York in Geneseo and Buffalo.

Maura Baldiga, Senior Planner, City of Ithaca

Session: *Regulating Short-Term Rentals: A Local Perspective*

Maura Baldiga is a Senior Planner at the City of Ithaca. She played an instrumental role in developing the City's new short-term rental regulations and has led the implementation of the new policy. Prior to joining the City of Ithaca, Maura directed policy and programs for the State of Massachusetts's Public Housing program. Maura received a Master of City Planning from UC Berkeley.

Adam Bonosky, AIA, AICP, CNU-a, Senior Architect/Planner, Fisher Associates

Session: *How to Design a Neighborhood*

Adam is a certified planner and licensed architect driven by a desire to share what he knows to help people make their communities better. He has worked with public and private clients to establish and achieve their vision for a range of project types and scales throughout the United States from neighborhood revitalization efforts, transit-oriented development, comprehensive plans, master plans, mall retrofit concepts, highway to boulevards initiatives, residential development, and K-12 school design and construction. In addition to his work at the office, Adam also serves as a Trustee of the Village of Fairport and has taught graduate and undergraduate courses to architecture and Master of Real Estate Development students. As a planner, architect, and Urban Guild Fellow, he is interested in ways to elevate the level of downtown architecture as well as strategies to implement context-sensitive schools. His work has received national and regional recognition.

Charles Buki, Managing Partner, Director of Strategy Development, czb, LLC

Session: *Building Momentum: Great Housing Opportunities for Onondaga County*

Charles Buki founded czb in 2001 after working in the nonprofit community development sector, and after growing disillusioned with what he believed was a lack of imagination in the planning and design fields in their response to the real world challenges faced by low-income and working families in America. In establishing czb, he sought to bring focus to the decisions that all households make with the capacities they have so that policy and other interventions could have positive and lasting impacts on families and communities. He has two main professional interests: the challenge of improving neighborhood residential life without displacement, and the challenge of constructively orienting the disequilibrium in communities undergoing change. He was a Mesa Fellow, a Loeb Fellow, and has served in numerous volunteer roles in his home communities. His primary volunteer aim is to help increase childhood literacy in his home community.

Diane Carlton, AICP, Emeritus, Regional Director for Public Affairs and Education, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Adjunct Professor in Environmental Sustainability, SUNY Oneonta

Session: *Overview of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Process*

Diane Carlton is the former Regional Director for Public Affairs and Education for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in Syracuse. She is a certified planner who served as the Otsego

County Planning Director (Cooperstown, NY) for over 15 years, where she assisted many local planning and town boards with SEQRA. Diane also is an adjunct professor at SUNY Oneonta where she teaches courses on environmental planning and environmental impact assessment, which includes NEPA and SEQRA. Diane has a Masters of Public Administration in Environmental Planning from the University of Delaware and a Bachelor's degree in History and Environmental Studies from SUNY Geneseo.

Chad A. Clark, Mayor, Village of Marcellus

Session: Case Study: A Pathway to a Greenway

Chad Clark proudly serves as Mayor of the Village of Marcellus and brings years of local government and community leadership experience to his role. He previously served on the Zoning Board of Appeals and led the Marcellus Chamber of Commerce as President from 2020-2025. He is a Sacred Heart University graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Communications & Technology. He has also owned and operated multiple local small businesses in Marcellus for the past 14 years, giving him a strong understanding of the needs of residents, small businesses, and the broader community.

Megan Costa, Deputy Director for Planning, Onondaga County Department of Planning

Session: County Referral

Megan Costa, a native of the Sedgwick neighborhood in Syracuse, NY, is the Deputy Director for County Planning Services at the Onondaga County Department of Planning where she manages countywide planning studies and works with the Onondaga County Planning Board, staff, government agencies, municipalities, and community organizations to advance a variety of planning based initiatives. Prior to joining the Planning Department, Megan has held local positions with the Syracuse Lakefront Development Corporation and the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council. Megan received a Masters in City & Regional Planning (MCRP) from Clemson University, a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from the University of Dayton, and is a graduate of Leadership Greater Syracuse.

Tyler Cooper, Educator, Marcellus Central School District

Session: Case Study: A Pathway to a Greenway

Tyler Cooper is an educator, program designer, and community collaborator entering his 10th year at Marcellus Central School District. Originally a science teacher, Tyler now serves as the district's Independent Studies and Professional Pathways Facilitator, where he helps students connect classroom learning to real-world careers through immersive, student-led projects. He also coordinates community partnerships that bridge the gap between education and local industries. With a background in project management, Tyler has guided students in initiatives ranging from bridge construction and civic revitalization, to published research and grant acquisition. Under his mentorship, students have secured critical funding for community development, authored pieces in international journals, and led meaningful projects that directly impact the Marcellus community. Tyler is passionate about empowering students to explore, create, and contribute—equipping the next generation with the confidence, skills, and experience to thrive.

Joseph Frateschi, Esq., Partner, Harris Beach Murtha

Session: Case Law Update for Planning and Zoning

Joseph Frateschi is a Partner with Harris Beach Murtha. Joseph has extensive experience as a transaction counsel on real property, intellectual property and corporate masters. He also advises municipal agencies and public benefit corporations on a range of issues under New York municipal law. He serves as bond counsel and issuer counsel on taxable and tax-exempt bond financings undertaken by local issuers. He also serves as special transaction counsel on large projects throughout New York State.

During law school, he served as a law clerk for the Hon. Glenn T. Suddaby of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York and the Hon. Frank P. Geraci, Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York. Joseph taught music industry law and ethics at Syracuse University and maintains an active playing schedule as a jazz saxophonist throughout Central New York.

Paula Gilbert, Local Government Training Manager, Division of Local Government Services, New York State Department of State

Sessions: Special Use Permits; Area Variances: A Deep Dive; Site Plan Review; County Referral

Paula Gilbert is the Local Government Training Manager for the Division of Local Government Services, New York State Department of State. Prior to joining the Department of State in 2017, she worked for three years as the Executive Director and two years as an Urban Policy Associate at the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of NYS, Inc., a technical assistance and advocacy not-for-profit organization working with a group of more than 140 affordable housing and community development organizations within the urban and suburban neighborhoods of New York State. Paula received a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and Planning and a Master's in Regional Planning from the University at Albany.

Dereth Glance, Director, Region 7, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Session: Changes in New York State Wetland Regulations

Dereth Glance is the Director for Region 7 for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which includes the Central New York counties of Oswego, Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Cortland, Chenango, Tompkins, Broome, and Tioga. Dereth joined NYSDEC as Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Remediation and Material Management in January 2022. Formerly, Dereth served as the Executive Director for Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) and was appointed to the NYS Climate Action Council Waste Emissions Advisory Panel. Prior to that, Dereth was appointed by President Obama to serve as a U.S. Commissioner at the International Joint Commission (IJC) charged with preventing and resolving disputes and promoting cooperation for the shared waters of the United States and Canada. Previously, she served as the Executive Program Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE), directing water, energy, and waste reduction programs for five regional offices in New York and Connecticut. Dereth also chaired the Citizen Participation Working Group for the Onondaga Lake Bottom Subsite of the Onondaga Lake Superfund Site, chaired the OCRRA recycling committee, and has served on New York State's Great Lakes Basin Advisory Council, the Clean Water Network and the Onondaga Lake Partnership Outreach Committee. She graduated from James Madison College of Public Affairs at Michigan State University with a degree in Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy.

Matt Horn, Director of Strategic Growth and Development, MRB Group

Session: Choose Wisely: How Land Use Drives Local Government Revenue and Operations

Matt Horn is the National Director for Strategic Growth and Development at MRB Group, where he guides the firm's nationwide growth and business development strategy. Prior to taking this role, Matt served as the Director of Local Government Services for MRB Group – integrating several existing service areas and launching economic development and long-range planning practices for the firm. In addition to a range of private and non-profit experience, Matt served nearly two-decades in public service as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager, economic developer and operations lead for communities throughout the U.S.

Peter Lombardi, Partner, Director of Revitalization Planning, czb, LLC

Session: Building Momentum: Great Housing Opportunities for Onondaga County

Peter Lombardi is a planner, project manager, and policy analyst with broad experience in soft-market communities. At czb, he specializes in managing the firm's largest and most complex long-term planning projects. Prior to czb, Peter lived and worked in his home town of Jamestown, New York, where he directed revitalization activities for the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation and served as the founding chairman of the Chautauqua County Land Bank. A student of architectural history and urban morphology, he wrote a book about Jamestown's built environment and led the nomination of downtown and neighborhood districts in the city to the National Register of Historic Places. Peter studied environmental design as an undergraduate at the University at Buffalo, where he has also served as an adjunct lecturer. He received his Master's degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University

Jennifer Manierre, CEM, LEED AP ND, Director, Clean Energy Siting, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Session: *Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)*

Jennifer Manierre is the Director of Clean Energy Siting at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), where she helps guide local government officials through best practices and appropriate local laws and permitting procedures for solar, wind, and battery energy storage. Ms. Manierre previously worked on NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities program; NYSERDA's Climate Smart Communities Regional Coordinator Pilot Program; Cleaner, Greener Communities program; and commercial New Construction Program. Ms. Manierre received her B.A. from Hamilton College with a concentration in Geology and a minor in Economics. She also holds a Master's degree in Education from Elmira College and a Master's degree in Ecological Economics, Values, and Policy from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is a Certified Energy Manager and a LEED Accredited Professional with a specialization in Neighborhood Development.

Amelia McLean-Robertson, Esq., Associate, Harris Beach Murtha

Session: *Case Law Update for Planning and Zoning*

As a member of the Harris Beach Murtha Commercial Real Estate Practice Group, Amelia focuses on environmental, land use, zoning, energy, and municipal work. She advises clients on the responsibilities, exposures and liabilities resulting from federal, state and local environmental legislation and regulations. She guides clients through the environmental impact review processes and regulations related to traffic patterns, air pollution, coastal areas and wetlands. Amelia also provides counsel to clients in the waste management and recycling, utilities, mining and electric and gas industries. She negotiates with regulatory agencies regarding permitting and enforcement matters. Amelia has drafted local legislation for municipalities concerning land use and zoning laws, commercial leases, license agreements, Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreements and shelter rental agreements. Further, as a member of the Financial Restructuring, Bankruptcy and Creditor's Rights Practice Group, Amelia represents creditors' interests when dealing with financially distressed organizations and individuals. She works with commercial, lending and consumer clients, counseling in commercial and financial planning, debt refinancing and restructuring, commercial contract dispute resolution, bankruptcy, foreclosure, distressed investments, commercial and consumer collection, and Uniform Commercial Code compliance.

Monica Ryan, Local Government Specialist, Division of Local Government Services, New York State Department of State

Sessions: *Special Use Permits; Area Variance: A Deep Dive; Site Plan Review; County Referral*

Monica Ryan is a Local Government Specialist with the Division of Local Government Services, New York State Department of State. Prior to joining the Department of State, she was a planning consultant for more than twenty years, specializing in zoning and community revitalization planning. Simultaneously, she was the planner for her town, working with the town's boards and staff, residents, and developers on planning and development. Monica began her career in the NYS Legislature. She received her Master's Degree in Regional Planning from the University at Albany and a Bachelor of Arts from Siena College.

Megan Wilson, Deputy Director of Planning and Development, City of Ithaca

Session: *Regulating Short-Term Rentals: A Local Perspective*

Megan Wilson is the Deputy Director of Planning and Development for the City of Ithaca and serves as the City's Zoning Administrator. She has worked at the Department of Planning and Development for more than 15 years and has been involved with many key planning and zoning initiatives including the City's comprehensive plan, accessory dwelling unit policy, neighborhood planning, and the short-term rental regulations. She received her Master of Public Administration from Cornell University.