

# What Would It Take to Achieve Place-Level Transformation? Considerations for the Federal Government

## Speaker Biographies

**Laura Brunner** is president and chief executive officer of The Port, a public, mission-focused, quasi-governmental agency dedicated to expanding prosperity by repositioning real estate and creating value from land assets in a way that benefits everyone in Hamilton County, Ohio. Since her appointment in 2011, Brunner has leveraged her background in commercial real estate and public accounting to lead The Port in strengthening its platform to improve regional economic, social, and environmental conditions and foster greater economic mobility. Brunner works closely with The Port's Board of Directors delivering on a three-pronged revitalization approach that guides its work – an innovative Public Finance practice that drives development; a holistic Neighborhood strategy that restores property to productive use and raises quality of life; and an urban Industrial revitalization initiative designed to create development-ready sites that support next-generation manufacturing to attract high paying jobs to our region. She launched an impact investing program to support these bold initiatives, creating a Patient Capital Note structure that raises private capital and a revolving loan fund to help distressed neighborhood business districts. More recently, Brunner led the unprecedented effort to keep the American dream of home ownership alive for many Cincinnatians by acquiring nearly 200 single-family homes previously owned by out-of-town investors who were renting these properties. The Port's intent in acquiring these homes is to create a pathway for homeownership. Brunner earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana University, and spent 15 years in the public accounting industry, achieving the status of partner at Barnes, Dennig & Co. She is the recipient of dozens of awards, including Cincinnati Enquirer Woman of the Year and the Merlin G. Pope, Jr. Diversity Leadership Award. She is also a board member of Cincinnati ArtsWave and the Queen City Club.

**Congressman Jim Himes** represents Connecticut's 4th District in the United States House of Representatives where he is serving his seventh term. He serves as the Chair of the Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth and the National Security, International Development and Monetary Policy Subcommittee of the House Financial Services Committee. Congressman Himes grew up as the child of a single working mom in a small town. As a member of Congress, Congressman Himes works hard to provide all American children the same opportunities he had to succeed: access to a first-rate public school, affordable and effective health care, a decent and safe home, and a supportive community. Born in Lima, Peru in 1966 to American parents, he spent the early years of his childhood in Peru and Colombia while his father worked for the Ford Foundation and UNICEF. As an American abroad, Congressman Himes grew up fluent in both Spanish and English and was raised with an awareness of the unique position of the United States in the world. At the age of ten, Congressman Himes moved with his mother and sisters to the United States. Congressman Himes graduated from Hopewell Valley Central High School and then attended Harvard University. After completing his undergraduate work, Congressman Himes earned a Rhodes Scholarship, which enabled him to attend Oxford University in England where he continued his studies of Latin America, including research in El Salvador. Prior to his service in Congress, Congressman Himes ran the New York City branch of The Enterprise Community Partners, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing the unique challenges of urban poverty. Congressman Himes's team led the way in financing the

construction of thousands of affordable housing units in the greater New York metropolitan region, often using new green technologies to achieve energy efficiency and reduce utility costs. Congressman Himes's experience at Enterprise spurred his involvement in politics. Putting his expertise in affordable housing to work, Congressman Himes served as a Commissioner of the Greenwich Housing Authority, ultimately chairing the board and leading it through a much-needed program of reforms. Congressman Himes went on to become an elected member of his town's finance board, setting tax and budget policy for Greenwich. Congressman Himes has also served as Chair of his local Democratic Town Committee, organizing others in the community to become more active in the political process. Congressman Himes began his professional career at Goldman Sachs & Co. where he worked his way up to Vice President over the course of a 12-year career. There he worked extensively in Latin America and headed the bank's telecommunications technology group. Congressman Himes lives in Greenwich with his wife Mary (and not frequent enough visits from his daughters Emma and Linley).

**Carol Redmond Naughton** is the chief executive officer of Purpose Built Communities, an incubator and catalyst for social change dedicated to improving racial equity, economic mobility and health outcomes in communities across the country. Purpose Built works to improve neighborhoods so that they become platforms that support families and individuals working to improve their lives. Purpose Built Communities works with local leaders to help them plan, implement and sustain holistic neighborhood revitalization initiatives that create healthy neighborhoods that include broad, deep and permanent pathways to prosperity for low-income families. Naughton is a graduate of the Emory University School of Law and Colgate University. Naughton serves on the Board of the Directors of the Low Income Investment Fund, and serves on several national advisory boards including Build Healthy Places Network and Fifth Third Bank's National Community Advisory Forum.

**Brett Theodos** is a senior fellow and director of the Community Economic Development Hub at the Urban Institute. His work focuses on economic and community development, neighborhood change, affordable homeownership, consumer finance, and program evaluation and learning. His research includes evaluations of the Economic Development Administration, New Markets Tax Credit, Small Business Administration loan and investment programs, Opportunity Zones, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Choice Neighborhoods, Community Development Block Grant, and Section 108 programs. He is studying how capital flows (or fails to flow) into communities, including the role of mission finance actors like community development financial institutions. He leads projects researching how entrepreneurs can access capital. Theodos has conducted studies of neighborhood change and geographic mobility. He is evaluating several place-based initiatives. He's led studies of affordable homeownership supports, including shared equity models like community land trusts. In the financial capability space, he's led studies of financial coaching, financial curriculum, and rules of thumb for decisionmaking. He's explored the geography of debt. Theodos is working to grow nonprofit capacity in performance measurement. He directs Measure4Change, which provides technical assistance and facilitates a community of practice for nonprofits and has led randomized controlled trial evaluations of youth workforce and education preparedness programs. Theodos serves on the Board of the Center for Community Progress, the Douglass Community Land Trust, and the Housing Authority of Prince George's County. Theodos received his BA from Northwestern University, MPP from Georgetown University, and PhD in public policy from George Washington University.

**Sarah Rosen Wartell** is the third president of the Urban Institute since it was founded in 1968. During her tenure, Urban celebrated a milestone anniversary by moving into a state-of-the-art research and convening facility and launched its Next50, a strategy to advance upward mobility, equity, and shared prosperity by bringing the power of knowledge to help changemakers accelerate solutions. Under Wartell's leadership, Urban aims to leverage cutting-edge technology and data science; understand and confront structural

racism; and deliver timely, relevant, and actionable research to communities, capitals, board rooms, and wherever innovators are pursuing bold ideas. Previously, Wartell was deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. She also worked in various roles at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. After government service, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and the Doing What Works government performance program. Before her tenure in government, she practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell currently serves on the boards of Enterprise Community Partners and the Georgetown Day School, Bank of America's National Community Advisory Council, and the Sadie Collective's Advisory Board. She previously served on the boards of the Low-Income Investment Fund, the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University, and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (now known as Prosperity Now). Her areas of expertise include community development, consumer finance, asset building, and housing finance. Wartell has a bachelor's degree with honors in urban affairs from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. She has a law degree from Yale Law School.

**Barika X. Williams** is the executive director of the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development Inc. (ANHD) a non-for-profit leading community development for nearly 50 years focused on creating housing and economic opportunity for all New Yorkers. Williams previously served as the Assistant Secretary for Housing for the State of New York under the Governor where she managed the New York's major housing priorities including the \$20 billion housing plan and expanding tenant protections statewide. While with New York University's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education and the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, she worked on innovative initiatives and published on topics including affordable housing practices, foreclosures, urban mobility, disaster recovery, and the links between health, education, and housing on neighborhoods. Williams is the 2020 recipient of American Planning Association NY's Robert W. Ponte Award for her commitment to a more just NYC build environment that understands systemic racism's intersection to place and community. She serves on numerous Boards including the Capital One Community Advisory Board, Webster Bank's Community Advisory Board and on the Board of Directors of the Urban Design Forum. Williams received a Master's in City Planning from the MIT and a BA from Washington University in St. Louis.