

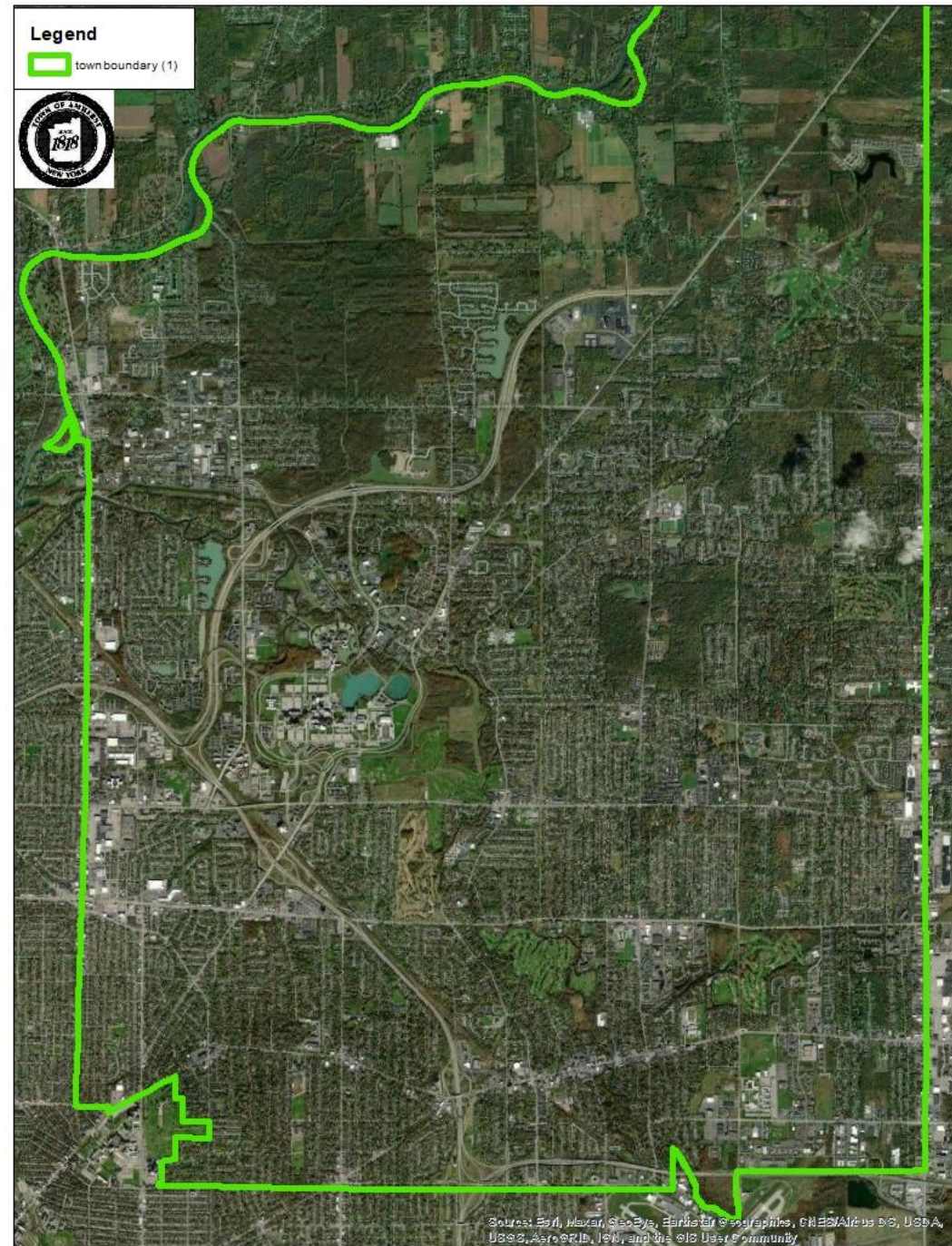
Zombie & Vacant Property Remediation Initiative: Action Plan



2021 Zombie & Vacant Property Task Force

Outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Background
- ▶ Task Force Overview
- ▶ Lessons & Contributions
- ▶ Action Plan
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Questions



Introduction

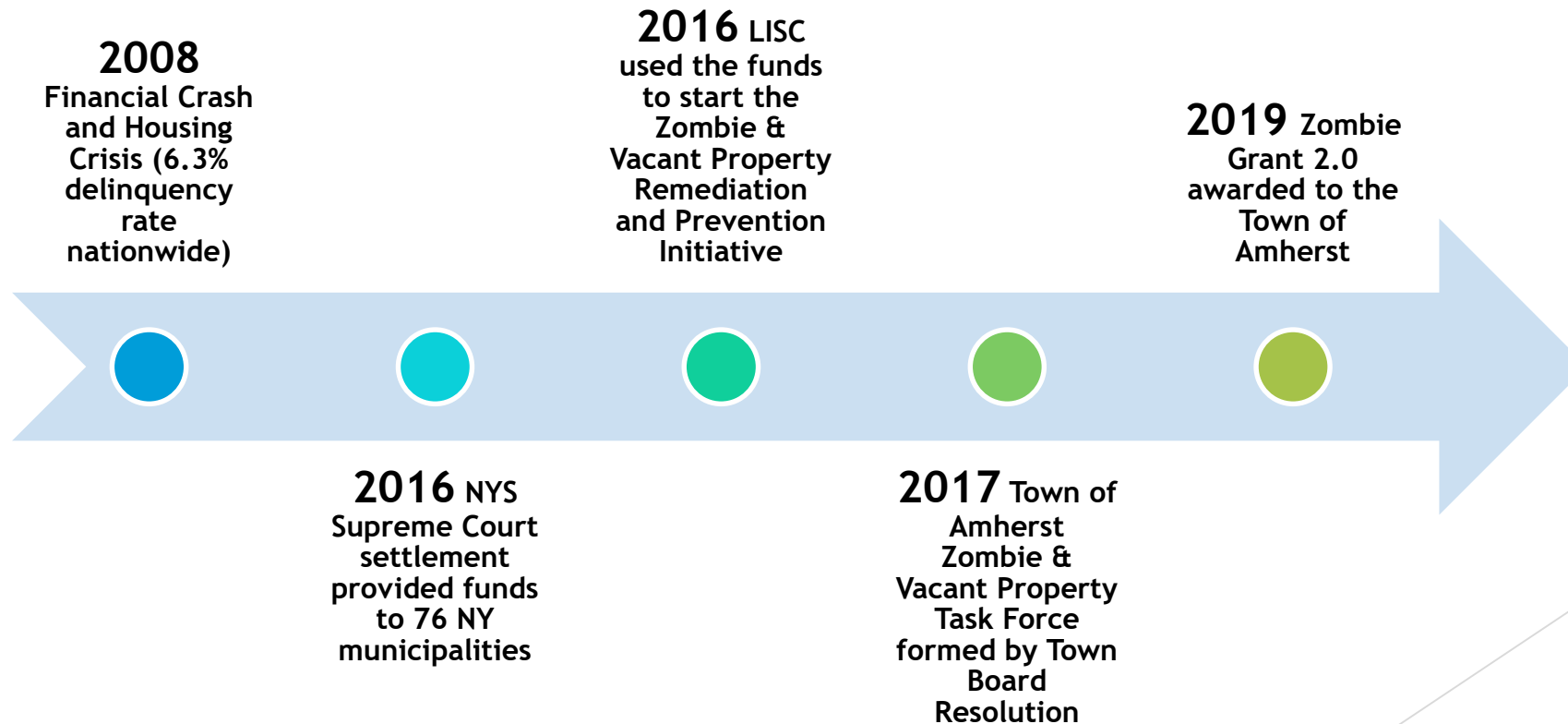
LISC
LOCAL INITIATIVES
SUPPORT CORPORATION



Department of
Financial Services

Background

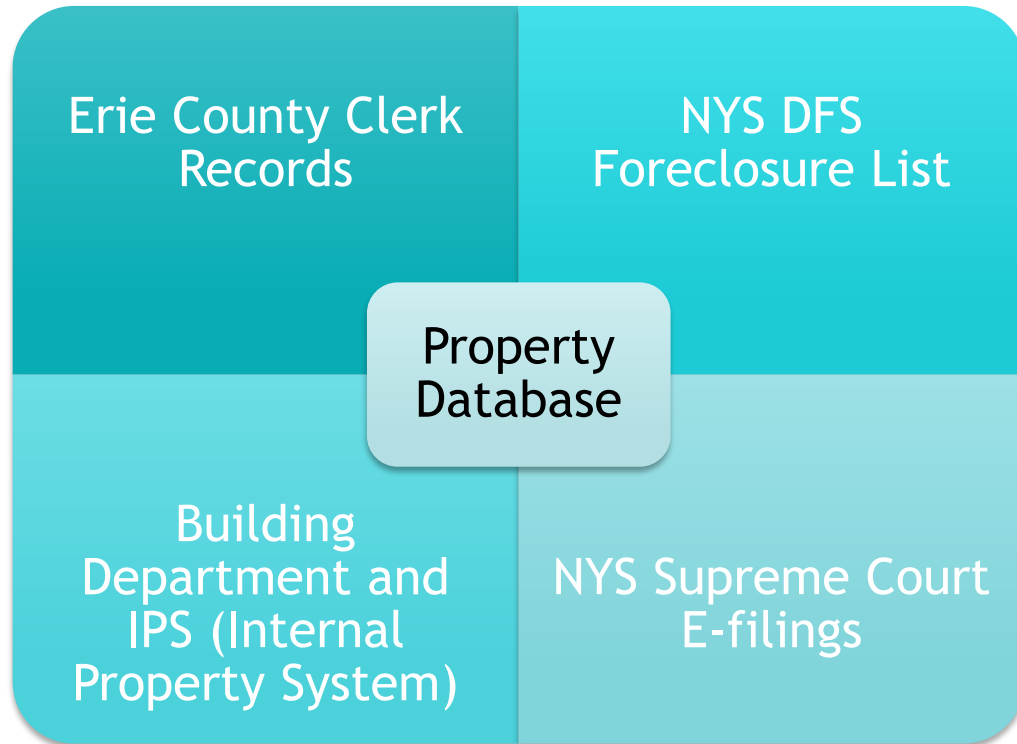
- ▶ Zombie Properties- vacant properties with a mortgage lien that is stuck in the foreclosure process (LISC, 2018)



Task Force Overview

Goal 1: Centralize data

- ▶ Inventory Zombie & Vacant properties
- ▶ Assess risk indicators



Task Force Overview

Goal 2

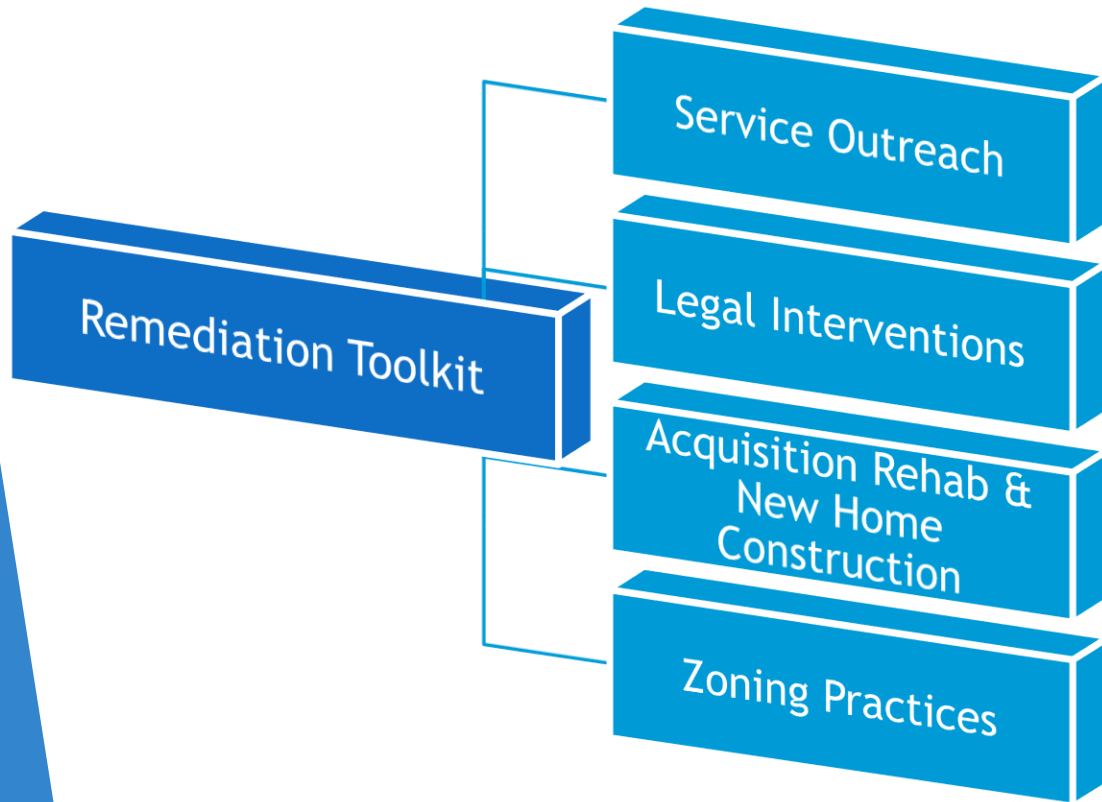
- ▶ Establish a foreclosure prevention procedure



Task Force Overview

Goal 3

- ▶ Develop a foreclosure remediation toolkit



Action Plan: Assessment

Database Update

- The **Planning Department** will assign a **Property Database Manager** who will update the Property Database quarterly and utilize available public records to monitor foreclosures

Property Research

- The **Property Database Manager** will identify and perform historical title and legal research to determine risk of vacancy

Property Risk Analysis

- The **Property Database Manager** will identify Moderate to High risk properties and enter complaints into the IPS system

Property Inspections

- The Building Department will assign a **Code Enforcement Officer** from the Property Maintenance Division to respond to complaints
- The **Code Enforcement Officer** will confirm vacancy or occupancy, cite any visible code violations, and post information on foreclosures and available counseling services to the front door of the property

Action Plan: Remediation

Outreach

- Emphasize and advertise for utilizing the housing counselors from Belmont and Buffalo Urban League that visit with the Town. This is a free legal service to residents.
- CDBG or HOME funds may be available for home rehab depending on qualifications.

Toolkit Assessment

- The ultimate goal is to keep owners in their home and financially stable before we consider an intervention.
- If an intervention is necessary, the **Task Force** will make formal recommendations at quarterly Task Force meetings utilizing the Toolkit.

•Toolkit Action

- After the Task Force recommendations are made, formal decisions on a course of action with the toolkit are collectively made by the **Task Force** and where necessary, with **Town Board** input.
- Under the direction of the **Task Force**, Town staff from all relevant departments will utilize their abilities and expertise to pursue the agreed upon action for each property

•Quarterly Reassessment

- The **Database Manager** will perform historical title research to identify points of contact and assign a legal status for properties in the database

Lessons & Contributions

2 LISC grant rounds completed from 2017-2021

Reduced total # of vacant properties from 165 to 110

Over 100 households referred to housing counseling services

Reduced total # of zombie properties from 51 to 21

Established action plan and remediation toolkit for all properties in distress

- ▶ Leaders in County Task Force pushing for Mortgage Servicers to be listed on all Lis Pendens

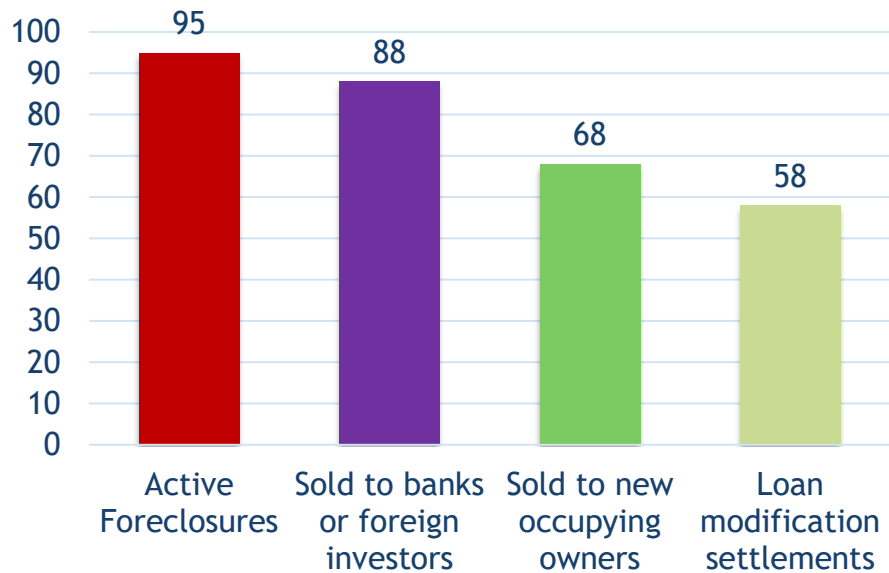
SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF ERIE

----- x
NEW PROMISE FUNDING : Index No.: 21
Plaintiff, :
-against- : **NOTICE OF PENDENCY**
: **Mortgaged Premises:**
: Amherst, NY 14226
: **Section:**
: **Block:**
DOE" said names being fictitious, it being the intention: **Lot:**
of Plaintiff to designate any and all occupants of the
premises being foreclosed herein, :
Defendants : **Mortgage Servicer: FCI**
: Lender Services, Inc.
: **Mortgage Servicer Phone #:**
x 800-931-2424

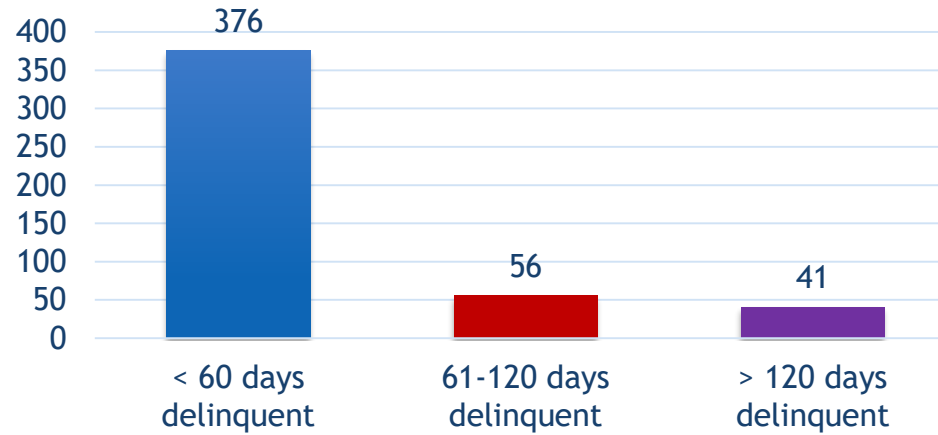
- ▶ Illuminated the gap in service to isolated elderly populations within probate court

Discussion

Foreclosure Outcomes in the Town of Amherst (2018-2020) N=309



NYS DFS Mortgage Delinquency Reporting (2020-2021) N=495



- ▶ In 2020, New York is seeing the highest delinquency rate ever 11.8% (10,393,141 households)

Thank you! We are happy to answer your questions.

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