

CommunityLand.ca

Community Land Trusts 101

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**Canadian
Network of
Community
Land Trusts**



This presentation was developed by staff at the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts.

Further questions and information can be gleaned from our website (communityland.ca) or by contacting us directly at info@communityland.ca.

Solidarity with Indigenous People across Turtle Island

The Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts works on the ancestral territories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people across so-called Canada.

We acknowledge that we are engaging in Land-based practices on stolen Land and are committed to support Indigenous sovereignty & well-being through tangible actions:



Supporting the development and growth of Indigenous-led CLTs



Sharing best practices for supporting reconciliation, decolonization, and Land back through CLTs



Sharing resources to support non-Indigenous CLTs in solidarity efforts



About the CNCLT

Mission



To support the growth of community land trusts with the primary purpose of acquiring, developing, and/or stewarding permanently affordable housing, land, and other assets that contribute to a thriving community.

Vision



A Canadian CLT sector that is well-connected, enabled by government policy and funding, and driving a major increase in the national share of non-market housing assets.

Guiding Principles

Housing is a right, not a commodity.

Land ownership empowers communities.

Solidarity with Indigenous people.

Democratic governance.

Diversity is our strength.



Outline

What is a community land trust?

Origins & Evolutions

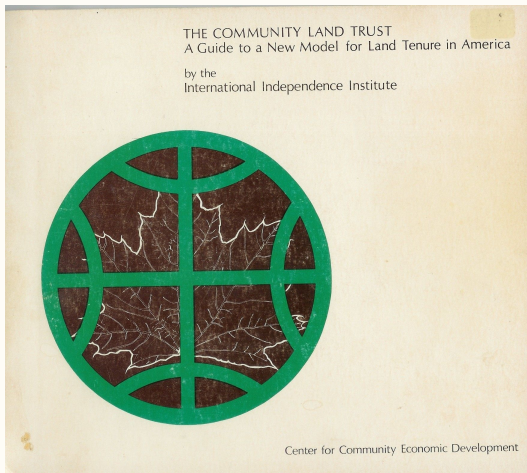
CLTs in Canada

Further resources



Community land trusts believe that land should be held and stewarded for the benefit of local communities.





“...the goal is to **‘restore’**
the land trust concept
rather than initiate it.”

The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for
Land Tenure in America. 1972.



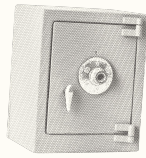
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The notion of collectively stewarded land is not an innovation, but rather the way we held land for millenia. Early CLT organizations knew this.

CLT Land Uses



Key Characteristics



Permanent Land
stewardship



Perpetual
affordability



Expansionist



Place-based



Community-led



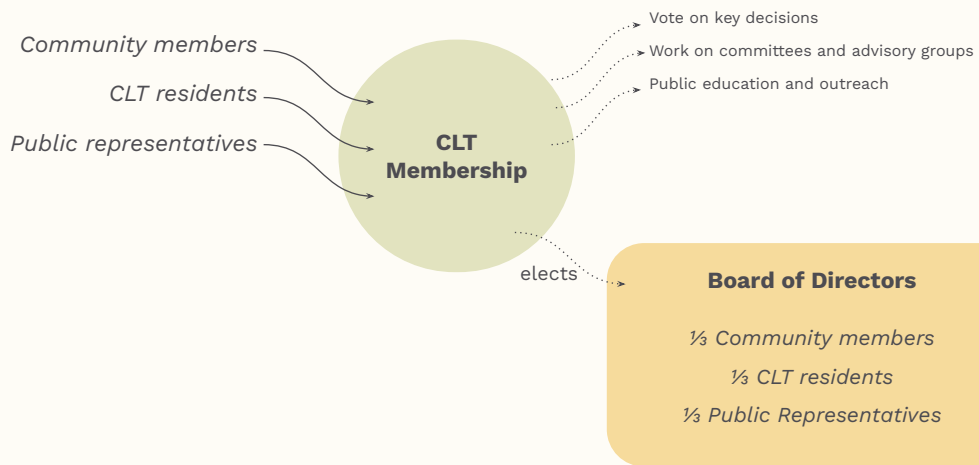
Community
benefit



Key Features

- Permanent land stewardship. CLTs never sell their land, protecting it from the speculative real estate market.
- Perpetual affordability. Housing and other properties owned by CLTs are affordable forever.
- Expansionist. CLTs assemble community-owned real estate portfolios, with active acquisition and development pipelines.
- Place-based. CLTs serve a certain geography, from neighbourhoods to entire regions.
- Community-led. A membership and elected board includes both CLT residents and community members.
- Community benefit. CLT directly benefit communities by enabling access to housing and other identified needs, while also playing important advocacy and community-building roles.

“Classic” CLT Governance



This slide shows what is considered the “classic” CLT governance model, including an open membership which elects a tripartite (three party) board. The governance structure is spelled out in the organizational by-laws.

Membership Classes

- Community members include those living or working in the CLT’s area of operation.
- CLT residents includes those living in or leasing the CLT spaces.
- Public representatives include those who bring the perspective of a the broader community, which could include elected officials or community-based organizations.
- CLTs may also make room for helpful “experts” on their board, such as realtors or lawyers.

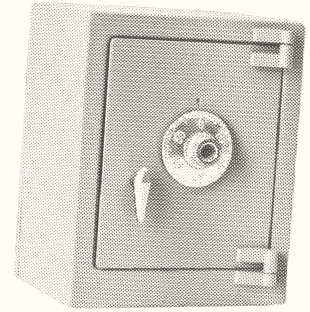
Why Board Classes?

- “Control of the CLT’s board is diffused and balanced to ensure that all interests are heard but that no interest is predominant.” - John Emmaus Davis, [Starting a Community Land Trust](#)

In practice, CLT organizations trend to adapt this structure based on their own priorities. For example, in the case of a Black CLT operating in a neighbourhood where residents have experienced displacement through urban renewal, the organization may create a membership class for those with historic, familial ties to the neighbourhood, through they do not currently live there.

Protecting CLT Assets

- CLTs are not “trusts” in the legal sense. They are non-profit organizations.
- They must employ policies and legal tools to secure their assets within their organization.
- Their primary goals are to ensure that (a) CLT retains permanent ownership of their assets and (b) that assets are affordable in perpetuity (forever).



Example of policies include:

- Resale restrictions
- Right to repurchase
- Occupancy agreements

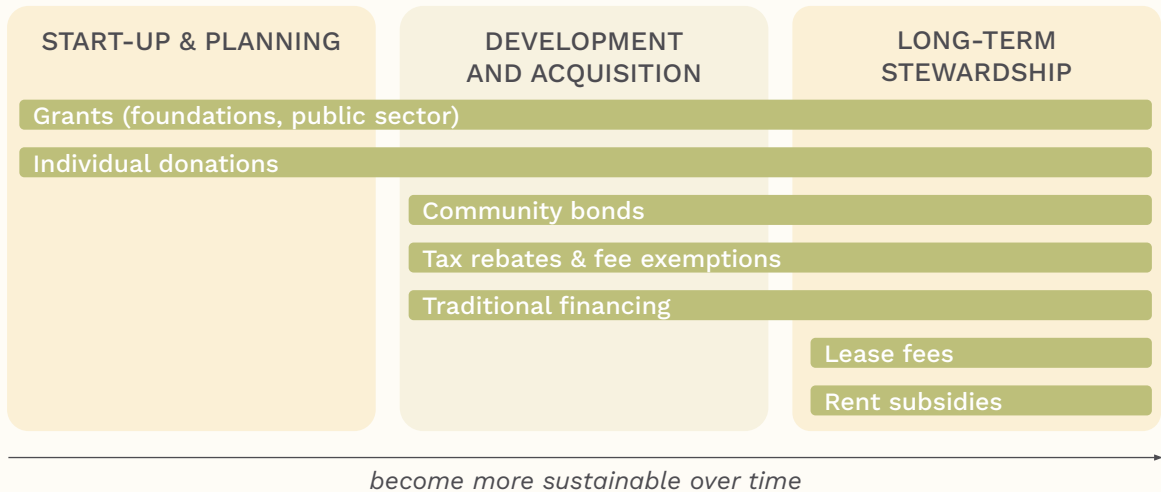
For example, if a CLT owns an affordable homeownership project, the homes should be affordable for the first homeowner, as well as the subsequent homeowners. This is usually accomplished by a resale value preventing the homeowner from making large profits off the sale of the home.

Pathways to Land Acquisition

- Purchase at market value
- Purchase at below-market value from government (e.g. former social housing units) or private owners
- Receive as gift from government (e.g. surplus lands) or private owners (e.g. bequests)
- Transfer through inclusionary zoning, community benefit agreements, or land title claims



Funding: From Start-up to Stewardship



Like other non-profit organizations, new CLTs require startup funding and municipal concessions (e.g. waiving development fees, land donations).

As they acquire assets CLTs are able to generate revenue via ground lease fees, building leases/sales, membership dues, and other sources.

CLTs may be eligible for charitable status and can then more easily solicit donations (has implications for operations).

Origins and Evolutions

- In 1969, a collective of civil rights activists established [New Communities Inc](#) in rural Georgia as the first community land trust
- Since the 1980s, urban and rural communities across the [world](#) adapted the CLT model
- CLTs are mobilized for various reasons
 - Neighbourhood stabilization
 - Scaling co-ops and community housing
 - Reparations and Reconciliation



More about New Communities Inc (NCI)

- NCI aimed to economically liberation for Black tenant farmers through secure land tenure
- NCI eventually acquired more than 5,000 acres of land, the largest parcel owned by Black Americans at the time
- Their story is shared in the film [Arc of Justice](#)

CLTs in Canada

- CLTs in Canada emerge [in the 80s](#)
- Cooperative housing federations quickly become interested ([CHFT](#), [CHF BC](#))
- Since the 2010s, there has been “[CLT renaissance](#)” in Canada, with organizations sprouting across the country
- In Canada, there are more than forty established and emerging CLTs stewarding over [10 thousand homes](#)



Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT) was instrumental in the founding of CNCLT in 2017. Here is PNLT celebrating the purchase of a 15-unit rooming house in Parkdale, the first affordable housing project of the land trust ([Source](#))



For a detailed history of CLTs in Canada, see [Origins and Evolutions of Community Land Trusts in Canada](#).

CLTs in Canada: Racial Justice

CLTs are being used a vehicle for racial justice in various communities

- [African Nova Scotian](#) CLTs formed to secure historic land titles
- [Black communities](#) razed by urban renewal
- [Chinatown](#)s facing gentrification
- Land Back, [rematriation](#) & Indigenous communities



[Sogorea Te' Land Trust](#)



CLTs in Canada: Project Examples

2019



Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust celebrates its purchase of a 15-unit rooming house in Parkdale.

2022



Community Land Trust (CHF BC) acquires 425 units of co-operative housing at risk of sell-off upon lease expiration.

2022



Circle Community Land Trust acquires more than 500 homes previously owned by the Toronto's municipal social housing provider. The units were at-risk of privatization. Tenants stayed in place and retained housing subsidies.

2023



Ottawa Community Land Trust purchases a 6-unit apartment building which will be converted into non-profit housing.



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Further Resources

History

[Roots of the CLT Movement \(US/International\)](#)
[Origins and Evolution of the CLT in the US](#)
[Origins and Evolution of Urban CLTs in Canada](#)
[History of CHF BC's CLT](#)

Networks

[Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts](#)
[European CLT Network](#)
[UK CLT Network](#)
[Grounded Solutions Network \(US\)](#)
[California Network](#)
[International CLT Network](#)

Other

[CLTs in Canada - List & Map](#)



Community Land Trusts: Can they be an answer to the housing crisis? (Global News)

