

Community Land Trust Vision Development Tool

What is an organizational vision?

A vision is a statement of what the future would look like if your CLT achieved all its goals. The purpose of a vision is to inspire people to get involved and support you in working towards making your vision a reality. It is essentially the “big picture” of why your organization exists.

Developing a vision

Every CLT will follow a different process in developing their vision. However, these are some suggested steps to develop a strong vision.

1. Get the right people involved - *CLTs will usually ensure future beneficiaries are involved in developing the organizational vision!*
2. Use brainstorming exercises to generate ideas
3. Collaborate on drafting your vision
4. Get feedback from those with a stake in your CLT's success
5. Refine and finalize your vision
6. Share your vision!

Tips for a strong vision

- **Make it compelling** - Use strong language that will strike a chord
- **Be ambitious** - Your vision should feel out of reach in the short term. This is a chance to think big and be optimistic!
- **Leave room for flexibility** - Your vision does not need to be specific about how you will accomplish your goals; this is the role of a purpose or mission statement. You may update your vision at a later date, but you want to come up with a vision that will last for at least the first few years of your CLT's development.

CLT vision examples

- **Hamilton CLT:** “A Hamilton where communities are active in the inclusive and sustainable ownership of land for community benefit, forever.”
- **Ottawa CLT:** “What if affordable housing is available to anyone who needs it, anytime? What if it's community empowering community to make that happen?”
- **Muskoka CLT:** “Communities that thrive with social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.”

Before you start...

1. Define a process

Decide who's leading the process and what resources will be needed, and decide on a goal end-date.

2. Think about who's involved

Incorporate into the process groups or individuals in the community who will be important partners or contributors - try to ensure involvement at some level from each of the following parties to a tripartite board:

- i. Future CLT beneficiaries
- ii. Community members
- iii. Organizational representatives

Group Activities

Semi-Structured Brainstorm

Discuss the following questions:

- Why does what we do matter?
- What impact do we want to make?
- Who is the CLT for?
- What is our most ambitious goal?
- What would our community look like if we achieved this goal?

Likes and Dislikes

In a group, look at 5-10 examples of non-profits' vision statements (they don't have to be CLTs). What do you find inspiring about their visions? What words or ideas might you borrow from these examples? What do you like and not like about these statements?

Community / Land / Trust

In a group, brainstorm responses to questions about community, land, and trust:

- What community? For who?
- What type of land? For what purpose?
- Why a trust? What's the aim?

Fill in the Blanks

Come up with a few options for each of the blanks in the following sentence. Stuck coming up with a good word? Try using a [thesaurus](#)! (Note that this is not the structure your vision needs to follow.)

A _____ (your community) where _____ are/have/feel/can
_____ and where everyone is _____.

Word Cloud of “Why”

Get everyone in your group to write 1-2 sentences explaining why they wanted to get involved in starting a CLT. Plug these sentences into a word cloud generator (try [this](#), [this](#), or [this](#)) and generate the image. Take note of the biggest words and any surprising words and discuss.

Hopeful Headline

In small groups, brainstorm an ideal headline you’d like to see about your CLT’s work 25+ years from now. Reframe this as a broader vision statement.

Further Resources

- DonorBox - [How to Create a Non-profit Vision Statement](#)
- Design Kit - [Brainstorming tips](#)
- Prosper Strategies - [Non-profit Vision Statements Guide](#)