



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST

Grant Overview and Report

**The Community Land Trust:
a Feasible Tool for Addressing Starksboro's
Housing and Community Development Needs?**

March 5, 2026

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Is the Community Land Trust a Feasible Tool for Addressing Starksboro's Housing and Community Development Needs?

I. INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission for the Town of Starksboro seeks practical and appropriate solutions to long-standing housing challenges. These challenges include the condition and inadequacy of infrastructure needed to scale growth, creating a village center with Route 116 running through the town, a topography that leaves little buildable land. Starksboro has expressed interest in exploring ways it can play a proactive role in the type and scale of local housing development. Further incentives include a variety of state-level housing initiatives, an immediate threat to the local elementary school, and an expiring town plan. In June of 2025 the Town of Starksboro Planning Commission was awarded a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development to explore creative ways to increase housing opportunities, with a particular focus on the Community Land Trust (CLT), a model that promotes and preserves affordable homeownership through the leadership and engagement of local citizens in partnership with local government as well as the for-profit sectors. The Town engaged TA\CHT, (a program of the Champlain Housing Trust) to explore the feasibility of creating a CLT to help address these challenges. A local CLT could support appropriate residential development. If successful, it may attract younger families (bolstering school enrollment) and could promote a more robust and balanced housing market. However, organizing, governing, staffing, and funding a small CLT carries substantial risk along with the potential. This report outlines the opportunities and challenges of establishing a CLT.

The grant scope of work outlines three phases:

Phase One. General information - Completed

In this exploration phase, TA\CHT Consultant Brenda Torpy provided to the Planning Commission and Selectboard presentations on the CLT model outlining what it is, where and how it has been applied successfully, what is required to create and sustain a CLT, and what resources are available to Starksboro should the Town seek to create a CLT. The following products were delivered:

1. An introductory overview of the CLT model and the project to the Planning Commission.

2. A more in-depth tutorial on the model, its history, growth and variations, applicable examples, funding sources and Vermont partners/resources, delivered to a joint meeting of the Selectboard and Planning Commission. The tutorial is available as a PowerPoint presentation.

These were followed by the submission of the following resource materials.

3. An annotated bibliography of the most critical publications on CLTs including theory, practice, technical and practical manuals, and reports.

4. An annotated and curated bibliography of online resources in various media available to support outreach, education, implementation, and direct assistance. (Appendix D)

5. Three Case studies of rural CLTs. (Appendix C)

Phase Two- This Report on the Feasibility of Creating and Sustaining a CLT for Starksboro
(Section III, below)

Phase Three: Public Outreach – (Spring 2026) Aligning with the anticipated town plan revision, the Town will lead a series of housing-focused gatherings across the community designed to explore the public’s views on the Town’s housing priorities with a view to setting goals for where housing should be encouraged, what type of housing the community needs, and what tools or assets the Town might leverage to reach its housing goals.

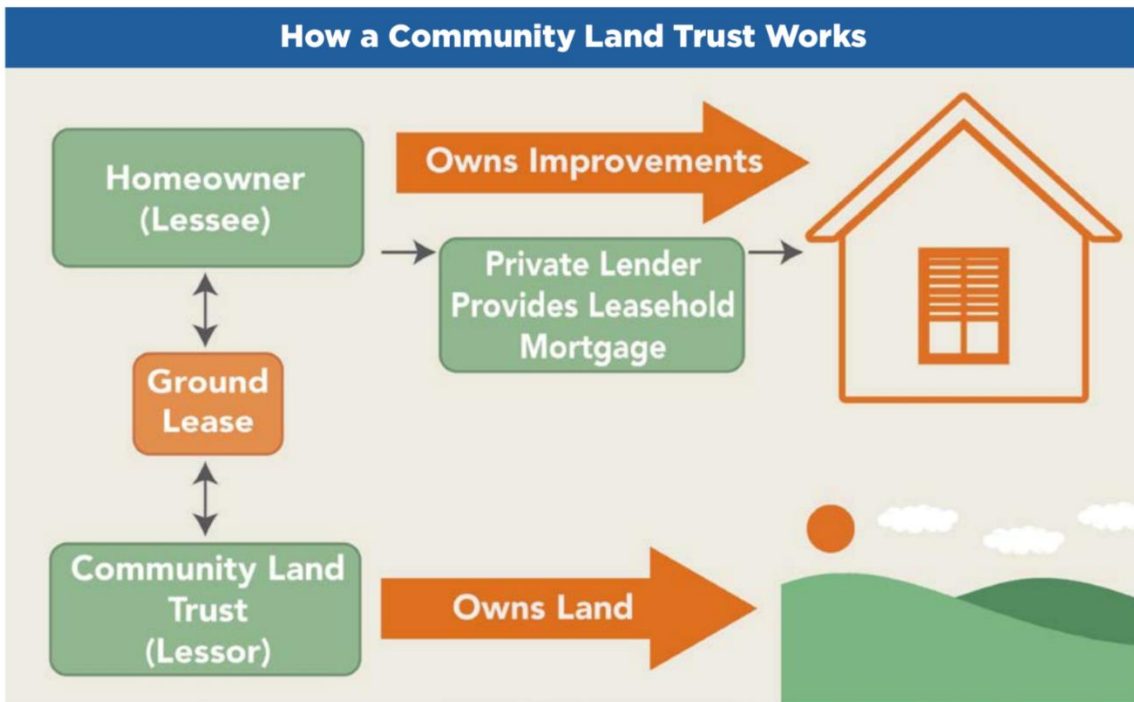
Pending the Town’s acceptance and concurrence with the recommendations of this report, the process will include an introduction to the Community Land Trust model, and an invitation to interested citizens to explore the possibility of creating a CLT for Starksboro.

II. BACKGROUND ON THE CLT MODEL

1. What is a Community Land Trust?

A Community Land Trust is an organization created to hold land for the benefit of a community and of individuals within the community. It is a democratically structured nonprofit corporation, with an open membership and a board of trustees elected by the membership. The board typically includes residents of trust-owned lands, other community residents, and public-interest representatives. Board members are elected for limited terms, so that through broad participation and leadership the community retains ultimate control of the organization and the land it owns.

The CLT acquires land through purchase or donation with the intention of retaining title in perpetuity, thus removing the land from the speculative market. Appropriate uses for the land are determined compatible with community interests, goals, and regulations, and the land is then leased to individuals, families, cooperatives, community organizations, businesses, or for public purposes. The most common use of CLT lands is affordable housing and related community assets that enhance the quality of life for the leaseholders. These may include community gardens, parks, public services, and small local businesses.



The CLT offers long-term leases that are specific, flexible, legal instruments by which the legitimate interests of both the community and the individual leaseholder are explicitly described and protected in accordance with the policies of the CLT.

Priority in leasing is given to those whose needs are the greatest in keeping with the CLT's charitable mission. Leaseholders pay a minimal lease fee in support of the CLT's stewardship of the property, own the improvements on the land, and have exclusive occupancy rights to the land. In return the CLT provides subsidies to make the property affordable and stewardship that supports the owner and sustains the program's mission. The CLT retains the first option to buy improvements at the owner's original invested cost adjusted by the pre-determined resale formula designed to balance a fair return to the seller with continued affordability for the next buyer(s). Thus, the CLT holds the property for the benefit of the community and individuals within the community. Additional background on the purpose and organization of CLTs can be found in the Appendix.

2. A Brief History of Community Land Trusts in Vermont

The State of Vermont has established statutory standards for permanent affordability and supports a network of CLTs that deliver affordable housing and related community assets across the state through a quasi-governmental agency, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Board (VHCB). The VHCB is the principal source for capital grants to create permanently affordable homes and rentals, special needs housing and many of the community development projects that the CLTs provide to their communities as part of their mission. The VHCB was created in 1987 and by 1995 there were 10 local CLTs around the state along with a handful of older nonprofit housing groups, all supported by the VHCB's organizational capacity fund. Over the years, these small organizations found themselves stretched beyond their ability to manage their portfolios and unable to grow to a scale that could support a sufficient level and variety of expertise. Affordable housing is a highly regulated sector with multiple public sources needed in every project, regardless of size, each with its own compliance requirements. This puts an onerous burden on providers of the smaller projects in Vermont's rural communities. In keeping with the CLT tradition of mutual self-help, Vermont's CLTs collaborated to protect their collective mission and their beneficiaries by merging with neighboring groups and combining their services areas into larger regions. The result is 5 CLTs whose service areas cover one of 5 regions as follows: Cornerstone Housing Partnership in the Southwest; Windham and Windsor Housing Trust in the Southeast; Downstreet Housing and Community Development in Central Vermont; Rural Edge in the Northeast Kingdom and Champlain Housing Trust in the Northwest. For more information on each group see:

[Cornerstone Housing Partners](#): Approximately 900 rentals in high-quality, redeveloped and historic buildings for low-income, senior, and family housing, with services as needed to support elderly, and disabled.

[Downstreet Housing and Community Development](#): Rental portfolio includes over 731 apartments, 85 manufactured housing lots, and 163 shared equity homeownership units.

[Windham & Windsor Housing Trust](#): Over 900 affordable apartments and 147 shared equity homes in Windham and Windsor counties, with 95 more units in development as of August 2025.

[Rural Edge \[ruralede.org/\]\(http://ruralede.org/\)](#): 1,000 affordable rental housing units in 33 properties, which includes both residential and commercial units, as well as developments for seniors and families, and shared equity homes.

Champlain Housing Trust: <https://www.getahome.org/>: Over 3,000 apartments, 700 shared equity homes, 30 commercial spaces, five loan programs.

The handful of small remaining CLTs are in the process or on a path to joining a member of this network.¹ This evolution to larger entities qualified them for membership in the National NeighborWorks Network, (NNA) providing access to direct funding and technical assistance to housing nonprofits nationwide. Membership in NNWN strengthened Vermont's CLTs and enabled them to operate full-service Homeownership Centers, for financial counseling and homebuyer education services. It also bolstered their affordable loan programs, and rehabilitation services for home repair, rental repair, energy efficiency, mobile homes purchase and farmworker housing. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development (DHCD) continue to fund and support these organizations to deliver permanently affordable housing throughout the state, leveraging millions of additional federal dollars and private investment resulting in 16,000 homes since 1987.

Even at their current scale and with our state's robust support, Vermont's 5 regional CLTs struggle to manage their portfolios and expand them to fully address the housing needs of their regions; meanwhile, the gap between what Vermonters can afford and the cost of housing continues to widen. In recent years State Funders have also called upon the CLTs to supplement the work of the State's shelter providers by developing more emergency and transitional housing and rapidly moving the unhoused into permanent housing. This added component of their mission has required CLTs to add related services.

Because this regional CLT network evolved organically through voluntary mergers over time there is occasional overlap in service areas and variation in their offerings. Collaboration serves to smooth these bumps. The CLTs draw strength and stability through cooperation, operating specialized programs by invitation in each other's service areas, stepping in as needed to help each other overcome a staffing shortage or deal with a crisis. They also take advantage of each other's specialties, for example Cornerstone Housing Partnership provides certain loan products statewide and Champlain Housing Trust is a VHCB-funded backup to all the CLTs resale-restricted homeownership programs.

¹ **Twin Pines Housing Trust** is a unique case serving White River Valley in Vermont and New Hampshire. They benefit from substantial support from major donors dedicated to that region. **Addison Housing Works** serves Addison County only and operates sustainably now. They have put the option of merging with a neighboring CLT into their strategic plan as a path to sustainability should they need it.

Despite these challenges, Vermont's CLTs have found a balance between the benefits of localism and the necessity of scale. Vermont stands out among rural states for its distribution of affordable housing across its rural territories due to this reliance on regional nonprofits led by local volunteers. Vermont also remains a leader in CLT development and growth nationwide by demonstrating a strong and collaborative CLT infrastructure of knowledge, experience, and expertise that Starksboro can draw on in its exploration of a CLT. In this context of Vermont's network of CLTs, we can envision a potentially viable path for Starksboro to create and sustain its own CLT.

III. FEASIBILITY OF A CLT FOR STARKSBORO

It is my conclusion that Starksboro can create a CLT to lead the Town's affordable housing initiatives--within limits. As noted, there are significant challenges to all CLTs serving small service areas and while the chances of success are better in Vermont than almost anywhere else in the country, the path to sustainability is narrow.

The CLT design recommended in response to the Planning Grant's original feasibility questions (below) is one where Starksboro creates its own CLT and contracts its implementation entirely to a chosen partner that has all the capacities needed to develop and steward Starksboro's program. While Vermont's CLTs have routinely developed housing in response to local government and civic or church groups, pursuing contracted services within this relatively new, regionalized CLT framework would be yet another innovation in Vermont's ever-evolving CLT sector.

1. Can the community galvanize more support for creating affordable housing by involving more stakeholders, building its capacity and leveraging outside resources?

A Community Land Trust is a membership-based nonprofit that develops property on behalf of the community it serves, draws its leadership and members from that community and embeds these, and related obligations in its bylaws. This structure establishes a relationship of trust between the organization and the wider community it serves, and one that while it is outside of government, works in partnership with local government bodies like planning commissions, zoning boards and selectboards to evaluate and realize appropriate development projects. By directly engaging residents in the process of creating housing to meet local needs, the organization provides an important educational function, highlighting the benefits to the community when that development is community centered and is responsive to needs. CLTs are also valuable public partners in private-public partnerships where private sector developers bring value by filling gaps in the local housing market and

the CLT fills the affordability gap for those who cannot compete in that market. By adding a diversity of housing offerings, the entire community fabric is strengthened.

CLTs like all nonprofits can access sources of capital and financing not available to either government or the private sector because CLTs are charitable institutions representing their communities and providing benefit to them. Foundation grants and/or program-related-investments along with private donations supplement government funding and help sustain a Trust's operations. Most CLTs also raise membership dues from the wider community they serve. Matched with public funding for affordable housing, CLT's privately raised funds, while rarely sufficient to cover all operations, provide valuable leverage and demonstrate community support.

2. Is it a good fit for a small community?

CLTs are especially well suited to small communities where there are common experiences and institutions, shared knowledge, a history of collaboration, and the ability to connect and to forge a common vision. Also, the CLT can support and supplement the work of local government by being available to explore and vet housing and community development opportunities as they arise, or to help to seek out partners to help realize a potential project identified by the Selectboard or Planning Commission. Local governments that are volunteer driven with minimal staffing and no added capacity for community development benefit from the added capacity of an informed and self-sustaining citizen group like a CLT that builds and maintains its own knowledge of the field and helps to educate and engage residents more broadly.

On the other hand, there are challenges specific to small CLTs with small service areas. Regardless of the size of its portfolio, fully volunteer leadership and labor are not sufficient to the mission of creating and stewarding real property assets in perpetuity. A CLT needs resources to sustain its mission even if it contracts out the development and stewardship of its homes. Maintenance of the organizational infrastructure itself--an active informed board and membership, and the capacity to maintain legal and administrative obligations--all require staffing at any size. A Starksboro CLT (SCLT) would need to raise this relatively modest amount of funding to operate responsibly and maintain good oversight of entities contracted to implement any development and stewardship initiatives. Like any small, local nonprofit of any kind, SCLT will always require strong local support through steady and reliable volunteer labor and sustaining donors to assure continuity and capacity over the long haul. Further, in the competitive worlds of public grants and private donations, high production and impact win the day, favoring nonprofits for whom growth is both appropriate and possible. This reality underscores the need to evaluate the potential of local support from donors who value the local focus of SCLT. Sources of funding used by CLTs historically are described in Section III below.

Therein lies the essential challenge at the core of the Community Land Trust model: while CLTs are eminently suited to the needs of small communities that seek to meet their

housing and community development needs through local community engagement and leadership, mission implementation, the management of a real estate portfolio, however small, is beyond the capacities of even the most dedicated volunteers. Housing development and stewardship are costly and complex, requiring significant social investment to create and steward permanently affordable housing.

Recognizing this challenge, a Starksboro-specific CLT will need to contract out its activities and raise funds to support its operations. This forms the basis of the recommendation below. This opportunity is one that is not typically available outside of Vermont and that arises specifically from our state's commitment to community ownership and community-driven development, and an infrastructure in place to support it, through policy and targeted funding, and through the network of sophisticated and mutually supportive Community Land Trusts operating across the state. In this context, Starksboro could sustain a local trust that is based on local governance and contracted services that follow Vermont's well established CLT policy and practice.

The following three questions will be addressed with a proposal for a feasible Starksboro CLT (SCLT) that has a sustainable structure and governance, a path to capital and funding and will be scalable to the Town's needs.

3. How would it be structured and governed?

Recommendations:

- The SCLT will be a 501(c)(3) membership organization made up of interested citizens of the Town who will have a role in the Trust's decisions and elect the Board of Directors drawn from that membership. The Town lines will define the service area.
- The Bylaws will clearly state the SCLT's intent to serve those who have barriers to the housing market, principally low- and moderate-income households and individuals.
- The Board will have three types of members: residents living on SCLT land, residents of the Town not living on STCLT land, and public members as determined by the by-laws to represent key partners in the SCLT mission. These public members could include local government, regional planning and/or public agencies. The Board will designate candidates to represent residents of SCLT land until such a time as homes have been built on SCLT land and leased to buyers. The tri-partite Board is a core element of the CLT model to create a balance between the interests of SCLT residents, non-resident stakeholders and relevant governmental entities.
- The SCLT bylaws will define the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the membership as these relate to governance, Board executive positions, term limits, meetings, and elections including any special provisions specific to CLTs, including the quorum requirement requiring one vote from each category of Board member.
- Resale formula terms will be defined, including the process required to change the formula if needed, and a procedure for disposition of land when permanent

affordability cannot be upheld. These terms protect the CLT mission of permanent affordability while striking a fair balance between the sellers and the buyers of SCLT homes.

- Board policies will be developed to direct the implementation of SCLT's program and guide the Board.
- The SCLT should seat a Board as small as seven members. Wide participation by members in the leadership of a CLT is achieved through term limits. This approach refreshes leadership and eases the management of the Board. Regular orientation and training for Board members will enable this turnover. Frequent orientation and training are best practices for any non-profit Board and, in the case of CLTs, it is critical to maintain permanent affordability through generations of staff and beneficiaries.
- Maintaining the SCLT's organizational infrastructure will depend on robust volunteer membership and leadership. A paid part-time coordinator will be required for operations along with additional contract services as needed.

A well supported Board and informed membership will be fully able to support the Town government in its goal of creating permanently affordable homeownership and can also ensure access to any other affordable housing program that is available to residents of Starksboro. This added local capacity and eligibility to receive and deploy private charitable grants and public affordable housing funds will add value to the Town's ability to fulfill its housing focused planning and community development goals. While the maintenance of such capacity is not free, it is a very cost-effective means of retaining local control of development.

4. How would the CLT be capitalized and funded?

The Town's size and modest options for growth make SCLT's financial sustainability the greatest challenge. SCLT, indeed all CLTs, will need two types of funding: operating support for start-up and ongoing operations, and capital for land acquisition and affordable pricing for eligible buyers.

Operating support: There is no guaranteed or easily achieved source for this. Vermont's public affordable housing funds are no longer available to small non-profit start-ups because of the challenges faced by the small local trusts that pioneered the model in Vermont and struggled to sustain their work individually. Any operating funds outside of potential earnings from SCLT's production (more on this below) will need to be raised through private, charitable fundraising. Some CLTs around the country have been started and are supported by a local foundation. Some are beneficiaries of major donors. All CLTs raise money through community campaigns and major donor cultivation while also tapping members for annual dues and requests for larger gifts. Fundraising from the local community is unlikely to be sufficient on its own to sustain the core corporate operations of SCLT and will need to be part of a larger fundraising plan.

Capital Funding

Vermont directs nearly all its affordable housing dollars to permanently affordable housing, including Federal funds allocated to the state. Non-profits are the primary delivery system for these subsidies. A permanently affordable homeownership project in Starksboro would compete well. If Starksboro decides to use Town land as an outright contribution to such a project that source would be a very competitive leverage for public funding. Capital projects pay fees to the developer, enabling SCLT to contract that role without having to cover the developer's costs.

There are other publicly funded housing programs that could be made available to eligible Starksboro residents, such as affordable rehabilitation loans and grants to homeowners, landlords and farmers who have farmworker housing. Residents of Starksboro are already eligible to access these but may not know about them. Promoting these resources is a good service SCLT could provide. These affordable capital programs are fully managed by the CLTs that operate them on behalf of the state including service to the applicants and beneficiaries and all compliance and reporting to funders.

The main sources of funding that Vermont's CLTs access to operate and to create permanently affordable homes are numerous but oversubscribed and access to them is competitive. These are listed here briefly in three categories. In addition, descriptions of each source are provided in **Appendix A**, attached.

Federal Funding Programs

Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), New Markets Tax Credits, Rent Subsidies, Charitable Bonds, FHA discounted financing, Rural Development (former Farmer's Home Administration) mortgages and Rental Housing programs.

State Funding Programs

State Tax Credits, Bonds, Trust Funds, Permanent Affordability Policy, Inclusionary Zoning, Property Tax adjustment.

Private, Charitable Funding

Foundations, Major Donors, Community Fundraising, Capital Campaigns, Land Donations, Bargain Sales, Social Investments / Program related Investments (PRI).

5. Is it scalable to the needs?

Starksboro CLT's main sustainability challenge is its small service area and small population. Providing affordable housing is costly and complex and requires significant public investment. This is a highly regulated sector funded through various federal and state agencies, each with individual compliance requirements. CLTs that focus on affordable housing benefit from scale because it enables them to spread the cost of compliance and all administration across larger portfolios for more efficient operations. This efficiency can

only be achieved through larger service areas that enable larger portfolios. The model proposed here addresses this challenge. By contracting with an existing CLT that can deliver all development and services, SCLT can limit itself to fulfilling the needs of the Town and limit its operating costs to providing program oversight, while keeping the focus on project opportunities.

Finally, the overarching framework of Vermont's Community Land Trust delivery system for permanently affordable housing provides other kinds of resources for Starksboro's CLT initiative. Critical program elements have been standardized among all the CLTs, some enshrined in state policy. At every step of the process SCLT can freely access model documents such as By-laws, successful 501(c)(3) applications for charitable status, and CLT-specific policies and procedures from the practicing CLTs that have been evaluated and adapted over 40 years of Vermont-specific practice. This standardization is not total. There are many elements that vary according to local preferences and priorities. **Appendix B** lists the steps SCLT might follow and how these tools will facilitate the process.

CONCLUSION

A SCLT is only feasible if the Town proceeds as recommended by this report. A stand-alone CLT serving the Town is too small to be sustainable and would struggle to attract necessary funding. Sustainability is only achievable if the town contracts with a fully staffed Community Land Trust that has sufficient capacity to perform all the components of affordable housing delivery. Consistent administrative staffing and cross-CLT collaboration is the only strategy that would allow Starksboro to compete effectively in a complex funding environment.

Appendix A

Funding Available to Vermont Community Land Trusts

1. Federal Funding

Community Development Block Grants

Issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), allocated to states and entitlement cities (in Vermont-Burlington) by population; administered in Vermont by the Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Affairs and distributed competitively to applicant towns and cities. Flexible funds for housing and community development benefiting low- and moderate-income people or census tracts.

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)

Issued by HUD allocated to states and entitlement cities (in Vermont-Burlington) by population; administered in Vermont by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and distributed competitively to qualifying projects, (primarily by nonprofits) to subsidize deep affordability for very low-income renters within a mixed income development.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), allocated to states by population administered by distributed by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) through a competitive process to rental projects by non-profit and for-profit developers committing to permanent affordability. Provides equity through private investment in return for tax benefits to investors instead of repayment.

New Markets Tax Credits

Issued by the IRS and allocated to qualifying areas through intermediaries. Designed for non-residential development but can be used by larger homeownership projects. Provides equity through private investments in return for tax benefits to investors. Requires some repayment after 7 years.

Rent Subsidies

Issued by HUD allocated to state and Local Housing Authorities by competition. In Vermont, the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) and multiple local Authorities in cities across the state. Delivers rent subsidies of various kinds to landlords renting to qualified low-income households or projects, under the Section 8 Program.

Charitable Bonds

State Housing Finance Agencies (HFAs) primarily issue and sell Mortgage Revenue Bonds (MRBs) and Multifamily Housing Bonds to fund affordable home mortgages and rental housing. These tax-exempt, municipal bonds provide low-interest mortgages for first-time homebuyers and are originated by Banks – and not directly by the VHFA. Bond financing for the construction or rehabilitation of affordable rental units is borrowed directly from the VHFA by the developer that can be a for-or nonprofit.

Rural Development (Formerly Farmers' Home Administration)

This federal Agency has an office for Vermont in Montpelier. Their housing programs include deeply affordable mortgages and mortgage guaranties, a suite of rental housing programs that mirror HUD's, but they are woefully underfunded and their subsidies do not work well with the other affordable rental production sources like LIHTIC resulting in few recent projects. Additionally, they have rehab programs and assistance to farmers for farmworker housing, and below market financing for public facilities and rural utilities.

2. State Funding

State Homeownership Tax Credits

Available from the VHFA, this credit provides a purchaser with \$5,000 towards downpayment and closing costs and does not need to be repaid until resale. Annually there is a set-aside for shared equity (the term for resale restricted CLT homes) homebuyers. VHFA also issues substantial state tax credits to incentivize development, for projects in designated downtown or village centers. Key incentives include up to 50% for code improvements, 25% for façade work, and 10% for historic rehabilitation. Additionally, a 27% R&D tax credit is available based on federal credits.

Trust Funds

Vermont has two trust funds. (1) The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) is funded by a percentage of the property transfer tax. It funds the development of perpetually affordable housing and the conservation of agricultural land, forestland, natural areas, and historic properties. It provides grants and loans to non-profits, municipalities, and state agencies, aiming to balance market development of Vermont's land with preserving property for community use and benefit. (2) The Burlington Housing Trust Fund (BHTF) is primarily funded through local, dedicated revenue streams designed to support affordable housing development. Key sources include developer impact fees, in-lieu payments from inclusionary zoning, a dedicated portion of property taxes (half-penny/\$1,000), rental registration fees, and municipal bonds. It supports permanently affordable housing development through capital grants to projects and capacity funds to nonprofits.

Inclusionary Zoning

In Vermont, Burlington is the only municipality that requires all new housing development to include permanently affordable housing- 25% on the waterfront and 15% everywhere else in the city. However, many of Vermont's development designations are heavily

incentivized to include affordable and mixed-income housing. Programs like Neighborhood Development Areas, Growth Centers and Town and Village Centers encourage or mandate the creation of affordable units to receive tax incentives, Act 250 permit exemptions, and priority funding.

3. Private Funding

Foundations

The primary foundation in the state is the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), a collective of more than 1,000 charitable funds, supporting organizations, and foundations created by individuals, families, and businesses to support Vermont. They are a useful resource for non-profit capacity building of any kind. The benefit of their model is that non-profits can easily research and identify a VCF fund that is interested in their region or mission. VCF, as with most foundations, is not a source for ongoing funding but can be critical for specific activities that are time-limited and can demonstrate impact.

Major Donors

Many major donors use family foundations to manage their giving; others are self-managed. Major donors, especially if they remain loyal to your organization or mission, can provide substantial, sustained support. Major donors are also much more administratively “efficient” compared to multiple small donors.

Community Fundraising

This is an umbrella term for all direct giving that is not a major gift. Many CLTs have built a community of small donors from their membership, leveraging the outreach infrastructure to communicate with members and ask them for their support. Membership dues are typically small so that the cost will not create a barrier to those with lower income. Broadening the local donor base adds value by demonstrating community support to major donors and public funders.

Capital Campaigns

Targeted campaigns are often designed to increase project affordability to buyers or to close a funding gap. In a capital campaign it is acceptable and normal to include a percentage of your goal to pay for the administration of the campaign. The key here is to secure a starter grant to cover the start-up activities and materials that will launch the actual fundraising. Smaller capacity grants that leverage a broader initiative are often attractive to a range of funders.

Land Donations

The appraised value of the donated land counts as a charitable investment and benefits the donor in the same way as a cash contribution.

Bargain Sales

Land sold at a discount (supported by an appraisal) provides a charitable tax deduction equal to the value of that discount.

Social Investments / PRIs

Program-Related Investments (PRIs) are mission-driven investments by foundations-such as low-interest loans, equity stakes, or loan guarantees-used to support charitable goals while expecting to recover the principal. They count annual distribution requirements (the amount they must spend to qualify as a charitable foundation) and often provide returns to be recycled for future philanthropic use, allowing for higher-risk capital to support social enterprises and bridging the gap between traditional grants and commercial investments.

Appendix B

Next Steps: From Outreach to SCLT Start-Up

1. Robust community engagement and outreach must build community buy-in for a small CLT to prosper. Aligning with the anticipated town plan revision, the Town has planned a series of housing-focused gatherings across the community designed to explore the public's views on the Town's housing priorities and tools available to address these, including the creation of a Community Land Trust. If the response to this idea is positive and the CLT finds support, the process of creating a Starksboro CLT would be undertaken by community volunteers, with the assistance of a qualified consultant.
2. Additional outreach will be needed to engage a volunteer working group. This group will meet regularly and start building the proposed CLT structure according to the established Community Land Trust's model of governance and operations. Resource materials and model documents assembled from this feasibility project are available to guide this process and will inform the working group's decisions. The length of this phase depends on the availability of working group members and frequency of meetings. Working through the many decisions that the working group will make to form the Trust is greatly facilitated by the free availability of model documents, legal and operational, that are used by Vermont's CLTs.

This process can be accomplished through a series of meetings where the group will be reviewing model CLT documents and adapting these to create a viable CLT for Starksboro.

Once the decision is made to create a SCLT, the working group must make structure and governance decisions, including:

- a. Board size and composition
- b. Board member appointment
- c. Board officers
- d. Bylaws adoption

3. Use an attorney to file Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State. Requirements for this include:
 - a. Naming the corporation
 - b. Appointing a registered agent
 - c. Holding an initial board meeting for 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.NOTE: Vermont nonprofit *incorporation* is simple and timely. The federal process for *charitable designation* is complex and slow.

 4. Once the application is in, the group can turn its attention to vetting potential partners including funders and nonprofit development partners. Opportunities for CLT housing development can also be pursued.
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Estimate of Costs

The central cost will be the consultant who will prepare, facilitate and record the group's decisions and assemble founding documents. The consultant will provide background and context throughout to assist them in their decisions. Legal services will be primarily for the non-profit state and federal applications.

Consultant Services for Decision Process: 16 meetings x 3 hours @ \$165/per hour = \$7,920

Legal Services- 16-24 hours: 24 hours \$275/per hour= \$6,600

Materials and incidental costs: Printing, meeting costs and any other incidentals: \$2,500

Total Estimate: \$17,020.00

Total: **NOTE:** The consultant fee is based on the Town's stated fee in the Planning Grant, and the Legal Fees are an average rate for Vermont Attorneys

Appendix C

Case Studies: Successful Rural CLTs

The Opal CLT and the Lopez CLT were selected for Starksboro's exploration of the model because they are small trusts serving very rural regions deeply affected by gentrification. While far from Vermont, these two locales share the negative impacts of being places of great natural beauty. This beauty makes them magnets for second homeowners, short-term rental operators, and those who can work remotely and afford the desirable locations to call home. Both have mitigated this through the collective action of residents, creating and preserving homes that ordinary people and families can afford. Also, while they each serve larger populations than Starksboro, they have remained completely local in their contexts and have not merged with others in order to sustain their programs.

Population of Regions Served: Starksboro: 1,883
Orcas island: 5,000 permanent residents
Lopez Island: 3,1056 permanent residents
Addison County: 37,500

Case Study, 1

OPAL Community Land Trust

Established in 1989 (Orcas Island, Washington)

Profile contributed by Vicki Brems and Lisa Byers (2015)

In the 1980s, rapid population growth and escalating real estate values threatened the quality of life valued by residents of Orcas Island. Located one-hour by ferry from the mainland of Washington State, islanders grew concerned about the loss of open space and the lack of available housing that was affordable for year-round residents.

Many people worked toward solutions, yet three individuals stand out for their leadership and innovation in launching OPAL Community Land Trust to sustain a healthy and economically diverse island community: Peter Fisher, Penny Sharp Sky, and Michael Sky.

Peter Fisher had grown up in Seattle, but spent many summers visiting his grandparents on the island during the 1960s and 1970s. As a teenager, he attended school and spent time with relatives in Norway. He admired the Norwegians' consensus-based social values and their approach to land stewardship, where anyone can enter private farmland with the obligation that they harm nothing.

In the 1980s, Peter – who had decided to make the island his full-time residence – was passionately driven to protect open space and to create affordable housing for the island community. Searching for solutions to foster an inclusive and sustainable island community, Peter read an article written by Robert Gilman, published in the winter 1984 edition of *In Context* magazine. The article was entitled

“The Idea of Owning Land” and described the community land trust model. Later he attended two national CLT conferences in Atlanta, Georgia (1987) and Stony Point, New York (1988).

During that same period, Penny Sharp Sky and Michael Sky – recent transplants to Orcas Island from the Boston MA area – were working on creating a landed community. They wanted something like co-housing where people could gather together for meals and share some common facilities. They met Peter and discovered many shared values and hopes. Coincidentally Michael had read the same article that had inspired Peter. Penny and Michael also had a pragmatic reality similar to many other islanders: they needed an affordable, year-round home. The island’s rental market was unstable, and often meant that residents were renting homes that lacked insulation or adequate plumbing.

After many conversations, Penny, Michael and Peter convened the first public meeting in July 1988 to talk about the need for creating a new organization to, in their words, “provide permanently affordable access to land, homes and workplaces for current and future community members in need.” After months of meetings and committee work, OPAL (Of People And Land) Community Land Trust was officially incorporated in May 1989.

Three years of near-death experiences and triumphs followed. The organization weathered internal disagreements about what land to buy, when to hire staff, and how to fund operations. Trustees debated whether or not to pursue funding from government agencies, which would mean more restrictions. For example, it would not be possible to finance a commons house, so the hopes for a co-housing styled development would be dashed. In the end, the overriding struggle was to find money to buy land and to finance housing so that OPAL’s homes would be affordable. The only way to make that happen was with government-funded grants and loans.

It took almost a year to obtain the first grant: \$300,000 from the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, awarded in April 1990. Soon after, OPAL received an \$80,000 federal Community Development Block Grant and was offered a seven-acre piece of land in the village of Eastsound at a reduced price.

These were major achievements, but the organization nearly foundered on the problem of affordable mortgages for OPAL’s prospective homeowners – hard-working, capable people who were creditworthy, but could not earn enough in the local economy to qualify for traditional housing loans (then pegged at 7.5%). To make their payments affordable, they needed interest rates of 3% or less.

Fred Klein, a local architect and member of OPAL’s Board of Trustees, proposed applying to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farmers Home Loan Program (now called USDA Rural Development) for construction financing and mortgage loans, offering interest rates as low as 1%. But the application was arduous, so the hardy band of volunteers applied for and was awarded a grant from Washington State’s Housing Trust Fund for technical assistance.

OPAL used this grant to hire Mary Burki, who worked with Peter Fisher to prepare a strong application to USDA. OPAL was awarded funds from USDA for a demonstration project, enabling the organization to proceed with the construction of Opal Commons, a new neighborhood of 18 homes. OPAL became the first community land trust in the United States to receive funding from the USDA, and most of OPAL’s subsequent projects have utilized USDA financing.

Meanwhile, after two years of all-volunteer labor, OPAL hired its first staff in 1991: executive director/project manager, Jeanne Beck. Fred Klein was then hired to draw up plans for OPAL's first neighborhood, now that USDA financing had been secured. Working closely with future residents on site planning and house design, and incorporating feedback from neighbors, OPAL's leaders were determined to avoid the small-lot subdivision of typical suburban development. Future homeowners valued a rural aesthetic and wanted to grow food. They followed design guidelines articulated by Christopher Alexander in *A Pattern Language* to retain privacy while also fostering interaction among neighbors. As a result, the design reflected many of the qualities that Peter Fisher had admired in Norway: small houses clustered around common open space and a half-acre area for growing food.

Everyone, especially the prospective homeowners, had to make compromises in order to meet the requirements and restrictions of the funding agencies and to keep the houses affordable, despite high local building costs. Finally, in May 1995, after a year and a half of site work, construction, and countless work parties – and five years after OPAL's founding – 18 families moved into their new homes at *Opal Commons*.

Since that first project, OPAL has gone on to develop more residential neighborhoods. In addition to new construction, OPAL has purchased, renovated, and resold existing houses. On occasion, entire houses have lifted off their foundations and moved from one site on Orcas Island to another. As of 2014, OPAL was housing nearly 5% of the island's year-round population.

OPAL's role does not end when houses are constructed or rehabilitated and sold to eligible households for an affordable price. Instead, OPAL continues to serve as the long-term steward for all of its homes, protecting their affordability, preventing foreclosures, and promoting regular repairs. OPAL was one of the first community land trusts to establish repair and replacement reserves for its owner-occupied housing, modeling and sharing a "best practice" that other CLTs have begun to adopt.

OPAL has accomplished all of this with an energetic board, an engaged and generous membership, and a relatively small staff that has never numbered more than six people, working the equivalent of four full-time employees.

Beyond the considerable impact they have had on Orcas Island, developing affordable housing for individuals and families who add to the economic diversity and social vitality of this island community, OPAL's staff have played significant roles in the national CLT movement. Lisa Byers, OPAL's executive director since 1996, was a co-founder of the National CLT Network and served as the first co-chair of the Network's training and research division, the National CLT Academy. Julie Brunner, a member of OPAL's staff since 2002, also served on the Academy's board and has been a leading consultant and trainer for the National CLT Network. In 2014, the Network honored her with the *John E. Davis Award for Scholarship*, in recognition of her inspirational teaching, coaching and mentoring.

The mission and method of OPAL have remained constant throughout its history. It has stayed focused on sustaining a healthy and economically diverse island community. It has continued to use community ownership of land and long-term ground leasing to accomplish this goal, providing permanently affordable homes and related education and support for islanders whose housing needs

are not being met by the traditional market. At the same time, OPAL has endeavored to keep the “C” in CLT, cultivating a strong board, maintaining an island-wide membership, and building community within every neighborhood it has developed.

To learn more about the OPAL Community Land Trust, past and present:

- [OPAL Community Land Trust](#)
- Robert Gilman, “The Idea of Owning Land,” *In Context*, Winter, 1984.
- OPAL Community Land Trust, *Telling Our Stories, Building Homes, Creating Community*. Eastsound, WA: OPAL, 1999.
- [OPAL Commons](#), Project profile in *Affordable Housing Design Advisor*

Case Study 2

Lopez Community Land Trust

Established in 1989 (Lopez Island, Washington)

Profile contributed by Rhea Miller (2015)

They said it couldn’t be done – provide homeownership opportunities for people earning less than 60% of median income – so, of course, as islanders, we decided to do it! There is nothing like a challenge, but then again, there is nothing like necessity.

It is trendy in certain parts of the United States to make country-living the domain of the wealthy. On Lopez Island, a similar mindset had arisen during the 1980s that said people of lower incomes didn’t deserve to live rurally, much less to enjoy the remote beauty of a small island off the coast of Washington State. And the local real estate market was making that attitude a reality. Land started to be bought and sold sight unseen on the Internet, after the *Wall Street Journal* published an article stating that the San Juan Islands were a great place to live and to invest. Speculative investment pushed up housing prices, which increased by 196% in 1989 alone.

A group of working folks in our thirties got together because we feared that the up-scaling of Lopez was going to force us out of the very place we loved. Affordable housing was an obvious need, but we also acknowledged many other challenges facing our small rural community: how to steward land and to hold it responsibly; how to create opportunities for local entrepreneurship; and how to support sustainable agriculture, cottage industries and rural forestry.

We looked first at co-housing as a possible solution and then at Habitat for Humanity and a couple of other models. None seemed to be the answer. We needed a flexible strategy that could address a variety of needs, withstand the test of time, and weather the rapid rise in real estate prices.

Around that time, Peter Fisher, a resident of nearby Orcas Island, had just returned from visiting Vermont, where he had heard about community land trusts. He hoped to start one on Orcas. He shared what he had learned about the model with a Lopez islander, Sandy Bishop, a 33-year-old community activist. Sandy was a strong advocate of empowerment and social justice, so the model sounded very appealing.

She contacted the Institute for Community Economics (ICE) and asked for more information. They sent out Chuck Collins to speak with us, while he was on a west coast tour. We were sold. The concept seemed to be both economically sound and firmly rooted in principles of social justice. In 1989, we set about forming the Lopez Community Land Trust (LCLT) as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation. Sandy Bishop and Rod Morgan played leading roles, joined by Ona Blue, Ted Bower, Sue McCullough, Jeff Hewins, Oscar Smaalders, Liz Scranton, and Rhea Miller, all of whom served on the original Board of Directors.

The charitable purpose of LCLT, as described in our founding documents, was “to build a diverse, sustainable island community, specifically through programs that primarily support low-income households.” LCLT planned to do so by:

- Acquiring and holding land in trust in order to provide for permanently affordable housing;
- Building homes and using land in an environmentally sensitive and socially responsible manner;
- Providing permanently affordable access to land for such purposes as quality housing, sustainable agriculture and forestry, cottage industries and co-operatives by forever removing land from the speculative market;
- Developing and exercising responsible and ecological practices which preserve, protect, and enhance the land’s natural attributes; and
- Serving as a model in land stewardship and community development by providing information, resources and expertise.

These purposes have remained unchanged since 1989. So has the organization’s service area, encompassing the 29.8 square miles of Lopez Island. With so many needs rising at once, however, and with an organization that has never had a large staff, we have had to pick and choose carefully which purposes and projects to pursue.

LCLT’s first *de facto* executive director, Sandy Bishop, and our project manager, Rod Morgan, worked a year without pay. The first \$2,000 in grant funds for LCLT came from a group of Catholic nuns and a Presbyterian church, allowing us to set up an office. A local insurance company offered us space six days a week; they occupied the same office the other day. LCLT received more small grants and donations, which kept the office running.

In the early 1990’s, affordable housing was the biggest crisis facing the island’s lower-income residents. LCLT quickly realized that its only option was to build dense housing. The dream of helping every person get their own 5 acres was not financially feasible. The only land that was properly zoned and (somewhat) affordably priced was located in Lopez Village. We found a relatively inexpensive one-acre parcel, but it was heavily encumbered with liens. A lot of work was involved to remove these encumbrances. An attorney from Evergreen Legal Services volunteered to help. Then the sewer district refused to service the property and a concerted effort arose among some islanders to stop us.

Extensive education and public speaking were necessary to counter this opposition. Key support came from a local County Commissioner who understood the significance of building affordable

housing for low-income and low-wage people who already lived and worked on Lopez. But, from other quarters, there was an eruption of hate. Some locals were fearful of what they considered “low-income housing”—dead cars in the yard and old couches and refrigerators on the porch. They feared a devaluation of their own property. There were also racist comments made about LCLT attracting “those people” to the island.

A petition against the project was hidden under the counter at the local pharmacy. Its circulation happened in secret. We didn’t know about it until a friend was surreptitiously asked to sign it and refused. Another citizen, whose property bordered land that LCLT was considering for purchase, threatened the life of one of the co-founders. He invited a Seattle-based television news crew to Lopez to denounce LCLT, but his publicity stunt backfired. He was filmed smoking a cigar and spouting foul language, an unappealing personal appearance when shown against the backdrop of younger, working people seeking to create housing opportunities for their fellow Lopezians. The first major grant proposal that we submitted for the housing we were hoping to build in Lopez Village was rejected because LCLT didn’t have a proper budget in place. Despite that rejection, we received technical assistance from the Washington State Housing Trust Fund. Our next proposal for project funding was successful. In 1992, LCLT completed its first housing project, seven detached, single-family houses on an acre of land in Lopez Village. We were featured in the *New York Times* under the headline “Low-Cost Houses on a High-Price Island.”

All seven of these houses were located on land leased from LCLT. The houses were owned and managed as a limited-equity housing cooperative. Most of the people to whom LCLT wanted to sell these newly built houses did not qualify for a traditional mortgage. Their household income was too low or their credit history was too poor. An officer at Washington Mutual Bank suggested to LCLT that the homeowners should form a cooperative – which they did. After the first successful project at Lopez Village, LCLT has continued to create cooperative housing corporations for every one of its subsequent developments. To date, LCLT has built a total of 40 houses, which are owned and managed by 6 different cooperatives and different sites. In addition to the 40 co-op homes, LCLT manages two rental apartments and some commercial real estate.

The leaseholders for the first seven houses built by LCLT were typical of the population that LCLT has continued to serve. They were singles, couples, parents and children. They included a county employee, a musician/waitress, a museum curator, a massage therapist and mother of three, a working mom, an elder on a fixed income, and a single working woman. They had been living on the island without secure housing, so they had nothing to lose from buying into this unfamiliar form of housing: cooperatively owned houses on leased land. Indeed, the elder who purchased one of LCLT’s first houses had moved seven times during the previous year.

There was considerable turnover on LCLT’s board during the period when LCLT was planning and developing its first project. Almost the entire Board changed within the first year. People with the vision necessary to start the organization were not necessarily the same people who wanted to work on making projects happen. By the third year, the Board of Directors had stabilized.

Another transition occurred within LCLT’s de facto staff. On the morning of the land use hearing which cleared the way for our first project in Lopez Village, our project manager, Rod Morgan, died from AIDS complications. Sandy Bishop, already serving as LCLT’s executive director, took on the

duties of project management as well. She led the organization until 1996, when she took a six-year leave to build her own home and to manage projects as a private consultant for other community-based organizations. She returned as LCLT's executive director in 2001 and continues in that position today.

LCLT's Board is divided into three categories: resident homeowners/leaseholders; persons representing a more public segment—such as a school superintendent, community business, school board; and local residents who represent the greater community. LCLT tries to keep a balance among the members who serve in each of the three categories. Our bylaws allow for a Board that ranges in size from 5-9 directors.

LCLT has a voting membership of about 200. People are elected to the Board at LCLT's Annual Meeting during the first quarter of every year. They are either nominated from the floor or nominated by the existing Board. If a vacancy occurs in the interim, the Board appoints someone to fill that seat until an election can take place, at which point that person is either accepted or rejected (rarely rejected) by LCLT's members.

LCLT engages the people who live in its housing and the larger Lopez community via “fun-raising” as well as fundraising. For example, LCLT has an annual harvest dinner, which is a local food potluck. An average of 200 people attended and prizes were awarded for best presentation and best use of local foods. Community members approach wealthier people who move onto the island, inviting them to become members of the Board of Directors. This helps to combat stereotypes of the sort of people served by LCLT. Other engagement happens by requiring prospective homeowners to contribute sweat equity during construction, which helps to build self-esteem, prepares them for home maintenance, and creates a deeper appreciation from the greater community.

The organization's motto is “Unleashing the Power of Community.” For LCLT, that has meant playing major roles in other aspects of community development, not only in affordable housing. LCLT now sees affordable housing, for example, as an incubator for small businesses. Many new businesses on Lopez have arisen from folks living in LCLT housing. LCLT has also taken leadership in the island for sustainable agriculture, energy renewables, and net zero construction, including a pair of intern programs that have been successful for over 20 years.

Our sustainable agriculture internship provides local farmers with extra field hands and with assistance in housing those workers. Agricultural skills, life skills, and a sense of community are thus instilled in the next generation. LCLT only chooses farmers to participate in this program who can teach and work alongside interns, and who believe in building a sustainable community. Our construction interns help LCLT with labor during construction projects for affordable housing, while providing LCLT with insights into the young people of today. We teach construction skills on the job. As a whole, the residents of Lopez Island are an aging community. LCLT's intern programs have helped to provide a foundation and encouragement for more young people to make their homes here. Some have started businesses of their own, gotten married, and are raising families. Some have moved into one of LCLT's housing cooperatives. Most interns remark about their growing sense of being part of a community for the first time in their lives. Our intern program, like the rest of our work, fulfills one of LCLT's founding purposes: *To serve as a model in land stewardship and community development by providing information, resources and expertise.*

To learn more about the Lopez Community Land Trust, past and present:

- [LCLT website](#)
- [Lopez Community Land Trust video](#) created for the Fourth Annual Thriving Communities Conference, held at the Whidbey Institute in March 2015.
- [“The Story of the Lopez Island Community Land Trust,”](#) *Field Guide to Investing in a Regenerative Economy.*

Appendix D

Annotated Bibliography Print and Online Resources

Introduction

This Bibliography has been curated and annotated on behalf of the Town of Starksboro, Vermont as a resource to them in their exploration of the Community Land Trust as a tool to create and preserve affordable housing in their community. This collection of CLT resources covers its history, theory and practice, including detailed studies and data on the performance of the model here in Vermont and nationally. These resources will assist Town Officials on the Planning Commission, Zoning and Selectboards in evaluating the potential of the model for Starksboro. A separate section includes additional curated and annotated digital resources that are free and easily accessed by the public.

About the Author: Brenda Torpy has 40 years of firsthand experience advancing the community land trust model (CLT) at the local, national and international levels. She established and has led Champlain Housing Trust (CHT), one of the earliest community land trusts in the nation, and still the largest. Brenda was an active founding member and board chair of the National CLT Network, and board member of its successor, Grounded Solutions Network. Since 2005, she has exported the model to England, Canada, Belgium and France through direct technical assistance and training, and Co-chairs the International Center for Community land trusts (ICCLT). Today Brenda works as CHT’s TA provider to non-profits, local governments and national institutions seeking to create and implement CLT’s and CLT-like programs.

About the Sources: The most comprehensive source of CLT history, theory and practice is maintained by the ICCLT and can be accessed at <https://www.cltweb.org/>. Other institutional thought leaders in

this space were also accessed for this Bibliography. Their websites as well as curated materials from them are provided in the final section on digital resources.

About the Method

The first section comprises 16 books and monographs that cover the seminal works that have shaped and recorded the progress of first, the CLT movement and then the CLT sector that operates across the US and internationally. The reader will note the immense role that Vermont's CLT leaders and organizations like the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board have played in the growth of the CLT model as an effective tool for affordable housing and community development. CLTs are now recognized by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and federal finance system, especially Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The Bibliography is organized into five sections as follows: History and Practice; Technical Manuals and Guides; Impact Studies; Theory and Commentary, and Online Resources.

The author, in addition to having read and used many of these texts over the years, also reviewed numerous commentaries by others including AI generated summaries for this project. The notes here are all the author's own and reflect solely the author's opinions and rating of the publications especially in the context of their relative value to this project.

Community Land Trust Definition

A community land trust is an organization created to hold land for the benefit of a community and of individuals within the community. It is a democratically structured nonprofit corporation with an open membership and a board of trustees elected by the membership. The board typically includes residents of trust-owned lands, other community residents, and public-interest representatives. Board members are elected for limited terms, so that the community retains ultimate control of the organization and the land it owns.

The CLT acquires land through purchase or donation with the intention of retaining title in perpetuity, thus removing the land from the speculative market. Appropriate uses for the land are determined, in a process comparable to municipal planning or zoning, and the land is then leased to individuals, families, cooperatives, community organizations, businesses, or for public purposes. The most common use of CLT lands is affordable housing and related community assets that enhance the quality of life for the leaseholders, including community gardens, parks, public services, and local small businesses.

The CLT offers long-term leases which may be transferred to the leaseholders' heirs if they wish to continue the use of the land. Leaseholders must use the land in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, but the CLT may not interfere with their personal beliefs, associations, or activities. Priority in leasing is typically given to those whose needs are the greatest, consistent with the CLT's charitable mission. Leaseholders pay a minimal lease fee in support of the CLT's stewardship of the property. While the leaseholders do not own the land they use, they own the improvements on the land. Most often the CLT assists the leaseholders to access the property through affordable financing and other assistance as needed.

The CLT retains a first option to buy improvements at the owner's original invested cost adjusted by the pre-determined terms of the lease (resale formula), taking into account both damages and capital improvements. The CLT then resells the property with the same terms to the next owner. The resale

formula is designed to balance a fair return to the seller with continued affordability for the next buyer(s). Thus, the CLT holds the property for the community and individuals within the community. The lease agreement is the specific, flexible, legal means by which the legitimate interests of both the community and the individual leaseholder are explicitly described and protected in accordance with the policies of the CLT.

*The language of this definition of a CLT is faithful to the one used in the **Community Land Trust Handbook** (see below) with only minor modifications to update to more current and commonly used terminology.*

I. History and Practice

The Community Land Trust Reader. Davis, John Emmeus, Editor. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Cambridge, MA 2010.

Summary: Essential read, brief history, model description and underlying values, selection of articles by practitioners from origins to more contemporary. This is the best introduction to the model: comprehensive and enjoyable. Edited by Vermont's own John Davis, who can safely be called the leading and most prolific CLT scholar and a working practitioner since the 1970s, the book is a collection of essays and articles that cover the evolution of the model in seven sections that take us from the precursors of the movement, and through its basic structure and key elements, current practice and variations ending with reflections on the CLTs future potential and challenges. Fifteen years on, this reader stands up as a useful and very accessible introduction to CLT thought leaders, early activists, modern practitioners, and examples of successful applications.

Download free: <https://www.lincolnst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pubfiles/the-community-land-trust-reader-chp.pdf>.

The City-CLT Partnership: Municipal Support for Community Land Trusts Davis, John Emmeus and Jacobus, Rick. 2008. Policy Focus Report commissioned by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. MA **Summary:** This is not just about cities, but generally how CLTs who have local government support can thrive and add value to the public's affordable housing strategies. Using successful examples from around the country, authors show the diversity of community development goals that are addressed: affordable homeownership and revitalization along with community gardens, community facilities, brownfield clean-up and more- and all preserving and recycling the public subsidies to assure sustainability.

Download free:<https://www.lincolnst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-files/pubfiles/the-city-clt-partnership-full.pdf>

Preserving Affordable Homeownership, Municipal Partnerships with Community Land Trusts. Davis, John Emmeus and King-Ries Kristin. 2024. Lincoln Institute for Land Policy MA.

Summary: This brings the topic of local government- CLT partnerships up to date with many new examples as well as showing the impact of longer-term relationships first reported in 2008. CLT start-ups are featured that are getting to scale rapidly through the relatively recent surge in local government initiatives such as land-banking and inclusionary zoning.

Download free: <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/policy-focus-reports/preserving-affordable-homeownership-municipal-partnerships-community-land-trusts/>

II. Technical Manuals and Guides

The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America. Swann, Marjorie, Editor. 1972 The International Independence Institute (Renamed Institute for Community Economics in 1972.) **Summary:** Original Guide (since updated -see below) to CLT start-up and implementation, with descriptions of the earliest CLTs. This is the first Community land trust explainer and may well be the first document to use the term 'Community land trust.' Preserved and reproduced by the Schumaker Institute, this book describes the alternative land-use inspirations for the CLT model and traces these ideas through early forms of collective land ownership in the US, including New Communities in Georgia, now celebrated as the first CLT and walks the reader through each step of setting up a CLT from the legal structure through organizational decisions and the practical steps of accessing land and finance; as well as proposing possible applications of the model that partner with public land use policies and planning strategies.

Download Free: [The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America](#)

Community Land Trust Handbook. Abromowitz, David and various writers, 1982, Institute for Community Economics, MA, The Rodale Press

Summary: Update of the 1972 Guide with more- and more recent- case studies of active Trusts. This is the direct descendant of the International Independence Institute's 1972 **Guide**. By 1982 the Institute for Community Economics was well established and promoting CLTs along with Community Loan Funds as the two practical applications of their community development mission of helping to assure their mission of broad supporting expanded access to land and capital for all people. The Handbook introduces the model, describes the many examples established since the publication of the **Guide** in 1972, and provides a step-by- step guide to those seeking to create a CLT.

Purchase options: [Community Land Trust Handbook \(Thrift Books\)](#)

Community Land Trust Legal Manual, First Edition. Abramowitz, David and twelve writers. 1991. Institute for Community Economics MA;

Summary: Valuable as a historical document. For current Manual see # 9 below: ***The CLT Technical Manual. 2011.*** For readers interested in these editions: [Community Land Trust Legal Manual, First Edition](#) (Vermont Law School)

Community Land Trust Legal Manual, Second Edition. Abramowitz *et al.* 2002. Institute of Community Economics MA

Summary: Valuable as a historical document. For most current Manual see # 9 below: ***The CLT Technical Manual. 2011.*** For readers interested in this edition: [Community Land Trust Legal Manual, Second Edition](#) (Vermont Law School)

The CLT Technical Manual. Originally titled ***Community land trust Legal Manual, Third edition.*** White, Kirby, Editor. 2011. Grounded Solutions Network, DC.

Summary: The manual's preface describes the origins and antecedents of this practical guide to all aspects of CLT implementation providing a good thumbnail history of the institutional history of the organizations dedicated to disseminating the model in the late half of the 20th century

Download free: <https://groundedsolutions.org/resources/community-land-trust-technical-manual/>

Preserving Farms for Farmers: A Manual for Those Working to Keep Farms Affordable. White, Kirby. 2010 Equity Trust

Summary: This 36-page manual contains case studies and a model agricultural ground lease, applying the CLT model to Farmland preservation.

Download free: <https://equitytrust.org/farms-for-farmers/>

III. Theory and Analysis

Progress and Poverty. George, Henry. 1998. Robert Schalkenbach Foundation (Abridged edition) NY. Originally published in 1879.

Summary: While there are many antecedents worldwide of alternative approaches to land ownership, tenure and valuation, Henry George is widely considered the founder of the community land trust model and movement due to his analysis that the causes of poverty were rooted in private ownership of land and profit. His thesis was that the landowner should only claim and receive the value of the improvement on the land and that the ‘unearned’ value in the land itself should be taxed for the benefit of the entire community. This would depress the inflation of rents and could, according to his calculations, replace all other taxes, leveling the gap between the wealth of landowners and that of wage-earners who paid rent. He argued that wages did not and could never rise at the rate of property values given that the latter were fixed assets that rapidly rose in desirable locations benefiting from external factors that they did not create.

While his critique of land valuation has largely faded from our mainstream economic discourse, it was enormously popular in his time and in the early part of the 20th century the book sold three million copies in the 1890’s outselling all English-language books, except the bible. By 1936 the number was six million including all translations. Furthermore, he was a popular speaker, touring the US as well as **Europe, the UK, Australia and New Zealand and he spread his gospel through pamphlets and other publications.**

Available in various editions and Kindle at: [Progress and Poverty \(Amazon\)](#)

On Common Ground: International Perspectives on the Community land trust. Davis, John Emmeus, Editor and 42 authors. 2020. Terra Nostra Press WI

Summary: The stories of successful CLTs as well as commentaries on these and other CLT applications in the US and around the world. CLTs featured include Champlain Housing Trust in Vermont, Dudley Street Neighbors, Boston, Urban land Conservancy in Denver Co, London CLT and Brussels CLT. This book also introduces the roles played by emergent national CLT networks in building CLT capacity and strength.

Available at: <https://www.cltweb.org/terra-nostra-press/>

Community Matters: Conversations with Reflective Practitioners about the Value and Variety of Resident Engagement in CLTs. 2022 Terra Nostra Press WI

Summary: This is a collection of interviews with CLT leaders on how CLTs engage with their residents and broader communities and the value that such engagement brings to work and to the people CLTs wish to serve. It includes snapshot descriptions of the CLTs discussed.

Available at: <https://www.cltweb.org/terra-nostra-press/>

Why Community Land Trusts? Algoed Line, Davis, John Emmeus and Hernandez-Torrales, Maria, Editors. 2025 Terra Nostra Press WI

Summary: Six articles that make the case for community-owned and stewarded land, as an engine of the common good. Through different examples they show how organizations that are rooted in its residents and accountable to them develop and manage property more responsibly.

Available at: [Why Community Land Trusts?](#) (Amazon)

IV. Studies and Data

Lands In Trust - Homes That Last. Davis, John Emmeus and Stokes, Alice. 2003. Published by Champlain Housing Trust, VT

Summary: First longitudinal study measuring how the model works for buyers, sellers, and the community. Analyses 100 resales over 20 years to see how the model performs in terms of affordability for buyers, wealth creation for sellers, and protection of public subsidy, and demonstrates that the model does work as promised.

Available at: <https://www.getahome.org/cht-publications/>

Permanently Affordable Homeownership: Does the Community Land Trust Deliver on Its Promises? Davis, John Emmeus and Demetrowitz, Amy. 2009. Publication by the Burlington Community Land Trust VT

Summary: Second longitudinal study measuring how the model works for buyers, sellers, and community. (see #5 above) with double the resales to measure. This larger sample confirms the findings of the first study and provides concrete evidence of the value of the CLT model for sustainably preserving affordable housing.

Available at: <https://www.getahome.org/cht-publications/>

Tracking Growth and Evaluating Performance of Shared Equity Homeownership Programs During Housing Market Fluctuations. Wang, Cahen, Acolin, and Walter, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, 2019, MA

Summary: This national study collected data on all forms of resale restricted housing- CLTs, shared equity homeownership programs, housing co-operatives, and manufactured housing communities in the resident- ownership through ROC USA. In spite of this broader mix, the findings were very similar to Champlain Housing Trust's study results (above) showing very low foreclosure rates in relation to the market, high percentage of households earning below 80% of the area median income being served, turnover that tracked that of the market, and earnings that enabled two thirds of sellers to move up to market rate homeownership.

Available: https://www.lincolninst.edu/app/uploads/legacy-iles/pubfiles/wang_wp19rw1_rev_0.pdf

The 2022 Census of Community Land Trusts and Shared Equity Entities in the United States.

Wang, Bennett, Spicer and Thaden, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, 2022, MA

Summary: This study describes the state of the CLT and Shared Equity Program Sector in great detail focusing on how the common elements of these models are implemented across the country, illuminating major trends in practice and outcomes.

Available at: [The 2022 Census of Community Land Trusts and Shared Equity Entities in the United States](#)

Selected Online Community Land Trust Resources

Grounded Solutions Network: <https://groundedsolutions.org/>

A national network of organizations dedicated to housing with lasting affordability. GSN serves local governments and non-profits, especially community land trusts that create and steward permanently affordable homes. Members benefit from access to webinars, a helpdesk and discounted conference fees, along with peer connections.

Highlights:

<https://groundedsolutions.org/resources/start-upclthub/>

Decision guide, training guide, worksheet. Use this roadmap to help chart a course for advancing from CLT idea to implementation. The hub walks you through all the decisions involved in creating the CLT that fits your community and provides sample documents.

<https://groundedsolutions.org/resources/community-land-trust-technical-manual/>

The Community Land Trust Technical Manual provides a comprehensive, practical guide for the ongoing operation of community land trusts as well as for startups. (downloadable).

<https://groundedsolutions.org/community-land-trust-census/>

The 2022 Census of community land trusts and nonprofits with shared equity homeownership programs. This is the most comprehensive report to date on contemporary practitioners.

International Center for Community Land Trusts

<https://www.cltweb.org/>

This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date resource for Community Land Trusts, serving community land trusts and people seeking to create CLTs worldwide with constantly updated resources, tools, publications, and projects.

Highlights

<https://worldcltday.org/>

Home of World CLT Day - an online gathering and celebration of CLT work all over the world featuring webinars and panels on timely subjects and a window into CLT practice all over the world.

<https://www.cltweb.org/resources/clt-directory/>

Interactive and up-to-date map and directory of CLTs worldwide.

<https://www.cltweb.org/resources/manuals-and-guides/united-states/>

Resources and guides for start-ups beyond the 2011 Technical Manual

Roots and Branches - A Gardener's Guide to the Origins and Evolution of the Community land Trust.

Highlights

This 4-part presentation on video tracks the CLT model's origins and evolution in the US.

<https://www.cltweb.org/resources/clt-timeline/>

This Timeline denotes major milestones in the CLT's development, honoring thinkers, activists, publications, and precedents from around the world that contributed to the creation of New Communities – while highlighting key events that came after, seeding the growth of a global CLT movement.

The Equity Trust

<https://equitytrust.org/>

A small national nonprofit dedicated to alternative approaches to land ownership. Focused on supporting permanently affordable farmland and community supported agriculture and organizations doing that work primarily as a lender.

Highlights

<https://equitytrust.org/managing-the-money-side/>

A helpful resource to small CLTs that catalogues the fiscal challenges of such organizations and offers money management tools.

<https://equitytrust.org/integrating-social-equity-and-growth-management/>

This is pertinent to your local goal and to the overall approach of CLTs in Vermont to support our historical pattern of settlement.
