

West Broadway Community Land Trust

Summary and Backgrounder

January 24, 2025

What is a Community Land Trust?

Community Land Trusts are organizations run **by the community and for the community** to acquire and steward land. They are **democratically controlled** so that residents and community members make decisions and plan current and future use of these lands. By shifting properties from private ownership to community ownership, CLTs strive to **protect lands** so that they can **permanently serve collective interests and social values**.

What does a Community Land Trust do?

CLTs can serve a variety of purposes like wildlife conservation, agriculture, the creation and preservation of affordable housing, and the protection of small businesses and industries.

In most cases, the Community Land Trust owns the land under a house, a complex or business, and the operations are handled by the residents on that property. Sometimes this is accomplished with a long term (99-year) lease, a second mortgage held by the CLT, or a right of return to the CLT.

Where has this worked?

CLTs started during the Civil Rights Movement and became especially popular in the 1980s. There are hundreds of examples of Community Land Trusts in Canada, the United States and England. Some prominent examples in Canada include [Communauté Milton Parc](#) in Montreal, the [British Columbia CLT](#), [Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust](#), and [Colandco](#) in Toronto.

Community Land Trusts are currently going through a “renaissance” in Canada partly as a community-based strategy to prevent gentrification and thanks to technical support and organizing by the newly established [Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts](#).

What could a West Broadway CLT look like?

West Broadway Community Organization is proposing that a Community Land Trust could help to decommodify housing by acquiring housing from the private market and making sure it is kept affordable and community-owned. The CLT could also preserve affordable housing by providing asset management for local non profits and co-ops, such as fundraising and planning for renovations and retrofits. Finally, the CLT could act as a vehicle for decolonization by planning for the transition of assets to Indigenous ownership, and integrating Indigenous-led governance in the decision-making body.

Ultimately, the CLT’s vision and operations will be crafted by the community planning process, which is currently ongoing.

What has been done so far?

WBCO's board has set aside an affordable housing acquisition fund to help kick-start the Community Land Trust. WBCO is also completing a research project to learn from their organization's previous attempt to establish a CLT in the early 2000s. WBCO has done preliminary engagement with local organizations, housing co-ops, non profit housing providers, rooming house operators, residents, CLT experts, and other CLTs in Canada to shape the work so far.

The Community Housing Transformation Centre has supported our efforts with a start-up grant to pay for community engagement and planning sessions and a business plan, both of which are underway. The community sessions will help craft a vision, values, and mission for the CLT and the business plan will lay out a financial plan with opportunities and constraints for this vision to come to life.

Some key concepts in our discussion so far:

- How do we define the "us" in 'for us, by us' and how do we involve people who aren't yet in the room?
- We want this to start with success – what does success look like?
- What about our responsibilities to the land and to the Treaties? How are we in relationship with each other?
- How do we define 'affordable' housing and how do we keep housing affordable and in good condition?
- What are some standards for housing quality that promote dignity, joy, and community?
- How can people who currently own property be involved?
- What about spaces other than housing? How do we protect the culture of our neighbourhood and spaces that allow us to be in community together?

How can I get involved?

The Community Land Trust is being created by members of the West Broadway community, and by helpers who want to assist our work. Anyone who fits these categories is welcome to attend our monthly community planning sessions and Tuesday evening coffee houses. This is where we will build our West Broadway model. Later, there will be opportunities for people to join as voting or supporting members, and to participate in running and directing the CLT.

To register for community planning sessions, or for further information, email housing@westbroadway.mb.ca or call (204) 774-7201 ext. 7.