

Understanding Community Land Trusts



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History of Community Land Trust

- First CLT was inspired by the civil rights struggle for Black land ownership in rural South
- 1st formal CLT in US was in 1969, New Communities, Inc., in Albany, GA: 5,700-acre land trust for Black farmers
- CLT drew from global movements: Gandhi's Gramdan movement in India, Israeli kibbutzim and British Garden City housing movements
- 1980s - 1990s CLT model spread to urban areas to combat gentrification, housing displacement and speculation in areas such as Boston, Burlington and New York for affordable housing
- Over 200 CLTs now exist across the US and supported by HUD, municipalities and community development organizations.



What is a Community Land Trust?



- NONPROFIT HOLDS LAND
IN TRUST FOR THE
COMMUNITY

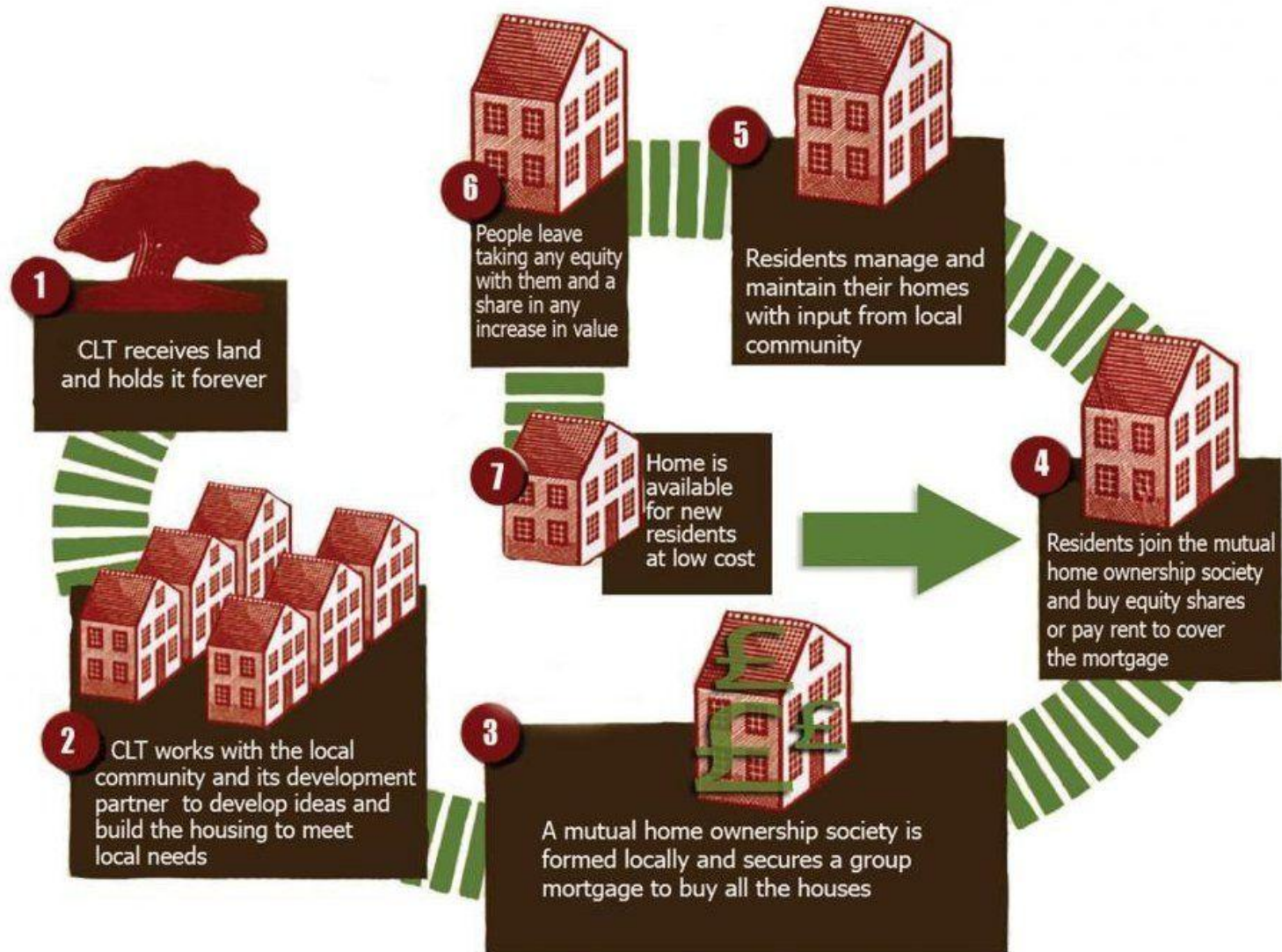


- SEPARATES LAND AND
HOME OWNERSHIP



- ENSURES LONG-TERM
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Community Land Trust at a Glance





How It Works

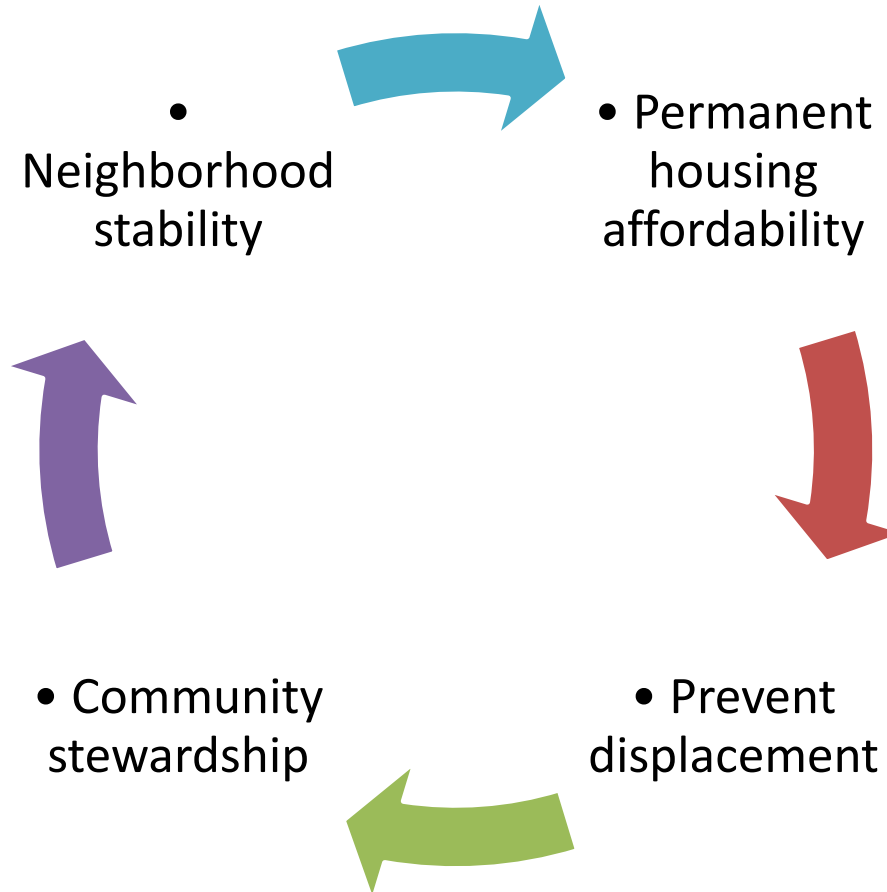
- CLT owns the land
- Resident leases land (often 99-year lease)
- Homeowner owns the structure
- Resale price restrictions maintain affordability

Key Objectives

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Benefits of CLTs



- Affordable housing for generations



- Builds modest homeowner equity



- Community empowerment



- Limits speculation



How CLTs are used

- Affordable homeownership
- Rental housing
- Community spaces (i.e., garden, co-ops, etc.)
- Mixed use development



Downside of CLTs

- Limited wealth building for homeowners – Resale restrictions cap appreciation, limits equity homeowners can build compared to market-rate housing
- Complex legal and financial structure – Requires legal setup, long-term lease and detailed resale formulas that may be confusing to potential buyers
- Reliance on grants and subsidies – dependent on public or philanthropic funding to acquire property and remain affordable
- Potential for community resistance – Residents may fear loss of individual control of property or misunderstand long-term lease concept

Real-World Examples

- Champlain Housing Trust – Vermont
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative – Boston
- Cooper Square CLT – New York City
- Hanibal Square – Winter Park, FL



Misconception: CLT = Sharecropping

Ownership:

- CLT – Land is owned by nonprofit trust to benefit community; resident owns the home/building
- Sharecropping – Land is owned by a landlord and tenant (i.e., sharecropper) owns nothing; farm the land in exchange for portion of crops

Equity and Wealth Building:

- CLT - Homeowners build some equity through homeownership
- Sharecropping – No wealth building; profits got to landlord to whom tenants were often indebted

Power Dynamics:

- CLT – Shift power to communities
- Sharecropping – Reinforced power imbalance favoring landowners and suppressing the tenant
- Summation – CLTs are anti-exploitative models of community empowerment, while sharecropping was an exploitative economic system the reinforced systemic inequality



**Conclusion /
Questions**

