

Annotated Bibliography: Community Land Trust Principles and Processes

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**Introduction**

The general purpose of this annotated bibliography is to highlight and discuss the best practices for planning and implementing a Community Land Trust (CLT). It includes articles about leadership structure, community engagement, collective impact approach, and funding models. Students from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis created this resource as a tool for the City Council of Webster Groves, Missouri during the Fall 2020 semester. The guiding research question was, “What principles and processes can be enacted to ensure that community land trust leadership appropriately reflects the Webster Groves community?”

**Articles**

[Al-Tabbaa, O., Leach, D., & March, J. \(2014\). Collaboration between nonprofit and business sectors: A framework to guide strategy development for nonprofit organizations. \*Voluntas\*, 25, 657-678.](#)

This article considers the benefits of cross-sector collaboration from a nonprofit perspective. According to the authors, a successful cross-sector collaboration requires 1) clear boundaries, 2) benefit and value, and 3) common objectives, all of which should be established and defined *before* the collaboration begins its work together (p. 658). Businesses typically focus on the social and financial value achieved through participating in cross-sector collaboration. Nonprofits help businesses achieve these values by having strong legitimacy and public trust, being deeply embedded within the community, and having capacity and expertise to address social concerns (p. 659). Nonprofits on the other hand seek cross-sector collaboration for different purposes, primarily diversification of income streams, publicity, brand improvement,

and learning business-related skills, all of which ultimately enhance the organization's sustainability (p. 662). The article includes nine propositions for nonprofit organizations to improve their cross-sector collaboration. While all nine will be helpful for Webster Groves as it establishes a community land trust, propositions 1, 7, and 8 seem especially noteworthy.

Proposition 2 states: “[Nonprofits] that define a specific purpose to underpin their [cross-sector] strategy will develop a more successful strategy” (p. 662). In other words, nonprofits must be able to define and market their mission to a variety of stakeholder groups, all of which will have different expectations and hopes. To establish a successful community land trust in Webster Groves, it will be vital to know, understand, and factor in the varying and often competing values of different stakeholder groups, including potential donors, Webster Groves residents, governmental entities, and local businesses. It is imperative to build and maintain accountability and legitimacy among all stakeholders for cross-sector collaboration to be successful. Proposition 7 states: “[Nonprofits] that recognize the issue of power imbalance and proactively employ their capabilities to avoid the traditional imbalance situation will develop more successful [cross-sector] strategy” (p. 666). The authors name power imbalance as a “potential concern” that must be addressed *proactively* in the development of a cross-sector partnership (p. 667). Regarding Webster Groves establishing a community land trust, it is important that the needs and voices of local residents are centered and prioritized, especially as they pursue for-profit partners. And lastly, proposition 8 states: [Nonprofits] that employ real-time, two-way communication channels will develop a more successful [cross-sector] strategy” (p. 667). “Two-way” communication means that a nonprofit has an effective way to both send and receive information about the cross-sector collaboration to its stakeholders. The

authors argue that these channels are “fundamental in responding to internal and/or external demands” and “provide decision-makers with real-time data to ensure that the process is progressing smoothly” (p. 668). “Through [cross-sector collaboration],” the authors conclude, “[nonprofits] can obtain various tangible and intangible benefits that foster their organizational sustainability” (p. 671). By being strategically proactive, instead of reactive, to what businesses and the for-profit community might offer them, nonprofits can increase the scale of their impact and enhance their organizational sustainability.

**[Austin, J. E. \(2000\). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and businesses. \*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly\*, 29\(1\), 69-97.](#)**

This is a comprehensive and easy-to-understand article that is widely cited in later research about cross-sector collaboration and public-private partnerships. In this article, Austin develops two conceptual frameworks: the collaboration continuum and the collaborative value construct. Using the collaborative continuum, Austin identifies and defines three types or stages of cross-sector collaboration: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative. “In the philanthropic state,” he asserts, “the nature of the relationship is largely that of charitable donor and recipient.” “In the transactional stage,” he continues, “there are explicit resource exchanges focused on specific activities.” “Some collaboratives have moved to the integrative stage,” Austin states, “in which the partners’ missions, people, and activities begin to merge into more collective action and organizational integration” (p. 71). Austin also posits that “every relationship involves an exchange of value between the participants” and he identifies four dimensions of the collaborative value construct: value definition before an alliance begins, and value creation, balance, and renewal during the collaboration (p. 76).

Since Webster Groves is in the early stages of developing a community land trust, the value definition before an alliance begins seems to be the most applicable. Austin argues, “The more specifically that one can set forth the expected benefits to each partner and to society, the greater guidance the collaboration will have” (p. 76). According to his research, nonprofit organizations often cite “additional financial resources, services or goods, access to other corporations, technology and expertise, new perspectives, and greater name recognition” as gained values from collaborating with for-profit businesses (p. 76). For-profit businesses on the other hand, name “benefits such as enhanced reputation and image, improved employee morale, recruiting, retention, and skill development, enrichment of corporate values and culture, increased consumer patronage and investor appreciation, and technology testing and development” (p. 76). As Webster Groves moves forward with developing a community land trust and founding a nonprofit, leaders should consider and market the value and benefits for-profit businesses will gain by collaborating in this work.

Austin also identifies four alliance drivers that strengthen collaboration: 1) alignment of strategy, mission, and values; 2) personal connection and relationships; 3) value generation and shared visioning; and 4) continual learning. Regarding strategy, mission, and value alignment, Austin states, “The more centrally aligned the partnership purpose is to each organization’s strategy and mission, the more important and vigorous the relationship appears to be” (p. 81). For personal connection and relationships, he writes, “Institutional partnerships are created, nurtured, and extended by people...Social purpose partnerships appear to be motivationally fueled by the emotional connection that individuals make both with the social mission and with their counterparts in the other organization” (p. 82). “Although good relationships will not

guarantee alliance successes, bad interpersonal relationships can destroy a partnership,” he concludes (p. 83). As mentioned with the collaborative value construct, “the fundamental viability of an alliance depends on its ability to generate value for each of its partners. High-performance collaborations are about more than giving and receiving money; they are about mobilizing and combining multiple resources and distinctive capabilities to generate benefits for each partner and social value for society” (p. 84). And lastly, regarding continual learning, Austin articulates, “in the stronger collaborations, the partners are engaged in continual learning about the partnering process and how it can generate more value” (p. 85).

In addition to alliance drivers that propel the cross-sector collaboration or public-private partnership, Austin also identifies five alliance enablers—focused attention, communication, organizational system, mutual expectations, and accountability—that contribute to the effective management of partnerships. Table 2 of Austin’s article (p. 91) is an especially helpful table that describes alliance drivers and enables across the three stages of the collaboration continuum.

[Buechler, G. \(2017\). Lessons from a commercial community land trust pilot. \*Rural Research Report\*, 18\(2\), 1-12.](#)

Rondo Community Land Trust in Ramsey County, Minnesota uses a commercial lease structure designed to create jobs, increase wealth, stabilize the neighborhood, and build community in a historically Black neighborhood. This article answers key questions regarding the affordability of commercial space and the implementation of a community land trust. Regarding the lease structure, the Rondo CLT decided that owning both the ground and the building would be the best method to ensure flexibility in case there was a better model more suited for the project once in operation. This structure increases economic feasibility by having

full control over the leasing price of the building for the residents. Since this structure requires less of an investment up-front from the tenant, this structure maintains pricing for low-to-moderate income residents to ensure affordability, which is the main economic goal of the CLT. Another goal of the CLT is to ensure that it is self-sustaining without the requirement of regular funding. To do this, the CLT found that funding the project through philanthropic grants would help to keep debt payments to a minimum. Should the CLT need any gap funding, Rondo CLT has decided to develop a reserve account and a crisis plan to address the affordability gap.

To ensure community input and ownership, Rondo CLT established many committees made up of community members and professionals alike who oversaw all commercial operations. Additionally, an advisory committee comprised of community members, stakeholders, commercial leaseholders, and board members is responsible for reviewing tenant applications, determining the terms of the lease/purchase agreements, and the overall direction of the CLT. The emphasis on including community members and professionals is key to ensuring input from all parties. Based on the goals of the specific CLT, detailed criteria should be noticeably clear when selecting tenants. Regarding the approval process for the development, Rondo CLT found that it can be streamlined at the local level. Doing this would cost less money and would ensure affordability for tenants.

As highlighted in the text, a lesson learned through developing the CLT was to engage with both stakeholders and community members early in the process to gain a wide range of support for the development. When engaging, it is important to create a formidable team full of diverse candidates. This team (or advisory committee) should include community members, funders, partners, and other stakeholders. In doing so, CLT projects will be transparent and the

community members and stakeholders will feel included in the overall process. Over time, maintaining these strong connections will attract support from other stakeholders and will also ensure that the concerns of the community members are addressed. Government stakeholders in particular have a noteworthy influence on the success of a CLT. Therefore, it is crucial for CLTs to remain committed to building these relationships. Regarding funding, this article recommends developers emphasize the social mission and put it at the forefront of this project. This way, the project extends beyond the economic impact, which further attracts more interest from funders. For the most part, this article asserts that keeping the community first, relying on grant funding, and utilizing a commercial model will best support low-to-moderate income residents achieve social and economic stability and increase the success of the neighborhood. Overall, to develop a strong CLT, the organization should engage community members, establish partnerships, utilize existing pools of money, and keep the social impact of the project front and center.

**[Ehlenz, M. \(2018\) Making home more affordable: Community land trusts adopting cooperative ownership models to expand affordable housing, \*Journal of Community Practice\*, 26\(3\), 283-307.](#)**

This article presents an overview of shared equity models for homeownership, including CLTs. This article also delves into case studies of successful shared equity housing models across the United States, comparing housing units, housing markets, and general affordability in order to present the advantages and disadvantages of the CLT model. Overall, this study finds that CLTs are relatively well equipped to meet the needs of a diverse array of households, across various income levels. Additionally, CLTs must balance financial and social feasibility and function best with community support, both financial and otherwise.



CLTs are one of the most prominent forms of shared equity housing models. In most CLTs, a household retains ownership of its housing unit, but the CLT retains ownership of the underlying land. A lease connects the homeowner and the CLT, and the CLT provides homeowners with support throughout all phases of homeownership. This often includes non-predatory financing, pre-purchase education, pre-foreclosure counseling, and sometimes, maintenance training. CLT homeowners tend to fare better than traditional homeowners in terms of wealth and equity accumulation, lasting homeownership, and future ownership opportunities.

CLTs also yield advantages at the community level. CLTs promote permanent housing affordability, allowing communities to retain subsidies. CLTs are largely seen as capacity-building models that work with residents to build stronger community financial security, as well as individual wealth accumulation for homeowners. However, CLT homeowners must qualify for traditional mortgage financing, which can limit participation in such a model for lower-income families and individuals.

**[Freiwirth, J. \(2011, May 9\). Community-Engaged Governance: Systems-Wide Governance in Action. \*Nonprofit Quarterly\*.](#)**

In her article “Community-Engagement Governance: Systems-Wide Governance in Action,” Friewirth points out the shortcomings of traditional governance approaches for non-profit organizations that are interested in implementing community-engaged work. She notes that usual approaches tend to emphasize top-down, command and control paradigms that run counter to democratic values and, perhaps unintentionally, exclude community members, ultimately making it difficult for organizations to fulfill their goals and mission.

To combat these trends, Friewirth presents a paradigm known as “Community-Engagement Governance,” which expands the approach to non-profit governance. Instead of a traditional hierarchical structure, the approach is “building upon participatory principles” and “moves beyond the board of directors as the sole locus of governance” (Friewirth, 2011). This framework acknowledges that responsibility over key governance functions (planning, evaluation, advocacy, and fiduciary care) can and should be shared across organizational stakeholders including (1) constituents or clients; 2) organizational board, staff, and volunteers; and 3) secondary stakeholders such as partner organizations, funders, and community leaders. Key Principles of the framework include:

- Prioritizing community impact instead of effectiveness of the organization
- Approaching “governance” as a function, rather than a structure
- Sharing and redistributing governance decision making power
- Facilitating democracy and self-determination, rather than dependency and disempowerment
- Promoting flexible and variable designs across organizations
- Distributing governance function creatively among stakeholders
- Creating transparent, open systems and informational flow between stakeholder groups.

Friewirth, though recommending a unique and tailored approach for each organization, does articulate five critical governance competencies that she believes will guide any effective shared-governance system: strategic thinking, mutual accountability, shared facilitated leadership, cultural competency, and organizational learning. Because this is a framework, as opposed to a formal governance model, there is flexibility in application. She provides a few examples of how organizations are applying this model, many of which may include ideas that are relevant for the Webster Groves CLT team.

The article concludes by providing initial insight into the value-add of Community-Engagement Governance, which was measured using an action research

methodology – “a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating, and critical reflecting prior to continued planning” (Friewirth, 2011). Preliminary findings of this governance model include: increased accountability and ability to respond to community need; increased creativity and problem-solving ability; increased shared ownership; more distributed leadership; improved capacity for building collaborative networks with other non-profits; increased visibility and, as a result, increased fundraising capacity; and more engaged board members. These takeaways and the tools utilized to achieve said takeaways may provide a set of guideposts that the Webster Groves CLT can use in order to build momentum and achieve progress as it relates to development of the CLT.

[Gray, K. \(2008\). Community land trusts in the United States. \*Journal of Community Practice\*, 16\(1\), 65-78.](#)

This article presents an introductory overview of Community Land Trusts (CLT) as an innovative mechanism for providing, preserving, and promoting affordable housing and homeownership. This article includes a brief history of CLTs in the United States and discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of this model. Overall, this article suggests that CLTs are a promising model of promoting equitable housing, and that CLTs should be further researched and implemented by social workers and public policy professionals.

In this article, Gray argues that CLTs are not well known or frequently implemented in the United States. This is, in part, because the concept of community land ownership is relatively unusual in the United States. Land trusts are sometimes implemented as a means of protecting natural lands and wildlife populations. This type of land trust is the most common form, and its purpose is conservation, rather than development. CLTs are defined as “a private nonprofit

corporation created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community and provide secure affordable access to land and housing for community residents.” The primary goal of CLTs is to serve as an avenue to affordable housing for all members of a community, though empirical literature shows that the CLT model is especially beneficial to low-income families and individuals.

CLTs are typically nonprofit organizations that acquire land, either through donation or purchase using funds from government agencies or private foundations. In the traditional structure of a CLT, individuals and families become members of the CLT and lease homes from the CLT, eventually becoming homeowners. CLTs must balance the needs of the homeowner’s real estate investment with the goal of the CLT to provide affordable homes for future residents.

The authors of this article propose ten common features of a community land trust:

1. CLTs are nonprofit organizations;
2. The CLT owns the land, while individuals own the homes;
3. The CLT leases land to the homeowner, allowing members and their families to live there as long as they wish to do so;
4. The CLT can buy any buildings located on the land;
5. The CLT is perpetually responsible for the land and the buildings on the land;
6. The CLT belongs to the community, and adult residents are voting members within the CLT;
7. Typically, one-third of the CLT’s board of directors is comprised of CLT homeowners, one-third is comprised of non-CLT residents, and one-third is comprised of other interest parties;
8. This board typically leaves two-thirds of the control with the residents;
9. CLTs are committed to acquisition expansion, and increasing their community development role; and
10. The primary goal of a CLT is affordable housing, but they also promote other forms of community development.

The authors also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of CLTs. Eleven advantages are listed: (1) expanded access to homeownership; (2) maintaining affordable homeownership over time, allowing for intergenerational homeownership; (3) improving the chances for

first-time homeowners to succeed; (4) enhancing neighborhood stability through steady property values, reduced numbers of absentee landlords, and active work against gentrification; (5) creating personal wealth; (6) preservation of community wealth through public—not private—subsidization; (7) building social capital; (8) building upon bases for community action and engagement; (9) enabling economic mobility; (10) promoting diversity in community development; and (11) offering local resident autonomy.

Despite the plethora of advantages of the CLT model, one of the greatest disadvantages is that the marketability of such a model is strained in the context of the United States because of the conflicting social consciousness surrounding the debate between community versus individual best interests. Additionally, CLTs have been criticized as representing a small-scale solution to the national structural problem of unaffordable housing. Sustainability of leadership and funding are also points of critique for CLTs. Additionally, there is limited empirical evidence on CLT development and efficacy.

[Gray, K., & Galande, M. \(2011\). Keeping "community" in a community land trust. \*Social Work Research\*, 35\(4\), 241-248.](#)

The role of community organizing while developing a community land trust is crucial to empower people and encourage them to achieve the changes they wish to see in their communities. Community organizing builds leaders and strengthens the relationships within community organizations that wish to promote and create social change. This article presents a case study and examines the effects of a CLT in Durham, a southern, historically Black city and the former home of “Black Wall Street” in North Carolina. In the 1960’s, a freeway was built in

the middle of the prominent Black community, displacing many residents and increasing racial tension between the Black community and the white city government.

In Durham, the CLT developed as a response to gentrification framed as “urban renewal.” The CLT acquired 100 apartments and houses as well as 2 commercial buildings for affordable office space. To understand this CLT, the study interviewed 29 individuals including homeowners, renters, board members, community members, CLT employees, and former CLT directors to collect data. Questions asked individuals what their roles were in the development of the CLT and how the community changed over the years because of the CLT. The results were split into two categories: accomplishments and the state of the community in the CLT. In the initial stages of the development, CLT staff members lobbied for streetlights, nudged the community to pave the dirt roads and beautify the neighborhood, and worked closely with police to combat neighborhood crime. The staff members were people who lived in and out of the neighborhood whose duties were to organize the development and address the primary concern of affordable housing while combating gentrification. Though the community was predominantly and historically Black, most of the founders and staff members of the CLT were white. After recognizing the need for input from the Black community, the CLT reached out to Black residents and developed a “community organizer” position. Unfortunately, this position was short lived and ultimately eliminated due to funding.

Data from the interviews indicate that residents recognized an increased sense of community and safety as a benefit. Initially, the community organizer had a hand in developing a community center, which allowed residents to get to know each other and to voice their concerns about their neighborhood. Additionally, buying a land trust house signified a commitment to the

neighborhood and fortified a bond between the residents and the community. However, once funding ran out and staff were cut, residents felt as though the community organizing aspect of the CLT was lost. Additionally, another factor that contributed to the lack of “community” in the CLT were the motivations of recent buyers. In the beginning, buyers sought out the CLT to stabilize and unify the community. More recently, buyers only sought out the home for homeownership abilities, not for the social change aspect. Consequently, this CLT experienced an increase number of foreclosures. As reported in the study, many residents felt as though the CLTs did not assist as much as they could have in the prevention of foreclosures. Respondents noted that though CLTs are not necessarily responsible for foreclosures, they should still serve as an aid to residents before they reach that point.

Overall, this study indicates that the CLT was effective at developing affordable housing units and contributing to positive changes in the community. However, as time went on, many residents did not feel as though the core goal of community leadership was the focus after the elimination of the “community organizer” position. Without this position, the CLT’s focus shifted to only being an affordable housing organization and lacked the commitment to social change and community organizing. With this position, CLT organizers could aid in securing funding, developing leaders, advocating for inclusionary housing policies, and generally, positive public relations. Additionally, residents did not feel financially supported nor did they feel as though they had enough training in the prevention of foreclosures. Although affordable housing is the primary goal, it is also important that CLTs never lose sight of the social goal of putting the community members first by ensuring community-building and promoting community leadership.

[Jeanetta, S. C. \(2007\). Building and sustaining the community-based nonprofit. \*Rural Research Report\*, 18\(2\), 1-11.](#)

Jeanetta's article "Building and Sustaining the Community-Based Non-Profit," provides a helpful overview for groups that are considering establishing a non-profit organization. While it seems that his primary audience is individuals within rural communities, the process and background information that he provides has relevance outside of rural areas. The four topics that Jeanetta discusses throughout the article include: (1) structures, roles, and responsibilities; (2) keys to sustaining the organizations; (3) case examples, and (4) guidelines for forming a new non-profit. While much of the content provides helpful background information for groups considering establishing a new organization, there were a couple of concepts that were particularly relevant to questions facing the Webster Groves CLT.

At the start of the first section, Jeanetta differentiates between the basic organizing structures that are common among non-profits: "Membership" organizations and "Board of Director" organizations. Whereas membership groups often elect executive committees from the membership in order to manage the organization, the "Board of Directors" model – more common within the United States – allows the creation of a separate board that is responsible for management and operation (Jeanetta, 2007, p. 2). Jeanetta goes on to enumerate six board of director responsibilities - (1) ensuring organizational continuity, (2) setting policy and reviewing plans, (3) long-range planning, (4) ensuring fiscal accountability, (5) managing personnel, and (6) funding the organization. Additionally, he describes the usual development and maturation process that a board of directors may go through as an organization establishes itself – from working board to managing board to advisory board.



In the section of the paper, Jeanetta focuses on the challenges and opportunities that affect maintenance of an organization overtime. The topics he covers are broad and based on interviews he conducted with non-profit leaders who had at least five years of experience in their given field. The topics include: networking; securing local support; identifying clear purpose, values, and principles; maintaining passion for the work; developing a diverse resource base; working with little cash; cultivating a visionary and support environment while staying focused; engendering faith and commitment from a variety of stakeholders, creating healthy collaborations; and working with funders. Within each section he provides common pitfalls and recommended action steps that nonprofits may take in order to most effectively achieve long-term sustainability and positive impact.

The third section of the paper includes several case studies, one of which includes a rural community land trust. While the area surrounding the CLT is very different than Webster Groves, the example provides a helpful vision of what is possible for a land trust overtime. Starting with a small number of parcels and low awareness in the community, Jeanetta described that the CLT now manages approximately 40 homes; has facilitated the acquisition of new land, extension of utilities, and provision of basic community services; and has been involved in development projects including a town square (Jeanetta, 2007, p. 7).

The final section of the paper includes specific and technical information on how a group of individuals may turn an idea into a formal non-profit. The author describes some of the specific government steps that a group must take, as well as the infrastructure required in order to set up the organization. Like other components of this paper, though not specific to a CLT or built for a community like Webster Groves, this sort of technical background information may

still be helpful in supporting the implementation of the CLT. The paper, overall, presents a helpful and straightforward set of tools that groups can easily adapt to fit their needs as they consider developing a non-profit organization in their community.

**[Kania, J. & Kramer, M. \(2011\). Collective impact. \*Stanford Social Innovation Review\*, 36-41.](#)**

According to Kania & Kramer, collective impact is “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (p. 36). They open their article by asserting that “large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations” (p. 36). Although they use the examples of the U.S. public education system and environmental justice in their article, establishing a community land trust in Webster Groves will also require the abandonment of an “isolated impact” approach of individual non-profit agencies and the embrace of a collective impact approach of cross-sector collaboration and public-private partnerships. Kania & Kramer highlight and define five different types of collaborations that have attempted to address social problems: funder collaboratives, public-private partnerships, multi-stake initiatives, social sector networks, and collective impact initiatives. Funder collaboratives consist of “groups of funders interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources.” Public-private partnerships are collaboratives “formed between government and private sector organization to deliver specific services or benefits.” Multi-stakeholder initiatives are “voluntary activities by stakeholders from different sectors around a common theme.” Social sector networks are “groups of individuals or organizations fluidly connected through purposeful relationships, whether formal or informal.” And lastly,

collective impact initiatives are “long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (p.39)

It is important to note that for a community land trust to be successfully established in Webster Groves, there will need to be components of all five of the collaboratives described above. Funders are going to need to pool resources to purchase land. The government of Webster Groves will need to be in partnership with individuals and organizations from both the public and private sector. Community stakeholders will need to volunteer their time, energy, and resources. Formal and informal relationships between committed organizations and individuals will be vital. And, perhaps most importantly, and why we recommend adopting a collective impact approach, establishing a community land trust in Webster Groves required a long-term commitment by community stakeholders from across different sectors.

In their research, Kania & Kramer identify five conditions for effective collective impact initiatives: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone organization. A common agenda means “all participants have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions” (p. 39). “Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact,” Kania & Kramer state. “Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and to learn from each other’s successes and failures” (p. 40). Since collective impact initiatives require diverse stakeholders working together, mutually reinforcing activities are important to “encourage each participant to

undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others” (p. 40). Kania & Kramer acknowledge that “developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and governmental agencies is a monumental challenge,” which is why continuous communication through regularly scheduled meetings is imperative. And lastly, Kania & Kramer state “Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative” (p. 40). Since we that there are plans to establish a new 501(c)(3) organization for the community land trust in Webster Groves, we recommend that the new nonprofit organization serves as the backbone support organization.

**[Klempin, S. \(2016\). Establishing the backbone: An underexplored facet of collective impact efforts. \*Community College Research Center\*, 60, 1-6.](#)**

This short article explores the importance of establishing a strong backbone organization to effectively use a collective impact approach to create social change. Kania & Kramer (2011) first identified “backbone support organizations” as one of the five core components in successful collective impact efforts, but this article is an in-depth exploration about what the backbone organization is and how it can be used effectively. The article defines a backbone organization as “an entity that functions independently as a centralized management team for partnership efforts” (p. 1). According to Klempin’s research, “proponents of collective impact generally agree that the primary role of the backbone is to coordinate the work of partners” (p. 2). Some important functions of the backbone organization include establishing a shared vision, managing data collection, analysis, and dissemination, directing day-to-day partnership activities, developing public relations strategies, fundraising, and policy advocacy. This article

cites “a backbone toolkit,” a resource created by the Collective Impact Forum (n.d.) that defines main four backbone functions—maintaining overall strategic coherence, coordinating through the steering committee, supporting fundraising and outreach, and establishing and supporting working groups. The toolkit also outlines 43 strategic activities (e.g. oversight and policy work) and logistical activities (e.g. meeting facilitation and scheduling (p. 2). Although not included in this annotated bibliography, the Collective Impact Forum’s toolkit is included in the Google folder of resources.

This article is also useful because it defines and identifies the pros and cons of six different types of backbone organizations. While there are benefits and limitations to each of the six types, we recommend that Webster Groves adopts a hybrid of the first and sixth type—a community-based organization and multiple organizations. By including Webster Groves residents, a community-based backbone organization would have strong ties to the community, but the limitation is that there might be low capacity to establish a community land trust. Multiple organizations serving as the backbone would make it more difficult to act as a single unit, but there would be the opportunity to distribute responsibilities across organizational expertise (p.4). One possible hybrid model would be establishing a 501(c)(3) organization, hiring Webster Groves residents, and appointing a diverse set of stakeholders to the board.

**[McAfee, M., Blackwell, A. G., & Bell, J. \(2015\). Equity: The soul of collective impact. \*Policy Link\*, 1-8.](#)**

This is an informative and short article about the collective impact framework that emphasizes the importance of equity. The authors argue: “Equity, both racial and economic, must be infused through all aspects of collective impact processes, from the deep engagement of

communities to the collection and analysis of data; the design and scale of solutions; and the capacities, point of view, and roles of backbone organizations” (p. 1). Since Webster Groves is in the very beginning of establishing a community land trust, it is imperative that vision and pursuit for racial and economic equity is articulated and centered, and remains articulated and centered, throughout the entire process. The article explores two case studies, one about addressing infant mortality in Oakland during the 1980s and another more recent example about breaking the cycle of multigenerational poverty in Minneapolis. “Equity is realized through the results we set for collective impact and through all aspects of the process,” the authors write. “It requires the front-and-center engagement of communities as equal partners, leaders, and owners of the work. It requires a commitment to the long, complex task of systems and policy change. And it requires the leadership and capacity of backbone organizations driven by a vision of equity and skilled in bringing solutions to scale” (p. 4). The authors also write: “ownership of solutions matters. Listening to, integrating, and acting upon the voice, wisdom, and experience of community members are not optional. This is where collective impact finds its soul” (p. 4).

The authors write that community stakeholders, including residents, youth, small-business owners, clergy, grassroots advocates, and other neighborhood folks, must be engaged throughout the process because they have the insights, credibility, and relationships that are essential to an effective collective impact effort (p.4). “They must be involved at every step, at every level of power and authority, and in every important decision, from setting the agenda to developing strategy to determining who does the work in the community and how it will be implemented” (p. 4). Another incredibly important point from the article is the need to compensate community members for their time, energy, and resources. “Community

organizations and residents cannot be expected to function as true partners—and they will not be viewed that way—if they have to volunteer their time and resources while other are compensated and supported to participate and contribute” (p. 5). Regarding equity within the backbone organization, the authors articulate five different elements (p. 8). First, they state that “backbone organizations must embody a leadership voice and pattern of behaviors that live and breathe equity...[and] have expertise and experience in advancing equity and in bringing the needed technical, process, and political skills to collective impact efforts.” Second, they argue that “backbone organizations must have the courage, capacity, and credibility to take on...structural racism,” noting that diversity within the organization’s leadership is crucial. Third, they suggest that “backbone organizations must be adept at using a disciplined approach...for moving from talk to action and creating the right container that enables leaders to align the contributions of diverse partners in a way that makes long-term, transformational work happen.” Fourth, they say that backbone organizations must be flexible and able to “manage the culture of shared accountability while simultaneously coaching from the sidelines to support and amplify the voice of local leaders.” And fifth, they articulate that backbone organizations must “hold themselves and the collective impact partnerships they shepherded accountable for achieving results,” which requires the “skill, capacity, and commitment to educate, organize, and advocate for systems and policy change” (p. 8).

[Reisch, M. \(2019\). \*Macro social work practice: Working for change in a multicultural society\*. Cognella Academic Publishing.](#)

While not specifically about a Community Land Trust, Chapter 9 of the textbook *Macro Social Work Practice*, “Defining ‘Community’ and Assessing its Needs and Assets,” provides

helpful theoretical framing for community-based work. Before providing an overview of the content included in this book, it is important to articulate that the purpose of this text is education for social-work practitioners. To that end, some of the commentary and recommendation presumes status as an outsider from the communities with whom one is working. There are valuable insights, but the recommendations may need to be adjusted because the Webster Grove CLT will be developed and led by community members from within the neighborhood.

The central question explored through this chapter is one of how to define community. From that foundation, the authors provide theories of community change, overviews of the functions of community and factors that promote or interfere with community function, background on different types of community need, and, finally, descriptions of approaches for community needs assessments.

The authors suggest that there are a number of dimensions through which we can conceive of community including: physical space and proximity, population groups that have shared identities or interest areas, or groups that have shared commitment to a social problem (Reisch, 2019, p. 276). Upon articulating the dimensions of community, the author enumerates the four primary components that comprise theories of community practice. These include explaining the nature of communities and key features of community life; providing a framework for the analysis of community conditions; interpreting the causes, effects, and interrelationship between community and social change; and suggest guidelines for effective practice within communities (Reisch, 2019, p. 278). The author dives more deeply into four different types of theories – behavioral, structural functionalist, conflict, and social movement. While all of these theory types provide helpful tools for understanding community practice, they differ in whether



they are descriptive or prescriptive tools, and center distinct values and/or stakeholders in their assessment.

The following section of the chapter discusses the purpose of communities, and the most common structures that we find for communities and neighborhoods across the country. There are five primary functions that cut across all communities, including: Establishing economic and social systems that regulate goods and services; socializing community members into community culture; sustaining systems through formal and informal means of social control; developing mechanisms to encourage social participation; and, providing community members with various forms of mutual aid and support (Reisch, 2019, p. 281). The author points out the tools that support community competence, specifically drawing attention to the importance of “social capital” in facilitating development and social cohesion. The author also notes that a common obstacle for any sort of community project is unequal distribution of resources and power, especially across identity lines.

The final section of the chapter provides an overview of the first step in working with or in community, which is conducting a community assessment. According to the author such an assessment includes elements such as: gathering data, soliciting the perspective of community residents, survey current providers to obtain views on community conditions, identify assets in the community, and establishing priorities within the community (Reisch, 2019, p. 287). Community assessment may take a “problem-solving” approach focused on a particular topic or social issue, or a “population” approach, which engages with a certain set of people at the center of the assessment. Regardless of the choice one makes, the author provides a number of tools that are commonly utilized in needs assessments (included in the best practices section of our

presentation) and closes with an overview of how such an approach fits into the broader conversation of understanding, empowering, and working alongside community to manage a change process, which may provide helpful background information for the leadership team that is engaging members of the Webster Grove community as the CLT gets off the ground and gains momentum throughout the neighborhood.