Community Land Trust (CLT)

This tool enables a private, non-profit corporation to secure and maintain access to land in perpetuity for public benefit. CLTs are distinct because they can separate the ownership of land from any structure(s) on the land and because they are controlled through a democratically governed community board or membership model that can be open to CLT occupants and other local residents or stakeholders.

Status In NYC

Enacted

Status Elsewhere

Enacted

For NYC:

POLICY OBJECTIVE:
Community land trusts ensure permanent community ownership and housing affordability by removing land from the market and ensuring its long-term availability to community residents.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Community land trusts currently exist in New York City. They are reemerging as a leading model for providing permanent affordable housing in neighborhoods and protecting the affordability of homeownership and rental opportunities while allowing some wealth-building for residents.

In July 2017, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development received $1.65 million from Enterprise Community Partners’ Community Land Trust Capacity Building Initiative to support selected CLTs. The primary focus is on creating permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for low-income households. The CLTs will acquire distressed properties and use subsidies to create financially sustainable buildings with units priced for individuals and families living with extremely low incomes.

WHO BENEFITS?
Targeted to help: Low- and middle-income residents of the community targeted areas. Cooper Square CLT currently provides units those earning up to 50% of AMI.

Potential Impact: Only 9% of homes on the market in 2014 were affordable for purchase to those earning less than $55,000 a year. This means that for over half of the City’s households or 51% owning a home in NYC is out of reach.
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For NYC:

HOW WOULD IT BE ENACTED?

Community land trusts exist in NYC, but an initiative to facilitate the disposition of public land to CLTs would enable their expansion.

HOW WOULD IT BE ENFORCED?

Regulatory agreements with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development

WHAT IS THE FEASIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING THIS IN NYC?

Potential Proponents:
- Community-based organizations
- Tenants rights advocates
- Some NYC low-income homeowners

Potential Opponents:
- NYC developers
- Investors and small home flippers

Challenges:
- CLTs must have reliable ways to acquire land to have a measurable impact on displacement in a neighborhood. The city would have to play a large role in facilitating those acquisitions.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

Center for New York City Neighborhoods  Interboro CLT
Cooper Square Community Land Trust  Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
NYC Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI)  Habitat for Humanity New York City
Citi Community Development  Enterprise Community Partners
New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development  Picture the Homeless
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Example Policy: Boston, MA

HOW DOES IT WORK?
In 1987, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston formed a CLT to implement a community developed housing plan for the area. The CLT, called Dudley Neighbors Inc. (DNI), acquired land using two strategies. (1) The Boston Redevelopment Authority granted the CLT power of eminent domain, enabling it to acquire privately owned vacant land in the Dudley Triangle. (2) The City of Boston and DNI began a partnership through which city-owned land could be transferred to the trust at minimal cost.

WHO BENEFITS?
Stock: This applies to a mix of homeownership, cooperative housing, rental housing, and commercial space. The DNI CLT currently has 255 units of affordable housing.

Low- and middle-income residents of the community served by the CLT and the community at-large

HOW WAS IT ENACTED?
A combination of a city initiative and city government action.

HOW IS IT ENFORCED?
The CLT’s charter governs actions of the trust and lease agreements control rents and the resale price of homes.