

COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUSTS

What is a community housing trust?

A community housing trust (CHT) is a non-profit corporation created to provide affordable housing in perpetuity to low- and moderate-income households. Under current models, land is owned by the CHT and housing by the individual, co-op or non-profit housing organization. By structuring ownership in this way, the value of land is separated from the value of the improvements (housing).

Tenure types can be the same or mixed and housing itself can consist of new builds and/or renovated

homes. A board of directors, which can be made up of politicians, residents, community members and/or business advisors, governs the organization. Some CHTs also offer amenities such as parkland or daycare centres to residents.

Terminology: We use community housing trust instead of community land trust. Though they're often used interchangeably, a community land trust can also be used to conserve natural lands.

Do community housing trusts exist in Vancouver?

Yes. The Community Land Trust (CLT) is the real estate development faction of the Co-operative Housing Federation of British Columbia (CHFBC). Its portfolio is made up of five co-ops and one non-profit housing development. The Land Trust, a component of the CLT, includes 358 units of housing on four City-owned sites in Vancouver:

- Fraserview Housing Co-op (2 lots)
- 1720 Kingsway (operated by the Sanford Society)
- Fraserview townhouse project (operated by the Tikva Society)

These lots have been leased to the Land Trust for 99-year terms. Facilitated through additional partnerships with BC Housing and New Market Funds, the Land

Trust receives no external subsidies but instead cross-subsidizes units between buildings.

The CLT also operates Railyard Co-op in Olympic Village on City-owned land leased for 60 years and obtained through a Community Amenity Contribution from Concert Properties. Of the building's 135 units:

- 10 units are rented at Income Assistance rates to residents participating in the STEP pilot program
- 54 units are available at rent geared to 30% of income (for those who earn up to the Housing Income Limits)
- 71 units are rented at the low end of market (up to 90% of market rent and 30% of BC Housing's moderate income limits)

Can a community housing trust work in False Creek South?

Under the *Strata Property Act*, a landlord of a strata lot on leased land is limited to a:

- Municipality
- Regional district
- First Nation
- University
- Or other public institution

This means that a False Creek South CHT could not technically be a landlord to a strata lot on leased land.

However, leaseholders could sell or transfer their property to a housing trust or co-op, making this entity the owner of a leasehold unit. Swapping equity for the security of tenure offered by a housing trust or co-op could be a good option for individuals who aren't able to pay the cost of lease renewal determined by the City.

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Canadian Examples

British Columbia

Vernon and District Community Land Trust

The [Vernon and District Community Land Trust](#) (VDCLT) is a charitable non-profit society mandated to provide affordable housing for minimum wage and entry level working individuals and families in Vernon and the North Okanagan. The VDCLT was created in part through a \$600,000 grant from the Province, provided via the BC Housing Endowment Fund.

The society currently operates two facilities. The first, Under One Roof, is a 6-unit community project for families and people with disabilities. Land for this project was gifted by the City of Vernon and all cost charges waived to facilitate development. In-kind goods and services valued at \$1.2 million were also provided by a variety of partner organizations. The second property, Creekside Village, is a 74-unit affordable seniors housing development operated by the VDCLT.

Salt Spring Island Community Services

[Salt Spring Island Community Services](#) (SSICS) is a charitable organization currently in the process of developing Salt Spring Commons, a 24-unit mix of rental and ownership units on a 5-acre property near Ganges Village.

To ensure ownership units remain affordable in perpetuity, SSICS will retain the land and limit resale values of homes to no more than the Greater Victoria Consumer Price Index over the time the unit has been owned. This means homes will be sold for 15-25% below market value, with affordability preserved for future buyers.

Galiano Green / Galiano Land and Community Housing Trust

[Galiano Green](#) is the first affordable home ownership project of the Galiano Community Housing Association (GCHA) and is governed using a land trust model. The GCHA currently owns a 10-acre property on Galiano Island, which, as per their housing agreement with the Islands Trust, will be subdivided into 20 lots.

Of these, 15 will be leased to owners with the capacity to build their own homes, while five will be preserved as affordable long-term rental homes. This development is located on the south side of the island in close proximity to facilities, retail, parks and beaches.

Alberta

HomeSpace (formerly Calgary Community Land Trust Society)

[HomeSpace Society](#) was created in 2003 out of a desire to build capacity in the affordable housing sector. A charitable real estate developer operating within a land trust model, the organization owns nearly 500 units across 25 properties in Calgary.

Residents of these units are supported using a Housing First philosophy that provides individually-tailored services to those considered most difficult to house. HomeSpace partners with a range of social service agencies to provide assistance, acting as property owner and manager.

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Canadian Examples

Ontario

Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust

The [Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust](#) (PNLT) is a charitable community organization owned and operated by residents of Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood. Formed to address the changing landscape of the community, the group intends to acquire land that will serve community needs related to urban agriculture, housing and economic development.

In 2017, the group purchased its first piece of land, a 5000 square foot property, through fundraising and large donations. The property is currently used for small-scale urban agriculture by local immigrant families, a use the PNLT intends to preserve. However, it intends to acquire subsequent properties for affordable housing development.

Hamilton Community Land Trust

[Hamilton Community Land Trust](#) was formed in 2014 for the purpose of facilitating real estate projects that would better serve the community's needs. In 2017 it acquired its first property, a vacant lot adjacent to the downtown core, through a land transfer from the City of Hamilton.

The Trust partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build an affordable two-unit development that will welcome new owners in 2019.

Kensington Market Land Trust

Inspired by the Parkdale Neighbourhood Community Land Trust, [Friends of Kensington Market](#), a not-for-profit community group in Toronto's Kensington

Market neighbourhood, launched a community land trust in 2017. It does not yet own property.

Toronto Islands Trust

The [Toronto Islands Residential Community Trust Corp.](#) was created in 1993 and is made up of single family houses on land leased by the City of Toronto.

The trust is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of members recommended by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Quebec

Communauté Milton Parc / Milton Park Community

Created in 1979 in response to a proposed urban renewal project in Montreal, the [Milton Park Community](#) (CMP) is the largest renovated cooperative housing structure in North America. Made up of 146 residential buildings and two commercial properties, the group purchased the land from CMHC in 1979.

The neighbourhood's governance model is similar to a community housing trust in that land is commonly owned. However, rather than being owned by a single trust, it is subdivided among 25 housing co-operatives and non-profit organizations. The CMP houses more than 1500 residents in low and moderate income housing.