

LITERATURE REVIEW

# Building Equity: Community Capital Projects as Pathways for Self- Determination

DCHS Children, Youth, and Young Adults Division and  
Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit

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# Introduction

## Abstract

This paper explores how community-driven capital projects, funded through accessible, community-guided investments, can serve as vehicles for self-determination in communities of color, immigrants, and low-income communities in underinvested neighborhoods. The analysis is guided by two questions:

- 1 **How does community ownership of development advance self-determination and health equity for communities?**
- 2 **What are effective strategies for achieving community ownership of development through neighborhood-based capital projects?**

Building on the Ownership of Change construct, a concept referring to individuals feeling like their neighborhood is changing in ways that are meant to benefit them, the paper explores how community-driven capital projects may promote a sense of ownership among members of the surrounding community. Collective stories of place, harnessing shared interests, capacity building, design that centers the interests of communities, and community stewardship and leadership are proposed as key strategies through which community-driven capital projects advance Ownership of Change. The paper lays a foundation for measuring the construct as an outcome of these strategies.

This report is designed to support efforts to fund, plan and evaluate community-driven capital projects.

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## About Best Starts for Kids Capital Projects

Best Starts for Kids is a community-driven initiative that invests in support from prenatal development through young adulthood to help King County children grow up happy, healthy, safe, and thriving. Best Starts' Capital Projects Investment Area was launched in 2022 to support renovation and construction of facilities serving low-income children and families, prioritizing those serving Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities, including early learning centers, childcare, recreational spaces, community hubs, and affordable housing.

 Learn more: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/human-social-services/community-funded-initiatives/best-starts-for-kids>

## Introduction

The unaffordability of real estate and consequential displacement of communities from urban cores threaten the well-being of American communities. Along with investments in affordable housing, efforts to create and preserve physical spaces that support social cohesion are imperative (Mead et al, 2025; McShane et al; 2022). Community development financing has helped incentivize these types of investments; however, access to capital and development planning has largely remained inaccessible to people in host neighborhoods (Loh et al., 2025; Theodos, Hangen, González, & Meixell, 2020; Wright, 2014). Community-driven development goes a step beyond addressing the affordability crisis to reassert communities' right to self-determination by shaping how their neighborhoods and the places within them evolve.

This paper explores how community-driven capital projects, funded through accessible, community-guided investments, can serve as vehicles for self-determination in communities of color, immigrants, and low-income communities in underinvested neighborhoods. The analysis is guided by two questions: how does community ownership of development advance self-determination and health equity? And, what are effective strategies for achieving community ownership of development through neighborhood-based capital projects?

Analysis of the first question draws on the concept of Ownership of Change, a social construct explored in recent research that indicates an individuals' perceptions of neighborhood change (positive or negative) are correlated with self-reported health outcomes (Binet et al., 2022). The second question is addressed through an analysis of literature highlighting best practices associated with community-driven development and eight community-driven capital projects in various cities across the U.S. The following strategies are proposed as promising vehicles to promote Ownership of Change through community-driven capital projects: developing collective stories of place, harnessing of shared interests, capacity building, design that centers the interests of communities, and community stewardship and leadership over assets. The paper lays a foundation for measuring the extent to which community-driven capital projects may advance Ownership of Change through the five strategies.



***We do it ourselves...  
my board may not speak  
English, but they have  
good wisdom, they feel  
ownership...  
that's why we survive  
until now.***

**Former tenant, Park Village  
Apartments  
in Abrams, 2024**

## Community-driven capital projects

With the help of non-punitive grants and low-cost capital, community-driven capital projects revitalize or develop land and real estate in underinvested neighborhoods. This development approach resembles the citizen-driven community development corporations that emerged during the Civil Rights era and is driven by community-based organizations whose leadership reflects the identity of neighborhoods.

The approach aims to address the impacts of exclusionary development (Scott et. al., 2023; The Alliance, n.d.; von Hoffman, 2019). This is often accomplished through development of cultural and community facilities that offer opportunities for economic mobility and social cohesion, and by supporting shared-equity property acquisition by communities (Choi et al, 2019; Love & Loh, 2021; Community Real Estate Stewardship Team et al., n.d.). Community-driven capital projects and their funders alike strive to promote self-determination and health equity.

### The community development ecosystem

Financing incentives administered by the federal government, such as the New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), help promote development in underinvested neighborhoods. These incentives help channel capital to places that would not otherwise receive it in collaboration with community development financing institutions (CDFIs) and community development corporations (CDCs) (Fukuzawa et al., 2024; Loh et al, 2025; Theodos, Plerhoples, González, & Meixell, 2021). This ecosystem is preceded by decades of advocacy by communities who have persistently been in the frontlines of discriminatory practices, including Civil Rights era efforts to expand landownership and loan financing for communities of color, such as the Fair Housing Act's antidiscrimination lending policies, desegregation mandates from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Office of Economic Opportunity's investments in citizen-driven community development corporations (Aaronson et al., 2021; Green, 2018).

Despite its ties to the Civil Rights Movement, today's community development financing system is, by several standards, failing to fulfill its promise of equitable prosperity (Fukuzawa et al., 2024). Most of the country's metropolitan areas face significant racial and economic segregation, and Opportunity Zone tax credits, enacted in 2017 have helped spur harmful investments under the ethos of community development (Fukuzawa et al., 2024; von Hoffman, 2019). Furthermore, due to the dearth of representation of underinvested communities, in both the financing and development fronts, development does not consistently address their needs (Brugman, 2017; Loh et al, 2025; Theodos et al., 2020).

### Capital development investments that promote community self-determination

Growing interest in community development financing that empowers underinvested communities has fueled innovative approaches (Federal Reserve System, 2022; Scott et. al., 2023; Fukuzawa et al., 2024). In 2016, a consortium of community-based organizations, including a local CDFI, in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, partnered to mitigate displacement risks affecting the neighborhood's Latinx community (Fukuzawa et al., 2024). Through NMTC financing, the CDFI provided the consortium subsidized loans to acquire multiple mixed-use properties which will eventually transition to shared ownership by neighborhood residents (Fukuzawa et al., 2024). During the life of the NMTC loan subsidies, the community organizations have procured philanthropic funds to subsidize the loans after the NMTC subsidies expire (Fukuzawa et al., 2024).

Capital funding programs by the City of Seattle and King County government, including the Equitable Development Initiatives and the Best Starts for Kids Capital Projects program, offer additional examples. Through municipal revenue streams, these initiatives provide sizeable grants for community-based organizations to acquire or redevelop property for cultural institutions, community, and mixed-use facilities in underinvested neighborhoods (Seattle Office of Planning et al., 2024; Syed, 2022). These initiatives have robust representation of community members in the administration of funds and execution of projects. At the core of these efforts is a commitment to equity through direct representation of communities (Seattle Office of Planning et al., 2024; Syed, 2022).

Learn more about equitable development at the City of Seattle and King County



[Best Starts for Kids Capital Projects](#)



[King County EDI](#)



[City of Seattle](#)

### How does community ownership advance self-determination and health equity for communities?

#### Neighborhoods are contexts for community-driven development.

In the U.S., systemic racism is fundamental to understanding neighborhoods, particularly in non-rural areas, as key settings for community-driven development (Arcaya et al., 2024; Ware, 2021). The Home Owners' Lending Corporation's (HOLC) 1930 redlining maps have been instrumental in shaping this context (Aaronson et al., 2021; Acevedo-Garcia, et al. 2024). HOLC was established after the Great Depression to refinance urban mortgage debt and prevent foreclosures, and the maps were meant to restrict financing in select neighborhoods based on race and nationality (Aaronson et al., 2021; Ware, 2021). Until the late 1960s, the FHA, one of the largest home loan insurers back then, utilized the maps to determine underwriting eligibility (Aaronson et al., 2021; Ware, 2021). This practice, known as redlining, has shaped place-based disparities across the U.S. to this day (Acevedo-Garcia, et al., 2024).

According to the Child Opportunity Index, neighborhoods that were redlined by the HOLC maps, which were predominantly populated by African Americans, have significantly lower levels of opportunity than those that were greenlined (deemed investment-worthy) and predominantly populated by whites (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2024). Based on 2020 Census data, the majority of people living in historically redlined neighborhoods today identify as belonging to a minority group, mainly Black or Hispanic (Meier & Mitchell, 2022).

#### Community ownership and development that benefits underinvested communities.

Capital investments in underinvested neighborhoods have the potential to advance health and socioeconomic equity for their communities. To be effective, investments must be accompanied by efforts to preserve affordability and ensure community ownership over the development process (Levy et al., 2007; Phillips, 2015; Wilson, 2015). Cost-of-living stabilization interventions, including policies aimed at



*...a person's evolving sense of empowerment over the changes around them, such as development of new housing or shifts in economic opportunity.*

Binet et al, 2024

### Ownership of Change

Sense of place and community, control, collective efficacy and community power are central components of the construct, which was developed in partnership with residents of nine neighborhoods across the Greater Boston area, the majority of whom were Black and Latinx (Binet et al., 2022; Healthy Neighborhoods Study). The validated construct was used to survey neighborhood residents about the level of ownership they felt over the changes happening around them (Binet et al., 2022).

When measured against indicators of health and wellbeing, respondents' perceived ownership of change was found to have a positive relationship to self-reported health (Binet et al., 2022). These findings corroborate a growing consensus that control over one's destiny (in this paper, in the context of neighborhood change) is a fundamental social determinant of health ( Garces-Ozanne et al, 2016; McGowen et. al, 2019; Whitehead et al., 2016; Drew & Schoenberg, 2011).



## Findings and Approach

increasing and preserving affordable housing, can prevent residential displacement, while community development strategies to effectuate communities' vision for change can cultivate ownership (Chapple et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2023; Westbrook, 2024; von Hoffman, 2019). This analysis uses Binet et al.'s definition of the social construct of Ownership of Change to guide the identification of such strategies.

### What are promising strategies for achieving community ownership through the development of neighborhood-based capital projects?

Through a case study analysis, this section draws a connection between community-driven development strategies used by practitioners and the various dimensions of Ownership of Change – empowerment, community control, and sense of place and community. Within this framework, capital projects are regarded as a type of neighborhood change, Ownership of Change as an outcome, and community-driven development strategies as an intervention (see Figure 1).

The strategies inferred from the case study analysis describe pathways through which communities achieve collective benefits associated with Ownership of Change (see Table 1). Identification of these was informed by key concepts from three publications that explore community ownership in the context of real estate development – the [CREST Collaborative's Community Stewardship of Land framework](#), [The Ingredients of Equitable Development Planning](#) report by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, and [The emerging solidarity economy](#): a primer on community ownership of real estate, a research brief by the Brookings Institute. In alignment with this paper, these sources describe community-driven development as efforts designed to benefit people who work, live, and have deep connections in host neighborhoods.

## Approach

The literature search was divided in two parts to address each research question. Searches were conducted on Science Direct, the Urban Institute's publications database, Google Scholar, and JSTOR. Literature recommendations were also sourced from equitable development practitioners in King County government.

The first part focused on literature describing the social and health benefits of community-driven development based on empirical research, conceptual models, and descriptive evaluations. The second part focused on case studies about place-based capital projects with robust community leadership. Ownership-building strategies were conceptualized through a deductive analysis where patterns in activities across studies were classified according to the constructs of empowerment, community control, and sense of place and community.

Figure 1: Capital Investment Community Change Cycle



**Table 1. Ownership of change outcomes and strategies of community-driven capital projects**

Outcomes	Ownership of Change (Binet et al. 2022)	Ownership-building strategies
Sense of community & place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sense of community:</b> a positive emotional orientation towards one’s neighborhood measured across four dimensions: group membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections. Sense of community influences quality of life, well-being, and social capital, and is correlated with psychological empowerment, mental health, and depression.</li> <li>• <b>Sense of place:</b> the emotional relationship between people and their environmental setting. Place attachment has psychological benefits, including a sense of belonging, positive emotion, and stronger social capital.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Building collective stories of place:</b> community members learning about each other’s backgrounds and connection to the neighborhood. These connections are manifested through public artwork, and documentation of the community’s past, present and/or envisioned future.</li> <li>• <b>Harnessing shared interests:</b> Formation of community groups, identification of shared concerns, priorities, and engendering of a shared vision and commitment to effectuate it.</li> </ul>
Empowerment & community control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empowerment:</b> process by which people gain greater control over their lives, participate in democratic decision-making and develop critical awareness of their socio-political environments.</li> <li>• <b>Collective efficacy:</b> a community’s ability to manage members’ behaviors related to social disorganization, and is associated with premature mortality, depression and asthma, and living in neighborhoods with higher collective efficacy is associated with better self-rated health. Certain features of the neighborhood environment, like parks, can foster collective efficacy, and interventions to improve collective efficacy have been shown to reduce health disparities.</li> <li>• <b>Community power:</b> a construct from the field of community psychology that is closely related to collective efficacy, but focuses more explicitly on challenging structural inequities and unjust distributions of power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capacity building:</b> collective learning around processes, policies and tools to advance development goals; from capital funding procurement to trainings on shared ownership models.</li> <li>• <b>Design that centers the interests of communities:</b> planning committees, asset mapping, and community needs assessments to embed community priorities in the project’s service intent, aesthetic and architectural design.</li> <li>• <b>Community leadership &amp; stewardship:</b> community authority over project design and service intent through clearly articulated stakeholder roles and project principles. Determination of legal ownership and stewardship structures take place in later stages.</li> </ul>

### Building collective stories of place

Collective narratives of place play an important role in community-driven capital projects. They capture the history and values of host neighborhoods and reflect the lived experiences of diverse residents and their relationship to place. Generally, project participants join or initiate a project with some awareness of the history of their neighborhoods and communities. During the project planning process, these stories become collective and more formalized.

Across the case studies, collective stories of place often entailed accounts of the community's resilience in the face of systemic discrimination, disinvestment, or gentrification. Queer the Land, a Seattle-based community group founded around the goal of developing a permanent hub for working class queer, trans, Two-Spirit, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (QT2BIPOC), and the Cambodian community that stewards the Park Village Apartments in Stockton, California, have similar stories of resilience in the face of displacement and a commitment to collective stewardship of places they call home (Duranti-Martínez et al., 2024; Abrams, 2024).

Once the projects were completed, the facilities themselves became a symbol of a shared history and values. The Jackson Medical Mall and Seattle's El Centro De La Raza erected murals showcasing the story of their communities and the values that shaped them (Duong, 2024; Johansen, 2020). The Douglass Community Land Trust, Plaza 122, and the Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP), feature their projects' origin stories on their webpages, celebrating their communities' success in claiming neighborhood spaces for themselves and future generations (Women's Community Revitalization Project | HISTORY, n.d.; Who We Are - Douglass Community Land Trust, n.d.; Community Investment Trust (CIT), 2025). These stories serve as an ongoing reminder of a shared commitment to asset stewardship in service of communities.

### Harnessing shared interests

When tied to a collective story of place, community-driven capital projects offer an opportunity for neighborhood residents to take action around shared interests and build deep networks, furthering collective efficacy and wellbeing for generations (Hovik et al., 2023; Love & Loh, 2021; Labonne & Chase, 2010).



*Explosion of Chicano Creativity.*  
Mural at El Centro De La Raza,  
Retrieved Dec. 7, 2025 from  
[Muralist Art and Activism in  
Washington's Latino Community.](#)



***Out of its people's  
intense discussions  
regarding  
organizational identity,  
El Centro de la Raza  
decided early (during  
the 1970s) not to focus  
solely on Latinos. The  
decision was part of an  
intense debate over the  
origins and implications  
of racism... The focus  
became how to live  
together...***

Johansen, 2020



## Ownership- building strategies

The Women’s Community Revitalization Project (WCRP), for example, was started by women and social workers from Philadelphia’s Kensington neighborhood in response to widespread homelessness and unemployment (Stokley, 1989). The women organized around a shared mission to promote economic development for women like themselves and their children, which eventually culminated in WCRP’s first low-income housing development (Stokley, 1989). Today, the WCRP remains active with hundreds of affordable and shared ownership units for low-income and working-class Philadelphians (*Women’s Community Revitalization Project* | HISTORY, n.d.).

Community members became involved in DC’s 11th Street Bridge Park planning efforts to help mitigate the risk of displacement posed by the multi-billion-dollar capital investment (Urban institute & Cohen, 2021; Childers, 2024). The group’s anti-displacement efforts served as a springboard for the formation of the Douglas Community Land Trust (Urban institute & Cohen, 2021).

For El Centro De La Raza, the historic building’s acquisition would not have been possible without the support of a multi-racial coalition, including native community leaders who had led successful efforts to acquire surplus Army property for Seattle’s Urban Native community (Johansen, 2020). Through these efforts, a collective sense self-determination takes root.

### Capacity building

To ensure sustainability, community-driven capital projects often entail capacity building efforts designed to equip community members and development contractors alike with the necessary knowledge to realize the community’s vision (CREST et al., n.d.).

During the planning stages for the Bridge Park project, project leads spent time grounding the design and development team in the interests and sociopolitical context of the community (Urban institute & Cohen, 2021). They also conducted trainings for community representatives around legal and technical aspects of the development and design process (Urban institute & Cohen, 2021). Once Bridge Park participants had identified the Douglass Community Land Trust as their organized response to the threat of displacement, they dedicated time and resources to educating themselves and their community about the benefits



*For the Women’s Community Revitalization Project, the development of eight rental units has proven to be the first step toward organizing community women to address the housing issues that they face in their community.*

WCRP founding member  
Stokley, 1989

WCRP’s founding members breaking ground on their first development]. Retrieved Dec. 7, 2025, from [Women’s Community Revitalization Project](#).



## Ownership- building strategies

and responsibilities of land trust patrons and shareholders (Urban Institute and Cohen, 2021).

For Park Village Apartment tenants, capacity-building entailed a partnership with the Rural California Housing Corporation (RCHC). The tenants obtained control of the property from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the disposition agreement required the partnership for the first five years while the tenants developed the necessary expertise to manage the facility. With RCHC's support, the tenants secured financing, expanded the facilities, and completed critical repairs and renovations. Simultaneously, the tenant group formed their own nonprofit to secure additional funding for facility operations (Abrams, 2024). Across projects, capacity building enabled communities to advocate for their interests and to preserve assets for the long run.

## Design that centers the interests of communities

Design of facilities and programming that centers the interests of communities is key to cultivating ownership (Aviles & Moore, 2025; CREST et al., n.d. von Hoffman, 2019). This is accomplished through a multi-pronged approach often involving community-led planning committees, deliberative decision-making processes, and landscape and needs assessments (von Hoffman, 2019; Love & Loh, 2021). These processes help move community interests from vision to reality.

Community and landscape assessments were commonly used to engage neighborhood residents at large. Plaza 122 Community Investment Trust utilized the results of a community assessment and asset map to develop a vetting tool that was used to identify the most adequate investment property based on the community's interests (Mercy Corps, 2019). The Jackson Medical Mall assembled an advisory group comprised of local artists and residents to shape the direction of community input gathering for the mall's renovation. Efforts revealed the community's desire for culturally responsive health promotion programs (Duong, 2021).



*You can share all the information you would like with a person, but if it doesn't connect on a personal level, then it doesn't work. CLEW [Douglass CLT stewardship train the trainer program] helped me bring a calmness to those conversations.*

Douglass CLT member  
Urban Institute & Cohen, 2021



Rendering of Douglass CLT's Lebanon Villages at the historic Langston Slater site]. Retrieved Dec 7, 2025, from [First a park, then a citywide land trust in D.C.](#)

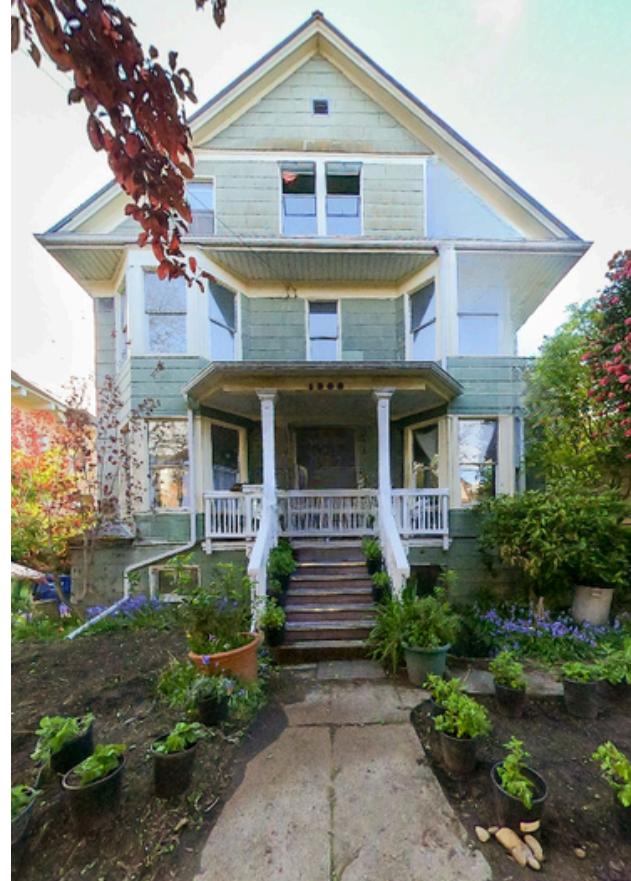
## Ownership- building strategies

Deliberative decision-making processes helped community members reach consensus around architectural priorities and property selection. Queer the Land's vision of creating a QT2BIPOC organizing hub is coming to life through the redesign of a twelve-bedroom home, which will include a community kitchen, transitional housing space, and a studio for community media production (Duranti-Martínez et al., 2024). Philadelphia's Women's Community Revitalization Project fulfilled their priority of safe, affordable housing for female-headed households by developing scattered housing units as opposed to a conventional high rise, which members associated with overcrowding (Stokley, 1989).

### Community leadership and stewardship

Community stewardship is another way community-driven capital projects strengthen connection to places in neighborhoods communities call home (CREST et al., n.d.). This strategy entails community governance groups set up to lead the development process and to steward the land and facilities in service of the surrounding community (CREST et al., n.d.). The trajectory of group formation varied across projects, depending on factors such as the unique circumstances that engendered the project (i.e. response to displacement threat, equity or asset generation opportunity, etc.). All case studies mentioned the use of some type of community governance body which, in most cases, was established within five years of the start of the project.

For the Douglas Community Land Trust, this process started with the formation of a community advisory committee comprised of over twenty-four residents from residential areas most at risk of displacement (Urban institute & Cohen, 2021; Childers, 2024). This group led the founding of the Douglas Community Land Trust and its acquisition of the Langston Slater property in Washington D.C (Childers, 2024). Contrastingly, the Kensington Corridor Trust in Philadelphia (a collective of mixed-use buildings, multi— and single-family properties spread across 1.4 miles of the Kensington transit corridor) was initiated by four impact investors, with the goal of moving property out of Kensington's speculative real estate market and into the hands of the community in perpetuity (Abizadeh & Purpose Foundation, 2021). While founding project members wanted to prioritize swift acquisition to keep up with the pace of the



Queer the Land building]. Photo credit: Evana Enabulele. Retrieved Dec. 7, 2025 from: [The power and promise of TLGBQIA+-owned spaces.](#)



***...Queer and trans kids deserve a place to come where they feel safe and they're...learning skills and building friendships.***

**Linda Chastine, Queer the Land  
Duranti-Martínez et al, 2024**



## Ownership- building strategies

market, community advocates insisted on prioritizing transitioning the project to community oversight early on, even if it meant slowing the pace of acquisition. Within the first four years (as opposed to the originally planned ten years), members focused on transitioning ownership and oversight to a board of community members (Abizadeh & Purpose Foundation, 2021).

With the building or acquisition of facilities completed, project leaders often pivoted toward developing stewardship structures through continued recruitment and development of policies to suit the service intent of the project. For El Centro, this process involved developing twelve governing principles by members of its founding group to guide the organization's governance of the El Centro facility and other resources. When projects reached maturity, recruitment efforts and governance membership grew, with groups generally consisting of building tenants, local community members, as well as legal, real estate, financial, and development experts.



East Portland Plaza 122 Community Investment Trust members]. Retrieved Dec. 7, 2025, from <https://investcit.org/media-news/east-portland-5th-anniversary/>.



Retrieved Dec. 7, 2025 from: [Kensington Corridor Trust](#).



*The KCT should be stewarded by community members for the purpose of the KCT and the benefit of the neighborhood and current and future generations of residents...*

**Kensington Community Trust  
governance value  
Abizadeh & Purpose  
Aoundation, 2021**

## Discussion

The Binet et al study inferred a positive correlation between participants' self-reported physical and mental health and their feeling like the changes happening in their neighborhood were meant for them. This correlation was most prominent in study participants who reported knowing that the average person in their community had a voice in changes happening in their neighborhood, that they felt the changes were meant for them, and/or that they were personally involved in with the changes (Binet et al., 2022). Thus, this paper hypothesizes that participation in activities associated with the community ownership building strategies could promote the psychosocial wellbeing of neighborhood residents.

Additional research highlighting the association between development which lacks community voice and displacement pressures that negatively affect the health of neighborhood residents reinforces this hypothesis and the potential of the proposed ownership-building strategies to promote resilience in the face of displacement pressures (Anguelovski, Isabelle, et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2023; Westbrook, 2024). The hypothesis could be explored through a comparative study focused on measuring before and after changes in Ownership of Change experienced by individuals participating in community-driven capital projects in gentrifying neighborhoods, using Binet et al's ownership of change survey instrument (see appendix II).

## Conclusion

Community-driven capital projects have the potential to safeguard the livelihood of communities who have been subject to exclusion and displacement. Patient, non-punitive capital, such as Boyle Heights' NMTC subsidized loans and the City of Seattle and King County governments' funding initiatives, are essential for this type of development. As interest in these types of investments grows, so does the need to better understand their impact (Scott et al., 2023; The U.S. Impact Investment Alliance, 2021). Using the community-ownership building strategies from the case study analysis as the means of intervention, and Binet et al's Ownership of Change construct as the desired outcome can offer a starting point for evaluation efforts.

Jackson Medical Mall hallway sign]. Dec. 7, 2025. *From [abandoned mall to bustling hub.](#)*



### About DCHS's Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division and the Performance measurement and Evaluation Unit

King County's Children, Youth, and Young Adult Division (CYAD) sits within the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). CYAD leads from the strengths of the region's young people and serves as a funder and convenor among K12, postsecondary, employment, and youth development sectors. Through initiatives, like [Best Starts for Kids](#), the division collaborates with youth, families, educators, providers, and the community to foster an environment where young people can be happy, healthy, safe, and thriving.

The Performance Measurement and Evaluation (PME) unit collaborates with internal and external partners to use data to understand the implementation and impact of DCHS programs. PME's mission is to generate evidence and use it in collaboration with partners to support DCHS policy and programming.

For more, visit: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dchs/about-king-county/about-dchs/data-reports>



## Community-driven capital project case studies

Project and Description	Ownership	Community participation	Unique qualities
<p><b>Jackson Medical Mall (JMM) Jackson, MS</b> A 900,000 square foot complex that was transformed from a deteriorated mall to a multi-purpose community center. The facility's transformation began in 1995 and starting in 2015, it underwent a redevelopment process. The facility houses economic development programs, commercial space leasing, health and social services, and arts and culture programs as part of a holistic community wellness mission.</p>	<p>Owned by the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit that was set up for the sole purpose of acquiring and managing the Mall.</p>	<p>Neighborhood-level community participation was orchestrated during the redevelopment process. Original development was led by two local Black community leaders.</p>	<p>The redevelopment process for this project highlights the important role that the arts, history, and culture play in evoking a sense of belonging through development. JMM did this by hiring a team of local artists to document the Mall's history and erecting a mural illustrating its story.</p>
<p><b>Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) Philadelphia, PA</b> Philadelphia's first nonprofit developer. It was founded in 1987 with the goal of promoting economic development for low-income women and their children and its first project consisted of eight affordable housing units. Over the course of three decades, WCRP has flourished to 369 affordable homes, including a community land trust.</p>	<p>WCRP, owns about 75% of the units. The remaining units are owned and managed by the non-profit's community land trust.</p>	<p>Community input collected during the original design process was led by a group of low-income women representing the project's priority community.</p>	<p>Exemplifies a community development project that was ideated, scoped, planned and executed by people living in the communities the project was designed to serve.</p>
<p><b>Douglass Community Land Trust (CLT) Washington DC</b> Established in 2019 by a group of Washington DC East Anacostia residents from Black communities who had experienced systemic racism and disinvestment. The group formed in response to imminent displacement threats from the development of DC's new Bridge Park. The land trust owns townhomes and apartment complexes across the city.</p>	<p>Limited equity cooperative and pay it forward ownership model.</p>	<p>Scaled community engagement targeting various ZIP codes across the East Anacostia community from the start to end of the development and design process. Perpetual community stewardship.</p>	<p>The Douglass CLT is a success story of a community-organized response to displacement pressures stemming from a capital infrastructure investment. The project utilized a community-informed process to select a project management partner who effectively addressed power differentials when they emerged in the planning process.</p>
<p><b>Queer the Land Seattle, WA</b> Founded in 2016, Queer the Land is a collectively owned, cooperatively stewarded land and housing project centered on self-determination and shared governance. It was established to counter displacement, creating a permanent, self-sustaining hub for QT2BIPOC organizers. After five years of fundraising, the group acquired the Emma Goldman Finishing School in the Beacon Hill neighborhood with the help of City of Seattle's Equitable Development Initiative.</p>	<p>Non-profit ownership community land trust.</p>	<p>The project was led by community members from conceptualization to acquisition, to governance and stewardship structure design.</p>	<p>Prime example of individually-owned real estate assets being disposed of for community ownership and perpetual affordability. The project is a recipient of Seattle municipal funding for community-driven development.</p>

# Appendix I

Project and Description	Ownership	Community participation	Unique qualities
<p><b>El Centro de La Raza &amp; Plaza Roberto Maestas Seattle, WA</b>            A community center and a mixed-use building offering 112 affordable housing units, retail space, and community gathering spaces. Located next to the Beacon Hill neighborhood light rail station, the properties were acquired and developed by El Centro in response to targeted disinvestment affecting immigrant and low-income residents.</p>	<p>The properties are owned by the 501c3 nonprofit organization and community development corporation, El Centro De La Raza.</p>	<p>The El Centro building was founded and rehabilitated by community advocates who led its 1972 occupation. Plaza Roberto Maestas was designed with community input collected through over thirty community engagement sessions.</p>	<p>Vibrant murals by artists and social justice activists from El Centro's diasporic community tell the story of the buildings' origination and vision. El Centro is renowned for its inclusive and transit-oriented design and its participation in a multi-racial grassroots movement which resulted in the successful acquisition of land and real estate assets benefiting Black, Native, Asian, and Chicano communities.</p>
<p><b>Kensington Corridor Trust (KCT), Philadelphia, PA</b>            After decades of blight, the KCT was founded in 2019 with the goal of moving property out of Kensington's increasingly speculative real estate market and into the hands of the local community. The KCT is a collective of mixed-use buildings, multi-and single-family properties spread across 1.4 miles of the Kensington transit corridor. The Trust is managed by a board of current and past neighborhood residents (most of whom are Latinx) and small business ownership.</p>	<p>Incorporates elements from land trusts, nonprofit, and business improvement district models. The nonprofit arm acquires real estate assets and the trust provides oversight.</p>	<p>The project was initiated by a group of impact investors and then transitioned to a community board. The board makes decisions about the assets in alignment with the community benefit intent stipulated by the trust's legal framework.</p>	<p>This project features a unique ownership-stewardship structure and sheds a light on the role that private investors and developers can play in advancing community ownership.</p>
<p><b>Park Village Apartments, Stockton, CA</b>            A tenant-stewarded apartment complex offering multi-bedroom family units and community recreation spaces to primarily immigrant and Cambodian residents. In 1993, HUD sold the property to a nonprofit agency founded by Park Village's Cambodian tenants. Due to negligence and inadequate translation of legal documents HUD failed to transfer the deed post sale and today the tenants' ownership of the property hangs in limbo.</p>	<p>Non-profit ownership model. A transfer of deed contract was established contingent upon demonstration of adequate capacity, which they received support for and fulfilled within the first ten years.</p>	<p>Residents of the Park Village Apartments led efforts to acquire the property from HUD, including establishing their own nonprofit to assume ownership. The property is stewarded by the nonprofit and tenant board members.</p>	<p>This project exemplifies how shared history, sense of community, and collective stories of place can fuel community-driven asset control and anti-displacement efforts. It also points to HUD's ability to support tenant ownership, given the appropriate accountability mechanisms, through transfer of real estate assets and tenant capacity-building.</p>
<p><b>Plaza 122 Portland, OR</b>            A community-owned commercial space located in East Portland that leases space to around 30 local business and nonprofit tenants. The development of the project was led by the Community Investment Trust (CIT) and is now owned by the East Portland Community Investment Trust (EPCIT), founded by the CIT.</p>	<p>Community investment trust ownership model.</p>	<p>Project conceived by development experts and presented to target ZIP code residents for approval and input throughout design and execution stages.</p>	<p>Plaza 122 is community-owned through a nationally recognized shared wealth generation model called a community investment trust.</p>

Ownership of Change survey instrument (Binet et al., 2022)

Changes	1. Are these changes happening in your neighborhood?	2. Does the average person in your community have a voice in these changes?	3. Are these changes for you? (for your benefit)	4. Are you personally involved?
Building new homes, apartments or condos	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Building new commercial developments like shops, cafes, offices	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Building or improving public spaces like libraries, plazas, community centers	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Creating new jobs in the neighborhood	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Creating or improving public green spaces like parks, greenways, community gardens	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Developing new transportation options	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
Changing policies practices and activities	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know	Yes, No, Don't Know
	<i>Skip logic: If "no" or "don't know" skip questions B, C, and D</i>	<i>Skip if answered "no" or "don't know" to question A</i>	<i>Skip if answered "no" or "don't know" to question A</i>	<i>Skip if answered "no" or "don't know" to question A</i>

Binet, A., Nidam, Y., Houston-Read, R., Lopez, C. G., Del Rio, G. Z., Abreu, D., Baty, C., et al. (2022). Ownership of change: Participatory development of a novel latent construct for neighborhoods and health equity research. *Journal of Social Science and Medicine*, 309, 115–234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115234>

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