

Burlington Community Land Trust
Strategic Plan

2004 - 2009



BCLT

Mission Statement

*The Burlington Community
Land Trust is a
grassroots organization whose
goal is to ensure access to
affordable homes and vital
communities for all people
through the democratic
stewardship of land.*



Strategic Planning Process

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

During the spring and summer 2004, BCLT's Board, staff, and members joined to develop a strategic plan to establish and to articulate clearly our goals and our priorities for the next five years. Our first step was to survey confidentially dozens of our partners, donors and funding agencies, as well as a broad range of stakeholders. This input provided invaluable feedback to the board and staff who ultimately drew up the final plan through a series of meetings, including a two-day retreat in July.

Robbie Harold of Harold and Associates facilitated the process, conducted the confidential surveys, and drafted the plan for the Directors' review.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and to the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board for funding the process and producing this report.

Thank you also to all the community members who shared their valuable opinions and feedback, and to our dedicated staff and board who gave up evenings and a weekend to complete the project.

BCLT 2004 Board of Directors

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Hal Colston, Vice President

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BCLT Values and Operating Principles: Screens for All Contemplated Activities

1. *Stewardship*
2. *Community control of land*
3. *Involvement of constituents in governance*
4. *Responsible risk-taking*
5. *Balanced fiscal and social responsibility*
6. *Inclusiveness*
7. *Partnership*
8. *High quality of services*
9. *Honesty and integrity*
10. *Perpetual affordability*
11. *Flexibility to meet commitments in changing circumstances*
12. *Building and strengthening sustainable capacity to deliver services*

Strategic Plan Evaluation

Evaluation will occur annually and will inform the annual workplan and budget process.

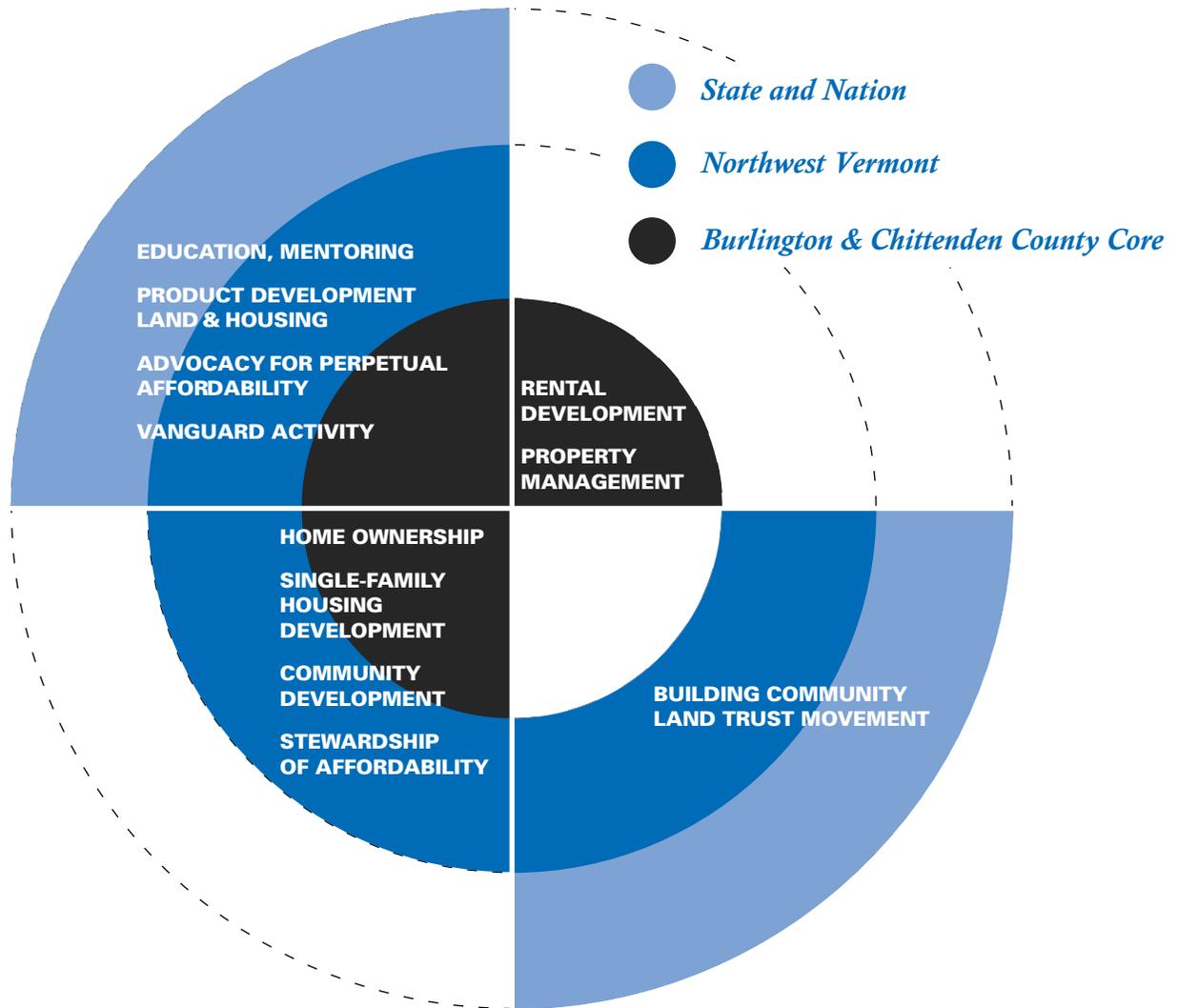
Co-Directors and Department Managers will be evaluated against plan goals as amended in annual process.

BCLT Board committees will provide oversight and evaluation of their respective areas in accordance with the plan.

BCLT's Target Area and Activities

Service areas:

- Three Northwest counties: Chittenden, Grand Isle, Franklin
- State of Vermont
- National-level advocacy



Programs in core area (inner Chittenden County):

- Home Ownership Center
- Single-family housing development
- Community development
- Rental development
- Property management

Programs in broad service area:

- Home Ownership Center (has statewide aspects)
- Single-family housing development
- Community development

Leadership function nationally (and statewide):

- Advocacy
- Mentoring
- Product development
- Innovation—being in the vanguard

BCLT Five Year Goals

Customer and Community Goals

- I. BCLT-assisted home ownership grows by at least 10% per year overall, with at least 30% of that growth in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. HOC will serve at least 350 new households per year ongoing with 150 of those purchasing each year.

Benchmark:

221 homes are added, of which at least 70 are in Franklin and Grand Isle counties

Strategies:

- *VHCB HOMELAND program will be tapped for grants and down payment assistance, and also supplemented by new and non-traditional sources*
- *BCLT will build at least 111 net new single-family homes*
- *Under Burlington's perpetual affordability ordinance, BCLT will absorb a number of affordable homes through inclusionary zoning*
- *BCLT will meet stewardship obligations of homes in portfolio through resale services to the 6% of homes that turn over annually as well as provide post purchase programs under the full cycle lending model*

Lead: *Homeownership Director*

Support: *Project Developer, Executive Co-Director, Development Director, HOC staff*

Partners: *private developers, VHCB, Neighborhood Reinvestment (NR), VHFA, banks, credit unions, Freddie Mac, municipalities, foundations, homebuyers*

Contingencies:

- *VHCB is fully funded*
- *BCLT's share of the VHCB "pie" is maintained*
- *New, supplemental funds are secured from nontraditional sources*

Threats to achievement of goal:

If state and federal government funding is further curtailed, re-evaluate goal in January 2005
Down turn in real estate market

Evaluation:

Six months from Plan adoption and annually thereafter
HOC educated homebuyers

- II.** BCLT revitalizes an average of five substandard properties per year in Burlington's Old North End, whether owned or rented housing, commercial or mixed-use properties.

Key considerations:

Residents will not be displaced

BCLT commitment to the neighborhood will be renewed

BCLT reactivates neighborhood relationships

Strategies:

- *Priority for home ownership under BCLT stewardship*
- *Chittenden HomeOwnership Center serving Burlington*
- *Section 8 Homeownership program*
- *Create mixed-use developments*
- *In commercial spaces, priority for long-term nonprofit tenants*
- *Outreach to neighborhood residents to occupy the created homes*
- *Conversion of existing BCLT rental properties to home ownership where appropriate*

Lead: *Project Director*

Support: *Co-Directors, Homeownership Director*

Partners: *City of Burlington: CEDO and elected leaders, VHCB, VHFA, Housing Vermont, Neighborhood Planning Assemblies and other neighborhood groups, Investors and lenders*

Contingencies that would threaten goal:

- *Radical reduction in federal funding (see goal I)*
- *Radical change in City government support*
- *Economic downturn, e.g. interest rates rising to 9% or more, unemployment in the Burlington LMA to 6% or more* □ □

Evaluation:

Annual from plan adoption; if any of above contingencies occur, revisit goal

III.

Federal and state housing policy further incorporates and funds the land trust model.

Strategies: *Advocate to Federal government for funding and policy support*
Demonstrate impact of CLT model through BCLT achievements
Use media to publicize success and educate public
Help strengthen CLT network
Mentor emerging community land trusts and government entities interested in model

Lead: *Co-Directors*

Support: *Project Director, Homeownership Director*

Partners: *Institute for Community Economics, Burlington Associates, Ford Foundation, Neighborhood Reinvestment, Congressional delegation, VANPO, Affordable Housing Coalition, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board*

Evaluation:

Annual from plan adoption

IV.

Employer-assisted home ownership produces at least 5 new homeowners per year.

Strategies: *Start with visible institutional employers*
Use home ownership development pipeline and resources as leverage

Lead: *Executive Co-Director*

Support: *Project Developer, Homeownership Director*

Partners: *Major employers (e.g. Fletcher Allen, UVM, IDX, IBM, municipal governments), VHFA and other home ownership funding sources*

Contingencies that would threaten goal:

- *Drastic economic downturn/reduction in demand for labor*
- *Drastic downturn in real estate market*

Evaluation:

Annual from plan adoption; if any of above contingencies occur, revisit goal

V.

A community outside Burlington meets an affordable housing goal via a housing development, completed by BCLT, which reinforces or revitalizes the town or village center.

Strategies:

Respond to local groups and governments who seek BCLT's help to provide affordable housing in their communities, by education, community organizing, regulatory changes, project feasibility analysis, and project development

Continue to work with Charlotte on education, awareness campaign, feasibility analysis and regulatory changes; respond as capacity allows to other communities such as Jericho and Hinesburg

Lead: *Executive Co-Director, Project Developer*

Support: *Homeownership Director*

Partners: *Local land trusts, Local governments, Citizen groups, VCDP, VHCB, LCHDC (in Franklin and Grand Isle counties), Investors and lenders*

Contingencies that would threaten goal:

Drastic cuts in resources for housing development

Evaluation:

Annually from plan adoption

VI.

Winooski has a new multi-use community center building and a revitalized Malletts Bay Avenue neighborhood.

Strategies for Center:

Facilitate community process to determine site and programming
Conduct feasibility studies for all aspects of project
Direct capital campaign and raise funds
Manage construction

Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization:

Support community planning process
Help City implement responses to citizen input e.g. rehab program, acquisition and redevelopment, public infrastructure improvements
Conduct feasibility studies for neighborhood

Lead: *Executive Co-Director (Center), Project Developer (neighborhood)*

Support: *Finance Co-Director, Homeownership Director*

Partners: *City of Winooski Community Development office, Service organizations in Winooski, Malletts Bay Avenue neighborhood residents, VCDP, Investors and capital campaign leadership and donors*

Contingencies that would threaten goal:

- *Political priorities of Winooski change to detriment of support for projects*
- *Drastic cuts in resources for housing development*

Evaluation:

Annually from Plan adoption

VII.

BCLT is producing at least 20 net new affordable rental apartments per year in the greater Burlington area.

Strategies:

Larger scale developments with a larger number of affordable apartments

New construction or creative redevelopment to create new apartments

Respond to requests from communities

Seek sites with public and private development partners

Support housing goals in communities' Town Plans

Lead: *Project Developer*

Support: *Co-Directors, Director of Property Management*

Partners: *Housing Vermont, Federal and State funding sources, Municipal governments, Private developers, other nonprofits or service providers, Investors and lenders, Citizen groups*

Contingencies that would threaten goal:

- *Change in State resource distribution policies and laws*
- *Drastic cuts in resources for housing development*

Evaluation:

Annually from Plan adoption

BCLT Five Year Goals

Internal Goals

- I. Property management is fully stabilized, operating above breakeven and at or above industry standards for affordable housing, with BCLT resident leadership fully implemented.

Strategies:

- *Reorganize Facilities and Property Management departments into one department headed by a Director of Property Management who oversees all aspects of property management including facilities maintenance, asset management, occupancy, and resident services*
- *Use results from analysis of property management program to establish benchmarks for parameters such as staffing vs. workload in rental, co-op and commercial properties; vacancy rates; turnover rates; maintenance; capital improvements, and other NeighborWorks® Multi-Family Initiative criteria*
- *Reduce vacancy rate to 3%*
- *Revisit property management strategy in light of collaboration discussions with LCHDC and make recommendations for future action to Boards of BCLT and LCHDC (July 2005)*
- *Create Resident Services capacity to facilitate tenant access to needed services provided by outside agencies: life skills, health, budgeting, employment, etc. (July / August 2005)*
- *Establish residents' associations for properties with 25 or more apartments*
- *Develop a set of criteria for portfolio properties and review each site to determine whether it fits BCLT mission and should remain in BCLT portfolio*

Lead: *Co-Directors, Director of Property Management*

Support: *Senior Property Manager, Property Manager, Occupancy Coordinator, Facilities / Construction Manager, appropriate Accounting staff, Administrative Assistant*

Partners: *Housing Vermont asset managers, NR Multi-Family Initiative, VHCB, VHFA*

Deadline for achieving benchmarks:

6 months from plan adoption

Evaluation:

6 months from Plan adoption and annually thereafter

II.

Administrative Systems are optimized through the creation of IT staff capacity and Human Resources Administration at the management level.

A. IT Strategy:

- *Work with current personnel consultant to structure IT functions*
- *Create half-time IT management capacity*
- *Secure professional assessment of current IT systems*
- *Review current IT contract and establish performance benchmarks*

Lead: *Finance Co-Director*

Support: *Executive Co-Director*

Resource issue: *space constraints in headquarters office. Possible solution: find space to deploy (other staff as appropriate) staff in owned or managed properties*

Deadline:

Six months after Plan adoption

B. Human Resources capacity strategy:

- *Reconfigure an existing positions to incorporate half-time H.R. management responsibilities*
- *Provide staff with additional training and compensation as needed*
- *Include position in management team*
- *Review job descriptions annually regarding workload*

Lead: *Executive Co-Director*

Support: *Finance Co-Director, Senior Accountant*

Resource issue: *potential work overload for selected staff (needs to be monitored)*

Deadline:

Six months after Plan adoption

Evaluation:

one year from Plan adoption

III.

Within three years of Plan adoption, staff salaries and benefits are competitive (within 10% of norms for comparable experience and qualifications) with the private sector in our labor market area, and staff turnover is at or below 7% annually.

Strategies:

- *By October 1, 2004, adopt new compensation plan and adjust salaries and benefits accordingly*
- *Review and update the salary scale every three years*
- *Conduct annual salary reviews and adjustments*
- *Manage health care costs to enable organization to provide other benefits*

Leads: *Co-Directors*

Support: *Management team and Personnel Committee*

Deadlines:

Salary and health care adjustments implemented October 1, 2004

New benefit implemented October 1, 2005

Resource issue: *Requires significant growth in annual income (see goal VI)*

Evaluation:

Annually from Plan adoption

IV.

BCLT is financially sustainable and has at least \$3 million in a permanent endowment as well as a \$250,000 operating reserve.

Strategies:

- *Implement the Legacy Campaign, a three-year planned giving campaign as proposed to Board in 2004*
- *Dedicate no less than 1% of all earned fees to the operating reserve and raise the balance as part of the three-year Legacy Campaign*

Leads: *Executive Co-Director, Lois McClure, Peter Clavelle, Bob Robbins, Board Chair*

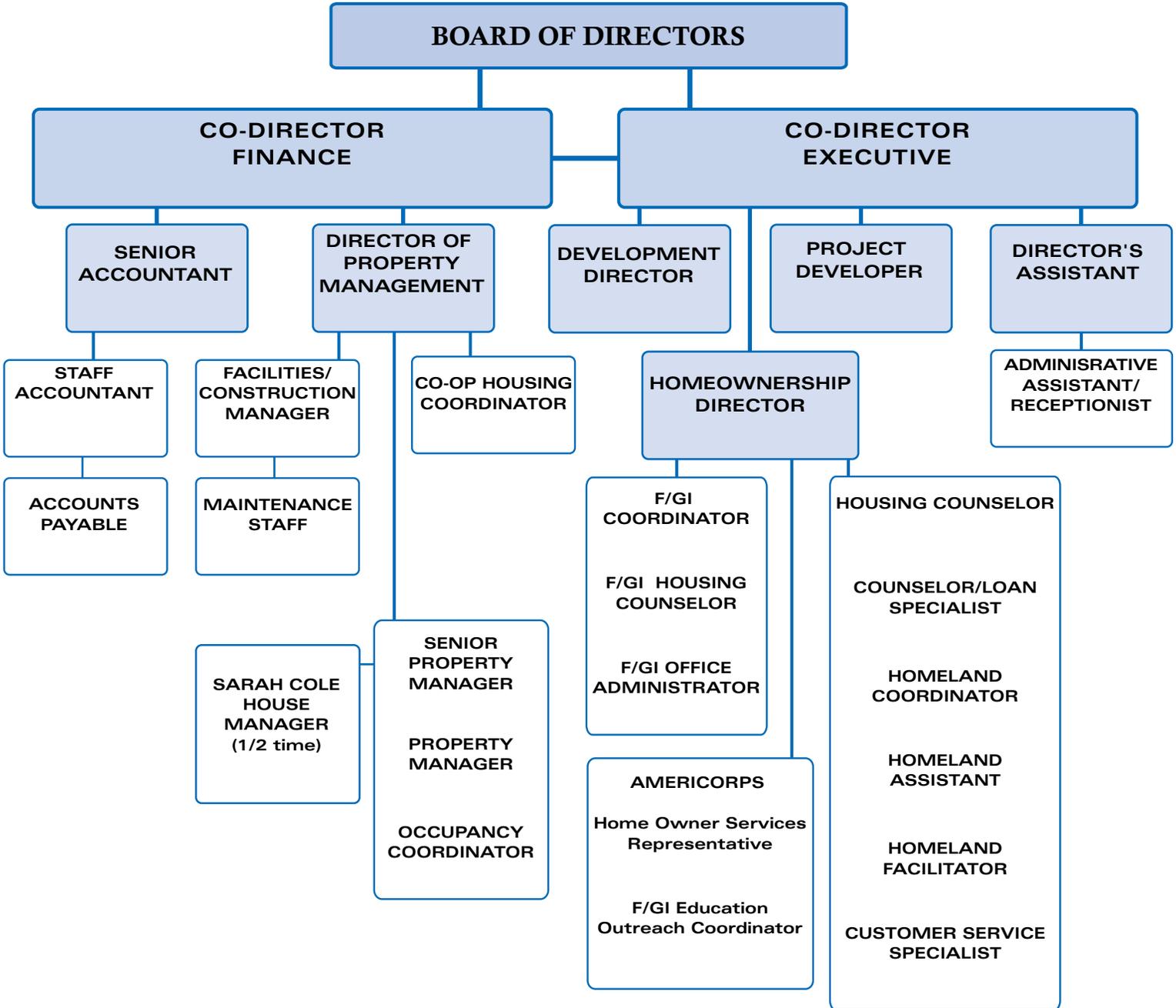
Support: *Development Director, Finance Co-Director, Director's Assistant, Board members, other volunteers*

Resource issue: *Executive Co-Director's ability to devote adequate time to process*

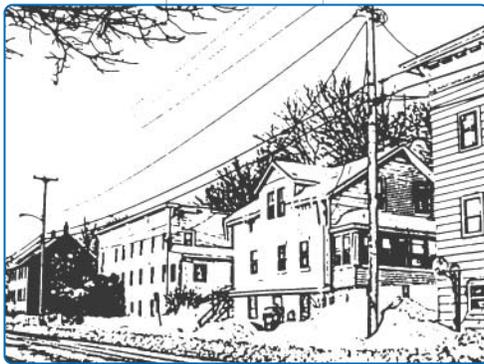
Evaluation:

Annually from Plan adoption

Burlington Community Land Trust Organizational Chart



As of December 2004



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