

# BUILT BY US

**August 21, 2025**

How Nonprofits Can  
Lead the Charge  
in Local Development

This is a recorded webinar,  
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**Presented by**  
Center for Creative Land Recycling  
Atlas Community Studios  
Groundwork USA



CENTER FOR CREATIVE  
LAND RECYCLING  
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.



# CENTER FOR CREATIVE LAND RECYCLING

## **U.S. EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfields Provider (TAB) for R9 & 10.**

Our mission is to promote the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties. We educate, advocate, assist and convene stakeholders to revitalize communities through land recycling.

### **What We Do:**

- Training + Resources
- Redevelopment Planning
- Grant Prep + Review
- Remediation Support
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Project Visioning





## **Groundwork USA**

Groundwork USA is a national nonprofit that supports and strengthens grassroots efforts to build healthier, more resilient neighborhoods. We do this by working deeply with our network of place-based affiliates and by facilitating national peer-to-peer learning, technical assistance, and grantmaking programs for community-centered organizations nationwide.

## **Groundwork Network**

The Groundwork Network is a national network of community-centered nonprofits working at the intersection of people, places, and systems to build healthier, more resilient neighborhoods



# Get in Touch and Stay in Touch!

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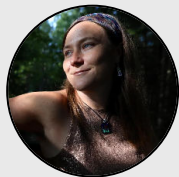
# **WELCOME & REFRAMING THE NARRATIVE**

# Introduction



**Kate Greene**

Redevelopment Director  
Atlas Community Studios



**Lori McKinney**

Co-Founder/Executive Director  
RiffRaff Arts Collective

# Session Goals



Redefine what development can look like for nonprofits and community leaders.



Build your confidence and capacity to lead your own projects.



Explore practical strategies, capital tools, and partnership models.



Learn from real-world examples and lived experience.

# Why Local Ownership Matters



Outside developers often extract wealth.



When nonprofits lead, we build assets that reflect our values and protect community interests.



Local ownership helps retain wealth, foster accountability, and strengthen community resilience.



# Before We Knew We Could Lead...

- At first, we assumed the City would take it on
- I saw myself as a guide or advocate - not in a developer role
- I never imagined our nonprofit owning or managing the project
- When no one else stepped up, we did because we had to



# Before We Knew We Could Lead...

- We believed someone else would redevelop downtown
- Spent years trying to attract outside developers
- Threw events, polished storefronts, pushed incentives and tried to sell, sell, sell!
- Eventually realized: we should invest first
- Took the leap without all the answers

# DEMYSTIFYING THE DEVELOPER ROLE



# **Poll: What does a developer have that you don't?**

# The Developer Skill Set

## Project Management

Communication + Negotiation

Financial

Legal + Regulatory

Problem-Solving

## Leadership

Market Analysis

## Networking

Engineering, Environmental,  
Construction

# Elements of a Development Project

## *What a Developer Oversees*

- **Vision and purpose** defining the project (with community input)
- Site control and acquisition
- Predevelopment work (due diligence, feasibility, budgeting, entitlements, permitting, environmental remediation)
- Securing (and stacking) the capital (grants, loans, tax credits, donations, etc)
- Construction
- Marketing and tenant commitments (if applicable)
- Launching operations and ongoing asset management

# Nonprofits as Developers

- Ensures the mission remains intact
- Opportunity to diversify revenue streams
- Wealth stays in the community
- Community needs drive the project

# **A MOMENT OF SELF-REFLECTION**



# What's True for Your Team?

Before you commit, reflect on a few internal drivers:

- What's your motivation for doing this? What's your why?
- What's your risk tolerance?
- Do you want the responsibility of owning the property long-term, or do you just want to influence the outcome?

# Are You **READY** to Lead This Project?

- Project Cost - *Can you secure the funding to pull this off?*
- Internal Capacity - *Can you manage it, or do you need help?*
- **Strategic Fit** - *Does leading this project advance your mission?*
- Project Complexity - *Is it a light lift or a heavy lift?*

# **UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS**

## **The Development Spectrum**



**Poll: What challenges do you anticipate when posing a development opportunity to your board?**

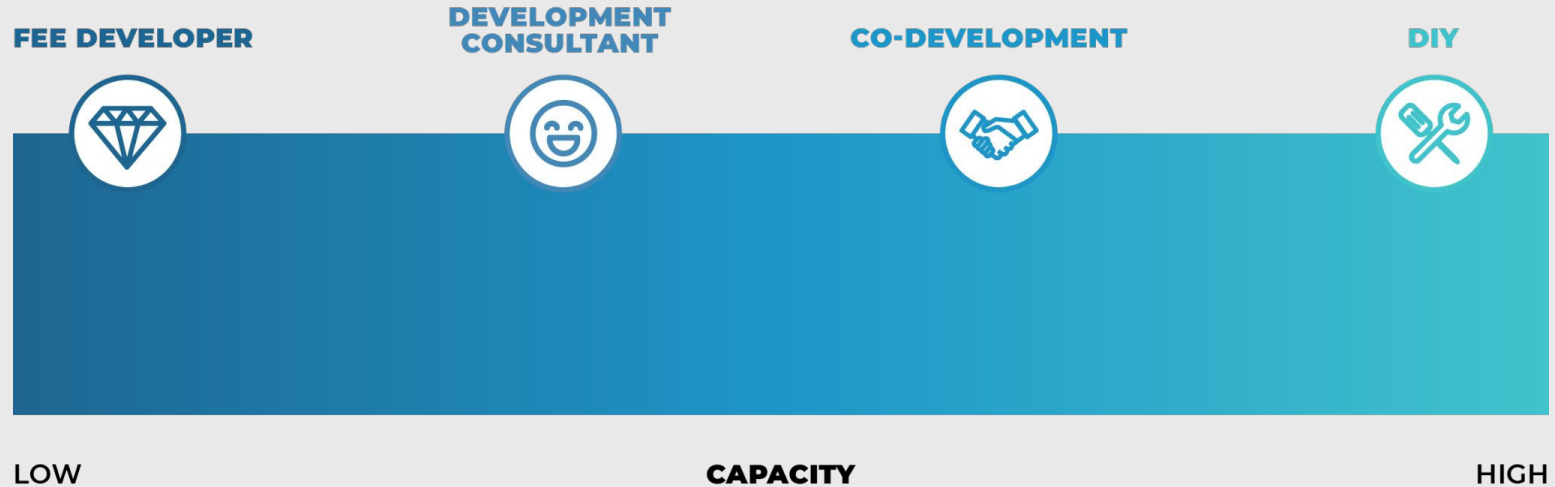
**Development  
is a team sport,  
but there's still  
individual risk  
involved**

There are two things **core to the developer role** that can't be outsourced:

- Securing site control or ownership of the property
- Accessing and securing the capital to make the project happen

Everything else? You can build a team to support it.

# The Development Spectrum



# Fee Developer

- Oversee the project from start to finish
- Nonprofit remains in control
- Reduces risk for the org and increases investor confidence
- Delivers a turn-key operation at completion
- Long-term wealth stays local

***Ownership and long-term wealth accumulation stay local.***



# Development Consultant

- You lead, they advise (they support your leadership)
- Brings technical know-how (finance, deal structuring, etc.)
- Often starts as 80/20 (consultant-heavy), then shifts
- “Train the trainer” model that builds internal capacity
- Invests in human capital and long-term local wealth

***You build the project and your team’s capacity to do it again.***



# Co-Development

- Shares risk while keeping the nonprofit at the table
- Leverages private capital + expertise for community-led outcomes
- Strengthens position to successfully access certain funding tools
- Increases funder/investor confidence
- Can ensure long-term nonprofit benefit (revenue sharing, buy-out)
- Requires trust and airtight legal agreements!

***You share the risk AND collaborate to shape an outcome that reflects community values.***

# DIY Developer

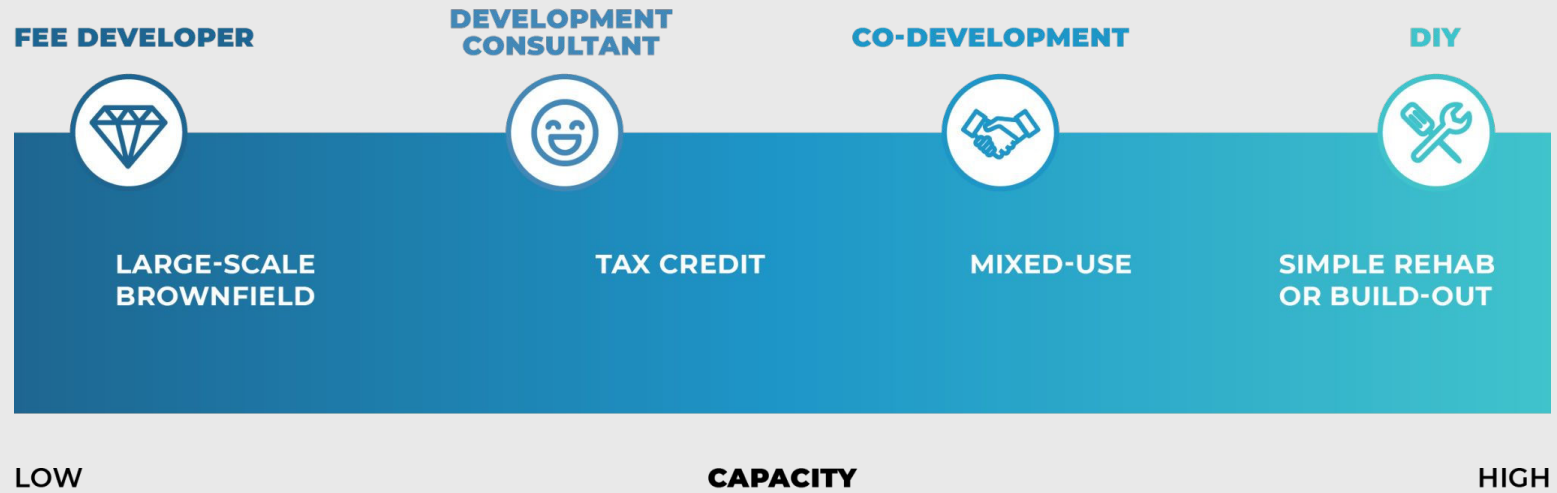
- You lead the project from concept to completion
- Full control over vision, timeline, outcomes
- You're in charge of building the team
- Highest responsibility and risk
- Best suited for small-scale, phased, or less complex projects

***Biggest risk, but all the rewards - revenue, credibility, and impact.***



# CHOOSING YOUR APPROACH

# Exactly HOW Complex Is It....?



# **CASE STUDY: FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION AS DEVELOPER**



# Bethel A.M.E. Church

## Building Blocks of a Developer

- **Operational Capacity:** Runs a well-established outreach center, demonstrating experience with programs, compliance, and community trust
- **Internal Expertise:** Leadership includes a retired public housing CEO, bringing deep knowledge of affordable housing development and finance
- **Site Control:** Holds a vacant lot adjacent to the church - one of the most critical starting points for any project



# Why They Chose to Develop

Instead of Selling  
to a Developer

- **Protect community priorities:** Ensure housing meets urgent local needs and keeps land in service of long-term community benefit
- **Maintain mission alignment:** Retain control over affordability, design, and who the project ultimately serves
- **Create sustainable income:** Use developer fees or rental income to support church programs and future ministry work

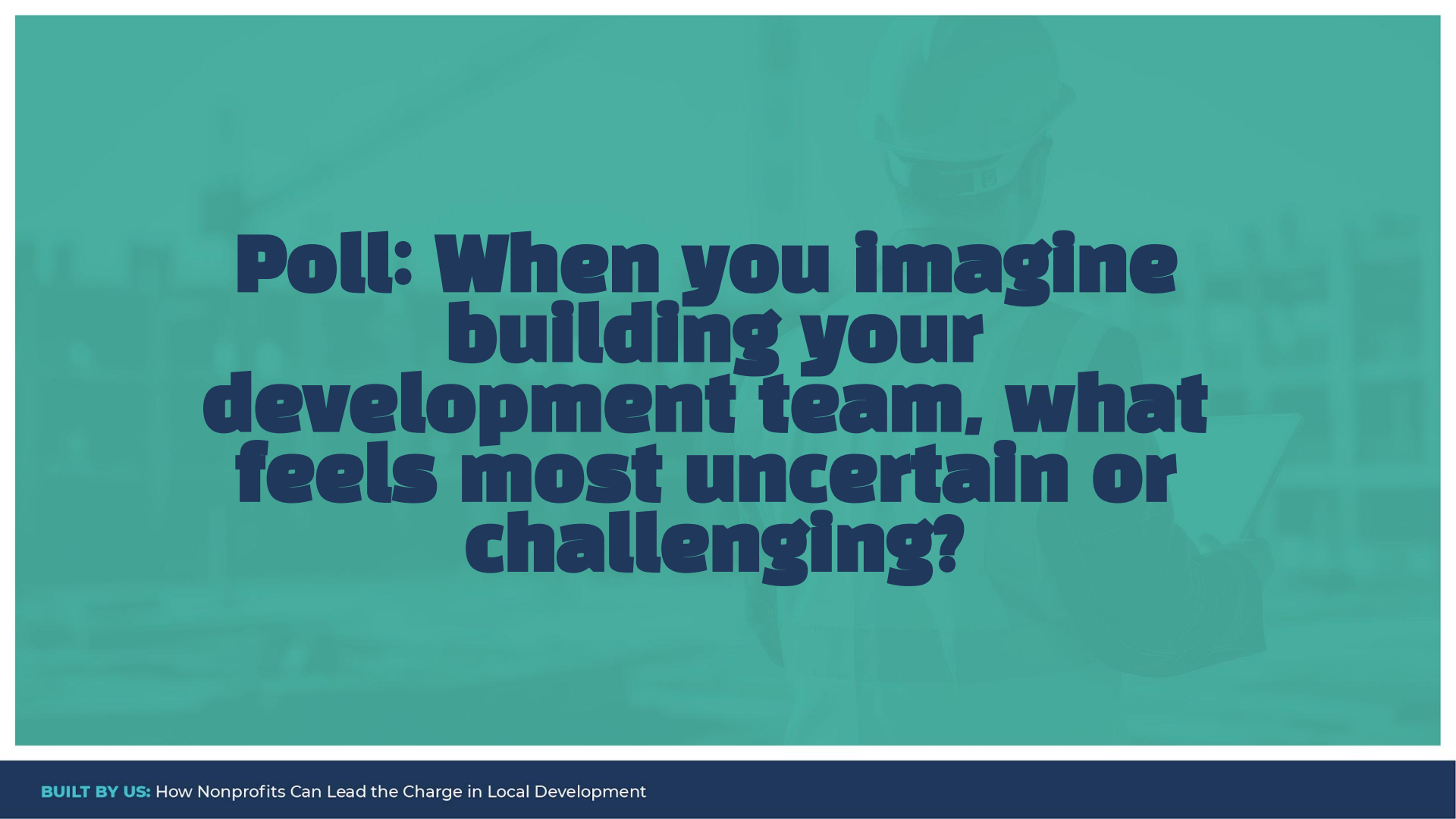


# Technical Partnership

Bethel A.M.E. Church  
+  
Enterprise

- Joined Enterprise's Faith-Based Development Initiative (FBDI) for
  - Training on development fundamentals
  - Legal structuring support
  - Peer learning and coaching from other faith-based developers

# **BUILDING A DEVELOPMENT TEAM**



**Poll: When you imagine  
building your  
development team, what  
feels most uncertain or  
challenging?**

# Who You'll Need + When

## Early Stage (Visioning & Feasibility)

- Architect
- Market + Feasibility Advisor
- Community Engagement Specialist
- Development Finance Advisor
- Environmental Consultant
- Legal Counsel



# Who You'll Need + When

*(continued)*

## Mid-State (Pre-Development & Capital Stacking)

- Cost Estimator/GC (*preconstruction*)
- Tax credit consultant (*if applicable*)
- Capital Partners/Funders (*letters of interest, pledges, etc.*)



# Who You'll Need + When

*(continued)*

## Final Phases (Construction & Operation)

- General Contractor
- Property/Asset Manager *(if you're holding long-term, this might also be you!)*
- Tenants/End Users *(input on space fit, agreements)*
- Funding/compliance manager
- Accountant, Bookkeeper, Grant Manager





**BUILT BY US:** How Nonprofits Can Lead the Charge in Local Development

# PROJECT FUNDING





**Poll: When you think  
about how your project  
might get funded, what's  
your biggest question or  
concern?**

# Project Funding: The Usual Suspects

## Traditional Sources

- Technical assistance
- Grants / Forgivable loans
- Loans (banks, CDFIs, USDA, etc.)
- Tax Credits (Historic, NMTC, LIHTC)
- Public finance tools (TIF, CDBG funds, conduit bonds, etc)
- Philanthropic Gifts



# Project Funding: The Power of Us

(continued)

## Community-Based Capital Tools

- **Regulation Crowdfunding:** Raise investments from your community (and beyond) via an online platform
- **Main Street Investment LLCs:** Community investors pool capital to invest
- **Community Notes or Loan Funds:** Community members lend to the project and receive modest returns
- **Program-Related Investments (PRIs):** Low-interest loans or equity from foundations

## CROWDFUNDING MODELS



DONATION



REWARD



DEBT



EQUITY



# **Funding Pitfalls: Presenter Discussion**

# **KEY TAKEAWAYS + TOOLS FOR GETTING STARTED**

# What We've Learned...

- You don't need to do it all to be the developer
- Sometimes, the nonprofit developer is the solution for catalyzing growth
- **There are tools, models, and partners for every phase**
- Mission-aligned development is possible, even in small towns and soft markets!

# Let's Do This!!!

- What project are we already dreaming about?
- What do we already control (property, leadership, momentum)?
- What do we need to explore further, and who could help?

# Resources

- Development Spectrum
- Developer Readiness Assessment
- Joint Venture Worksheet



# Thank You!

## Time for Questions & Discussion



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