



# DATA DRIVEN PRACTICES FOR THE DECOMMODIFICATION OF LAND

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As community land trusts (CLTs) respond to California's housing affordability crisis they are utilizing data to help extend their limited capacity and funding. However, CLT-related data work is not being systematically shared, coordinated, or leveraged to enhance the efficiency of data distribution and analysis. To build and share this knowledge base I conducted interviews with practitioners from CLTs and related organizations across the state to understand what questions they are answering with data and how. Interviews revealed that CLTs are using data in five main practices: 1) tenant protections, 2) tenant organizing, 3) removing land from the speculative market, 4) mapping corporate ownership, and 5) advancing policy. In each of these practices, data is leveraged in conversation with community knowledge and the interpretation of data is directed by lived experience. Alongside stories from the field, this report includes a deep dive into the data sources practitioners employed. Such information is useful for those working in the housing rights ecosystem to share how to answer housing questions with data and where to begin in this process.

# INTRODUCTION

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a solution to the limited access to safe and affordable housing caused by the speculative nature of the United States' housing market, which treats housing as a commodity and investment object, rather than an essential source of shelter.

CLTs remove property from the speculative housing market to return land to community control and preserve housing as permanently affordable. The need for CLTs is especially pressing in California where roughly 40% of residents are renters and more than half of renters are housing cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their household income towards rent (Davalos et al., 2021). The financial precarity presented by this burden is compounded by the uncertain nature of renting where the cost of housing, the maintenance of the building, and the future of the property are all outside the control of the tenant.

As CLTs provide the necessary legal and financial mechanisms for renters to transform the precarious position of their housing tenure into a stable one by moving their property into the land trust, the number of CLTs across the state has grown from only five in 2000 to nearly 30 today (CACLTN, 2022).

However, the demand for safe and affordable housing consistently outpaces CLT capacity, as pressure to scale up the size of their portfolios is complicated by limited staff capacity and access to project funding (CACLTN, 2022). To help navigate this imbalance between community demand and available resources, CLTs are utilizing data to enhance their work and help stretch their capacity.

This report shares the findings from interviews with 20 practitioners who are utilizing data to help support the work of CLTs. These stories are shared alongside a technical dive into data sources that together intend to help those across the housing rights ecosystem employ data by understanding what questions CLTs answer with data and how.

The primary finding from these interviews is that CLT work expands beyond property acquisition and land stewardship to include a vast array of work that supports the right to safe and affordable housing. CLT efforts to decommodify housing are carried out at a variety of different time scales (see Figure 1). This includes taking immediate action in moments of crisis like helping tenants respond to eviction notices. This also includes the longer game of supporting tenant organizing efforts to fight rent increases or redevelopment plans. These efforts culminate at the point of moving a property into community control via the land trust, but they don't start or end here. At the far end of the spectrum is the long term work of advancing policy to help enable CLTs to acquire property in the future. In all, CLTs are engaged in the entire ecosystem of housing rights and are using data to support their work across this spectrum.

The questions CLTs are answering with data also vary across this spectrum. In responding to a tenant's eviction notice they may need to know: *who owns this building? Is it rent controlled? Was this eviction notice filed with the Rent Board?*, which can help the tenant decide how to move forward.

In helping to grow tenant organizing they may need to know: *what other buildings does this landlord*

**Figure 1. Spectrum of CLT Practices and Data Tools**

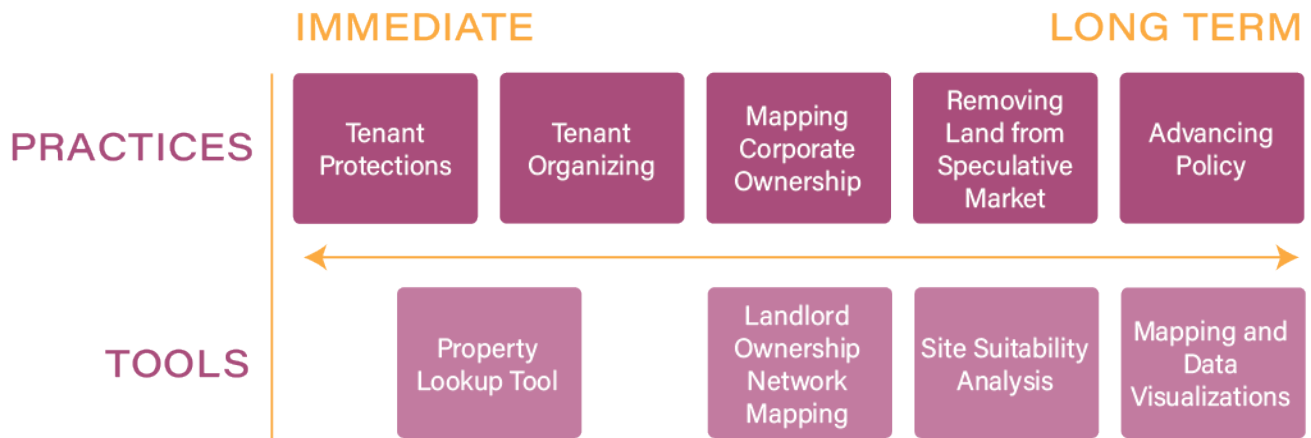


Figure 1. CLT practices that utilize data are shown in dark maroon, the accompanying data tools are shown in maroon, these are mapped across a spectrum of response from immediate to long term

*own? Are they experiencing the same habitability issues?*, which can help inform how to grow the movement.

In working to acquire property the CLT may need to know: *when did the landlord purchase a building? Based on this and their other properties are they likely to sell? Is there any acquisition funding that the building would qualify for?*, which can help direct the CLT’s limited funding to projects with low cost acquisition opportunities.

In educating policy makers and the public about CLTs, maps and data visualizations can help answer questions like: *who owns rental housing in the community? What are the impacts of consolidated ownership?*, which can help CLTs explain their work and the impact it can have.

In addition to what questions practitioners answered with data, they shared what tools and sources they used to access this data. The tools included a property lookup tool to access property and ownership data, a mapping tool that identifies what properties match a set of criteria, and maps and data visualization to explain the

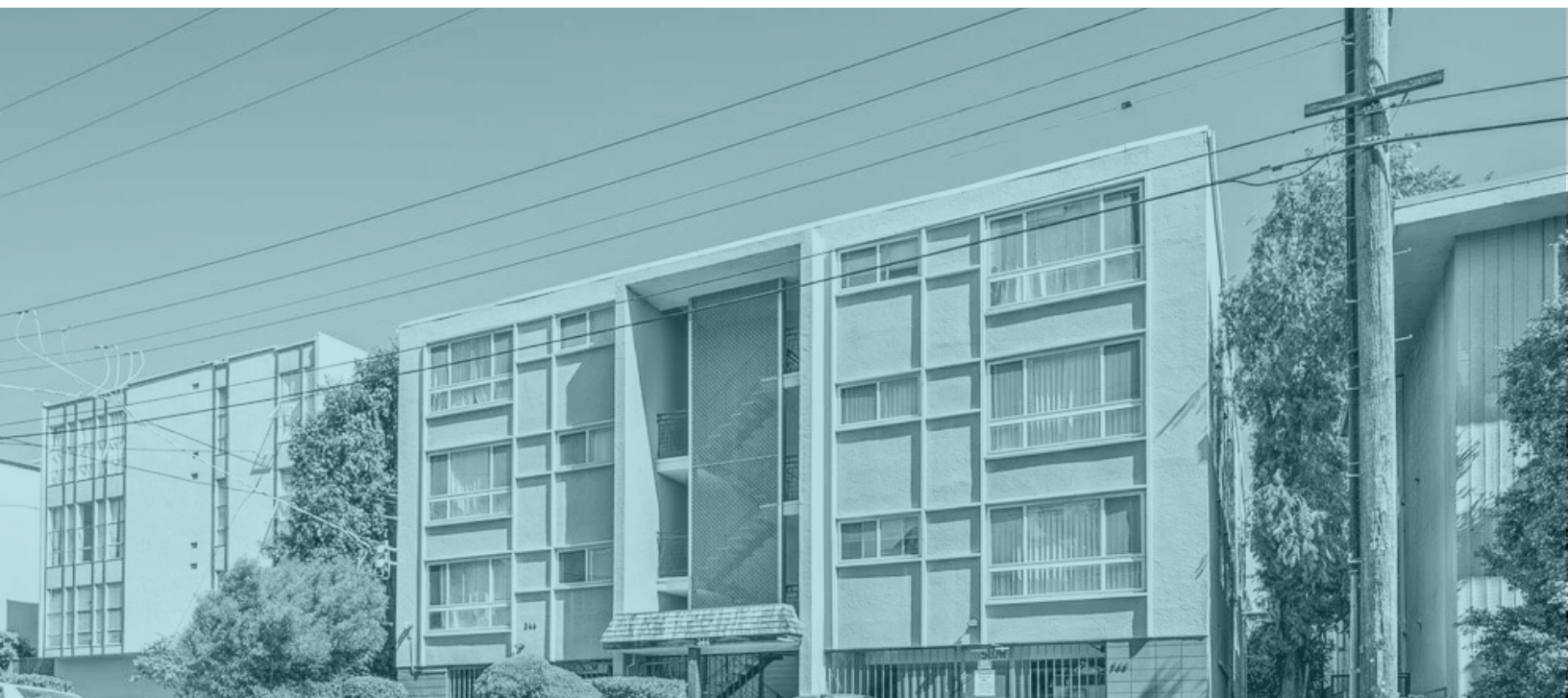
CLT model and its impact.

Working with data can be a complex process that can be hindered by lack of access to data, challenges interpreting data, and difficulties updating data. Navigating these obstacles can be cumbersome and labor intensive. For these reasons, sharing how others are answering housing questions with data is important for fellow practitioners interested in this work, as oftentimes the hardest part of the process is identifying where to start.

This report shares the stories of CLT and related practitioners using data to advance their work, clustered around five primary practices. Furthermore, this report provides a more detailed field guide to what data sources others have used – building permits from the city for example – and what variables within that dataset were informative – permit type, issue date – as sometimes the best way to answer a question is to understand how others are answering it.

This report proceeds as follows. The Background section provides an introduction to CLTs, the housing affordability crisis they are responding to,

and how they leverage data to decommodify land. The Methodology describes how the research was conducted and introduces the organizations and the data projects that were represented by the practitioners interviewed. The Findings section describes how CLTs are using data broken into five practices: 1) tenant protections 2) tenant organizing 3) acquiring property 4) corporate landlord mapping and 5) advancing policy. The Findings section also includes the best practices and common challenges that practitioners shared about this work. Finally, the Conclusions section summarizes the takeaways and cross cutting themes from the practitioners' stories. Additionally, the Appendix features a deep dive into the data which details where practitioners accessed data and what variables within a dataset they used to answer questions.



# BACKGROUND

## What is a CLT?

Community land trusts are affordable housing non-profits that work counter to dominant logics of property as an investment item by creating a “decommodified” form of land that does not trade on the housing market and is permanently held for use by the community. The CLT model has three distinct elements that enable decommodification and community ownership: 1) land is permanently held by the CLT, 2) affordability restrictions on the structure, and 3) collective governance of the CLT.

When a CLT acquires a property, it will hold ownership of the land in perpetuity and lease use of the land to tenants through a 99-year ground lease with affordability restrictions written into the deed. This commits the land to remain permanently off the housing market, while also restricting resale of the structure to below market rates. CLTs are governed by a tripartite board comprised of community members, CLT professionals, and residents, which establishes decision making by the community about CLT properties.

Typically, CLTs help tenants transition the building into a cooperative ownership model to enable asset building for residents. Whether through an ownership or rentership scheme, CLTs work to help “people feel autonomy and sovereignty in housing”, as opposed to risk of displacement or inability to pay rent (F. Barlas, personal communication, March, 2023).

Figure 2. The CLT Model

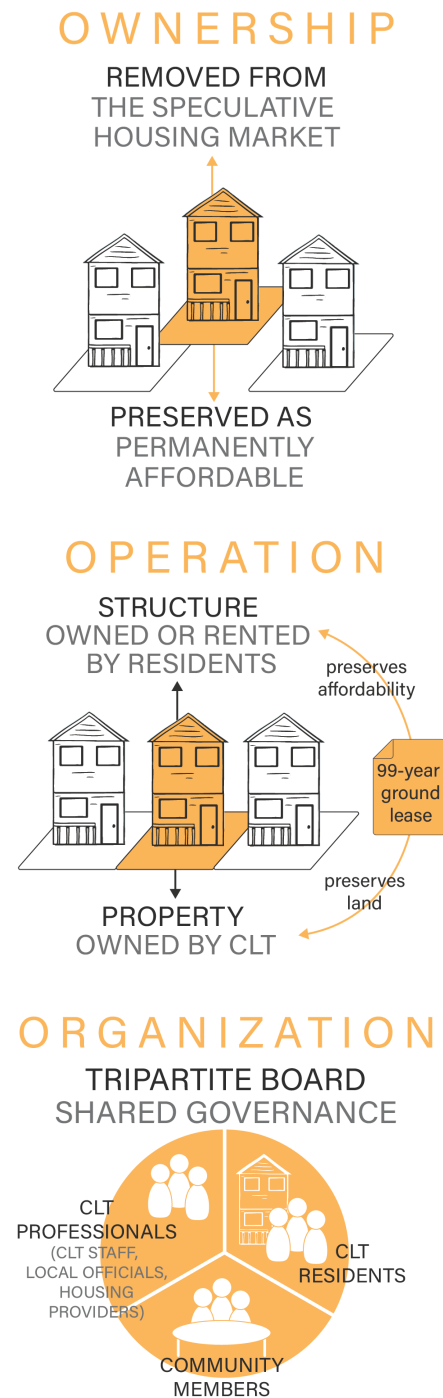


Figure 2. Overview of the unique ownership, operation, and organization elements of the CLT model



## The Crisis that CLTs Respond To

The CLT model is a response to the long lineage of housing as a financial object in the United States that leverages racialized dispossession for wealth accumulation. The US was established as a settler colony through the extraction of land from indigenous people that created the private property scheme recognized today (Blatman-Thomas & Porter, 2018).

In the centuries since racialized dispossession continues to underlie property as a tool for wealth accumulation. The methods through which this is carried out have transformed from more openly discriminatory practices of racial covenants and the exclusion of people of color from government-backed mortgages to more insidious practices of predatory lending targeted at communities of color. The predatory lending of subprime mortgage loans led to mass foreclosure, resulting in land loss for homeowners across the country, hitting California particularly hard.

More than a decade later, the aftermath of mass foreclosure can be seen in the current housing affordability crisis, in which more than half of California renters are housing cost burdened (Davalos et al., 2021). Foreclosure worsened housing affordability as the capitalistic logics that underlie property as an investment item must find ways to continue to generate profits while fixed in place (Harvey, 2001).

The dispossession of foreclosure created the opportunity for investors to swoop in, purchase foreclosed homes for cheap, and turn substantial profits from future resale or by making the homes into rentals. In Oakland over 10,000 homes were foreclosed on, with some parts of the city seeing nearly every home on a block in foreclosure (King, 2012, p. 4). 42% of Oakland's foreclosures

were purchased by investors, capitalizing on the opportunity presented by racialized dispossession (King, 2012, p. 5).

This practice continues today, as in California 29% of single family home sales in 2021 were purchased by investment companies (Henderson, 2022). This shift in ownership transforms homes from opportunities for family wealth building to profit generating objects for corporations.

This practice of investors purchasing homes brought about the creation of a new financial instrument, the securitized “single family rental bond”, which allows single family homes to be bundled and traded as an asset (Abood, 2017). These and similar financial instruments position corporate landlords as accountable to investors, implicating housing in stock market gains and losses. This makes corporate landlords responsible for maximizing profits through high rents and fee collections and minimizing losses through evictions to turn over units when needed (Abood, 2017).

Recent research shows corporate ownership to be related to increased evictions and displacement, as well as poor housing conditions and unethical management practices (Ferrer, 2021). This new ownership form puts renters in a more financially precarious position in potentially unsafe and unhealthy living conditions as their housing serves as the new site of wealth extraction through property.

## How CLTs Intervene

Community land trusts are a mechanism for empowering people to transform their living situations. This was true for the first recognized CLT, New Communities Inc. formed in 1969,

which was created to provide a safe place for a racially integrated agricultural community to escape the dangers of Jim Crow era Georgia (Davis, 2014). Today's CLTs in California continue this tradition of providing a safe and stable alternative to the extractive cycles of the speculative housing market.

The CLT model centers community control of land and the ability for residents to have decision making power over their housing. As such, the CLT acquisition process begins with relationship building with tenants to establish the necessary trust to eventually move their housing into ownership by the CLT. Most often CLTs acquire a building by connecting with an already organized tenant group that is seeking support. Usually, tenants have organized in response to unhealthy living conditions or impending displacement risk from rent increases or eviction notices.

The properties that these tenants live in tend to be older, under-maintained housing stock that is renting at relatively affordable rates. This unsubsidized affordability comes at the expense of tenants having to live in housing that is poorly maintained by the owner, where limited rent control and eviction protections can result in the cost of any improvements to the building being passed through to tenants via rent increases (King, 2017). This affordability also comes at the expense of the neighborhood at large, as these buildings are frequently found in low-income communities of color where decades of local government disinvestment create an absence of amenities and services that enable "affordability". Disinvestment in the property and surrounding neighborhood makes these buildings prime targets for redevelopment as their undervaluation offers large profitability potential.

Moving a property into the community land trust

helps preserve the affordability of the building, as it becomes deed-restricted affordable in the land trust, and preserves the tenants' ability to stay housed and attain a stable living situation. Furthermore, upon acquiring the property the CLT will rehabilitate the building to a safe and healthy standard for residents. This process is called acquisition-rehabilitation (or "ac-rehab"), and for the CLTs interviewed in this report, it is their primary method of creating affordable housing (as opposed to ground-up development). As rehabilitation of the building can require tenants to temporarily move out, the CLT works to make tenants' relocation and return as protected and harmless as possible.

Since their inception in the 1960's, CLTs were created by low-income communities of color in pursuit of safe and stable housing. This remains true today, as a recent survey of California CLTs showed that 60% of CLT residents have an annual household income of under \$40,000 and 80% of CLT residents are people of color (CACLTN, 2022). The survey also reported that 60% of CLTs residents experienced an increase in their economic security after their property was moved into the land trust. Through trust building with organized tenants, CLTs are able to provide the legal and financial mechanism through which tenants move their housing off the speculative market and into the stability of permanently affordable housing.

While CLTs provide a promising exit from the exploitative cycle of rental housing in the US, they are heavily dependent on government subsidy and funding to enable their work. In an expensive housing market like California's, CLTs need government subsidy to afford acquisitions (F. Barlas, personal communication, March, 2023).

This is compounded with the reality that CLTs must compete not only with for-profit companies to acquire properties, but also with traditional non-profit housing developers for access to limited government funds. CLTs in California report the primary obstacles in their work to be lack of funding for acquisitions and lack of staff capacity (CACLTN, 2022).

## Data Work for CLTs

CLTs are unable to meet the demand for safe and affordable housing in their communities given their limited capacity and funding. As such, CLTs are utilizing data to help direct limited resources. Data is employed in a variety of ways, including to help tenants respond to their housing crisis, to help the CLT identify properties to prioritize for acquisition, and to advance public campaigns to further CLT efforts and to access greater funding streams.

However, working with data can be a complex, labor intensive process that is challenging to navigate, especially for time strapped CLT practitioners. As such, this report aims to centralize and share knowledge about how data is being used by CLTs to help others who seek to work at the intersection of data and housing rights advocacy do so more effectively.

In this report the term “data” is used to refer to quantitative datasets that are created by government agencies and made accessible for use by the public. The reality of the accessibility of “public” data is oftentimes bleak and can be highly dependent on the funding and staffing of an agency. While access issues are varied across agencies, they are widespread in general, as even California’s most well resourced city governments have restrictions on access to their data. This lack

of accessibility is what the non-profits in this report are responding to as they create in-house data tools to provide the access they need.

Centralizing public data access is something that should be provided by government agencies, but issues like privacy concerns, disconnect between agencies and departments, and technical time and cost make this a rarity. As such, others are left to fill this gap by creating their own tools. The cost and time to understand these various datasets, format them to be fed into a single data tool, and maintain the updates is extensive, which is why these services are frequently offered by proprietary software companies as opposed to community-based non-profits.

Navigating public data can be cumbersome and time intensive. Simply understanding a dataset can be difficult without a guide document or direct communication with the dataset’s creator (oftentimes neither are available). Furthermore, complex government terminology and use of acronyms paired with poorly formatted and inconsistently created datasets can make what could be a simple process extensive. The way certain information is documented varies across agencies and is impacted by nuance in local policy.

For all these reasons this report not only describes the narratives of how CLTs and related non-profits are using data, but also details where they are accessing data, specifically focusing on the data source and the variables within a dataset that were used. While this may seem arbitrary, in my experience trying to answer housing questions – who owns this property? Are there documented rent increases for this property? Is a landlord carrying out unpermitted work? – the hardest part is where to start. Identifying what sources others have used – building permits from

the city for example – and what variables within that dataset were informative – permit type, issue date – can be helpful for answering a question by understanding how others are answering it.

The Data Deep Dive section in the appendix of this report shares the information. It is organized by an umbrella category – displacement risk, landlord network mapping, etc – and then by a more specific category – rent increases, foreclosure, or Chapter 8 Tax Sale – to identify how the creators of data tools accessed information to answer their questions.

The first step in utilizing public data for decision making is understanding where to access it. The data tool is simply a vehicle to deliver information to users, and therefore understanding what data to use is foundational to any data project, which is why digging into sources and variables is important to do and share. As one researcher interviewed expressed, “the outcome is only going to be as good as the data that goes into it”.



# METHODOLOGY

This research originated from an existing working relationship between Richmond LAND and myself, the report author. Richmond LAND is a small, mission-driven CLT in the Bay Area, founded and led by women of color that works in community to keep Richmond residents in place amid gentrification pressures. My work with Richmond LAND consisted of building out a GIS (geographic information system) to support their research. This research sought to garner community support for collective ownership in Richmond by using data visualization to challenge the narrative of landlord hardship and instead show how the size of landlord holdings correlates to renter hardship.

This work with Richmond LAND spurred my interest in understanding how other CLTs integrate GIS, in addition to other data tools, into their analysis and research work.

To answer this question, qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 practitioners who have participated in data projects related to CLTs. In total 29 people were contacted for an interview, 9 of whom did not reply.

Interviewees represented CLTs, related non-profits, universities, and a public agency (see Appendix C for complete list of organizations represented). Interviewees' involvement in data work represented a significant range of technical, project management, and content expertise. Examples of interviewees roles include the technical designer of a data tool, the project manager of a data project, student researcher working with a CLT, and CLT board member advising the process.

Five preliminary conversations were conducted to initially assess the landscape of CLTs and related organizations who use data to drive their research and analysis. Through these conversations OakCLT in Oakland and Beverly-Vermont CLT in Los Angeles were identified as CLTs that utilize data in their work.

Two key data tools were identified in the preliminary conversations: OWNIT! from SAJE in Los Angeles and EvictorBook from the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project in the Bay Area, both of which are being used broadly in the housing rights ecosystem, including by CLTs to advance their work.

The preliminary conversations helped craft a network analysis of key stakeholders in the field to contact for interview. While CLTs located outside California were identified for their utilization of data in their work, the scope of the research was quickly confined to California as a geography. As CLTs in the Bay Area and Los Angeles respond to California's uniquely expensive housing market, it made sense to narrow the focus to CLTs in these two metropolitan regions.

The interviews were roughly an hour in length, and the majority of them, 17, were carried out over zoom, with 3 in person interviews. The author conducted all of the interviews. The interviewees were asked the same questions (interview protocol included in Appendix B) with follow up questions varying based on the conversation. The interview audios were recorded and transcribed with consent from the interviewee. Full interview transcripts remain confidential, however, approved quotations and excerpts will appear throughout this report.

# ORGANIZATIONS

## **Beverly-Vermont CLT (BVCLT)**

Beverly-Vermont CLT is a BIPOC-led, mission-driven community land trust that has served LA's Koreatown and surrounding neighborhoods since 2008. BVCLT was founded by community members of the L.A. Eco-Village co-op to permanently steward its land. In 2023 their portfolio contains 4 properties with 48 residential units.

## **OakCLT**

OakCLT is a Community Land Trust in Oakland that was founded in 2009 by Urban Strategies Council and the Oakland chapter of ACORN (now ACCE) in response to the foreclosure crisis. In 2023 their portfolio contains 45 properties, with 67 units of housing that are single-family homes and small residential buildings, it also includes 5 commercial units and 9 vacant lots that will be developed into housing or community gardens.

## **SAJE**

Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) is a Los Angeles based non-profit that for over 25 years has worked to build community power and leadership for economic justice. SAJE advocates for tenant rights, healthy housing, and equitable development in LA. Their work includes running tenant clinics, conducting research, and helping establish local community benefits agreements, collective-bargaining agreements, and tenants' right to counsel.

## **AEMP**

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP) is a data-visualization, critical cartography, and multimedia storytelling collective documenting dispossession and resistance upon gentrifying landscapes. AEMP is a San Francisco based, volunteer-run organization that has expanded to work in Los Angeles and New York City.

# DATA TOOLS

## **EvictorBook**

Evictorbook is a web-based tool created by AEMP to support housing organizers and tenants in researching properties, landlords, and the complicated webs of corporate ownership behind them. It does this by relating three decades of eviction data to properties and their historical owners. The data tool allows users to identify owners, their eviction histories, related companies, and other properties in their portfolio.

## **OWNIT!**

OWNIT! was created by SAJE with consultant theworksLA to provide the organizations and individuals they work with greater access to public data. OWNIT! connects to a variety of data feeds (some live, others updated on a monthly basis) to centralize data from the City of LA and the County of LA in order to access important property and landlord information. One can search an address in the tool to view it on the map, access the owner's name and address, what other properties they own, and view existing building inspections and building permits for the property.

# FINDINGS

## CLTS WORK ACROSS THE HOUSING RIGHTS LANDSCAPE

Interviews with practitioners revealed the vast scope of work that CLTs are engaged in. This includes CLT staff answering phone calls from tenants when they receive an eviction notice and have three days to act. It includes CLT staff presenting data at conferences to push policymakers to create legislation that intervenes in future foreclosure. It also includes helping tenants organize across buildings to pressure their landlord to sell to the CLT. Interviews for this report found that CLTs are embedded in their local community, supporting both the residents living in their properties and residents of the greater community in their daily housing struggles. As such CLT work expands far beyond property acquisition into the entire ecosystem of housing rights.

CLT work is inherently tenants' rights work, as CLTs respond to the precarious position the housing market puts tenants in. Underlying the renter-landlord structure is a continuous risk of displacement for tenants as their housing conditions, cost of rent, and future of their housing is outside their control.

Displacement risk can quickly elevate to a housing crisis if any of these factors of housing stability suddenly shift. CLTs intervene in moments of housing crisis to help tenants re-

stabilize their housing and eventually move it into the community land trust.

For Beverly-Vermont CLT (BVCLT) in Los Angeles they have more organized tenants in touch with them than they do available resources to acquire properties. To help support tenants in their organizing efforts they convene a monthly meeting for those who are organizing to talk through their experience, get the resources they need, and connect with others in similar situations. This not only helps to build the necessary relationships and trust for tenants to want to move their homes into the CLT, but also positions everyone to act once funding becomes available.

As CLTs are responding to calls from the community to intervene in housing crises, it is common for CLTs to have more demand from the community to decommodify their housing than they do resources with which to do so.

OakCLT's Executive Director, Steve King, described requests from the community being greater than what is possible given their staff resources and available funding. He described the influx of requests from the community as a triage-like process where because the housing crisis is so widespread in Oakland any single form of housing dispossession is "changing the face of Oakland" and going unnoticed by the greater community. He said OakCLT could dedicate 100% of their capacity to black land loss issues in Oakland and still not make an impact given the extent of the dispossession.

Steve King shared the story of a woman living in East Oakland who rented a single family home from a local slumlord who doubled her rent in an

attempt to push her out. She was able to connect with neighbors renting from this same landlord who had also received rent increases to organize against the increases. Together with her neighbors they were able to move 4 of those properties into OakCLT’s ownership and avoid the extreme rent increases that would’ve displaced them.

This is a typical story of how CLTs acquire properties and remove them from the extractive cycle of the speculative housing market. It is dependent on tenant organizing, CLT support,

and the necessary financing to enable the CLT to purchase the property from the landlord. As shown in Figure 3, crises like foreclosure and the participation of corporate investors in the housing market only intensify this extractive cycle and make intervention more urgent.

CLT intervention relies on relationship building with tenants to establish the necessary trust to eventually move their housing into ownership by the CLT. This process extends across multiple time scales, as it includes the immediate response

**Figure 3. CLT Intervention in the Speculative Housing Market**

## CLT INTERVENTION IN THE SPECULATIVE HOUSING MARKET

(Narrative and quotes from OakCLT Executive Director Steve King)

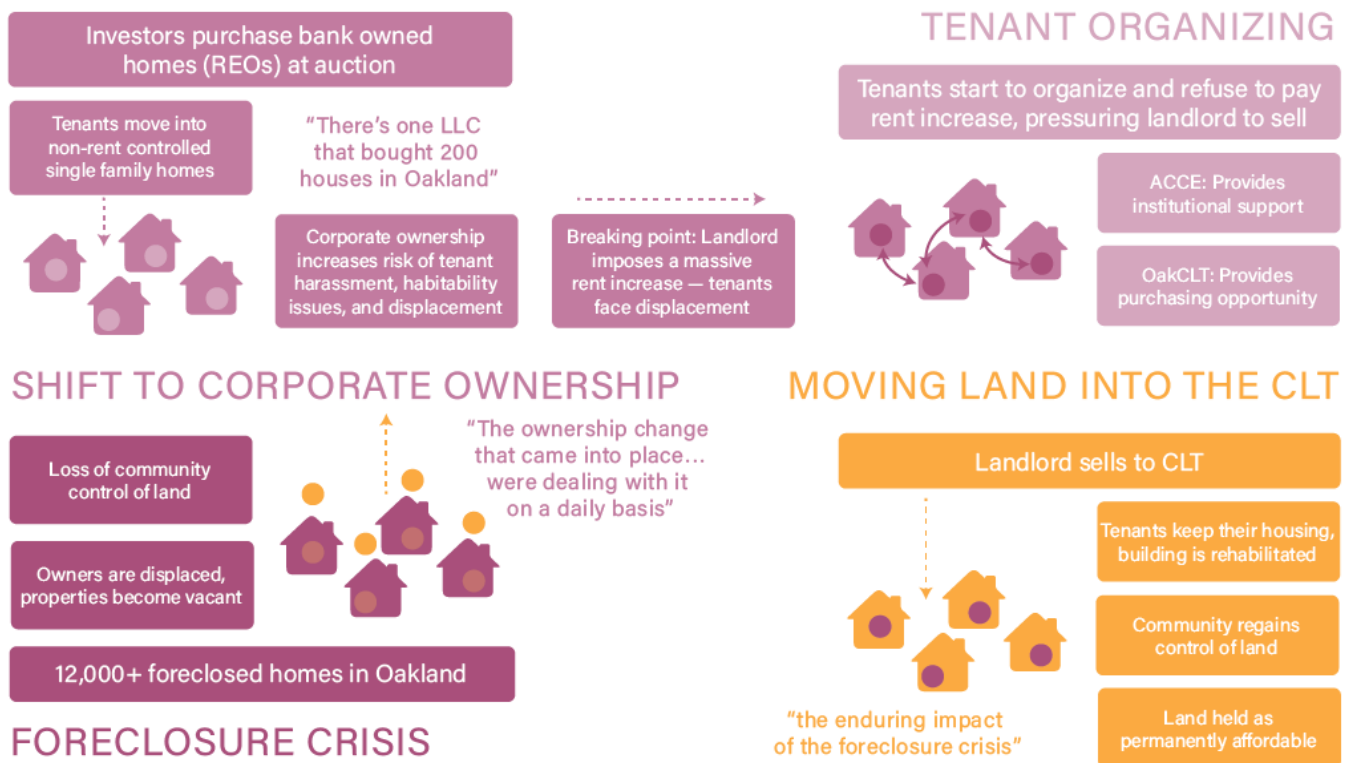


Figure 3. Moving from the bottom left clockwise to the bottom right, this visual narrates a process for community land trust intervention in the speculative housing market, which begins with the foreclosure crisis of the late 2000’s (in maroon), sees a shift to corporate ownership of housing (dark pink), sees tenants organize in response (light pink), and eventually move their housing into the CLT (orange). This visual is created from stories told by OakCLT executive director Steve King, and represents the series of events that led a number of their residents into the CLT model.



**Figure 4. Spectrum of CLT Practices and Data Tools**

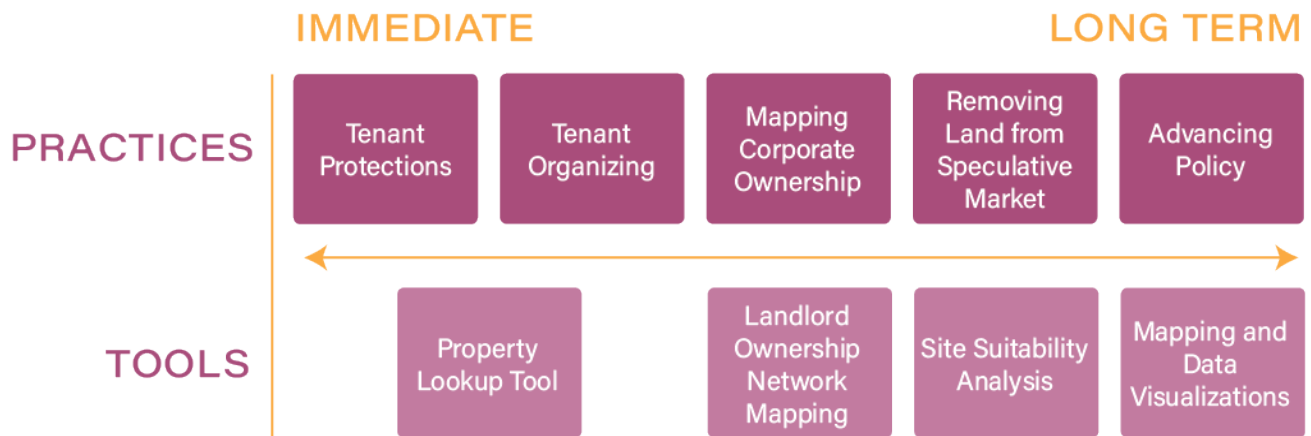


Figure 4. CLT practices that utilize data are shown in dark maroon, the accompanying data tools are shown in maroon, these are mapped across a spectrum of response from immediate to long term

of addressing tenant housing issues to the long term response of providing permanently affordable and stable housing.

CLT practitioners shared stories of how they are using data to support their work across this spectrum. These stories collectively shaped five primary practices through which CLTs are employing data to support their work of helping tenants move from housing crisis to stability in the land trust. Each of these practices is described in the following section of this report.

Practice #1 is tenant protections, which is the immediate essential step of working with tenants to stabilize their housing and improve conditions in the short term in order to then look to the long term. The next three practices describe the development of tenant campaigns to move housing into the land trust. This includes Practice #2, tenant organizing, in which tenants build power together to pressure a negligent landlord to sell to a CLT. Practice #3, removing land from the speculative housing market, explores the ways data is employed to help CLTs prioritize

properties to work to acquire. Practice #4 is corporate landlord research, which can provide essential context and connection for tenant groups working to move land out of corporate ownership and into the CLT. Finally, Practice #5 is advancing policy, which looks beyond the process of decommodifying land and to the larger picture of how to fund and facilitate the process for CLTs across the state.

# CLTS UTILIZING DATA IN FIVE PRACTICES

## #1 TENANT PROTECTIONS

Interviews with practitioners revealed that the first step in CLTs intervening in a housing crisis is getting connected with tenants and working to immediately address the crisis at hand. Accessing data to understand the context of the situation is essential to help tenants craft a plan moving forward.

A crisis like a tenant receiving a 200% rent increase notice can be contextualized by accessing basic property information to understand building ownership and rent control status. Seeing who owns a building and the scale of their ownership across the city can tell a tenant who they are up against and if others may be in their same situation. Checking rent control status can reveal if the rent increase is legal and if the tenant can contest it with the city.

A rent increase is just one example of a housing crisis that a tenant may face, there are an unlimited number of other issues of housing conditions and displacement risks that can put a tenant in crisis, and that can be informed by access to data about the situation. This section describes how one organization, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE), utilizes their in-house data tool to help tenants respond to housing crises, and shares insights into the process through which they created this tool.

### 1.1 OWNIT!: A Data Tool for Property Research

OWNIT! is an interactive map-based data tool that was developed by SAJE to support their weekly tenant clinics in Los Angeles. An employee at SAJE who managed the design of the tool said they wanted tenants who came into the clinic to be able to walk away with more information than they came in with. They crafted a sort of property “diagnostics” sheet for tenants to take home that would be a printed report of all information SAJE could access on a property, the landlord, related permits, and related properties. Clinic staff also offer actionable resources like helping tenants file a habitability complaint to the city, as well as a form embedded in OWNIT! that assists tenants in writing a letter to their landlord – something that SAJE helped JustFix add to their tool that serves tenants in New York City.

Before creating OWNIT! staff at SAJE had previously been relying on pre-existing online tools to access information about landlords and properties. This included the LA County Assessor’s Office online tool which would allow users to submit up to three property information requests a day. The county would allow unlimited in-person property requests at their office, so to work around the online maximum of three searches a day, SAJE staff often visited the county office to do property information lookups for tenants. As the online requests were limited, and visiting the office was labor intensive, SAJE wanted a way to access that information on demand and in their office. This was the impetus behind creating OWNIT! which provides

**Figure 5. OWNIT! Public Version**

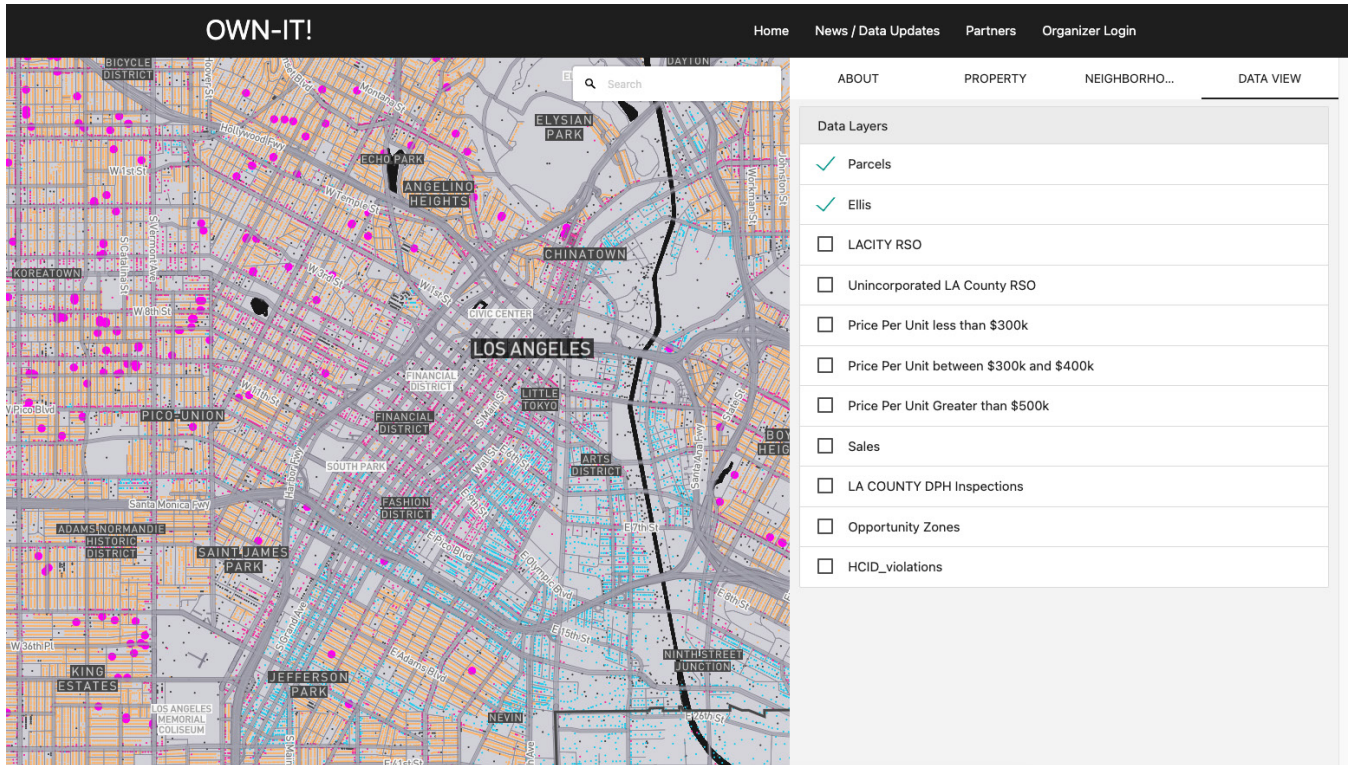


Figure 5. A screenshot of OWNIT! 1.0, which is the publicly available tool that lets users view data layers in the map and look up information by property

unlimited access to the County Assessor’s Office data alongside multiple other public datasets.

OWNIT! is a map-based interactive tool that allows users to search for addresses, view all related information for that property and its owner, toggle data layers on and off in the map, and link to additional sources of property information.

The basic property information that OWNIT! provides access to include landlord name, landlord address, other properties owned by that landlord, number of units in a building, the year a building was built, and the last time it was sold including the price and date. Beyond basic property information OWNIT! sources information from specific programs from government agencies across LA, these datasets include rent control status, eviction history, habitability issues, and

building permits.

Conversations with SAJE staff explained how access to these datasets can help tenants respond to housing crises. Housing condition issues can include property neglect by landlords, like refusing to make repairs or abate mold or pests, as well as construction that is disruptive to tenants’ livelihood or leads to safety issues like construction fires and water damage. Access to building inspection data and permitting data can inform these situations. For displacement risk, issues can include rent increases, owners move-in, owner turnover, and demolition, which can all result in people being forced out. Building and planning permits can help inform these situations and help tenants craft a plan going forward.

**Figure 6. OWNIT! Blueprint**

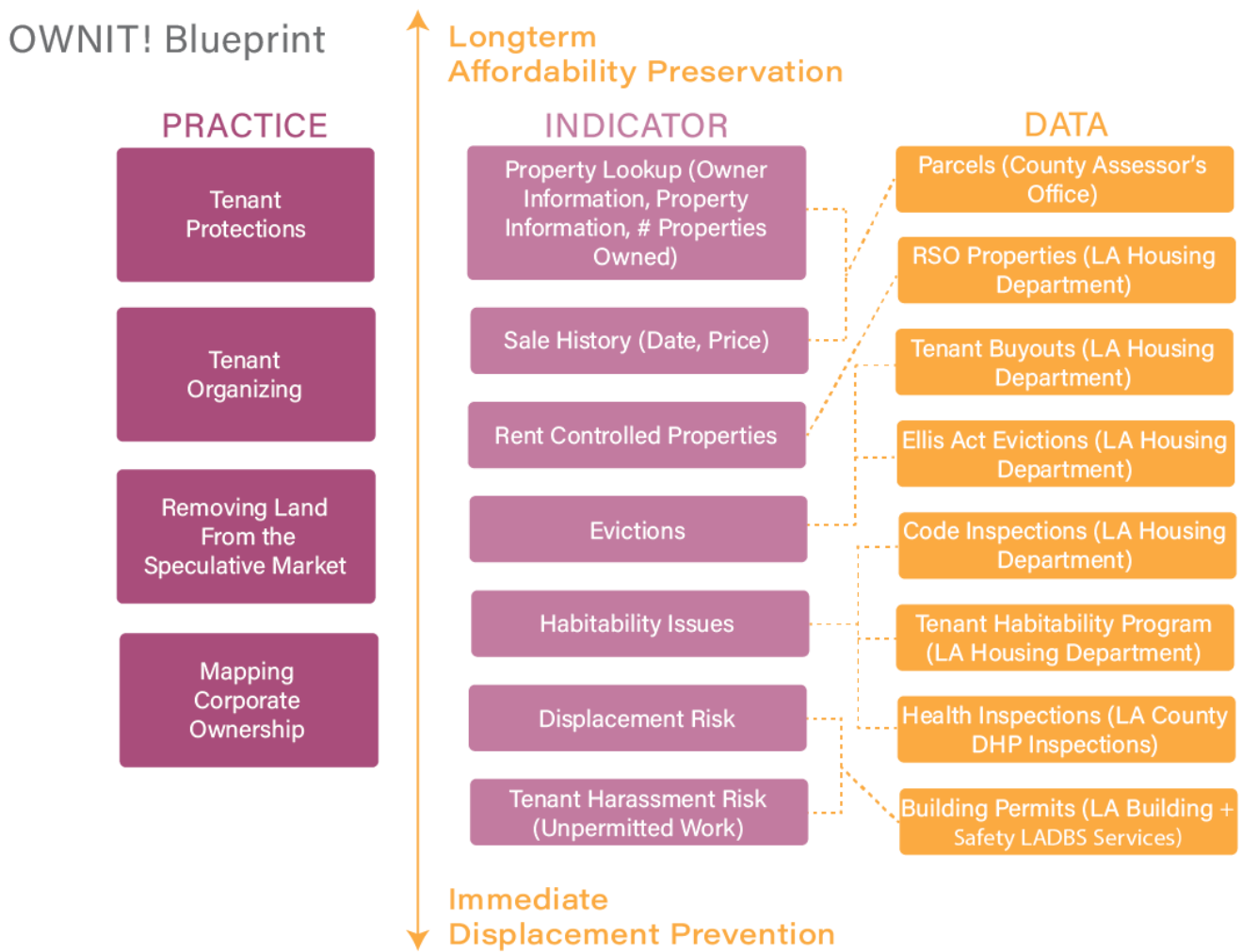


Figure 6. This diagram describes SAJE's data tool OWNIT! through the practices it supports (left), the indicators that the data informs in the middle, and the data with source on the right.

Each of these datasets is discussed in the [Data Deep Dive: Property Lookup](#) section of the appendix, which details each data source and what variables in the data are used to answer tenant questions.

All together OWNIT! provides SAJE and the other 48 organizations in Los Angeles that use the tool the ability to access property related data on demand in a centralized place and share that information with tenants who need to respond to their housing crisis.

## #2 TENANT ORGANIZING

For CLTs like OakCLT and BVCLT, most of their acquisitions are the result of tenants organizing in opposition to landlord neglect or eviction pressure and connecting with the CLT to help stabilize their housing by moving it into the land trust. This section shares stories of how CLTs and other housing rights organizations utilized data to help start, bolster, and grow tenant organizing campaigns.

### 2.1 Data to Connect Tenants in Crisis: Organizing Across Buildings in LA

SAJE uses OWNIT! as a tool to support tenant organizing campaigns. An example of how the tool is utilized came from a staff member at SAJE who was instrumental in its development and design. She said tenants frequently come to the clinic having heard that their building is slated to be demolished and replaced with market rate units. In OWNIT! they can access building permit data to understand what plans have been authorized by the city. If their building is at risk of demolition, they can start to organize neighbors in the building to make the case to the city to preserve the existing affordable housing, prevent the demolition, and let them keep their housing (see the [Data Deep Dive: Displacement Risk](#) section of the appendix for details of how this data is accessed).

Another person involved in the development of OWNIT! talked about the way data can help transform experience, saying “seeing data on a map helps support and facilitate the organizing

process of bringing people in and moving them from a moment of individual crisis to leadership”. In this way OWNIT! helps illuminate larger power structures that could underlie a shared experience of tenant harassment and neglect. Tenants organizing in one building can identify other buildings that share that landlord.



#### BVCLT's Koreatown Apartment

Location: LA's Koreatown neighborhood

Year acquired: 2021

Building: 4 residential units

Tenants living in this building organized against the corporate owner's attempts to turn over their rent controlled units through harassment, Cash for Keys, and intimidation. They connected with BVCLT for support, and after extensive relationship building with residents, BVCLT was able to negotiate the sale of the building, which plans to transition to cooperative housing in early 2024.

Habitability concerns in one unit can be revealed as part of a slumlord network, strengthening tenants' complaints to the city and bolstering support for collective legal action (see the [Data Deep Dive: Landlord Network Mapping](#) section of the appendix for details on how landlord networks are mapped).

## 2.2 Data To Create Door Knocking Campaigns in LA and Oakland

SAJE uses OWNIT! as part of their program and campaign development. One of the datasets made available in the tool is the LA residential development pipeline, which tracks major housing developments that are proposed, planned, or underway in the city. When new development projects that include the demolition of existing affordable housing are submitted to the City, SAJE uses this to inform a door knocking campaign to share the plan with tenants and help them organize to keep their housing (see [Data Deep Dive: Displacement Risk: Ownership Change & Redevelopment](#) of the appendix for details of how this data is accessed).

In Oakland the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) wanted to carry out a door knocking campaign to talk to tenants living in investor owned buildings about their experience. They reached out to OakCLT who had previously created an investor owned properties database. OakCLT used this database to create lists by neighborhood of properties owned by the top ten investor owners and where tenants had experienced habitability issues per city code enforcement records.

This list acted both as a starting point for ACCE's campaign as well as a potential acquisition pipeline list for OakCLT as ACCE helped organize tenants within the buildings (see the [Data Deep Dive: Displacement Risk: Habitability Issues](#) and [Landlord Network Mapping](#) sections of the appendix for details on sources for these datasets).



### OakCLT's Fruitvale Apartment

Location: Oakland's Fruitvale neighborhood

Year acquired: 2021

Building: 14 residential units

This building is home to a community of mostly mono-lingual Spanish speaking tenants, who organized against unsafe living conditions and massive rent increases in this non-rent-controlled building. Despite pressures from tenants with support from ACCE, the landlord refused to sell the building to OakCLT in 2019. In response tenants launched a rent strike that lasted more than two years, which is the longest recorded rent strike in Oakland's history. The tenants' rent strike successfully pressured the landlord into selling the property to OakCLT in 2021. OakCLT rehabilitated the building and looks to work with tenants to transition it to a limited equity cooperative.

# #3 REMOVING LAND FROM THE SPECULATIVE MARKET

As CLTS are responding to calls from the community to intervene in housing crises, it is common for CLTs to have more demand to decommodify their housing than they do resources with which to do so. Given the imbalance between demand and capacity, CLTs like BVCLT and OakCLT described wanting to focus their acquisition process on properties with the greatest opportunity to intervene. Also noting that funding from local and state governments sometimes require sites to fall into a specific geography or match certain building criteria in order to qualify for funding. This section describes how these organizations are using data to inform the acquisition process by identifying potential low cost intervention opportunities and considering criteria to access necessary project funding.

## 3.1 Data to Identify Low Cost Acquisition Opportunity: REOs in Post-Foreclosure Crisis Oakland

In the wake of the foreclosure crisis the City of Oakland required banks to register their Real Estate Owned properties (REOs), which were foreclosed homes that did not get a bid at foreclosure auction, therefore defaulting to ownership by the bank who provided the initial mortgage. OakCLT Executive Director, Steve King, described how in the early 2010's banks were trying to offload these properties, and there was a short window where it seemed they would

be willing to donate or sell a group of them for cheap to a non-profit like a CLT. This was at the same time that OakCLT was being formed. Steve King shared that “there was a sense that the CLT would be responsive to vacant foreclosed homes in Oakland”, and that the acquisition of REOs “could be a strategy to regain community control” of properties lost to foreclosure.

OakCLT had funding from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), a federal program developed in response to the foreclosure crisis, and hoped to utilize this funding to acquire REOs. To support OakCLT in this effort and to better understand the spatial trends of ownership by banks, Urban Strategies (where Steve King worked at the time) scraped Alameda County Clerk Recorder's registration of REOs, which was not available for public download, in order to compile their own database of properties owned by banks.

They created maps of REO clusters owned by a single bank to bring to meetings with the bank in an effort to acquire the properties in bulk. In the end banks sold these properties to investors. When OakCLT tried to compete, NSP funding restricted them from bidding more than 99% of the appraised value of a property, which resulted in them being outbid sometimes by \$10 by an investor.

While this is a story of a failed attempt to acquire properties at a low cost, efforts are underway at the State to prevent this from happening in the next crisis. Policies like California's SB1079 give nonprofits priority at foreclosure auctions (SB 1079, 2020). This paired with adequate funding could help non-profits minimize private capitalization on disasters in the future and keep property in the community control.

### **3.2 Data to Meet Ac-Rehab Funding Criteria: LA's CLT Pilot Program**

The Los Angeles County Pilot Community Land Trust Partnership Program (“the pilot program”) was started in 2020 and provided \$14 million to 5 CLTs for acquisition-rehabilitation (“ac-rehab”) of properties. The funding came with geographic criteria that restricted the property acquisition area for each CLT to a specific county supervisorial district. CLTs like BVCLT were not accustomed to having their community defined via county supervisorial district, and as a result had to map which of their potential properties fell within that boundary. This process helped them locate the two buildings they acquired in the pilot program: their Koreatown 4-unit building (an organized tenant community they were already in conversation with) as well as a second site in the San Fernando Valley.

The pilot program included other specific property criteria. The property had to fall within a range of purchase price and rehabilitation price per unit, it had to be in a high to very-high displacement risk zone (per LA County’s Equity Index), it had to be home to tenants living at 30%-80% AMI, and the building had to be 4-20 units located within a half mile of transit (LeSar, 2022).

This set of criteria is a relatively simple puzzle to solve with a visualization tool like an interactive mapping platform. While OWNIT! was not designed specifically for this pilot program, it provides access to LA’s displacement risk index, it lists the number of units located at a property, and provides access to Census data about local income levels. The five CLTs involved in the pilot program utilized OWNIT! and their internally managed list of properties where tenants are

organized. In the end the pilot program funding enabled the five CLTs to acquire 8 properties for a total of 43 units, preserving housing for 110 tenants (LeSar, 2022).

### **3.3 Data to Utilize FIHPP Funding**

LA’s CLT Pilot Program was a demonstration project for the Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program (FIHPP) rolled out by the State in 2023. FIHPP is a program that came up in every conversation I had with practitioners. It is important to CLTs not only for funding the acquisition of properties, but also because it was championed by many CLTs, including the California Community Land Trust Network (CACLTN) who helped write the program. As one practitioner said, “CLTs created FIHPP”.

FIHPP was added to California law in 2021, a landmark program following the passage of SB1079 that funds and supports ac-rehab by non-profit housing organizations. \$500 million dollars were allocated to the program in the state budget to be used by 2027 (CA Health and Safety Code, 2021). The program is intended to help springboard small housing non-profits into the ac-rehab space, recognizing that many interested organizations have yet to participate in ac-rehab because of lack of funding and support. FIHPP identifies a small set of criteria that sites must meet to qualify for funding, including: the owner must be willing to sell, the property cannot be owner-occupied, and there must be evidence of foreclosure risk (see Figure 7 for the full list of criteria).

These criteria are less strict than the pilot program, but still present a need for utilizing public data records to identify properties that qualify. Many practitioners when discussing



## Figure 7. FIHPP Criteria

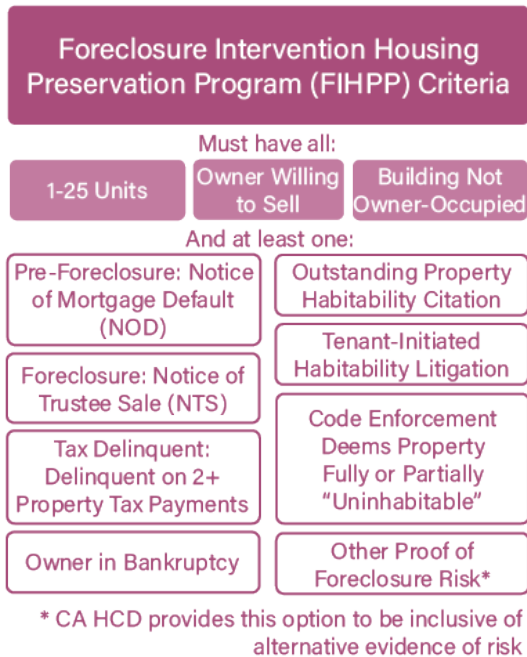


Figure 7. California's Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program requires properties to meet both criteria in maroon and one of the five owner financial distress categories

FIHPP mentioned the need for a State organized spatial dataset of properties that would qualify, and while it doesn't seem the State plans to create such a tool, tools like PropertyRadar could help identify qualified properties. PropertyRadar is a national proprietary property data compiling tool that includes foreclosure risk and filings, as well as landlord bankruptcy data, among many other things (see the [Data Deep Dive: PropertyRadar aside](#) in the appendix for details on PropertyRadar).

As more legislation targeted at supporting non-profit housing preservation comes online it is important that CLTs be able to identify which of their potential sites could fit the criteria and make swift moves, as oftentimes they are competing with traditional affordable housing developers for these funds, as is the case with FIHPP. While all affordable preservation is important, the community control and perpetual affordability

that CLTs can offer makes it important for them to utilize funding streams to decommodify as much of the housing stock as possible. For detailed discussion of datasets used to identify sites that meet the criteria of California's other enabling legislation, like the Surplus Land Act and Chapter 8 Tax Sale policies, see the [Data Deep Dive: Acquisition Opportunities](#) section of the appendix.

## #4 MAPPING CORPORATE OWNERSHIP

Corporate consolidation of property is something that CLTs are working to reverse by moving property back into community control. However, as it is a relatively new trend, understanding it and its impacts on renters is important for CLTs to advance their work. CLTs and related organizations are doing this through data analysis and mapping to reveal corporate ownership networks and to understand how policies like Opportunity Zones are exacerbating the consolidation of property and the risks it poses to tenants. This section shares stories of practitioners doing this work. It also introduces EvictorBook, a one of its kind data tool that maps ownership networks that are typically obscured from the public.

### 4.1 Data to Prove Corporate Consolidation of Housing in Oakland

OakCLT was founded in 2009, and by the early 2010's hoped to be responsive to the corporate scoop up of foreclosed homes in Oakland. At that time they were only beginning to piece together the extent to which investors were purchasing foreclosed homes, not yet aware of the future impact it would have on affordability and renter experience. Steve King, Executive Director of OakCLT, notes "the ownership change that came into place subsequent to [the foreclosure crisis]; we're dealing with it on a daily basis".

In 2012 Urban Strategies Council published

Who Owns Your Neighborhood to investigate this transfer of ownership after the foreclosure crisis in Oakland. They found that "by October 2011, investors had acquired 42% of all properties that went through foreclosure since 2007 in Oakland" (King, 2012, p. 5). Identifying that 93% of the properties acquired by investors were located in Oakland's "flatlands", a low lying area, also known as East Oakland, home to the majority of Oakland's impoverished population and black population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The report (2012) also revealed that 20 of the 30 biggest investor purchasers of Oakland's foreclosed homes were based outside of Oakland, indicating that new ownership was disproportionately based outside the community.

The report Who Owns Your Neighborhood also featured two maps, one of foreclosures and one of the ensuing investor acquisitions in Oakland (see Figures 8 and 9). Both maps show a pattern of concentration in East Oakland. Together these maps illustrate the trend of corporate buy up of foreclosed properties in low-income communities of color that was only beginning to be understood in 2012.

These foreclosure and investor acquisition maps communicate how investors capitalized on community dispossession in Oakland. These maps were instrumental in advancing Oakland's Measure KK which provided \$600 million for infrastructure and affordable housing, and was the primary source of local funding for OakCLT's property acquisition (City of Oakland, 2023). In discussing how the maps illuminated the reality of the crisis with Oakland officials, Steve King of OakCLT said "you can't convey that with a graph... seeing it spread out across the map is pretty impactful."

**Figure 8. Oakland Foreclosures 2007-2011**

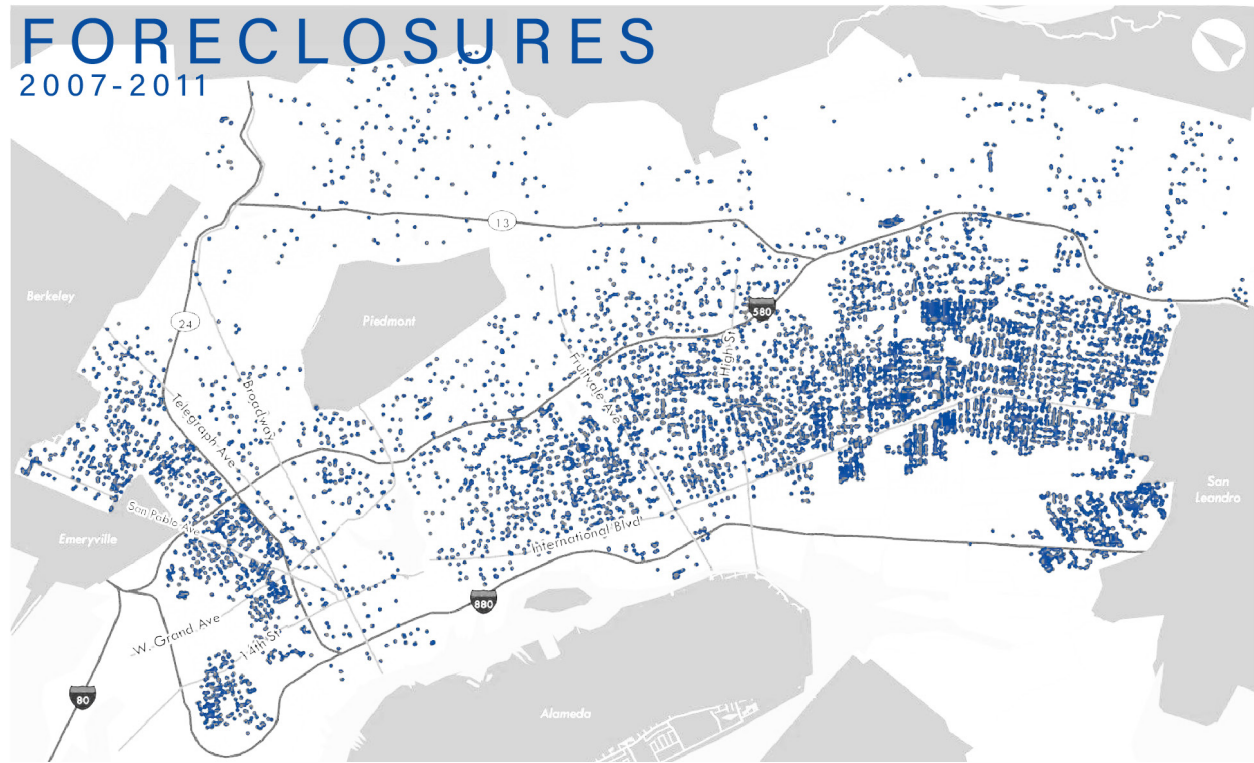


Figure 8. Map of over 10,000 foreclosures in Oakland 2007 - 2011, by Urban Strategies Council 2012; visually altered by author

**Figure 9. Oakland Investor Acquired Properties 2007-2011**

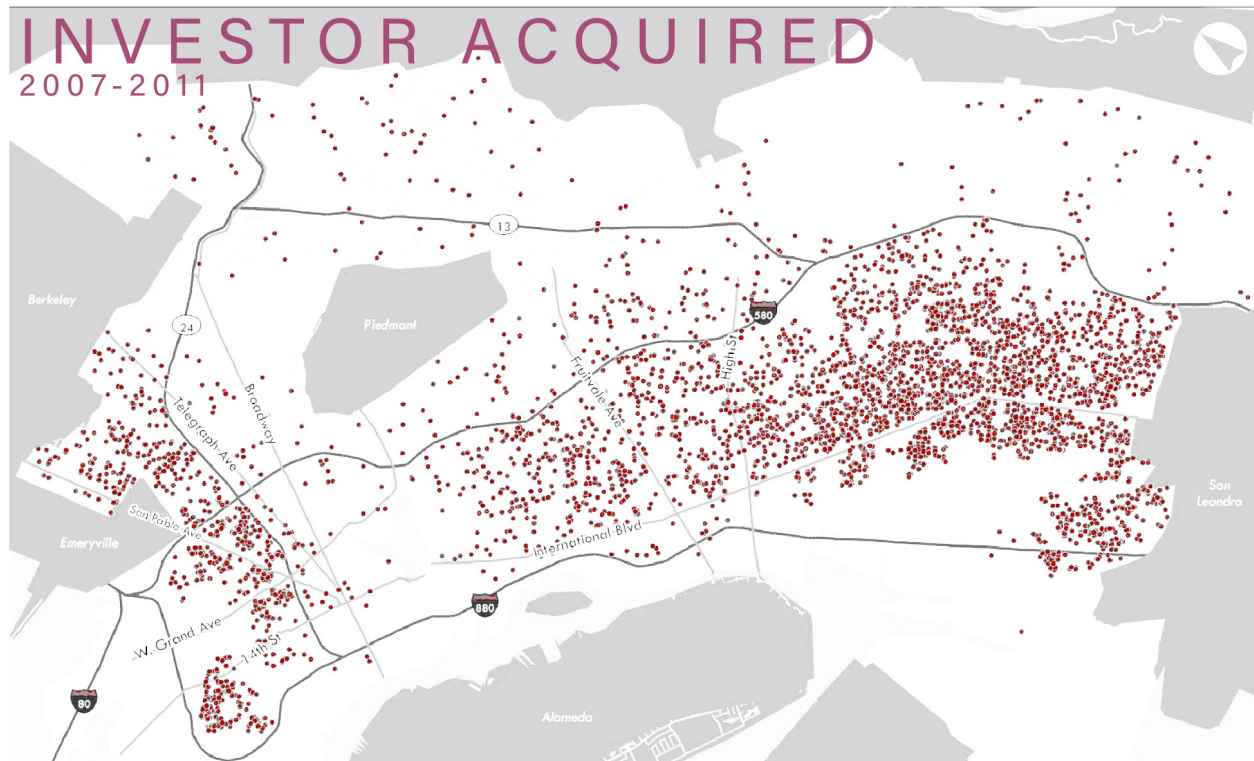


Figure 9. Map of investor acquired properties in Oakland 2007 - 2011, by Urban Strategies Council 2012; visually altered by author

## Data to Understand the Impacts of Corporate Ownership on Renters in LA

Los Angeles experienced a similar crisis of land dispossession to corporate ownership concentrated in its poorest communities that are predominantly home to LA's residents of color. SAJE wrote the report *Renting From Wallstreet* in 2014, which began to illuminate the shift to corporate ownership of foreclosed homes in LA (Call, 2014). Kaitlyn Quackenbush, a former SAJE associate, described how a couple years after the shift to corporate ownership began SAJE started seeing tenants come into their tenant clinic with more egregious habitability issues than before. As they started looking into the tenants' cases and mapping out the properties they began to see that a majority of the properties with the most extreme issues were owned by the same entity.

Access to property ownership information enabled this linkage across tenant experiences. While it may seem like a simple piece of information that most renters should have access to, it can be obscured extensively through the use of subsidiary companies, sometimes a unique LLC is established for each property a company holds. Furthermore, ownership information is not always accessible online, and with management companies and informal lease agreements, renters may not know who they are renting from.

OWNIT! provides users the ability to view properties owned by the same owner, matching on owner address. While this may not account for all of the properties that could be linked through an owner, it provides a cursory dive into shared ownership. This can be enough to put tenants in touch with tenants in other buildings that may be experiencing the same rent increases,

eviction pressures, or habitability issues to begin to organize together.

The tenants coming to SAJE's tenant clinic who linked their unsafe housing conditions to the experiences of other tenants in buildings owned by the same landlord helped SAJE recognize this as a trend on the rise in LA. This led to SAJE's 2021 report, *Beyond Wallstreet Landlords*, which details the predatory tendencies of corporate owners who now own over two thirds of LA's rental units. Connecting evictions to corporate ownerships, the report reveals that corporate owners carried out 54% of Ellis Act evictions since 2007 (p. 32). The report also overlays environmental health complaints from LA County's Department of Public Health between 2017 and 2020 with corporate ownership to show that 88% of health complaints were in rental housing with corporate owners (p. 34).

This research employs public datasets maintained by various government agencies in LA including eviction data, ownership data, and health complaints data. Accessing these and viewing them in relation to each other allows researchers to prove this linkage between ownership types and housing instability for renters. Kaitlyn Quackenbush described this saying, "GIS helped situate a tenant's experience within the larger context of corporate consolidation." A detailed discussion of accessing these kinds of datasets is provided in the [Data Deep Dive: Displacement Risk](#) section of the appendix.

## 4.2 Data to Understand the Impact of Opportunity Zones in LA

Opportunity Zones is a policy passed in 2017 as part of Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that "promises to drive billions of dollars of investment

into the country’s most disadvantaged and most vulnerable neighborhoods” by providing tax subsidies to investors of development in these areas (Ferrer & Donlin, 2019, p. 4). The research brief, Displacement Zones, published by SAJE in 2019 explores LA’s designated Opportunity Zones to show that “communities in Opportunity Zones are much more vulnerable to displacement than LA County residents as a whole” (p. 20). This includes Opportunity Zones being home to communities with higher rates of poverty, rent burden, and overcrowding than elsewhere in LA County (p. 20). Opportunity Zones also have a higher percent black population and latinx population than elsewhere in the County (p. 20).

Opportunity Zones require substantial renovations or redevelopment of buildings, oftentimes resulting in the replacement of rent-controlled buildings and below market rate rentals with new luxury housing. Kaitlyn Quackenbush described SAJE’s spatial analysis of Opportunity Zones as

an overlay of these zones with ownership patterns to reveal how investors were capitalizing on historic disinvestment and current tax incentives to flip properties and consolidate ownership of land. She explained that the Opportunity Zones that covered large portions of South Central LA could fuel gentrification if new investments in these areas are not determined by community members and if adequate anti-displacement protections are not provided.

### 4.3 EvictorBook: A Data Tool to Reveal Ownership Networks

EvictorBook is a tool that disentangles property ownership networks, revealing sometimes massive networks of corporate ownership. It is an interactive map-based data tool created by the Anti-Displacement Mapping Project that serves San Francisco and Oakland to empower communities to “combat the systemic racial and

**Figure 10. EvictorBook Landlord Network Connections**

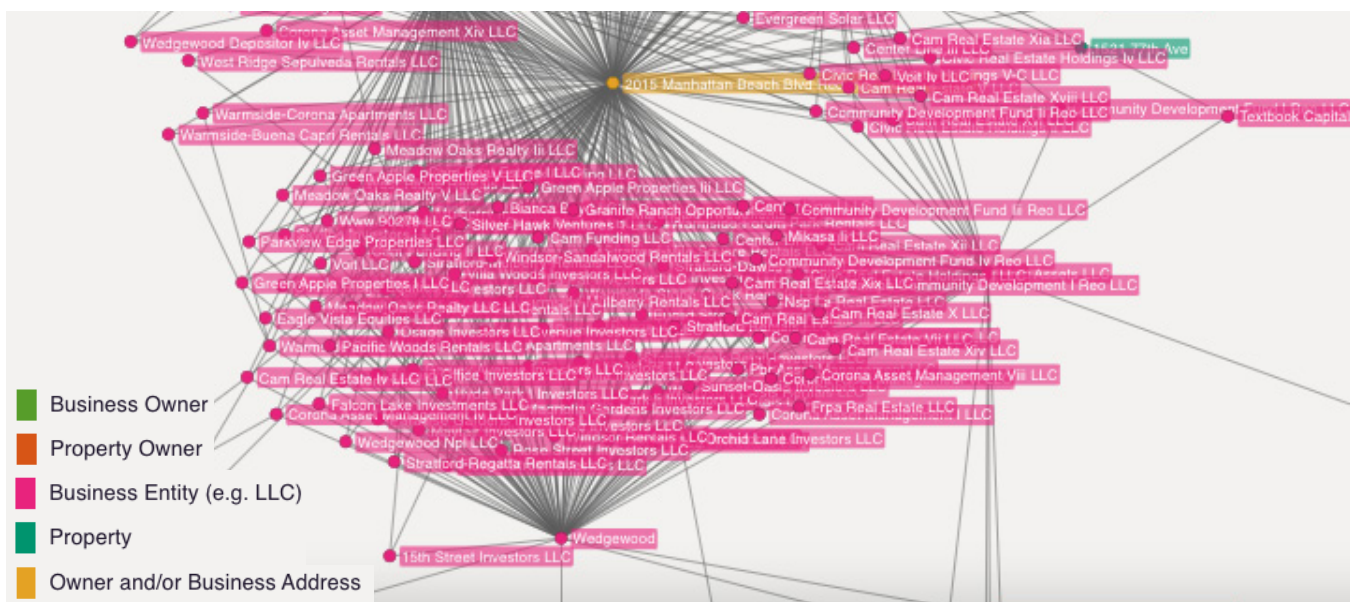


Figure 10. EvictorBook ownership network for Wedgewood LLC, the corporation that owned the Mom’s 4 Housing home in West Oakland that was acquired by OakCLT

economic inequities within our housing system and ensure that housing is for people, not corporate profit” (AEMP, 2023). Its unique capability is visualizing property ownership networks, which is a feat because of how convoluted these networks can be and how heavily guarded associated data is due to state privacy laws. As is, in 2023, it is hard to look up who owns a property. This tool not only gives people access to information about who owns their building, but shows what else they own, sometimes revealing a sprawling network of

companies and properties.

The genius of the tool is the disentangling of these complex networks, something that may have not been done anywhere else in the state. The designers of EvictorBook use a combination of data sources to tap into these oftentimes hidden connections. These include business licenses from the Secretary of the State, property owner name, and property owner address. They also look at eviction records for Oakland and San Francisco

**Figure 11. EvictorBook Blueprint**

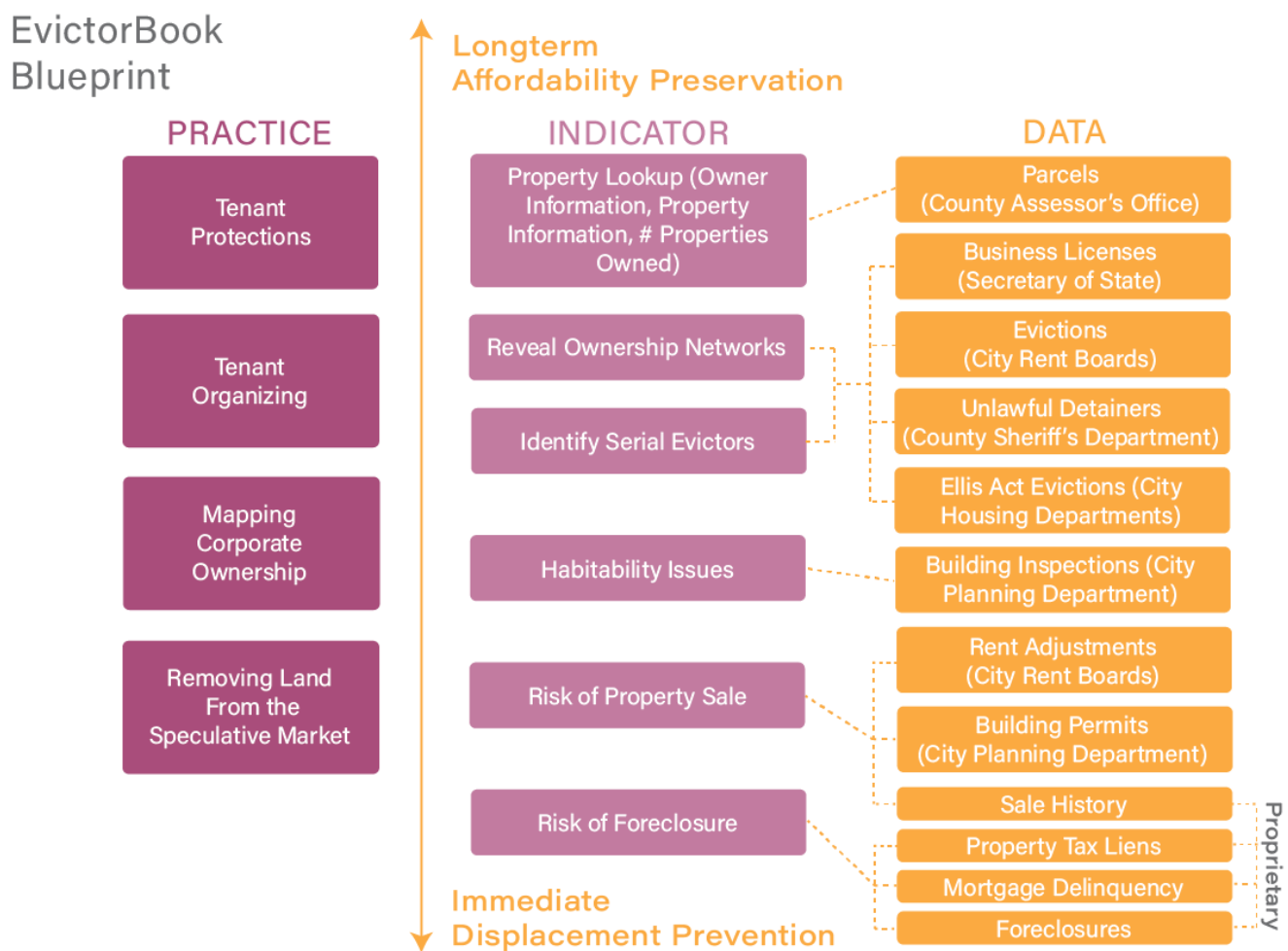


Figure 11. This diagram describes Anti-Eviction Mapping Project’s EvictorBook through the practices it supports (left), the indicators that the data informs in the middle, and the data with source on the right

and link these to historic ownership through sales records from the Recorder’s Office.

This process of linking these various datasets, not formatted for use together, is extremely labor intensive and complicated. An overview of the data sources and variables used for this is included in the [Data Deep Dive: Landlord Network Mapping](#) section of the appendix.

The original EvictorBook that serves San Francisco was created in collaboration with the San Francisco Anti-Displacement Coalition. In 2020, the tool expanded across the Bay to Oakland where the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project worked with the Oakland Preservation Table, a group of non-profits and stakeholders, to

expand the design to include new capabilities. The Oakland version integrates new datasets that point to a variety of indicators of displacement risk, which are detailed in Figure 11 above and explained in the [Data Deep Dive: Displacement Risk](#) section of the appendix.

Members of the Oakland Preservation Table who helped design EvictorBook said they wanted to create a tool that would support anti-displacement tenant advocacy and affordable housing preservation. They wanted to help housing rights and tenant protections counselors identify ownership of the building and if it is covered by rent control, as well as expose if a landlord is a serial evictor.



## #5 ADVANCING POLICY

Learning from the past, CLTs are looking to enact policies that can preemptively transition land back into community ownership and help guard against the impacts of the next crisis. To enact such legislation requires convincing policy makers of the scale of the housing affordability crisis, the need to intervene, and how CLTs can do so in a way that empowers tenants. Practitioners shared stories of using data analysis and visualization to accomplish this level setting with policy makers. These stories are presented in this section.

### 5.1 Data to Legitimize CLTs to Policy Makers

CLTs face endless challenges as they present a model that runs counter to the logics of the speculative housing market. As the CLT model is not widely understood, explaining it and proving its effectiveness to government officials and policymakers is important. The California CLT Network (CACLTN) supports CLTs across the state, and knows that having to provide quantitative evidence of impact is essential for CLTs accessing funding and support.

For this reason, in 2021 CACLTN conducted a survey to better understand the demographics of CLT residents, how living in a CLT property has impacted residents' financial security, and how CLTs across the state are operating. Leo Goldberg from CACLTN designed this survey in response to requests from CLTs who are in a constant cycle of engagement with local stakeholders, and need data to help make the case to support the CLT. He noted that for CLTs "being able to provide

evidence of the argument that they're already making can be powerful".

The results of the CLT survey are helpful for understanding general trends across CLTs in the state like what issues they commonly face and who their residents are from a demographic standpoint. I cited the survey in the background section of this report as it is one of few sources that shows that CLTs are supporting low-income tenants of color in gaining housing stability.

### 5.2 Data to Advance FIHPP

Leo Goldberg from CACLTN shared that while there's a common understanding that California has an affordability crisis, once you go into any more detail "there's disagreement from policymakers about what exactly the problem is", further complicating the process of identifying solutions. When it comes to advancing policy to give CLTs priority in property acquisition, making the linkage between the foreclosure crisis and today's affordability crisis can help support legislation to intervene in future foreclosure.

The Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program (FIHPP) was established as program through a CLT-led campaign. Part of CACLTN's efforts to promote FIHPP included generating maps to show that foreclosure is an ongoing issue in California. They mapped Notices of Default (when a bank files with the court that a mortgage has gone into default) as well as Notices of Trustee Sales (filed before a home goes to foreclosure auction) across the state. This process revealed that thousands of NODs and NTSs are filed across the state each year between 2019 and 2021, long after the peak of the foreclosure crisis.



This helped make the case that not only are properties at risk of foreclosure, but that for rental buildings the tenants living in these homes are at risk of displacement, and that any affordability held in these properties is at risk of being lost. This pressured the State to create FIHPP as an intervention to fund the acquisition of these buildings by non-profits, therefore preserving their affordability. Leo Goldberg said that while some elected officials and budget staff were immediately on board, others “needed the numbers” to support the policy.



# CONCLUSIONS

There were a number of recurring themes that came up in interviews with practitioners that linked together the narratives that individuals were sharing. These were how the foreclosure to corporate ownership trend impacted renters and housing affordability, how support organizations are best positioned to do data work for CLTs, and how community knowledge is centered in any data work.

## Foreclosure to Corporate Ownership Trend and Its Lasting Impacts

Interviews with practitioners helped illuminate how strongly connected the foreclosure crisis of the late 2000's is to the shift towards corporate ownership of property. Furthermore, the shift towards corporate ownership was a major player in intensifying the lack of affordable housing in California. Interviewees explained this as disaster capitalism playing out in the housing market, and as something to plan for now to try to prevent from repeating in future moments of crisis.

The foreclosure crisis positioned CLTs to intervene in reclaiming community ownership of properties lost to foreclosure, and at times resulted in CLTs acquiring homes that continued to depreciate in value, which only furthered the challenge of succeeding as a non-profit housing provider.

Foreclosure and corporate ownership both present huge challenges to providing housing for all, and are ominous indicators of what is to come as housing remains an investment item in the United States.

## Support Organizations – Best Suited for Data Work

Interviews revealed that the organizations that support CLTs might be the best suited to carry out data based work for CLTs. Faizah Barlas, Director of Finance and Operations at BVCLT, said “when there’s so much that our organization is doing, collection of data and GIS are often on the backburner.”

Conversations with practitioners described many relationships of this kind where supporting organizations were heading up the data work to support CLTs. One example is the data tool EvictorBook, which was designed with CLT input, and created and managed by the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, a non-profit that primarily does community-based data analysis and mapping work. The data tool OWNIT! is created and managed by SAJE, a non-profit that primarily does tenant advocacy work, in collaboration with theworksLA, a non-profit that does data analysis and did the technical work to create OWNIT!.

Additionally, university researchers are contributing to CLT work, as much of the research referred to in this report was a collaboration between a non-profit and a university. SAJE's research on corporate ownership was carried out by SAJE in collaboration with UCLA researchers and other local non-profits including CLTs. My work with Richmond LAND was supported by my role as a graduate student researcher at UC Berkeley, and funded by a non-profit using philanthropic money. Both BVCLT and OakCLT routinely hire students to conduct one-off research projects (UCLA and UC Berkeley respectively).

These collaborations provide opportunities for CLTs to access low-cost, short-term support in answering their housing questions with data, which utilize the funding and software licensing that academic institutions provide access to.

The California CLT Network (CACLTN) is a statewide support network for CLTs. They conduct research on CLT work across the state to help centralize knowledge about the work being done and the challenges experienced by staff. CACLTN is representative of how regional networks are positioned to do data work for CLTs as their research can be informed by and utilized by multiple organizations.

## **Grounding Data Work in Community Knowledge**

One interviewee challenged the term “data” as ambiguous as all knowledge is data. This is undeniable, and yet the way “data” is used in this report refers to a specific kind of quantitative data generated by government entities. The point is appropriate, however, as across interviews people continually described how their work is rooted in community knowledge. Multiple people mentioned the disappointment of recognizing how often quantitative data holds more value in decision-making than the lived experience of community members.

Navigating this can be challenging for practitioners, however Kaitlyn Quackenbush, formerly with SAJE, expressed optimism in this, seeing data and community knowledge as intertwined. She explained that data being facially neutral relies on the qualitative counterpart from tenants to reveal the direction of its narrative. She also remarked that while data is legitimized by the powers that be and as such is often valued

over lived experience, “we can do both” and use data to bolster individual stories. Faizah Barlas of BVCLT noted that when it comes to legitimizing their work to lenders they can generate numbers as needed. However, while BVCLT can do this, it doesn’t lead with numbers, it leads with its relationships with community members.

These conclusions provide the connective tissue between the stories shared by practitioners. Together these define the shape of the experience of employing data to advance CLT work in the housing rights ecosystem. While data inherently seeks to flatten lived experience into uniform, quantifiable elements, CLT practitioners using data to work with tenants to regain community control of land requires an unflattening and re-humanizing of the data to give it life again.

This work requires leading with community knowledge and using the data to validate it as the current systems demand. This work requires letting lived experience direct how data is interpreted, transforming something that is facially neutral into an argument for safer and more affordable housing. In all, practitioners are not using data because it is more accurate than lived experience, but because it provides an efficient path to answering urgent questions and advocating for better housing.

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# APPENDIX A: DATA DEEP DIVE

Using data to support CLT work to decommoify housing is complicated by a myriad of challenges with the data itself. These include privacy issues that limit access to data and redact important information, quality issues of inconsistently maintained datasets, and navigation issues of not knowing where to look for something or what agency maintains and publishes a dataset. As someone who has been challenged by these issues countless times especially in the context of answering difficult housing related questions that I haven't seen someone use public data to understand before, I wanted to include a data deep dive as part of my interviews.

In interviews with practitioners I asked people to describe what questions they were trying to answer, where they got the data they used and what variables within a dataset helped answer the questions. Understanding data sources proved helpful for things like eviction data which can be captured at the city and county level, and permitting information which can

be documented by multiple departments across a city. It was helpful to hear what data source someone looked to to answer a question and then to dig into what variables within that dataset provided the answer; together these illuminate where people are looking to answer a question. By documenting and sharing these answers I hope to help those with shared housing questions expand the scope of datasets they would look to for answers and hone in on datasets that will be useful to their efforts.

This Data Deep Dive is an entry point for anyone trying to answer housing questions with data, be it – is this construction happening at a tenant's building harassment? What is the ownership history of this building? Or who owns it now and what else do they own? – grounding tenant experience in the public data about their property can reveal what underlies the issue and help validate their experience to advance it towards a campaign to decommoify the property.

**Figure 12. Data Deep Dive Overview**

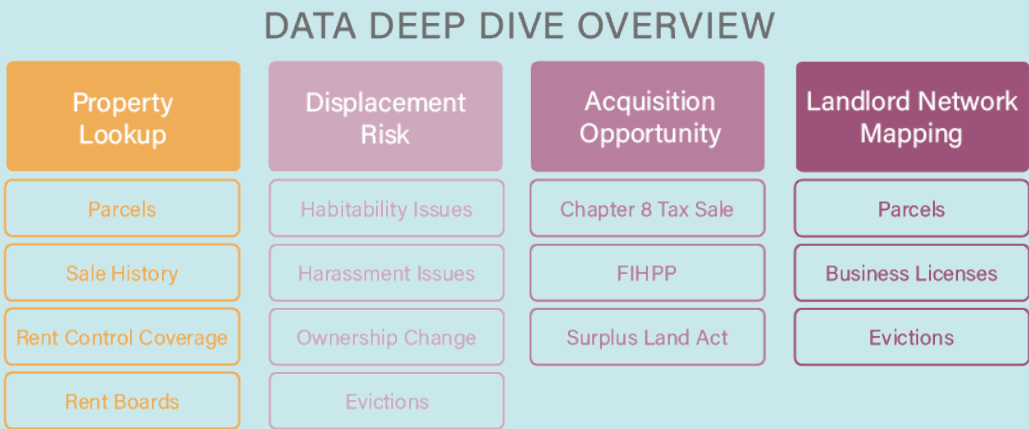


Figure 12. This diagram provides an overview of the content covered in the data deep dive section, showing the categories and specific data that is discussed

This section dives into the data that underlies the tools described in this report. It also includes some knowledge gained in my experience working with Richmond LAND, including examples like trying to understand how California's Chapter 8 Tax Sale could be used to acquire properties in distress. What I learned from others is contextualized alongside my experience trying to answer housing questions with data and is detailed in this section using four categories.

The first category is the Property Lookup tool for accessing information, which is rooted in understanding the most foundational piece of property data: parcel data. The second category explores a number of ways to understand Displacement Risk using data, including subheadings on habitability issues, tenant harassment issues, ownership change and renovation, and evictions. This category is the most extensive as something like ownership change can be foreshadowed by a number of things and documented in a few different places. The third category is Acquisition Opportunities, which describes what datasets will reveal properties that match criteria for three housing policies that offer low cost acquisition opportunities. The final section is Landlord Network Mapping, which digs under the surface of the very complex process of linking property ownership using a series of state and local datasets.



# PROPERTY LOOKUP: ACCESS INFORMATION

The first step in researching a property is looking up the public data associated with it. There are a number of Property Lookup tools that provide users access to this essential information. Both EvictorBook and OWNIT! are property lookup tools with additional capabilities. Some cities and counties provide their own tools for accessing this data, which can be useful, however, organizations may be compelled to create their own Property Lookup tool to customize the available data, integrate additional data sources from other agencies, and reduce the accessibility issues that

can accompany government provided tools. This section provides information on what datasets underlie the Property Lookup tool and how to access them.

## 1. Parcels

The parcel is the unit at which property data is captured and recorded by the county Assessor’s Office, for this reason the parcel dataset is the foundation of data-based housing research. Parcels are property lots, which have one (or two) owners, for example an apartment building will have multiple units and tenants, but is located on a singular parcel that has one owner. Parcel datasets typically include valuable property information like owner name, owner address,

**Figure 13. Property Lookup: Access Information Overview**

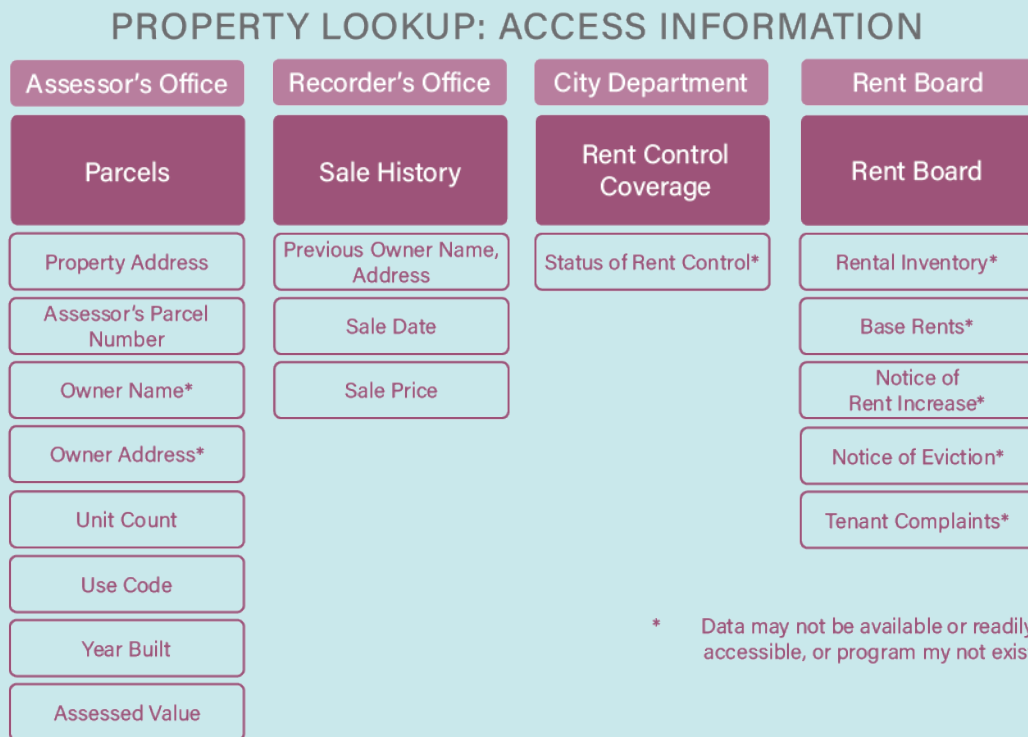


Figure 13. This diagram provides an overview of the content covered the property lookup: access information section, the dataset is in dark maroon with its source in light maroon, the lower boxes describe the useful variables in the dataset

Figure 14. Parcel Data Sample

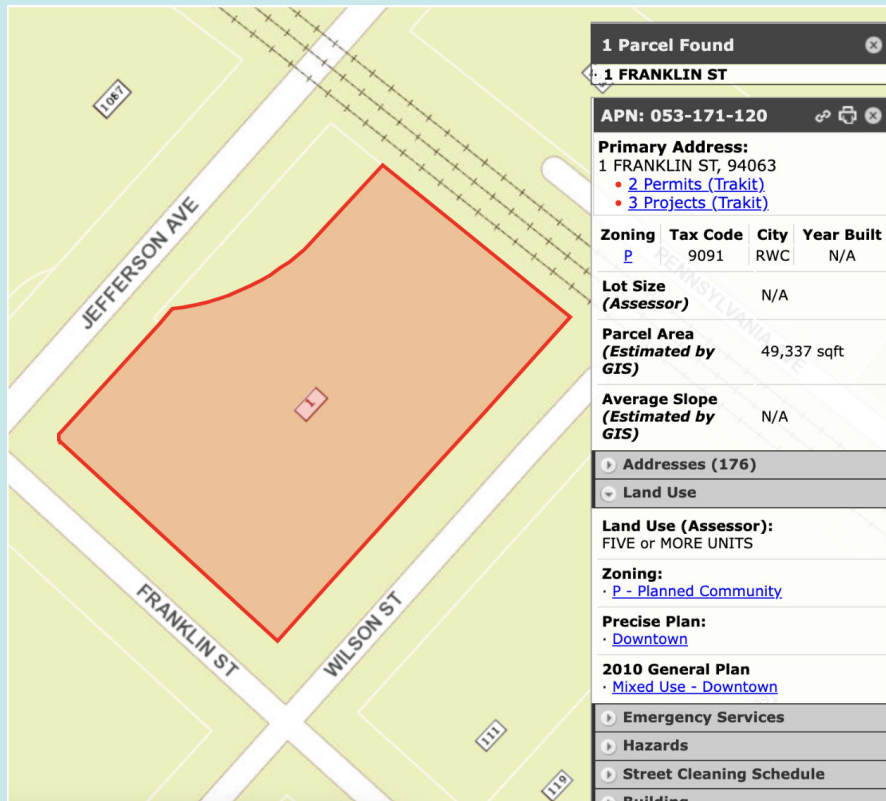


Figure 14. A screenshot from Redwood City's online GIS, which shows county parcel data enriched with city property information like city permits, zoning, and general plan designations

property address, use code (ie: “Church”, “Multi-family Residential”), unit count, year built, lot size, and assessed value. In my experience working with parcel datasets the use code is notoriously inaccurate especially when a property’s zoning allows multiple uses like “mixed-use residential”. Unit count and year built also tend to have a lot of inaccuracies or be incomplete with half of the parcels missing a value. Even with these common issues, parcels are the best source for property information across a geography.

If parcel data is received through a city government (typically counties distribute updated parcel data to cities regularly) it may have been further enriched with additional pieces of city data like the property’s zoning designation, council district, location in a historic district or precise plan - the possibilities are unlimited.

A screenshot from Redwood City’s online GIS,

which shows county parcel data enriched with city property information like city permits and zoning and general plan designations

Assessor’s Parcel Numbers, or APNs, are the most common identification system used to label parcels. It is standard to use APNs in other datasets where information is shared at the parcel level, which makes parcel datasets useful for joining other datasets that use an APN to match. For example, LA’s Tenant Habitability Program publishes data at the property level using APNs as the unique identifier. Parcels are preferable to addresses because properties can have multiple addresses, like with apartment buildings. However, as addresses are how property location is communicated, it is important to pair this information so that people can search by address to access parcel information.

## Common Parcel Accessibility Issues

Access to updated parcel data varies substantially across counties. San Francisco's parcels are constantly updated and available for download in their data portal. Having an up-to-date online data portal is the gold standard for government departments. Representing the other end of the accessibility spectrum are places like Contra Costa County (just across the Bay from San Francisco), where I was told that a one-time parcel export containing only basic information would be upwards of \$15,000. While parcel data is public information, the offices can charge for their time to produce it, which can be cost prohibitive.

To further complicate parcel access issues, it is common for counties to not share owner information in their parcel datasets as there are limitations on publishing identifying information like owner name. The parcels that are downloadable from San Francisco's data portal do not have owner information, which is essential for identifying things like tenure and ownership networks. I recently learned that San Francisco's parcels with ownership information can be requested from the Assessor's Office through an online form, for \$5 the data will be delivered on a CD or for \$350 it will be delivered digitally.

EvictorBook Oakland and San Francisco utilize parcel data with ownership information from San Francisco and Alameda Counties. OWNIT! purchases parcel data each month from LA county, which is delivered digitally. In my work with Richmond LAND our workaround for the high cost of Contra Costa County parcels was to acquire them from a planner at the City of Richmond who we signed a data agreement with. While this restricts Richmond LAND from publishing owner information, it provides

necessary access to the data for internal analysis. We also purchase PropertyRadar data to further enrich the dataset we are working with (more on PropertyRadar here).

While it can be labor intensive or expensive to acquire, parcel datasets are the foundation of any housing landscape analysis work, and are essential as such.

## 2. Property Sale History

The County Assessor's Office maintains and distributes parcel datasets, while the County Recorder's Office maintains sale history data. Both OWNIT! and EvictorBook access this information, and in EvictorBook it is used to trace the history of ownership to match the eviction dates to the correct owner.

## 3. Rent Control Properties

Identifying if a property is under rent control is important for checking the legality of a rent increase and for identifying what renter protections a property affords. The City of Los Angeles maintains and publishes a dataset of the properties under their Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO). The dataset includes the property APN (Assessor's parcel number), property address and number of units covered by the RSO.

Other ways to identify rent control status (as not all cities maintain and publish an inventory) can be using the year built (from the Assessor's Office) to identify buildings built before the city's rent control policy was passed (or 1995, whichever is earlier) in conjunction with unit count (from the Assessor's Office) to identify properties with

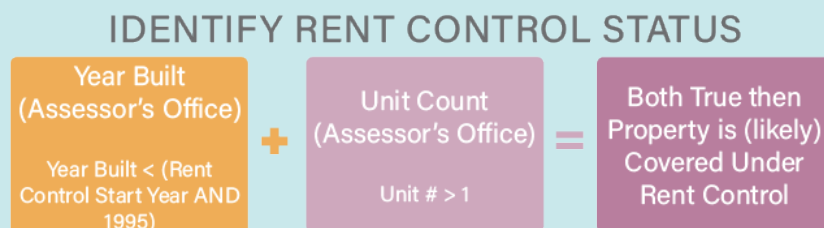
**Figure 15. Identify Rent Control Status**

Figure 15. A way to identify rent control status using parcel data

more than one unit. Not all cities have their own rent control ordinances, however all cities in California are covered by the Tenant Protection Act through 2030.

#### 4. Rent Boards

Many cities have Rent Boards. In Richmond for example, there is a Rent Program staffed by city employees that collects data on rental units in the city. This data is not readily accessible due to concerns from the City Attorney's Office for privacy of tenants and landlords. However, tenants can file a complaint to the Rent Program, and other cities with similar programs may make this dataset available for research.

In theory things like rental inventories including base rent amount, notices of rent increase, notices of eviction, and tenant complaints would all be filed with Rent Boards, which they would then maintain and share publicly. EvictorBook accesses data from San Francisco Rent Board and Oakland's Rent Adjustment Program.

# DISPLACEMENT RISK

As rentership puts people in precarious housing positions, it is common for CLTs and related organizations to need to access information about displacement risk to support renters in solving housing crises and to understand displacement risk across the housing landscape to advance anti-displacement policy. Displacement risk data can range from documentation of housing habitability issues and issues with harassment by landlords, it also includes documentation of potential ownership change which could displace tenants, and finally includes eviction data. This section details what dataset can indicate displacement risk and where they can be found.

## 1. Habitability Issues

Tenant habitability issues make a property unsafe or unhealthy to live in, and can include things like the presence of pests and mold as well as unrepaired damage to the building and broken windows. Habitability issues are challenging to identify in a simple and data driven way, as they are often underreported as reporting can present risk to the tenant and the pathways for reporting are narrow and specific. Nonetheless, there are a couple best practices that were identified in conversations with practitioners for using data to identify habitability issues. While not all cities have the same programs as Los Angeles and not all share data in such an accessible way, it seems standard among practitioners to use building inspection data as a best guess for tenant habitability concerns caused by landlord neglect.

**Figure 16. Displacement Risk Overview**

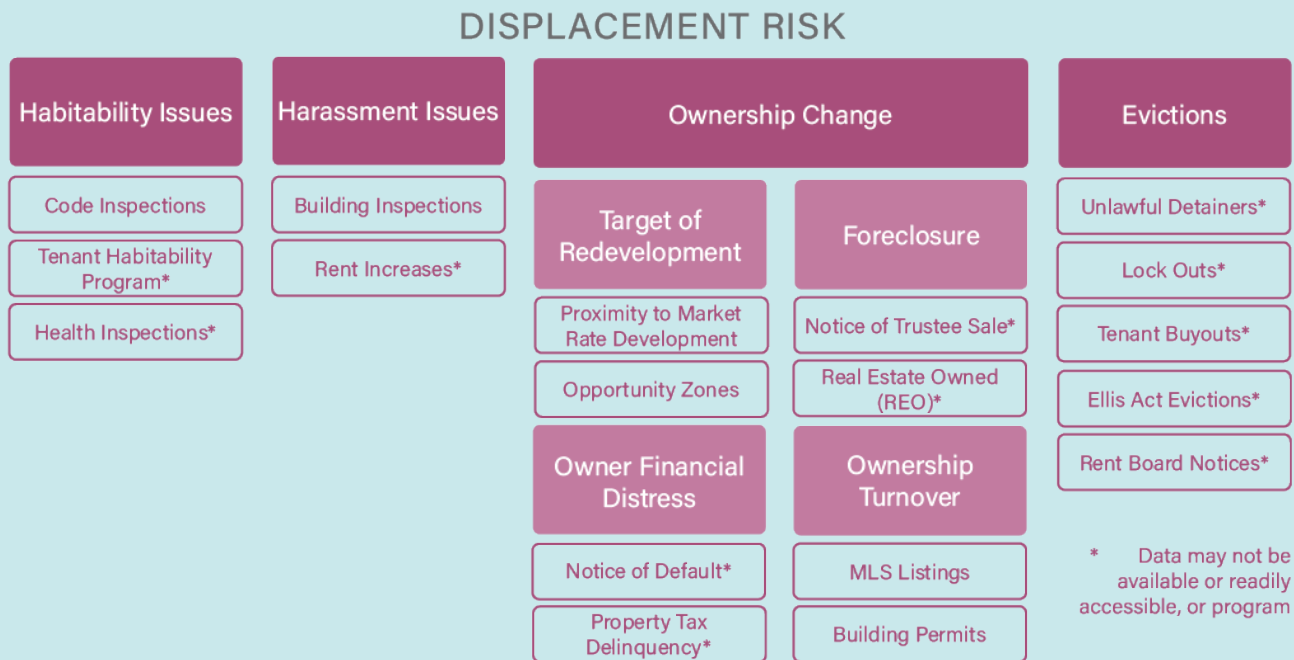


Figure 16. This diagram provides an overview of the content covered the displacement risk section, the indicator is in dark maroon, the unfilled boxes are where to look for this information, and the light maroon boxes are subcategories of the ownership change indicator

## 1.1 Habitability Issues: Building Inspections

The City of LA conducts routine inspections of residential rental units, they also conduct inspections in response to complaints. These inspections are captured and published in an online dashboard and data portal, which includes information about address, APN, unit count, inspection type, inspection date, and active violations.

Building inspections are typically something conducted in response to complaints from community members, additionally, some places like LA have routine scheduled inspections. They are intended to help protect building occupants by providing a way to check the safety and habitability of a building. These can include pest issues and unpermitted construction work, as well as the traditional signals of “blight” like graffiti and broken windows.

EvictorBook and OWNIT! access inspection data and integrate it into the data tools. Some cities make this dataset easy to access, like LA’s online portal, and others are less accessible, requiring people to reach out to the department that maintains the dataset to request access.

The quality of building inspection data can be limited. One reason for this is that habitability issues are oftentimes not reported by tenants as involving city building inspectors and code enforcement is not always a path towards safer living conditions. Additionally, building complaints are oftentimes a tool of local enforcement leveraged by neighbors in conflict, and in my experience processing them can include poverty shaming (like complaining about trash in a yard), attempts at neighbor control (like reporting every house on a block that hasn’t brought their trash bins

in by the end of trash day), and racially coded comments (like complaining about a basketball left in the street). This aside, it is helpful to have access to the building complaints to see what is being communicated to the city about a property.

## 1.2 Habitability Issues: Tenant Habitability Program

The City of LA has a Tenant Habitability Program that requires landlords to report planned renovations to rent controlled properties in order to reduce the chances of tenant harassment in the renovation process. These are published in an online dashboard and data portal, which includes information about address, APN, unit count, renovation type, and reporting date. This is not a standard program across cities in California.

## 2. Tenant Harassment Issues

Tenant harassment by the landlord is another experience that is hard to show using data as it is often underreported for the same reasons habitability issues are – reporting can present risk to the tenant and the pathways for reporting are narrow and specific. However, practitioners shared that accessing building permit data and Rent Board data can help determine the legality of landlord behavior.

### 2.1 Tenant Harassment Issues: Building Permits

Identifying properties with plans for renovation can show potential tenant harassment risk, as construction can be disruptive and lead to habitability issues, and is sometimes used as a tactic by landlords to pressure tenants to leave.

Building permits can be a useful place to check if a landlord has received permits to build or renovate a property, and to begin to understand the nature of construction happening at a home. These are typically maintained by either a planning department or building department. In Oakland it is the Planning and Building Department.

In LA, the Building and Safety Department administers building permits for building construction, demolition, and renovations. SAJE links to LA's online portal for these permits in OWNIT!. Accessing this information can help inform tenants if there is unpermitted work being done on their building, which could be part of a larger attempt to harass and displace tenants.

## 2.2 Tenant Harassment Issues: Rent Increases

Cities with rent boards typically require landlords to report planned rent increases to the city. For Oakland their Rent Adjustment Program captures this information, which EvictorBook accesses and includes in the data tool. If a tenant is informed of a rent increase it is worth checking rent board documents to identify if the increase was filed with the city, as is required in a place like Oakland, and if it falls within the allowed annual rent increase amount. Increases that are outside the city's requirements may signal unlawful efforts by the landlord to push tenants out.

## PropertyRadar

Proprietary datasets are a useful way to circumvent inaccessibility of data at the city, county, and state. These datasets should be publicly available in earnest, and should not require paying for a subscription to a company that capitalizes on unequal access to data. That not being the reality, these can be powerful tools.

PropertyRadar is an interactive map-based tool that contains property data across the country. It allows users to search properties using a long list of queries about a property's physical characteristics (lot size, unit count, year built), financial characteristics (estimated market value, year purchased, amount owned), and transaction history (historic purchases with amount, owner name, etc).

The tool also contains a number of pre-made queries to enable various users to identify properties they are seeking. One set of these queries or "quick lists" is for "investors", and aligns alarmingly well with the criteria CLT practitioners mentioned seeking for their potential property acquisitions.

I recommend reading through the investor quick lists published on their website. The lists include: owner financial distress (Notice of Default, Notice of Trustee Sale, Real-Estate Owned (bank owned), Liens), investor buyers who may be poised to sell (Cash Buyers, Trustee Sale Buyers, Corporate Owned), and owners who may be interested in selling (Absentee Owner, Out of State Owner, Free and Clear Mortgage). While these lists represent strategies of capitalizing on the dispossession of others, they are nonetheless useful strategies to understand, and the data is helpful to access.

### 3. Ownership Change & Redevelopment

A primary cause of tenant displacement is the turnover of ownership of a building. New ownership can result in building renovations and redevelopment that can require tenants to relocate, and in places without strong renter protections, can result in displacement. For this reason accessing data that signals ownership change can be helpful to tenants trying to respond to housing crises.

#### 3.1 Ownership Change & Redevelopment: Areas at Risk of Redevelopment

Especially relevant California's urban areas with expensive housing markets, these datasets can help identify areas that are at risk of redevelopment and gentrification:

##### **Proximity to market rate development**

Oftentimes cities will publish their “development pipeline”, which can be useful for locating neighborhoods at risk of gentrification and redevelopment.

##### **Opportunity Zones**

A tax subsidy for developers that is discussed in depth in the Corporate Landlord section of this report. Understanding where these are is helpful for anticipating market rate redevelopment of multi-unit buildings that could put tenants at risk of displacement.

##### **Census Data**

Identifying geographies that have high vulnerability using certain Census data can be useful. While Census data is typically less granular and accurate than local data sources, it is a standard dataset to use to verify community knowledge about what neighborhoods are at risk of gentrification.

#### 3.2 Ownership Change & Redevelopment: Owner Financial Distress and Foreclosure

Owner financial distress can signal likelihood of property ownership turnover, and is something CLTs may want to intervene in to preserve the housing access and affordability for any tenants in these buildings or to help prevent homeowners in owner-occupied buildings from losing their home. Here are some common indicators of owner financial distress:

##### **Tax Delinquency**

Owners behind on property tax payments are at risk of losing their property after five years of delinquency, after which it can be claimed and sold at auction by the County Tax Collector. This data should be maintained by a county's Tax Collector who received property tax payments. However, I have yet to hear of someone successfully acquiring this information from a County office. PropertyRadar tracks this variable, and may be a quicker route to access this data than working with the County. Tax Collectors will publish a list of tax defaulted properties going to auction, which is discussed more in the Chapter 8 Tax Sale section of [Acquisition Opportunities](#) section of this appendix.



**Pre-foreclosure: Notice of Default (NOD)**

Owners behind on mortgage payments are at risk of foreclosure. When an owner is behind on payments, a bank can file a Notice of Default (NOD) with the county court. A banks must wait 90 days after a missed payment to file a NOD (Clark, 2015). NODs should be obtainable from the county court.

**Foreclosure: Notice of Trustee Sale (NTS)**

Once a NOD is filed the owner has 3 months to become current on the loan, which includes paying all back payments, interest, fees, property taxes, and insurance. If this does not happen the bank can file a Notice of Trustee Sale with the court to set a date for the foreclosure sale (Clark, 2015). NTSs should be obtainable from the county court.

**Real Estate Owned (REOs)**

REOs are buildings that have gone into foreclosure and were not purchased at auction. A CLT could purchase these for a far below market rate from a bank. In OakCLT's efforts to acquire REOs they were able to scrape data from Alameda County Clerk Recorder's website that allowed individual record lookups for NODs and NTSs that include the buyer, the seller, the auction date, and the APN.

**3.3 Ownership Change & Redevelopment: Buildings for Sale and Schedule for Demolition**

Oftentimes by the time a building goes for sale it is too late for CLTs to intervene as they will

struggle to compete on the open housing market to purchase the building. However, it can still be useful to access official documentation of building sale postings and building demolition plans:

**Building Sale**

The sale of a building can signal destabilizing change for tenants. Access to MLS listings would be the automated way to tap into when a building is posted for sale, but oftentimes the posted for sale sign is indication enough for tenants that change is coming.

**Building Demolition Plans**

Similarly plans to demolish a building should be registered via a building permit with the city planning and building department.

LA's Building and Safety Department administers building permits for building construction, demolition, and renovations. SAJE links to the city's online portal for these permits in OWNIT!. These building permits can help tenants learn if demolition is planned to start to organize in opposition to it. Building permits with plans for demolition are certainly grounds to act as tenants displacement risk is very high.

**4. Evictions**

Eviction data can be documented in a number of ways, the first of which is by the county, as evictions across the state are filed with counties (and enforced by county sheriff's departments). Oftentimes accessing eviction data from the county is challenging, if possible at all. In addition to county records, some cities maintain data

about evictions, which can be easier to access than county data. For cities that have rent boards, it is common for rent boards to maintain some amount of eviction data.

### **Unlawful Detainer**

Landlords can file an unlawful detainer with the County court claiming the tenant is in violation of the lease. Once filed the tenant has 5 days to file a response with the court.

These records can be hard to access from the county courts, as such, currently in LA County people can request unlawful detainer data one at a time at the cost of a \$1 per request. Due to this limited access, county eviction filings are not included in OWNIT!, however, the City of LA will soon require unlawful detainers to be reported with the city, which will make the data more accessible for use in OWNIT!.

EvictorBook Oakland accesses unlawful detainer records from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, while EvictorBook San Francisco accesses this information from the city's Rent Board.

### **Lock Outs**

5 days after a landlord files an unlawful detainer, if the tenant has not filed a response with the court, the county sheriff's department can forcibly evict the tenants and lock them out of their home. Lock out records are recorded with the sheriff's department and are typically difficult to access.

### **Tenant Buyout Programs**

Los Angeles has a tenant buyout program (formerly "Cash For Keys"), which requires landlords to report tenant buyouts to the city. SAJE accesses tenant buyout data by submitting a monthly public records request to the LA Housing Department.

In both San Francisco and Oakland tenant buyouts are recorded with the cities, which both versions of EvictorBook access and use in their tool.

### **Ellis Act Evictions**

The City of LA also captures and publishes Ellis Act Eviction notifications, which are required to be reported to the city when a building is taken off the rental market. SAJE integrates Ellis Act Evictions into OWNIT! by accessing them through an open data portal the City of LA hosts. In Oakland and San Francisco Ellis Act evictions are documented with the cities, and accessed there for both versions of EvictorBook.

### **Rent Board Eviction Notices**

In addition to city and county eviction records, some cities require eviction notices to be filed with the rent board, similar to how rent adjustments must be filed with the rent board. These can be easier to access than county unlawful detainer notices.

# ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

As CLTs struggle to compete on the open housing market to purchase properties, efforts are underway at the state to give CLTs and other non-profits priority access in property acquisition. This section discusses three state programs that offer priority access or funding, and details the datasets that can be useful for identifying properties that meet the program criteria.

## 1. Chapter 8 Tax Sale

Properties that have outstanding property taxes due become tax delinquent with the County tax collector. Under the State’s Chapter 8 Tax Sale policy once a property is tax delinquent for 5 years the tax collector can claim the power to sell the property at auction. Eligible non-profits get priority in the auction of these tax defaulted

properties (CA State Controller’s Office, 2016). This can be a low-cost opportunity to acquire properties before they go to sale on the open housing market.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) has a tax default division that sends out notifications of tax default auctions (LA Treasurer and Tax Collector, 2023). While not all counties are so proactive in sharing auction information, it is worth looking into this program as a good opportunity to acquire buildings for ac-rehab.

## 2. Surplus Land Act (SLA)

The State’s Surplus Land Act is intended to reactivate vacant and underutilized land owned by cities across the state. The SLA offers a “first right of refusal” to affordable developers in the local disposition of city owned land (CA HCD, 2022). Therefore presenting an opportunity for CLTs to acquire land at low-to-no-cost to develop or use as community space.

**Figure 17. Acquisition Opportunities Overview**

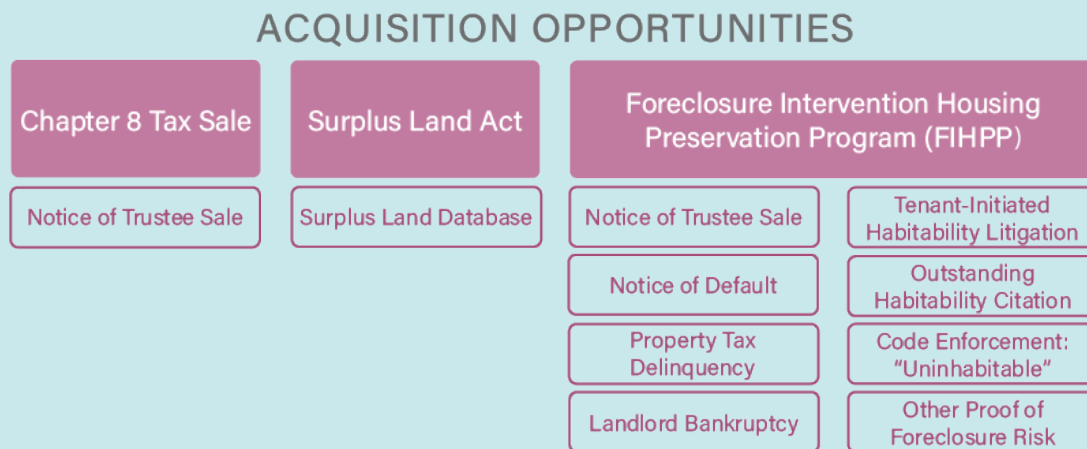


Figure 17. This diagram shows three programs that fund acquisitions and the datasets to identify what properties will meet the funding criteria

Cities are required to report their surplus land to the State’s Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), which publishes the statewide dataset for download in their Annual Progress Reports. This dataset is one of the most accessible of any discussed in this report.

### 3. Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program (FIHPP)

As discussed in section #3 Removing Land From the Speculative Market section of this report, FIHPP was added to California law in 2021, a landmark program following the passage of SB1079 that funds and supports ac-rehab to help springboard small housing non-profits into the housing preservation space. The program includes a small set of criteria that sites must meet to qualify for funding (shown in Figure 18).

It is yet unclear how organizations will go about identifying properties to use FIHPP funding to acquire, but regardless of if the process is initiated by tenants seeking support or by organizations looking for properties in the community that might qualify, access to property data will be useful in the process.

Information about unit count as well as owner-occupation of a building can oftentimes be found in the parcels dataset (discussed extensively in the [Property Lookup: Access Information](#) section of this appendix).

Documented foreclosure risk and filings are held by the county courts, which should be publicly available, although rarely easy to acquire in bulk. Notice of Trustee Sales (NTS), Notice of Default (NOD), and tax delinquency are all discussed

Figure 18. FIHPP Criteria

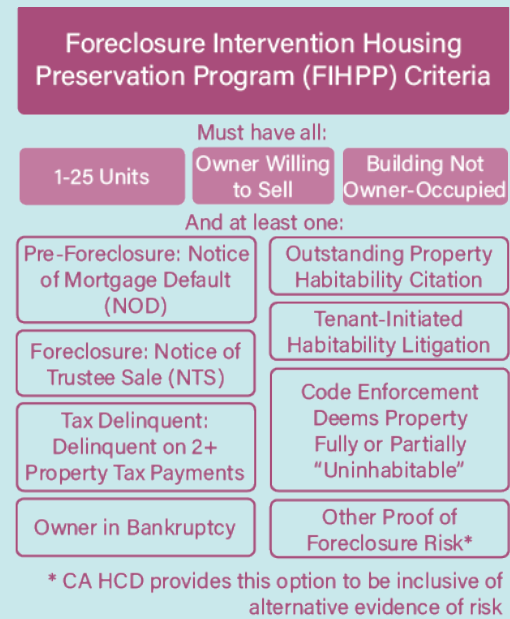


Figure 18. California's Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program requires properties to meet both criteria in maroon and one of the five owner financial distress categories

the above section of this appendix [Displacement Risk: Ownership Change & Redevelopment: Owner Financial Distress and Foreclosure](#) for more information.

Information about habitability issues can best be accessed at the local municipal government, where typically the Code Enforcement or Building Inspection departments will document violations. Some cities share this information in an accessible format. See the above section [Displacement Risk: Habitability Issues](#) of this appendix for more information about accessing these datasets.

Proprietary data compiling services like PropertyRadar, share data in a searchable format on owner bankruptcy, NTS, NOD, and tax delinquency. These services will also have information about the number of units and

owner-occupied status of a building. They will likely not include local code enforcement and building inspection data. PropertyRadar is discussed in the [Displacement Risk](#) section of this appendix.



# LANDLORD NETWORK MAPPING

Exposing property ownership networks is useful for any housing rights work as it can help tenants understand the size of their landlords’ portfolio, help tenants organize across buildings, and help make the case to policy makers to advance policy to counter the consolidation of property ownership. Ownership networks paired with eviction data can be especially telling and useful for these purposes.

Mapping landlord networks can be challenging,

and of the practitioners I spoke to there were two primary approaches to doing so. They share a more basic cursory connection and a more in depth connection that links together multiple datasets from different agencies across the state. Both are described in this section along with data sources and a brief description of methodology.

## 1. Basic Approach

The basic steps to identifying ownership networks center on owner name and owner address as associated with a property. These can be acquired through parcel data, and therefore are the only source needed for this approach. While methods are not the focus of this report, I will briefly describe this process:

**Figure 19. Landlord Network Mapping Overview**

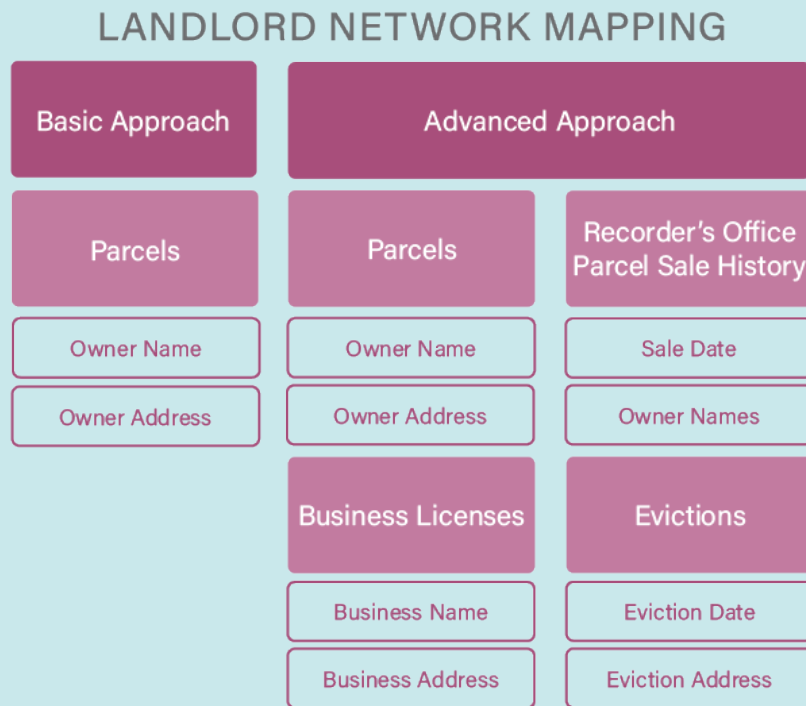


Figure 19. This diagram shows two approaches to conducting landlord networking mapping, the datasets used for each approach, and the necessary variables within each dataset

## Basic Approach: Data

### Parcel Data

The key piece of information here is the parcel dataset with ownership information. Not always the easiest thing to acquire, but incredibly valuable for any research of ownership trends across a community. See [Property Lookup: Parcels](#) section of this appendix for more information.

## Basic Approach: Method

Talking to a data analyst behind OWNIT! I was told the easiest and most efficient way to get at shared ownership is through the owner address, as some owners will have a unique LLC for each property they own, but will oftentimes register them at the same address. In an ideal world one would link the nodes of owner name to owner address to pull out any connections between them, but this already becomes a cumbersome task, and when compared with the ease of just looking at one field may not be worth exploring. Another common approach is to search owner name for keywords like “LLC, LP, INC, CORP”, this can be fairly straightforward and fruitful. But on its own does not do enough to access ownership networks.

## 2. Advanced Approach

Conversations with Anti-Eviction Mapping Project members who built EvictorBook revealed how complex the in depth landlord network mapping process is. These conversations did not go into depth on methods, but did discuss data sources and touch on methods. While methods are not the focus of this report, I will briefly describe this process:

## Advanced Approach: Data

### Business Licenses

A next level approach to mapping ownership networks is acquiring business licenses from the state to link information with owner name from the parcels. This dataset will include both business owner name and business owner address, which should be integrated into any matching system that is considering these fields in the parcel dataset.

### Evictions

Sources of eviction data are described in the [Displacement Risk: Evictions](#) section of this appendix. However, I will note what I learned from AEMP affiliates here on the process.

## Advanced Approach: Method

Eviction data includes eviction date and address, which should be paired with the parcel data to access property and owner information. Additionally, it includes attributed evictor, which should be paired with the parcel data. Ideally for both of these joins the date is traced to the owner at the time of the eviction, which requires sales history from the Recorder’s Office. This is another next level analysis that EvictorBook carried out that others may not be able to readily access. When properly linked, business licenses with local parcel data and eviction data can build out a complete network of property ownership by linking businesses to properties and evictions.

# APPENDIX B

## Interview Protocol

### Experience

- Describe any projects you've worked on using GIS or data analysis to promote the work of CLTs

### Goals (focusing on one project)

- What were the goals of this project?
- What questions were you trying to answer?

### Needs

- What needs was this project attempting to address?
- How were these needs identified?

### Role in process

- What was your role in the creation of this tool?
- How did you engage in design?
- How did you engage with other staff in the design process?
  - Why this tool?
- Why was data analysis the path forward for this project?
- How did the tool attempt to answer the questions?

### Outcomes

- What were the outcomes?
- How did the tool answer the questions?
- Did it meet the need?

### Changes

- What would you've done differently?
- What couldn't you do?

### Takeaways

- Was data analysis necessary for this?
- Do you have any ideas for useful products from my research?



# APPENDIX C

## Number of Interviews by Organization Type

Organization Type	Number of Interviews
CLTs	6
Related Non-Profits	7
Universities	6
Public Agencies	1

## Organizations Represented in Interviews

Organization	Organization Type
Richmond LAND	CLT
Beverly-Vermont CLT	CLT
OakCLT	CLT
CA CLT Network	Related Non-Profit
SAJE	Related Non-Profit
Anti-Eviction Mapping Project	Related Non-Profit
San Francisco Foundation	Related Non-Profit
Enterprise Community Partners	Related Non-Profit
University of California Berkeley	University
University of California Los Angeles	University
University of Southern California	University
Rutgers University	University
CA Department of Housing and Community Development	Public Agency