



# Imagining What Is Possible on the Land We Steward

# *How to use this guide:*

*Uncover the visions and passions for “ministry that matters” that come from the people in your congregation and your community. Vision and dream what might be possible for our neighbors and community with the land our congregation is called to steward.*

*This workbook offers tools for discernment and visioning, especially for “Ministry that Matters” focused on housing. It does so in three parts.*

*The **first** asks your congregation to consider their “why,” to dig into the rich passions and dreams of members and neighbors, and to imagine what your congregation is called to based on your own stories and visions and based on the story of the land itself. The **second** part offers lenses that can clarify the scope and type of housing ministry that might be right for your congregation at this moment. The **third** offers specific technical questions for your congregation’s process and for your congregation to ask of potential partners like developers.*

*Gather a team of leaders in your congregation. Think of the people who love to ask curious questions. Decide on a number of times you want to meet to consider the questions in this workbook. There might be need for multiple meetings so that your team of leaders can have conversations with other congregants and broader community members. Use the tools in this resource to consider your congregation’s next steps toward housing ministries and ministries that matter.*



## Notes

What is something your congregation would go to bat for, even if you faced resistance from your wider community?

*Find Your Why*

What stories and ministries in your congregation's present and past community work inform your desire to pursue this ministry that matters?

*Find Your Why*

## Notes

*Think of a place that has deeply felt like home for you. Describe the place and the relationships that make it feel like home.*

*Imagine that the Church has come into ownership of that place and is going to redevelop it, what would you hope happens there?*

*Land Story*

*If land at your church could speak, what story would it tell? What would it be proud of? What would it want to change? Who would be its main characters?*

*What is the hidden history of your land? How might you discover it and the environmental, cultural, social and colonial impacts of your ministry that matters?*

*Land Story*

## Notes

What specific people, concerns, or stories have you collected or heard that are pressing to you?

Community Listening

Imagine your church building could eavesdrop on the hopes and dreams of the neighborhood. What whispers and shouts would it hear?

Community Listening

What stories of struggle and celebration would it collect? How might these unheard voices guide your vision of the future of your land?

Community Listening

## Notes

What will be the individual and communal impact if you don't do something creative with your land?

Impact

Who has been coming up and what hidden stories have been coming up that could benefit from getting creative with our land?

Impact

How will we (our members and congregation) change in this process of pursuing ministry that matters?

Impact

## Notes

*As you imagine a more  
creative way to steward  
your land and space,  
what sparks your  
imagination?*

*Vision*

*Affordable housing,  
sheltering, land-back to  
indigenous neighbors,  
permaculture, solar  
installation... ?*

*Community-owned  
grocery store, co-  
working spaces,  
eldercare, music venues,  
childcare... ?*

*Vision*

## Notes

Imagine a pot of gold appears on your church lawn, inside are the talents, strengths resources already in your community. There is so much!

Capacity

What talents, strengths, resources do you find?

Capacity

How would you use the magic of your members' talents, hidden strengths of your property, and connections you have in the community to turn that gold into something beautiful and impactful?

Capacity



## Bringing Details into Focus

*How much control does the church want to have over use of the property, and/or ability to carry out direct ministry on the property after development?*

*Would you be willing to sell the land and rent it back for worship? Would you be willing to give the land away or at a steeply discounted rate?*

*What financial cost is the congregation able to bear before the project becomes sustainable or income producing 3-5 years in the future?*

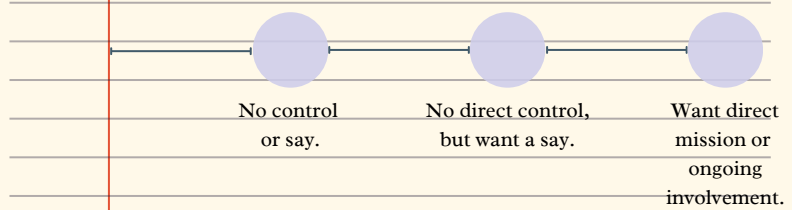
*How much upfront responsibility is the church willing to bear such as - working with neighborhood association, city, architect, lenders, community partners, denominational structures, etc - in the predevelopment phase, as well as helping manage the project during the development process?*

*How much ongoing responsibility is the church willing to bear such as daily management, problem solving, decision making, etc., after the project is complete?*

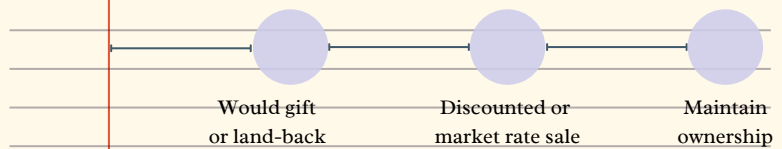
*What ongoing relationship does the congregation wish to have with residents/participants?*

***How do these answers resonate with the stories, values and “why” described above?***

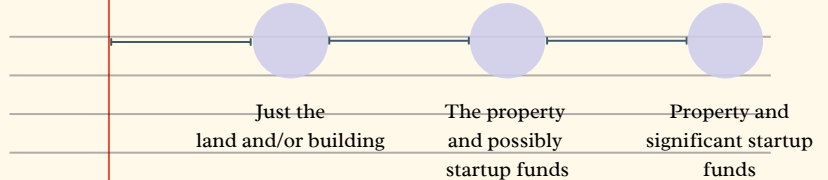
### Control



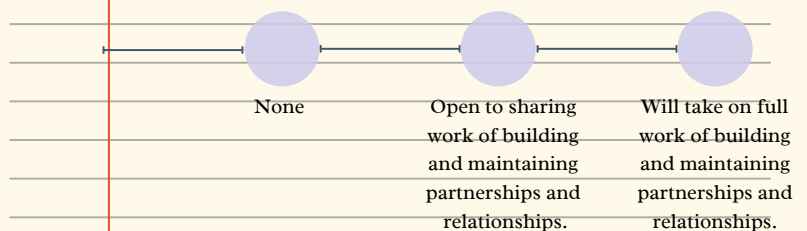
### Ownership



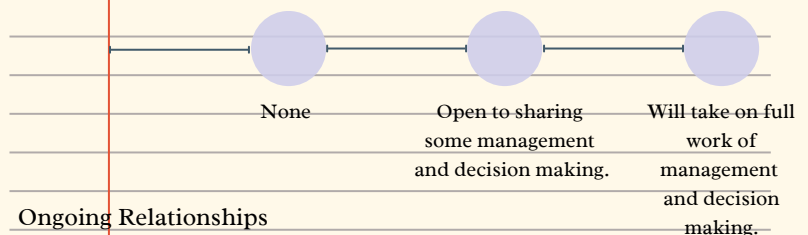
### Investment



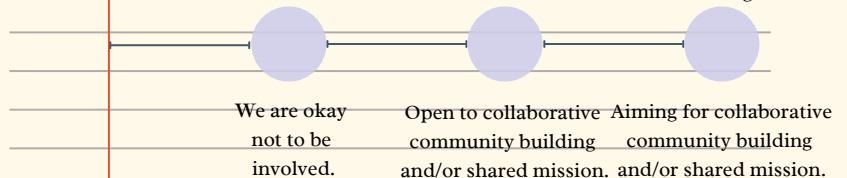
### Partnership Building



### Management



### Ongoing Relationships





*Checklist of Technical  
and Early Process Questions*



*1. What is your current zoning? How can you find out?*



*2. What is your current acreage?*



*3. Have you already done any discernment work in your congregation about whether to pursue building affordable housing or other housing? If so, what decisions has your community already made?*



*4. Have you built a team/taskforce to help lead your congregation through the steps of discernment and subsequent development?*



*5. Have you spoken to your District Superintendent about this vision?*



*6. Have you presented your congregation's vision to your District Board of Property and Location?*



*7. Have you already done any work to connect with developer partners? If so, who and how did you encounter them?*



*8. What other partners have you already begun building relationships with?*

## Questions to Ask Potential Developer Partners

### **VALUES AND MISSIONAL ALIGNMENT**

- *Provide a list of your company values, history, mission statement, and organization chart.*
- *How does the fact that this project's partners are faith-based and interfaith in nature affect your perception and expectations of how you'd accomplish your work?*
- *Given the above goals and legacy of our project, what opportunities and challenges do you see in accomplishing your work with us?*
- *Provide a description of your willingness to engage with the possibility of providing development services not only to build affordable housing on the Presbytery land, but also to collaborate with the refugee and asylum seeking community to build their community gathering spaces on the property. What limits, concerns, or opportunities do you foresee? Include how you would coordinate/communicate about this.*

### **EXPERIENCE**

- *Please describe your experience in developing affordable housing projects in Oregon, and if possible, [Your County Name] specifically.*
- *What specific issues apply to [Your County Name]? In your estimation, how can community partners such as faith communities and community organizations support efforts to eliminate barriers in [Your County Name]?*

## Questions to Ask Potential Developer Partners

### **SOCIAL EQUITY**

*We fully understand the societal costs of any diminution in our country's social equity, and the negative results of failing to embrace the diversity that characterizes our communities and nation. This understanding compels us to ask those with which we engage to do their part in overcoming these inequities.*

- What percentage of your subcontractors utilize Minority/Women/Emerging Small Businesses (i.e. on a project by project basis, what percentage of the total work was performed by MWESB subcontractors?)*
- Does your company have an explicit and monitored Social Equity and Diversity Policy? If so, please provide a copy of the policy.*

### **PROCESS AND FINANCING**

- Please provide your typical process for developing a project, including what you feel is a reasonable timeline for a project of this size.*
- What financial requirements do you have from owners and at what points do they typically appear on your timeline?*
- What is your preferred process for acquiring funding for projects?*
- Please describe your process and criteria for selecting architects and contractors.*
- Please supply a description of your fee structure.*