

Transforming Climate Governance With Community Accountability Boards

A Toolkit for Co-Creating Equitable Building
Decarbonization Solution

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TOOLKIT

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How to Read and Use this Toolkit

This toolkit explores the concept of a community accountability board (CAB), scrutinizing the viability of its framework and core principles as a model for community empowerment while examining the most salient challenges to such a transition of power and governance. Aimed at both community-based organizations and government entities considering the initiation of a CAB, this toolkit considers the foundational aspects, potential challenges, and strategic considerations inherent in establishing and operating CABs through a comprehensive exploration of best practices, legal considerations, and real-life experiences of our cohort participants.

All localities are unique with respect to legal, political, and community/resident factors and relationships. We recommend readers start by familiarizing themselves with the purpose and principles of CABs. Then, use the sections of the toolkit to explore legal frameworks, capacity building, and decision-making processes essential for effective CAB operation. The strategic considerations and case studies provide practical tools and real-life insights for designing and adapting the CAB model to your community's unique needs.



What Is a Community Accountability Board?

A **community accountability board** is a community-led, local governmental board that has the authority to impact power systems and move towards transparent, inclusive, and responsive policies and practices that directly serve community needs.

CABs operate under principles of transparency and accountability and are responsive to specific community climate change impacts. The CAB should be diverse in composition, reflective of the community's demographic and socioeconomic makeup, and empowered with either decision-making authority or significant influence over policy formation. CABs are designed to be adaptive and flexible, able to address a range of community issues as they evolve, with a strong foundation in engagement and broad civic support for their sustained operation.

This toolkit focuses on CABs under a larger building performance standard (BPS)—or similar emission-reduction, energy-saving program—within a governmental framework. Specifically, a BPS policy is a set of standards designed to reduce carbon emissions in buildings by improving energy, gas and water use, and peak demand.

These standards become stricter over time, driving continuous, long-term improvement in the building stock, and complementing building energy codes.

Buildings are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, contributing approximately 40% to the total emissions.¹ In taking action to address climate change, and knowing the disproportionate impacts on frontline communities, cities are considering how to address equitable, community-based decision-making in implementing building emissions reductions and energy savings. CABs can be effective bodies for stewarding climate progress when they are resourced to collaborate with a local government on community priorities and empowered with direct decision-making authority over the impacts on their community.

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021). *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2019*.



Considerations for a CAB Framework

To develop a robust and accepted framework of a CAB, several key considerations should be addressed. These considerations are meant to guide governments and local community organizations in establishing and maintaining CABs that are effective, respected, and sincerely reflective of community governance ideals.



Partner development

Begin the process by engaging a diverse array of community members, local government officials, and experts in relevant fields. It is important to note that there are different types of expertise (policy, lived experience, legal, cultural competency, etc.). A CAB should prioritize the expertise of community members who are experiencing the brunt of the climate crisis, because they understand the solution better than anyone and are often intentionally excluded from policy-making spaces.



Community representation and diversity

It is essential that the CAB reflects the community's diversity in terms of age, race, economic status, expertise, education, and employment experiences. This ensures that multiple perspectives are considered in CAB activities.



Scope and mandate

Clearly articulate the scope and specific mandates of the CAB. This clarity helps define the boundaries of the CAB's influence and responsibilities, particularly regarding which areas of policy it will impact.



Authority and empowerment

To the extent possible, give CABs the authority to make and enforce decisions and allocate resources.



Transparency and accountability

Ensure that the CAB operates with a high level of transparency and accountability, including mechanisms for regular public reporting and community feedback, to maintain trust and integrity.



Legal and institutional compatibility

The CAB's functions must align with legal frameworks and institutional structures to ensure effectiveness of its actions.



Sustainability and support

Outline mechanisms for ongoing support and sustainability of the CAB, including funding, training, and administrative assistance, ensuring it can operate effectively over the long term.



Adaptability and flexibility

Allow for flexibility in the CAB's focus and operational methods to adapt to changing community needs and circumstances, ensuring long-term relevance.



Ethical considerations

Establish guidelines that honor and reflect agreed upon core mission and values of the CAB members, ensuring that all activities align with and respect community norms.



Evaluation and revision

Create a structured process for the regular evaluation of the CAB's impact and how governmental systems may be obstructing CAB effectiveness, with provisions for necessary adjustments and updates in its definition and operations.



Diversity is a hard concept to measure and agree upon. There is no way to represent every intersection of every group that should be represented in some way. So we need to make sure the members of the group are at least trying to understand the community, not just share their demographics.

Steve Greenspan, PhD, Lead Volunteer,
Climate Justice and Jobs Team for POWER Philadelphia

Confronting the Built-In Challenges of Establishing CABs with Real Power

There are inherent challenges that come with creating a CAB with real power. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for establishing a board that truly empowers the community and drives meaningful change. Below are challenges to be clear-eyed about:

- **Power dynamics and representation**
Establishing a CAB with real power requires addressing power dynamics and ensuring adequate representation. Selecting board members and defining their roles and responsibilities can be challenging, as different community groups may have varying interests and perspectives. There is a risk of certain voices dominating the board while others, particularly marginalized or underrepresented communities, may not have equal influence. Striking a balance and ensuring fair representation across diverse community stakeholders can be a complex and ongoing process.
- **Lack of expertise and experience**
CABs may face challenges in terms of expertise and experience. While community members bring valuable local knowledge and lived experiences, they may not always possess the technical expertise or deep understanding of complex issues related to governance, policy-making, or the industry they are overseeing. Without the necessary expertise, board members may struggle to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and make informed decisions, potentially undermining the board's credibility and effectiveness.
- **Resource constraints**
CABs require adequate resources to function effectively. Funding for staffing, training, research, and community engagement initiatives may be limited, leading to constraints on the board's capacity to carry out its responsibilities. Insufficient resources can hinder the board's ability to conduct thorough investigations, provide meaningful oversight, and engage with the community, limiting its effectiveness in holding entities accountable.
- **Managing conflicts of interest**
Conflicts of interest can arise among board members, particularly if they have personal or financial connections to the entities they are meant to hold accountable. Adequate safeguards and processes must be in place to identify and manage conflicts of interest to maintain the board's integrity and credibility.
- **Time and deliberation challenges**
Engaging community members in decision-making processes and fostering meaningful dialogue takes time. Deliberations within the board, community consultations, and the need to reach consensus on important matters can be time-consuming. Balancing the need for inclusivity and participation with the need

for efficiency and timely action poses a significant challenge. Lengthy decision-making processes may delay or hinder the board's ability to address urgent issues or provide timely resolutions.

- **Political interference and influence**

CABs may face challenges from political interference or external influence. Powerful interests or entities may attempt to sway the decisions or actions of the board, either overtly or covertly, to protect their own interests. Political pressure can compromise the board's independence, undermine its effectiveness, and erode public trust in the accountability process.

- **Enforcement and decision-making authority**

Granting real power to a CAB raises questions about its enforcement capabilities and decision-making authority. If the board's decisions or recommendations lack legal enforceability, entities being held accountable may choose to ignore or contest them, rendering the board's power ineffective. Determining the extent of the board's authority and establishing mechanisms for enforcement can be a complex process, requiring legal clarity and support.

- **Lack of clear direction and identity**

While creating a CAB with real power has the potential to enhance transparency, oversight, and community engagement, addressing these inherent flaws and challenges will be paramount to ensure its effectiveness and credibility. Robust governance structures, clear guidelines, and ongoing evaluation processes are necessary to mitigate these challenges and maximize the board's impact.

Addressing these inherent flaws and challenges is crucial for the successful establishment and operation of CABs with real power. By proactively identifying and addressing these challenges, we can create robust governance structures that empower communities, enhance transparency, and foster meaningful engagement. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that CABs are not only established but are also sustainable, credible, and capable of driving impactful community-centered policies.

Using Race-Conscious Language in Establishing CAB Members

Given the ongoing legal attacks on affirmative action and race-conscious college admission programs, it is important to consider how to describe a CAB's community-reflective member selection process. Legal challenges may be considered by outside parties if a CAB is specifically and intentionally race-conscious in terms of the members nominated and selected to serve. A focus on representation of communities that reflect certain economic classes, pollution levels, or geographic areas within a location to avoid potential legal or political challenges. Due to systemic racism and its impacts throughout the country, communities of color often reside in under-resourced and more heavily polluted areas. To that end, economic and environmentally impacted neighborhoods and districts could be factors in evaluating CAB representation. One approach would be to set specific districts or wards that CAB members represent, similar to a city council.



Ensuring CABs Are Truly
Community Governed

Ensuring CABs Are Truly Community Governed

Having identified the inherent challenges and considerations in creating effective CABs, the next step is to delve into how we can ensure these boards are truly community-governed. In this section, we will explore the principles and practices that support genuine community governance, including building capacity, supporting community leadership, and establishing mechanisms for community control and decision-making.

1. Understanding and Establishing Community Governance

When using the terms “community” and “communities,” we are referring to groups of people more likely to experience the “first” and “worst” negative impact of the climate crisis and outcomes that affect their daily wellbeing and ability to prosper: [reduced life expectancy](#), [poorer health outcomes](#), [higher energy burden](#) (the percentage of income that goes towards energy costs), [higher heat stress](#), [increased unemployment rates](#), and [lower levels of housing security](#), to name a few. Communities must be directly involved into the policy process and empowered to reverse these outcomes.

A CAB provides a means to this end. In order for a CAB to be truly community governed, it has to be representative of the community it serves, empowered with decision-making authority to ensure policies address community needs, and responsive to community needs. Otherwise, the CAB cannot be said to be truly community governed and may be a false solution.

False Solutions

False solutions are approaches to climate change that will only worsen our ecological and economic crises. False solutions are exclusionary and inaccessible because they treat the symptoms and not the root causes of climate change while excluding frontline and marginalized communities. The proposed ‘fixes’ often:

- extract wealth from frontline community members and further concentrate wealth and political power

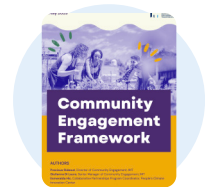
- continue to poison, displace, and imprison residents of frontline communities
- reduce the climate crisis to a crisis of carbon, rather than a complex and unjust humanitarian crisis

Learn more about common false solutions within the building decarbonization space in [IMT’s Community Engagement Framework](#).

Supplementary Tools



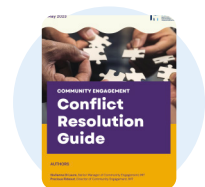
[Summary of IMT’s Model Ordinance for a Building Performance Standard](#)



[IMT Community Engagement Framework](#)



[IMT Community Engagement Process Guide](#)



[IMT Conflict Resolution Guide](#)



[Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) by Rosa Gonzales and Facilitating Power

2. Building Capacity and Supporting Effective Community Leadership

Understanding the Commitment

Service on a CAB is a major commitment, and the responsibilities must be clearly communicated to members from the outset in order to avoid member burnout. Recognizing the time-intensive nature of this role is essential for preventing burnout and ensuring long-term engagement. CAB members must be aware that the implementation stage of policy can span several years, requiring sustained dedication.

Resourcing Needed for CABs

How the CAB functions should be considered to ensure it is adequately resourced. Additional training of CAB members may be needed and resources provided to them so they can work effectively to address community needs. Most importantly, CAB members should be compensated for their time, via stipends or other means as permitted by local rules. The cadence of when the CAB meets may vary between localities. Thought should also be given to how these meetings are conducted. If they are in person, they should be held at a reasonable time of day, with childcare, food, and translation services provided. Remote meetings should also be an option. Hybrid meetings may suit the members of the CAB but can introduce imbalances, so alternating between in-person and remote meetings may be a better approach.

To get governments and CABs on the same page, it is beneficial to undertake a [Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#) and some form of facilitated equity training. Many governments will default to bringing in

private community engagement consultants as CAB facilitators, but they should consider carefully whether a local community-based organization (CBO) could better serve in this role, as these groups already have connections and know the needs of their communities. When technical decisions need to be made in relation to policy drafting or rulemaking, the CAB should be able to consult with policy experts.

Empowering Members

CABs should have real authority for decisions that directly impact under-resourced, frontline communities, such as alternative compliance paths for BPS and directing funds to address past and current environmental harms. CABs should be able to review and report on the metrics they choose to measure the progress of policies towards meeting community goals. These goals and metrics will look different depending on the location and community needs the policy is addressing. The CAB should also hold regular community accountability meetings that can help contextualize and explore the impacts of the policy. While the data available to the CAB and government may indicate one thing, the lived experience of community members may reveal different outcomes.

Developing Clear Goals and Metrics

CABs should be actively involved in setting and reviewing the metrics used to measure the progress of policies. These goals and metrics should be tailored to the specific needs of the community and the policy in question. By allowing CABs to choose relevant metrics, the board can ensure that the measures of success are meaningful and reflective of community priorities. Potential metrics include:

Representation accuracy	Resource utilization	Decision impact	Goal achievement	Transparency and accountability	Community feedback
Representing the community's diversity in terms of demographics, interests and expertise	Evaluation how efficiently and effectively the board uses resources allocated to it	How the board's decisions and recommendations influence policy or program changes	Measure how well the board achieves its stated goals and objectives	Determine the level of transparency and its accountability to the community	Gather feedback from the broader community about the CAB's efficacy and the perceptions of its impact

3. Determining CAB Processes and Roles for Community Engagement Throughout Policy Development, Adoption, and Implementation

Policy Stage	What CABs Should Be Empowered to Do	What This Might Look Like
Development	Directly engage with communities and policy experts to hear their concerns and ensure the policy is responsive to community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with governments to acknowledge past harms (IMT's Conflict Resolution Guide may be helpful) Use the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership by Rosa Gonzales and Facilitating Power to improve policy outcomes and assess the level of community involvement. Host public meetings to invite communities to highlight their needs Utilize CBOs and networks to encourage communities to participate in meetings Partner with CBOs (IMT has a draft MOU) Translate community priorities into policy and vice versa Have a budget to commission research and hire professional experts to advise and assist on the design of policies where appropriate
	Co-design policy wording with governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive how the policy addresses community needs, or at least co-own the process with governments
	Identify measurable outcomes to assess whether policies are equitably implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct analyses with governments to determine potential policy impacts Undertake equity mapping to examine disparate outcomes that communities experience
Adoption	Be empowered to mobilize public support for policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create policy explainers for communities and elected officials
	Meet with legislators and other decision makers to advocate for policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight community needs and historical outcomes Create buen vivir (living well but not at the expense of others) among stakeholders Organize educational forums with governments
Implementation	Co-design rules and policy changes with governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have final approval of rules and policy changes Gain acceptance for proposed rules or changes unless governments identify evidence that they would not be in the public interest
	Ensure equitable implementation of policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be responsible for deciding how funds from any penalty structures associated with policies are reinvested in the community Decide when to approve flexibility measures such as extensions or adjustments if stakeholders are unable to comply with policies Host community accountability meetings to gather input on the design and implementation of policies or programs Conduct research to determine changes in measurable outcomes Gather feedback from traditional stakeholders affected by policies to ensure the goals are achievable



Understanding Legal and Bureaucratic Landscapes

Establishing a community accountability board (CAB) holding decision-making authority within a governmental framework is a significant step towards empowering communities and establishing responsive governance. This section of the toolkit reviews the legal and bureaucratic frameworks to consider in making these boards a reality with effective community advocacy and change.

Legal Frameworks Essential for CABs

Before a CAB can take action, it must be firmly rooted in municipal and state legal frameworks that support its functions and goals. In reviewing the legal considerations for a CAB, we must state that—as other climate change legal scholars have noted—no two cities will go through an identical legal review.² State laws, enabling statutes, local constraints, and political powers will all impact the desires and abilities in establishing any city commission, including a CAB.³ To that end, any initiative to advance a CAB within a local government structure will need a thorough legal review expanding from the general framework put

forth below. Moreover, it requires an understanding of how local politics, community, and power relationships may present both opportunities and obstacles in establishing a CAB. A straightforward legal process (often not the case!) for establishing a CAB can still be challenging when there are significant political and power barriers. On the other hand, a more complex legal process for co-governance can be more achievable if there is strong public and political support to overcome obstacles and drive change.

With that said, there are some legal considerations that will apply in most cases, which we lay out in this section.

² Amy E. Turner & Michael Burger, Sabin Ctr. for Climate Change, Colum. L. Sch., *Cities Climate Law: A Legal Framework for Local Action in the U.S.* 3 (Nov. 2021), https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/sabin_climate_change/2.

³ *Id.*; see also Interview with Dr. Alison Brizius, Former Comm'r of the Env't Dep't, City of Bos. & Diana Vasquez, Manager, BERDO Rev. Bd. (Mar. 27, 2024); Interview with Dwaigh Tyndal, Exec. Dir., Alts. for Cmty. & Env't (ACE) (Apr. 1, 2024).



1. Municipal Authority Under State Control

In reviewing the legal framework for establishing a CAB with decision-making authority, we must first recognize the sources of municipal authority to set its own public policy and climate justice agenda. Local governments are subdivisions of their state, and to that end each state can withhold, grant or withdraw powers to and from local governments as it sees fit.⁴ Recognizing that local governments are subject to state control and only possess the powers that the states may delegate to them, before adopting any public policy, municipalities need to look to state law to determine whether they have the authority to do so.⁵

Home Rule

Nearly all the states delegate broad authority to some or all of their local governments under a system called “municipal home rule.” Local governments that have access to that authority have a wide ambit for policies, although their state may still remove that authority with regard to a specific action or subject matter. Home-rule localities may also have a “charter,” which is like a local constitution. If the local government in question wants to consider a CAB, it will be important to look at that government’s charter to understand if there are provisions related to delegation of power that could impact the effectiveness of a CAB’s authority as a community-based board.

Dillon’s Rule

A handful of states still operate on what is known as “Dillon’s Rule.” Under a Dillon’s Rule system, a municipality has no authority other than what their state expressly grants. Local governments only exercise (i) powers expressly granted by state law; (ii) powers necessarily implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted; and (iii) powers absolutely essential to the declared objects and purpose of the local government.⁶

Noting that while states establish local control, in establishing public welfare policies, cities will need to consider if the state has reserved that specific public interest area for itself. This is called preemption—where state regulations supersede local regulations. One area of the law where we tend to see states maintaining control is building codes. While this toolkit specifically focuses on local authority to establish a CAB, it does so within the context of a BPS. BPS are not building codes; they apply to *existing* buildings, not to new construction or renovations at the permitting stage. Still, localities may want to ensure their state does not preempt their actions under the BPS.

2. Delegation of Authority and CAB Discretion

When a government sets up an administrative body, like an agency, department, or commission, it is essentially allowing that body to act using the government’s own powers, within a specified scope. This is called “delegation of authority,” and it applies to CABs wherever the CAB has authority to take actions that are not merely advisory. The key question in constructing a new administrative body like a CAB is to ensure that the delegation of authority to it is permissible. Generally, governments cannot delegate the full scope of their “legislative” power; that is, the power to make laws. This is because the ability to make laws is supposed to be used only by elected representatives—the legislature. They can, however, delegate the power to fill in the details of the laws, and to apply those laws in particular cases; this is sometimes called “administrative” power. Essentially all city agencies, like departments of buildings or planning commissions, operate on this delegated administrative power.⁷

The line between the permissible delegation of administrative authority and the impermissible delegation of legislative authority depends on the scope of action that the new body has. This is often referred to as that body’s level of “discretion.” Laws that give administrative bodies too much discretion—typically by

4 City of Trenton v. New Jersey, 262 U.S. 182, 187 (1923) (“[m]unicipalities have no inherent right of self-government which is beyond the legislative control of the state. A municipality is merely a department of the state, and the state may withhold, grant or withdraw powers and privileges as it sees fit. However great or small its sphere of action, it remains the creature of the state exercising and holding powers and privileges subject to the sovereign will!” (citing Dillon, Mun. Corps. § 98 (5th ed.))).

5 Pub. Health Law Ctr., Dillon’s Rule, Home Rule, and Preemption 3–5 (2020), <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Dillon-Rule-Home-Rule-Preemption.pdf>.

6 *Id.* (citing *Principles of Home for the 21st Century*, Nat’l League of Cities 9–11 (Feb. 12, 2020), [Home-Rule-Principles-ReportWEB-2-1.pdf](https://www.nlc.org/Home-Rule-Principles-ReportWEB-2-1.pdf) (nlc.org)).

7 See generally *Delegation of Municipal Powers—Legislative, Governmental, or Discretionary Power*, 2A McQuillin Mun. Corp. § 10:45, § 10:45 n.5 (3d ed. 2023).

granting power without many guidelines on how that power should be used—may be challenged as improper delegations of legislative power. Laws that are specific as to how the administrative body can use its authority are more likely to be upheld.

The key lesson is that laws creating CABs should include instructions to CABs regarding their authority. This does not necessarily mean taking power away from CABs, but it does mean providing guidelines to make decisions: For example, if a CAB reviews compliance applications as part of its role, it should ideally have a set of factors against which to measure the applications. Ideally, CBO representatives of the impacted communities will have a role in creating the ordinance that sets out those factors, thereby maintaining a critical role in setting policy. And, again, the extent to which delegation without guidelines could threaten the CAB structure will depend on the state—some states may allow for very broad delegation.⁸

3. Administrative Procedure and Municipal Authority

Administrative bodies like CABs are also subject to rules governing their process for making decisions, generally known as “administrative procedure.” There are two types of administrative procedure: one for making generally applicable rules, often pursuant to a statute or ordinance passed by the legislature (“rulemaking”), and one for applying general rules to a specific situation (“adjudication”). Generally speaking, the procedural requirements for rulemaking are less strict than for adjudication because adjudication carries more constitutional requirements.

Ordinance drafters and CAB members should be aware of any procedural requirements imposed by their state’s laws or constitution. In general, where a CAB is responsible for adopting formal rules, it should be given the authority and resources necessary to put out notice,

hold a public hearing, and receive and analyze any resulting comments.⁹

Where a CAB is responsible for adjudicating particular cases—for example, if a CAB has authority to approve or deny compliance applications from individual property owners—it will likely be subject to more stringent requirements in order to meet the constitutional requirement of due process. Due-process requirements apply whenever the agency would deprive a person of liberty or property, including a particular use of property, and therefore may well come up for CABs that have authority over BPS implementation.¹⁰ In many cases, the easiest way to ensure these requirements are met will be to make the CAB’s decision subject to review by an existing governmental agency which also adjudicates administrative-law cases; that agency will presumably already conform to whatever requirements are necessary for adjudicatory agencies, and therefore will be able to guarantee the procedural rights of people subject to the CAB’s adjudications.

Navigating state and municipal legal frameworks will be location specific. However, the above framework is meant to provide a broad understanding of municipal authority, the legal context in delegation of authority to a CAB, and administrative procedure, critical context to begin the CAB process.

8 *Compare*, *Becker v. Dane Cnty.*, 977 N.W.2d 390, 402–04 (Wis. 2022) (implying that grant of authority to “take all measures necessary” to prevent contagious disease is appropriate delegation), *with* *In re Certified Questions from U.S. Dist. Ct., W. Dist. of Mich., S. Div.*, 958 N.W.2d 1, 20–25 (Mich. 2020) (finding that grant of authority to take “reasonable” action “necessary” for protection or ending a health emergency was unconstitutional delegation).

9 *See generally* 2 Am. Jur. 2d *Administrative Law* §§ 183, 186–89, 192–93.

10 *See, e.g., Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 332 (1976).

Inside City Hall: Navigating Bureaucratic Challenges as a CAB

When a CAB moves into city hall as a part of a BPS framework to address equitable, community-based, decision-making in implementing building emissions reductions and energy savings, it may face unplanned bureaucratic processes and challenges. While each locality, county and state will vary in its process to maintain their governmental functions, we present here three typical regulatory requirements that can present as burdensome compared to more fluid community practices.

1. Open Meeting Laws

Open meeting laws, which are also referred to as sunshine laws, demand transparency in the conduct of government. Specifically, they require that meetings of regulatory bodies be open to the public, with published notice of the meeting. These governmental bodies will broadly include municipal boards, commissions, and committees designed to serve a public purpose. Open-meeting laws exist to ensure the rights of citizens to participate in governance deliberations and decision-making, as well as protect citizens from secret decisions made without any opportunity for public input.¹¹

Whether a meeting is subject to open-meetings laws usually depends on its purpose, if there is a majority or quorum, and if the public body will be deliberating on the issues that it reviews and assumes authority over. State and local open-meeting laws provide the specific conditions, and typically have several exclusions. For example, attendance by a quorum of the public body at a private or public gathering (such as educational trainings and conferences) is often *not* subject to open-meeting laws, so long as the members of the public body do not deliberate on any matter within the body's jurisdiction.¹² It is critical that a board does not deliberate outside of noticed, public meetings.

Open meeting laws can be burdensome to the extent that scheduling and posting public notice often require staff time and process. Furthermore, CBO members serving on a CAB may be more used to fluid discussions to address shared interests and work. Having a requirement to not engage or deliberate on matters subject to a CAB's jurisdiction may require a shift in norms and training.

2. Open-Records Laws

Open-records laws are another common transparency requirement for governments which CAB members and local governments should keep in mind. Every state has some statute allowing private parties to view documents that are used in public decision-making.¹³ In many cases, these laws can reach quite far into the communications and records of individual agency decisionmakers, in manners that may surprise CAB members: for example, some states require public officials to provide records from their personal email or cellphones, if the documents involve public business.¹⁴

To avoid unexpected records disclosure, CAB members should ideally have some separate means of communication, such as email accounts and cell phones, to be used specifically for CAB business. This will protect CAB members from unwanted intrusions into their personal communications, and make it easy for local governments to respond to records requests. It will also be important to train CAB members on the requirements of the applicable open-records laws, so that they understand what information is required to be provided to a requester.

3. Conflicts of Interest

Finally, CABs will likely also be subject to rules regarding conflicts of interest. The requirement to avoid conflicts of interest comes from the constitutional (and sometimes statutory) right to due process: when a decisionmaker has something to gain in a case, it is difficult for them to be impartial.¹⁵

¹¹ *Meetings of Council—Public Meeting Laws*, 4 McQuillin Mun. Corp. § 13:11 (3d ed. 2023).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Jonathan Anderson et. al., *Policy Liberalism and Public Records Laws in the American States*, 27 *Comm'n L. & Pol'y* 30, 41–42 (2022).

¹⁴ Joey Senat, *Whose Business Is It: Is Public Business Conducted on Officials' Personal Electronic Devices Subject to State Open Records Laws?*, 19 *Comm'n L. & Pol'y* 293, 298–99 (2014) (identifying 15 states where there is precedent for allowing public access to records on private electronic devices).

¹⁵ *Conflicts of Interest and Undue Influence*, 8A McQuillin Mun. Corp. § 25:302 (3d ed. 2023).

For that reason, conflict-of-interest rules are usually more stringent in adjudication—when the administrative body is applying the law or regulations to a specific person or property—than when the regulations are created in the first place.

In adjudications, the question of whether a conflict exists is typically “objective,” meaning that it considers whether the average decisionmaker in a given situation would remain neutral, not whether the actual person for whom there may be a conflict is in fact neutral.¹⁶ There is also a presumption that the decisionmaker is neutral. Therefore, a conflicts-of-interest question will not normally be a judgment of the character or psychology of any particular CAB member, but rather a claim that a CAB member’s situation would cause a typical person to be biased.

It will be important to have a process in place to avoid conflicts of interest in the day-to-day operations of the CAB. This is particularly true for CABs that are reviewing individual applications, or other cases where the rules of the BPS will be applied to individual properties.

Power shifts happen when community members are working within the context of city authority and exercising that authority. When we move into regulatory frameworks there are processes for transparency, notice and objective review. While the processes to support these standards may not be the norm for some CBOs, the process can be navigated and support CAB members with dedicated, knowledgeable municipal staff resources.

16 Id.



CAB in Action: Boston’s Review Board

Boston’s [Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance \(BERDO\)](#) sets forth requirements for large existing buildings to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, with all covered buildings expected to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. In adopting its emissions reduction ordinance, the city also created the [BERDO Review Board](#), a community-based, nine-member board that works to ensure environmental justice communities benefit from Boston’s decarbonization efforts.

Establishing the Review Board

Engaging community and civic leaders in the development of the Review Board was a multi-year effort. Following the adoption of the amended BERDO provisions in 2021, Boston began a phased regulatory approach to establish the Review Board regulations, in addition to other regulatory provisions such as emission factors, renewable energy purchase, data reporting and verification requirements.¹⁷

While it may seem that passing the ordinance establishing the Review Board was sufficient, or the end goal, from a community involvement perspective it was only the beginning. The regulations, which fill in the details of the BERDO program were—and are—critical. As Dwaigh Tyndal, Executive Director of the Boston CBO Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) and CAB cohort member explained, the “ordinance passed, photo ops happened, and then the real work of developing the regulatory infrastructure of the ordinance [began].”¹⁸

Over the next two years, community and civic parties would continue to be engaged in the development of the Review Board regulations. During this phased approach, CBOs advised on the BERDO Review Board regulations through the Community Advisory Group (CAG). As CAG members ended their work on the regulations in 2023, Review Board members began their

role in the later half of 2023. After two years of phased regulations, the Review Board is active with 2024 being its first year to review, approve or deny applications for flexibility measures and act on the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. The first full BERDO emissions compliance year is 2025.

Review Board Membership

The Review Board itself has nine members, with two-thirds being community members, nominated by CBOs. All nine members must be residents of Boston and “have expertise in environmental justice, affordable housing, labor, and workers’ rights, workforce development, building engineering and energy, real estate development and management, public health and hospitals, architecture and historic preservation, or any combination thereof.”¹⁹

In discussing the development of the Review Board under BERDO, former Environment Department Commissioner Dr. Alison Brizius shared that in the beginning there was a lot of debate over the definition of “expertise.” Dr. Brizius explained that in this space “we absolutely need to prioritize many different types of expertise . . . lived experience, real understanding of affordable housing and tenant struggles and tenants’ rights, workforce development needs.”²⁰ She further recognized that Boston has complex building systems with significant technical challenges to efficiently decarbonize. To fully address expertise under BERDO, Boston held environmental justice expertise along with building science expertise, knowing that “you could have both the same people or different people with expertise in different areas.”

Dr. Brizius emphasized that you first center the Board priorities as outlined in the ordinance, with the core values, and then arm the Board with staff time, staff support and third-party consulting for success. Under BERDO, community members serving on the Review Board may also be compensated for their time,

¹⁷ City of Bos., BERDO Review Board, <https://www.boston.gov/departments/environment/berdo-review-board> (last updated May 14, 2024).

¹⁸ Dwaigh Tyndal, Exec. Dir., Alts. for Cmty. & Env’t (ACE), CAB Cohort Onboarding IMT Presentation (Dec.11, 2023).

¹⁹ BOS., MASS., CODE § 7-2.2(s) (2023).

²⁰ Interview with Dr. Alison Brizius, Former Comm’r of the Env’t Dep’t, City of Bos. (Mar. 27, 2024).

currently at a rate of \$200 per meeting.²¹ This avoids the problem of community members whose service is not part of any employment having to volunteer their time.

Today's Review Board includes people with backgrounds in affordable housing, building engineering and construction, data analytics, energy performance and efficiency, environmental justice, racial equity, university sustainability, workforce development, worker's rights, and labor organizing. Many of them also have the lived experience of belonging to a frontline community.

Review Board Decision-Making Authority

As stated throughout the toolkit, a CAB impacts outcomes, elevating equity and justice, through decision-making power. The BERDO Review Board²² is an example of that authority in four critical areas:

1. Review, accept, or deny applications for certain flexibility measures

Flexibility measures under BERDO refer to options that building owners may use to adjust their emissions limits and/or emissions reduction timelines. The Review Board must approve the use of building portfolios instead of individual buildings,²³ individual compliance schedules,²⁴ and hardship compliance plans.²⁵

2. Grant funding decisions for the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund

The Review Board is responsible for evaluating local carbon abatement proposals, and making recommendations for expenditures from the fund.²⁶

Money in the Fund may be used for administrative costs incurred by the Review Board, including compensation for members, or by the Environment Department in supporting the Review Board.²⁷

3. Enforce BERDO's requirements

The Review Board is authorized to enforce against any violation of BERDO (except those by residential tenants), including by issuance of a written notice of violation, with accompanying penalties, or by recommending that the city sue the violator to get a court order requiring compliance with BERDO.²⁸

If the person alleged to have violated BERDO challenges the notice of violation, the Review Board is also responsible for holding a hearing to determine whether the person did in fact violate BERDO's requirements.²⁹

4. Recommend updates to BERDO regulations and policies

The Review Board may recommend and draft revisions to BERDO regulations and policies as well as issue guidance to the Environment Department on equitable implementation.

Appealing a Review Board Decision

The Review Board has decision-making authority in executing critical aspects of Boston's building emission reduction goals. That said, a Review Board decision on a building portfolio, individual compliance schedules, or hardship compliance plan can be appealed to the Boston Air Pollution Control Commission. Once an appeal is filed, the Commission must hold a hearing within 90 days.

The Commission will base its decision to reverse or uphold the Review Board on the application and material that was presented to the Review Board. This means that if an application has materially changed since the Review Board decision, that application must go back to the Review Board first. The Commission will reverse a Review Board's decision if it determines that:

21 City of Bos., Air Pollution Control Comm'n, BERDO Policies & Procedures (Version 2.5) 12(A)(a) (2023), https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2024/02/12.20.23%20Full%20Policies%20-%20Clean%20Version_0.pdf.

22 City of Bos., *BERDO Review Board, About the Review Board*, <https://www.boston.gov/departments/environment/berdo-review-board#resources> (last updated May 14, 2024).

23 BOS., MASS., CODE § 7-2.2(c) (2023).

24 Id. § 7-2.2(k) (2023).

25 Id. § 7-2.2(l) (2023).

26 Id. § 7-2.2(g) (2023).

27 Id. § 7-2.2(g) (2023).

28 BOS., MASS., CODE § 7-2.2(q)(1) (2023).

29 Id. § 7-2.2(q)(3) (2023).

- a. The decision was inconsistent with the Ordinance or Regulations;
- b. The decision ignored material information in the record; or
- c. There was no reasonable basis for the decision.³⁰

If the Commission does find for the applicant that appealed the Review Board decision, then the underlying decision is returned to the Review Board for reconsideration that is consistent with the Commission’s findings.

Boston Is Boston

The Boston Review Board example is just that, an example. Representatives from the community and city both emphasized that each city is unique. Dr. Brizius

explains that when moving forward with a CAB-like opportunity, you have to make it work for your city. That every context is different, including the regulatory and political context as well as the stakeholder groups and history of your city, “what works in Boston doesn’t necessarily work in Minneapolis or St. Louis or L.A.”³¹

Given the fact that the Review Board is just beginning its full year in 2024, and not knowing the full outcome of its impact and the necessary pivots in the years ahead, Tyndal recognizes that the final chapters are not written, noting however “one thing is very powerful, we will keep residents, stakeholders involved in the conversation... Our goal is trying to create long-term engagement with the city, with the private sector, in the community.”³²

30 Id. § 7-2.2 (2023); BERDO Ordinance Reguls.§ VXIII(a)(iv) (2024).

31 Interview with Dr. Alison Brizius, former Comm’r of the Env’t Dep’t, City of Bos. (Mar. 27, 2024).

32 Dwaigh Tyndal, Exec. Dir., Alts. for Cmty. & Env’t (ACE), CAB Cohort Onboarding IMT Presentation (Dec. 11, 2023).



A Tale of Two Boards: Boston and Seattle

In the process of establishing community boards, especially a CAB, it is essential to understand the different structures, functions, and legal authorities that boards may have. Comparing Boston’s Review Board and Seattle’s Green New Deal Oversight Board (GNDOB) provides valuable insights into how community boards may be organized and operated. Although Seattle’s board functions primarily as an advisory body, both boards highlight the spectrum of community’s potential roles and powers. The table below highlights the key differences and similarities between these two boards.

Aspect	Boston’s Review Board	Seattle’s GNDOB
Originating Authority	Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter VII, Section 7-2.2	Ordinance 125926 establishing the GNDOB in relationship to the Green New Deal for Seattle
Primary Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, accept, or deny applications for certain flexibility measures. Grant funding decisions for the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. Enforce BERDO’s requirements. Recommend updates to BERDO regulations and policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the Mayor and City Council on Green New Deal initiatives Monitor progress towards Green New Deal goals Engage with diverse community stakeholders, including marginalized groups
Membership	9 appointed members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 must be nominated by a community-based organization 2 are openly nominated, including self-nomination, and 1 is reserved for the Chair of the Boston City Council’s Environmental Justice, Resiliency, and Parks Committee, or their designee 	19 appointed members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 members of communities directly impacted by racial, economic, and environmental injustices 3 representatives of organizations engaged in environmental justice work 4 representative of labor unions 3 individuals with depth of experience in greenhouse gas reduction and climate resiliency strategy 1 representative of an organization involved in workforce training
Community Involvement	Emphasis on including community representatives and stakeholders in decision-making processes; also elevates lived-experience expertise and centers environmental justice	Emphasis on including community representatives, especially those impacted by racial, economic, and environmental injustices
Monitoring	Monitors progress and compliance with set goals and standards	Monitors progress towards Green New Deal goals
Reducing Emissions	Focuses on reducing building emissions	Focuses on an equitable transition to renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

This comparison highlights the spectrum of community board roles and powers, particularly in the context of building decarbonization tools such as BPS policies. Boston's Review Board represents a more empowered model with regulatory and enforcement capabilities, which include oversight of building emissions and compliance with decarbonization standards. On the other hand, Seattle's Green New Deal Oversight Board serves as an advisory body with significant influence but without direct enforcement power, focusing on broader policy and budgetary recommendations as well as community engagement in climate initiatives.

Understanding these differences is crucial for civic, environmental justice, community, and property interests in establishing effective CABs tailored to their unique community needs and regulatory environments. By learning from these examples, communities can better design and implement CABs that are empowered to drive meaningful change and ensure accountability in addressing environmental and larger social priorities (i.e. affordability, resilience, public health).





Roadmap: Navigating the
Bureaucratic Journey of Establishing
a Community Accountability Board

Roadmap: Navigating the Bureaucratic Journey of Establishing a Community Accountability Board

This roadmap is designed to guide policymakers and community-based organizations (CBOs) through the bureaucratic processes involved in establishing a community accountability board (CAB). It delineates key bureaucratic stages and the administrative steps required at each phase to ensure successful establishment and operation. It is designed to provide a clear, structured pathway for establishing a CAB, ensuring that each step is managed with attention to detail and in compliance with municipal or state legal and procedural requirements. By following this roadmap, stakeholders can navigate the complexities of government bureaucracy effectively, setting up a CAB that is robust, compliant, and ready to serve the community. Buckle up!

Initiation of CAB Establishment

It is essential to clarify that the establishment of a CAB should be initiated by the government. While community advocacy plays a critical role in bringing about the need for a CAB, the official process must be started by government entities to ensure legal and procedural compliance. Government initiation, driven by community advocacy, combines formal authority with grassroots support, fostering a collaborative approach to community accountability. Additionally, it is advisable to assign a specific governmental agency or agencies to liaison with the CAB. This agency or agencies would be responsible for facilitating communication, ensuring ongoing support, and addressing any procedural or administrative issues that arise. Such a role is fundamental and helps to maintain a strong connection between the CAB and the government, fostering a collaborative environment and ensuring that the board's activities are aligned with broader, collective policies and objectives.



Stage 1 | Pre-Engagement Planning

- | | |
|--|--|
| Identify Legal Boundaries and Authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research local and state legislation to determine the scope of legal authority available for establishing a CAB. • Consult with legal experts to clarify governmental powers under local and state governance rules. |
| Draft Preliminary CAB Proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the objectives, structure, and functions of the CAB. • Determine compensation for community members serving on the CAB • Prepare initial drafts of governance documents, such as authority, responsibilities, and operational procedures. |
| Initial Stakeholder Identification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key government officials, department heads, and influentialw community leaders and members who will be critical in establishing a successful CAB. • Create a steering committee, working group and/or task force and determine the decision-making framework |
| Revise CAB Proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine objectives, structure, and functions of the CAB based on legal compliance, stakeholder input, and budgetary constraints. • Update governance documents and compensation details to ensure clarity, fairness, and alignment with broader policies. • Incorporate feedback from key government officials, department heads, and community leaders and members to enhance feasibility and effectiveness. |



Stage 2 | Documentation and Formal Proposals

Formalize CAB Documentation

- Develop comprehensive documentation that includes the CAB’s bylaws, vision, purpose, principles, and member roles.
- Include documentation of this process to ensure transparency during public comment periods. Many cities now use dedicated, online engagement hubs ([e.g. West Hollywood’s Dedicated Engagement Hub](#))
- Ensure all documents align with state and local legal requirements

Internal Review and Revisions

- Submit documents for internal review by municipal or state legal departments.
- Revise documents based on feedback to ensure compliance and address any legal or procedural concerns.
- *It is important to note that the process of governmental and community stakeholder review will involve multiple governmental departments and is likely to take more than just a year.*

Governmental Approval Process

- Present the CAB proposal and supporting documents for approval to the necessary municipal bodies, such as city council or other relevant committees.
- Address any questions or concerns raised during council sessions or committee meetings.



Stage 3 | Public Engagement and Feedback

Public Announcement and Transparency

- Publicly announce the proposal for the CAB and provide access to all relevant documents in accordance with the locality’s language access policy (e.g., translation for the top languages spoken or those spoken by a threshold of the population).
- Set up a public feedback mechanism, such as online portals or public forums with translation and interpretation services available.

Host Public Hearings

- Conduct public hearings to gather input, concerns, and endorsements from the community. Meeting translation and interpretation services should be available.
- Adjust the CAB proposal based on public feedback to ensure community needs and concerns are addressed.

Final Revisions and Submission for Final Approval

- Incorporate public feedback and final expert revisions into the CAB documents.
- Submit the final version for official approval by the necessary governmental bodies.



Stage 4 | Implementation and Operational Setup

Official Establishment of the CAB

- Once approved, formally establish the CAB through the signing of its bylaws, governance structure and/or rules of procedures by appropriate city officials.
- Assign a specific governmental agency or agencies to liaison with the CAB.
- Announce the establishment of the CAB through official channels and media releases.

Member Selection and Training

- Implement the member selection process as outlined in the CAB documentation.
- Conduct orientation and training sessions for all CAB members, focusing on governance, legal compliance, operational procedures, racial justice, and conflict resolution.

Launch Operational Activities

- Initiate the first official meeting of the CAB.
- Establish regular meeting schedules, reporting guidelines, and communication protocols, accessible in all widely spoken languages.

Ongoing Monitoring and Adjustment

- Set up mechanisms for monitoring CAB performance and community impact.
- Regularly review and adjust operational procedures and policies to enhance effectiveness and responsiveness.

Points of Intervention for a CBO in the CAB Establishment Roadmap

For a CBO, engaging in the process of establishing a CAB provides multiple opportunities for advocacy, influence, and ensuring that the board reflects community interests and needs. Here’s how a CBO can intervene effectively at various stages of the bureaucratic roadmap:



Stage 1 | Pre-Engagement Planning

Influence Legal and Policy Foundations

- **Advocacy for inclusive policies.** Advocate for inclusive policies that ensure the CAB has the necessary authority and mandate to address community issues effectively. This might involve lobbying for changes to local governance rules to increase the CAB’s powers.
- **Collaborative drafting.** Work collaboratively with legal experts to influence the drafting of the CAB’s foundational documents to ensure they include provisions for community oversight, transparency, and accountability.

Early Engagement

- **Building coalitions.** Build coalitions with other community groups to strengthen the advocacy efforts for a CAB that truly represents diverse community interests.
- **Setting the agenda.** Ensure that the initial stakeholder identification includes broad community representation, advocating for a seat at the table during preliminary discussions. Ensure that corporate interests or interests with a high level of power do not crowd out representation by frontline communities.



Stage 2 | Documentation and Formal Proposals

Document Review and Feedback

- **Review and comment.** Actively participate in the review process of CAB documentation to ensure community interests are adequately protected and promoted.
- **Propose amendments.** Submit formal amendments to the proposed governance documents to incorporate community feedback and insights.

Navigating the Approval Process

- **Public testimonies.** Prepare and deliver testimonies at city council or committee meetings to voice community perspectives and concerns about the CAB’s structure and function.
- **Lobbying.** Lobby elected officials and departmental leaders and other key decision makers to support adoption of the CAB proposal with the recommended community-centric amendments.



Stage 3 | Public Engagement and Feedback

Facilitate Community Involvement

- **Organize community forums.** Organize and host community forums to educate and mobilize community members about the CAB’s potential impacts and benefits.
- **Gather and present community feedback.** Act as a bridge between the community and the government, collecting and presenting community feedback to the municipal bodies clearly and persuasively.

Advocate for Transparency and Accessibility

- **Demand transparency.** Advocate for transparent processes in all CAB activities, ensuring that all meetings, decisions, and documents are accessible to the public through open meetings and records provisions.
- **Accessibility improvements.** Push for improvements in how the public can provide feedback, such as online platforms, language accessibility, and accommodating different schedules.



Stage 4 | Implementation and Operational Setup

Member Selection and Training

- **Nominate representatives.** Nominate or encourage the nomination of community members who are aligned with CBO goals and values to serve on the CAB.
- **Capacity building.** Offer training and resources to community members on the CAB to ensure they are effective in their roles, focusing on advocacy, legal compliance, and community engagement skills.

Monitor and Evaluate

- **Ongoing advocacy and support.** Continue to advocate for the CAB’s effectiveness by monitoring its activities, reporting on its performance, and suggesting areas for improvement.
- **Feedback mechanisms.** Establish and promote mechanisms for continuous community feedback to the CAB, ensuring it remains responsive and accountable to the community’s needs.

These points of intervention allow a CBO to play a crucial role in shaping a CAB that is not only compliant with bureaucratic requirements but also deeply connected to and representative of the community it serves. By actively participating in each stage of the roadmap, a CBO can help ensure that the CAB becomes a powerful tool for community empowerment and accountability.

Points of Intervention for Government in the CAB Establishment Roadmap

Here is how governmental bodies can intervene at various stages of the bureaucratic roadmap:



Stage 1 | Pre-Engagement Planning

Legal and Policy Framework Establishment

- **Regulatory review and development.** Assess existing laws and regulations to identify gaps or needed changes to support the effective operation of a CAB. This may involve drafting new regulations or amending existing ones to allow for the CAB’s creation and operation.
- **Resource allocation.** Allocate necessary resources, such as funding and staff, to support the establishment and ongoing operation of the CAB.

Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement

- **Government collaboration.** Ensure that all relevant government departments and agencies are informed about the CAB initiative and are engaged in the process. This includes planning joint activities and sharing responsibilities for different aspects of the CAB’s setup.



Stage 2 | Documentation and Formal Proposals

Formal Documentation Preparation

- **Drafting official documents.** Take the lead in drafting the CAB’s charter, bylaws, and operational procedures. Ensure these documents meet all legal standards and clearly define the scope and authority of the CAB.
- **Interdepartmental reviews.** Coordinate reviews of all CAB-related documents by relevant government departments to ensure consistency and compliance with all applicable laws and policies.

Approval Process Management

- **Facilitate discussions and decisions.** Manage the process of obtaining approvals from necessary governmental bodies, such as city councils or mayoral offices. This includes scheduling hearings, managing submissions, and facilitating deliberations.



Stage 3 | Public Engagement and Feedback

Public Communication and Engagement

- **Public announcements.** Lead the efforts to communicate the purpose and benefits of the CAB to the public, ensuring transparency and building public trust.
- **Organize public hearings.** Arrange and conduct public hearings to collect community input, making sure to document all feedback and respond to public concerns.

Feedback Integration

- **Adjust proposals based on public input.** Modify the CAB’s structure and operational guidelines based on feedback received during public engagement activities. Ensure that the final proposal aligns with community needs and expectations.



Stage 4 | Implementation and Operational Setup

CAB Activation

- **Official establishment.** Oversee the formal establishment of the CAB, including the signing of its establishment charter and the public announcement of its activation. This is likely to be achieved through ordinances, regulations, and policies.
- **Operational support.** Provide ongoing administrative and logistical support to the CAB, ensuring it has the resources needed to operate effectively.

Monitoring and Oversight

- **Performance monitoring.** Set up mechanisms to monitor the performance and impact of the CAB. This includes regular reports, audits, and evaluations to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Adaptive management.** Adjust policies and support as needed based on performance assessments and changing community needs.



Necessity of Detailing Government Interventions

Detailing these intervention points is necessary because it ensures that government actions are proactive, coordinated, and supportive of the CAB's goals. These interventions help to:

- **Ensure legal and procedural compliance.** Government bodies must ensure that all steps to establish and operate a CAB are compliant with existing laws and regulations.
- **Facilitate efficient and effective operations.** Government interventions are crucial for providing the necessary support systems, resources, and oversight to ensure the CAB functions efficiently and effectively.
- **Build public trust and engagement.** Active and transparent government involvement is key to building public trust and encouraging community engagement, which are essential for the CAB's success.

Overlapping Points of Intervention

When establishing a CAB, government bodies and CBOs both play critical roles, and there are points where their interventions overlap. Understanding these overlaps can enhance cooperation and ensure that the CAB effectively meets its goals. However, there can also be potential misalignments due to differing priorities and approaches, which need to be addressed to prevent conflicts and ensure smooth operation.



Public Engagement and Feedback

- Both government and CBOs are deeply involved in engaging the public and soliciting feedback. This mutual involvement ensures diverse input is considered in the CAB's formation and operation.
- **Overlap:** organizing and conducting public forums, hearings, and feedback sessions.
- **Cooperative benefit:** enhanced trust and broader community input, ensuring the CAB's actions reflect a wide range of community perspectives.



Documentation and Approval Processes

- Both entities contribute to drafting, reviewing, and revising the documentation necessary for establishing the CAB, such as authority, operational responsibilities and procedures, and governance frameworks.
- **Overlap:** collaborative efforts in document preparation and revision based on legal reviews and public feedback.
- **Cooperative benefit:** more comprehensive and compliant documentation that addresses both legal standards and community needs.



Monitoring and Evaluation

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the CAB's effectiveness and adherence to its mission are crucial for both government and CBOs to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Overlap:** participation in evaluating the CAB's performance and community impact.
- **Cooperative benefit:** shared responsibilities in performance assessment that can lead to more balanced evaluations and adjustments.

Potential Misalignments and Awareness Points



Priorities and Objectives

- **Misalignment:** Government bodies may prioritize regulatory compliance and administrative feasibility, while CBOs might focus more on community impact and social justice aspects.
- **Awareness:** Toolkit readers should be aware of these differing priorities and work to establish common goals and principles during the initial phases of CAB development to ensure alignment in objectives.



Approach to Community Engagement

- **Misalignment:** Governments may approach community engagement with a formal and structured approach, whereas CBOs might favor more grassroots and inclusive methods.
- **Awareness:** Both parties should compromise and combine their methods to ensure comprehensive and effective community engagement. The toolkit should provide strategies for integrating diverse engagement techniques that accommodate both formal procedural requirements and informal community expectations.



Resource Allocation and Management

- **Misalignment:** There may be differences in how government bodies and CBOs view the allocation of resources for the CAB. Governments might be concerned with budget constraints and resource distribution across multiple initiatives, whereas CBOs might advocate for more focused funding and resources for community-specific issues.
- **Awareness:** The toolkit should guide readers on negotiating resource allocation, emphasizing the need for transparent discussions and agreed-upon frameworks that address both sufficient funding for CAB operations and prudent fiscal management.



Decision-Making Authority

- **Misalignment:** CBOs might push for broader decision-making powers within the CAB to ensure substantial community impact, while governments might impose restrictions to maintain control and ensure decisions are within legal frameworks.
- **Awareness:** Include guidelines on establishing clear and mutually agreed-upon boundaries for decision-making authority that respect legal constraints while empowering the CAB to make meaningful community-driven decisions.

Addressing these overlaps and potential misalignments from the outset can significantly enhance the effectiveness of a CAB. This should provide practical steps for collaboration between government bodies and CBOs, ensuring they work synergistically rather than at cross-purposes. This collaboration is vital for the CAB to truly reflect community governance and accountability, which is what our toolkit continues to emphasize.



In Practice: Tenant Protections and Affordable Housing in Building Decarbonization

Because building decarbonization intersects with frontline community priorities including housing stability, building health, workforce opportunities, etc., a decarbonization-specific CAB must be able to address non-energy-related community priorities. CABs have the potential to address inequities in the housing market by lessening energy burdens and improving indoor air pollution, but these benefits will only be accessible to tenants if they are protected from displacement before, during and after the decarbonization retrofit process. The following is an example of how a CAB *could* be formed to protect renters. This is not a prescriptive methodology for how a CAB *should* center renters, but rather guiding principles localities can consider when tackling housing justice within a CAB.

Centering Renters

Renters are a forgotten population in most decarbonization strategies, despite representing the majority population in major cities and a third of all U.S. households. As localities progress with residential decarbonization efforts, the systemic inequities associated with the rental market must be addressed to ensure an equitable transition. Throughout the nation, communities of color disproportionately experience poor housing quality, displacement, and energy burden.³³ Renters can reap great benefits from decarbonization, but often are barred from realizing these benefits

because of their position as renters. They lack autonomy over their housing situation, unlike property owners, and usually require landlord approval to be able to make changes to their homes that can reduce their energy burdens, improve indoor air quality, and support a clean energy transition in their communities.

Because residential decarbonization requires extensive retrofits, it also has the potential to cause great harm to tenants. Decarbonization retrofits can be costly, and landlords are likely to try to recover costs and capitalize on increased property values by increasing

³³ NRDC and the Building Energy, Equity, and Power (BEEP) coalition, [Healthy, Climate-Resilient Homes for All: Centering Housing Justice and Health Equity in Building Decarbonization](#) (2023).



rents or replacing low-income tenants with higher-paying tenants.³⁴ There are few guardrails that prevent landlords from doing so; most cities do not have rent stabilization ordinances or eviction protections, leaving tenants subject to arbitrary rent increases and eviction. Landlords may also push out tenants by way of construction as harassment—the practice of using construction work to make rental units so uncomfortable, loud, and dangerous that tenants feel compelled to leave.

Unfortunately, even tenants in municipalities with protective policies in place can experience harm related to building decarbonization. Many local rent stabilization ordinances include exemptions that allow landlords to recoup renovation costs by passing them on to tenants.³⁵ For low-income tenants, pass through costs can be tantamount to eviction. Moreover, local tenant protections typically only cover a subset of all rental units and include loopholes. In Los Angeles, for example, roughly 25% of tenants are not covered by the City's rent-stabilization ordinance and can be evicted for substantial renovation projects due to gaps in local and state eviction protections. Each locality is unique in its landscape of tenant protections, which is why it is important to engage community residents and tenant advocates who are most familiar with potential concerns and solutions in a CAB.

The following guidelines can help decision makers create a CAB that protects tenants rather than placing the financial burden of decarbonization on frontline communities.

What Is Considered Affordable Housing?

The private market provides the majority of housing in the United States, but an important small amount of housing is considered deed-restricted affordable housing, which is housing that maintains below market rents for a set period of time with the support of subsidies, often utilizing the [Low Income Housing Tax](#)

[Credit Program](#). This housing is owned and operated by nonprofits, for-profits, community land trusts, and mission-driven groups who all have their own set of priorities, motivations, and different financial situations. Because they maintain artificially low rents, they are an important housing type to preserve and produce.

The most community-aligned affordable housing provider types are mission-driven groups and community land trusts who have stake in local communities, usually with staff from the community or a board that is made up of community members. In contrast with housing providers who cease to provide affordable housing when subsidies expire, mission-driven providers and community land trusts prioritize keeping housing permanently accessible and affordable. Because they tend to operate on tight margins to keep rents low, these groups are in need of support in the decarbonization transition and their perspective should be represented in a CAB.

Tenant Protection Guidelines for CABs

1. Develop Intentional Language

To begin establishing a CAB that can specifically address community priorities regarding affordable housing and tenant protections, the entity creating the CAB must first determine who is community and what is considered affordable housing.

Defining community is necessary when establishing any community-centered board, but in the context of housing justice, special considerations must be given to affected tenants and affordable housing providers alike. Renters make up one-third of all U.S. households and represent a majority in our country's major cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York City.³⁶ Inclusion of renters and renter advocates in a CAB, especially one operating within a majority-renter community, is critical. Renters face unique challenges that property owners do not face, whether they are low income tenants or moderate income tenants, all tenants are relatively disadvantaged

34 Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, [Los Angeles Building Decarbonization: Tenant Impact and Recommendations](#) (2021).

35 Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, [Decarbonizing California Equitably: A Guide to Tenant Protections in Building Upgrades/Retrofits Throughout the State](#) (2023).

36 Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, [America's Rental Housing 2020](#) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2020).

by their position as renters because they lack autonomy over their homes, which can manifest as being evicted for decarbonization initiatives or barred from installing health-improving HVAC systems at their discretion. This must be uplifted in CAB.

Having renters/renter advocates on a CAB will help to establish more equitable, community-centered approaches to building decarbonization. Landlords are not advised to participate in CABs. Despite their status as economic stakeholders, their interests—namely profiting off of their properties—are at odds with the goal of protecting tenants from the unintended consequences of decarbonization. Many landlords also do not live in the communities in which they own property. Only tenant advocacy groups (or tenants themselves) should ever represent tenants in a CAB. These groups can be defined as community based organizations with membership bases made up predominantly of tenants, advocacy nonprofits that work to advance tenant rights; tenant unions; legal service providers that provide eviction defense etc.

Small landlords may have questions and concerns regarding the costs of decarbonization retrofits. However, these landlords will not be impacted by a BPS policy, which applies to large, existing public and private buildings of specific sizes and types in a locality. Moreover, landlords of private properties of all sizes tend to have significant political power due to their access to lobbying groups and will have opportunities to inform decarbonization policy through venues other than a CAB. In contrast, tenants often lack equitable access to participation in political processes, and CABs are a crucial opportunity to rectify this imbalance.

2. Understand Support Needs

Developing equity-centered programs requires that the CAB meet the needs of its participants. To address the needs of disenfranchised community members, a CAB must value the time of their participants via compensation, capacity building, or other forms of support such as

childcare, transportation stipends, and translation services ([ARUP](#)).³⁷ Unlike other government housing advisory groups such as commissions, a CAB cannot be volunteer led. Volunteerism of community members for housing justice efforts demands time, knowledge, and relaying personal lived experiences to decision makers. To guarantee equitable compensation for these demands, the locality must determine whether their internal processes need to be restructured to permit compensation.

Moreso, the city must determine whether participation in a CAB prevents organizations from benefiting from programs produced by the CAB. For example if a CAB created a fund that finances AH deferred maintenance, are members of the CAB eligible to apply to the fund? These types of conflict-of-interest scenarios should be addressed prior to inviting participants to join a CAB to ensure CAB members can benefit from the solutions they create. Aside from compensation, other forms of support such as decarbonization learning materials will be required for AH-specific organizations who do not have a background in decarbonization.

Note on Undocumented Communities

Housing, housing costs, and income are inherently tied to documentation status³⁸ In locations with large undocumented communities, special support systems will be required to invite community members into government-sponsored spaces. Prior to inviting undocumented people to a CAB, the local government will need to create alternative payment structures allowable within federal law. California-based commissions have already taken steps to create alternative payment structures for undocumented leaders such as volunteer rebates rather than direct compensation.³⁹ Hybrid meetings also offer flexibility that supports undocumented peoples who are unable to attend meetings in person due to traffic checkpoints or local deportation raids.⁴⁰

37 ARUP, [Los Angeles Affordable Housing Decarbonization Study Phase 2](#), (2021).

38 McConnell, [Who has housing affordability problems? Disparities in Housing Cost burden by Race, Nativity and Legal Status in Los Angeles](#), (2013).

39 Long Beach Press-Telegram, [Undocumented residents can now serve on Long Beach city commissions](#), (2023).

40 Valdivia, [Expanding Geographies of Deportability: How Immigration Enforcement at the Local Level Affects Undocumented and Mixed-Status Families](#) (2018).

3. Enable CABs to Prioritize Housing Justice

Within the context of a decarbonization-focused CAB, AH and tenant protection representatives will only be a portion of the full CAB. Theoretically a CAB should be composed of community leaders and members across multiple causes such as environmental justice, green job accessibility, and energy burden. To address housing justice among the other causes, a CAB can have the authority to create priorities as opposed to being prescribed them. Local governments can facilitate this by developing long-term relationships with and being responsive to CBOs who may be trying to understand the landscape of tenant protections in the city, such as eviction protections, rent stabilization measures, and other relevant tenant rights and programs.

For example, a government can task a CAB to review the workforce equity of a building performance standard (BPS) that includes a green job incentive program but does not have specific language to address tenant pass-through costs. In this case, a CAB can decide whether rent stabilization/control is a more urgent priority and choose to focus their attention on

developing housing legislation versus assessing the equity of a workforce development program. By being able to prioritize issues that are not in a prescribed task, the CAB can respond to community needs.

Note on Timing

If possible, a CAB should be created before a BPS is passed. To create a collaborative and community-driven governance model that empowers AH and tenant advocates to address community issues, community members need to be involved prior to the policy being drafted.⁴¹ This way the CAB members can aid in defining unintended consequences of decarbonization and write in safeguards against those consequences. If a CAB is being established as part of implementation of a BPS, then the CAB should still have the ability to suggest revision to existing policy to make it more comprehensive of community needs. In both scenarios, CABs should have the ability to co-develop BPS implementation programs to represent the changing needs of frontline communities.

41 Gonzalez, Facilitating Power, [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) (2019).



Complementary and Additional Community-Driven Models

The main goals of CABs are to ensure they are community governed with legal decision-making authority, to not exacerbate the rising cost of living and housing, and to empower the people often left out of policy making to have real influence over how resources generated by building decarbonization are reinvested in their communities. In different sections of our toolkit, we have taken a deeper dive into how these goals can be achieved. Despite our collective efforts and best intentions, there may be scenarios where setting up a CAB as envisioned in this toolkit is either unfeasible or counterproductive. In this section, we will explore these scenarios and propose additional solutions community members and governments can explore to accomplish the aforementioned goals.

When CABs May Be Unfeasible or Counterproductive

There are several reasons why setting up a CAB may not be possible in your community. In most governments, it requires resources, staff time, political will, trust, and a deep investment in a community-driven process. These factors are crucial for the success of a CAB and, despite best intentions, may not be possible in some cases. Political will fluctuates with every new person elected or appointed. For example, a previous city administration may have considered a CAB a priority, but the new one may not. The same could be said if the city council or state legislature changes. The ever-changing winds of politics and prior interactions, or lack thereof, with community groups and members could have contributed to a situation where trust needs to be built or repaired before a CAB can be set up. In other cases, a city could have an overabundance of committees and boards. There may be a general sense of board or volunteer malaise. In these cases, we recommend you take stock of the structures that are already in place and determine if they could be adapted and used as a vehicle to accomplish the goals of a CAB.

Questions and Considerations for Identifying and Implementing Other Models

Are there already community-driven boards in place that could operate as a CAB?

- What sectors and stakeholder comprise those boards? Are the majority of the people representative of frontline community members? If not, can additional board members be recruited to provide a more equitable board makeup?

Have you carried out an assessment of CBOs and other resident-run infrastructure?

- CBOs and neighborhood councils may already have formations in place that could take on the roles and responsibilities of a CAB. To operate as an effective CAB, they would require funding and coordination with, and decision-making empowerment by, the appropriate city or state authorities.

Consider different ways to combat bureaucracy and improve co-governance with community members:

- **Simplify administrative processes.** Streamline permit and approval processes to make it easier for community projects to get off the ground. This could involve creating one-stop shops for community project approvals or simplifying the documentation required.
- **Enhance transparency.** Develop clear guidelines and publicly accessible platforms where all information related to community governance (such as budgets, meeting notes, and decision outcomes) is available. This helps build trust and keeps the community informed.

- **Develop capacity-building programs.** Offer training and support for community members to understand governance processes, project management, and financial management. This empowers them to participate more effectively in co-governance.

Build and repair trust between government and the communities it serves:

- Consider bringing in a third-party facilitator and utilizing something like the [Community Engagement to Ownership](#) tool By Rosa Gonzales and [Facilitating Power](#).
- Create incentive structures:
 - › Reward departments and individuals within the government who successfully collaborate with the community and achieve meaningful outcomes. Recognition and incentives can motivate public officials to engage more earnestly with community governance.
 - › Introduce policies that require community consultation and approval for certain types of projects, particularly those impacting local environments and public spaces.
- Establish conflict-resolution mechanisms:
 - › Set up clear and accessible mechanisms for resolving disputes between community members and government officials or between different community groups. This could involve mediation services or ombudsman offices dedicated to handling such issues.
 - › Train community leaders and members and government officials in conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

Participatory Budgeting

Community members and governments may also consider **participatory budgeting (PB)**: a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to allocate part of a public budget. This model has been employed around the world to enhance transparency, boost citizen engagement, and ensure that public funds are used in ways that reflect the priorities of the community.

A CAB focuses on governance and decision-making concerning the use of specific funds (e.g., fines from BPS policies). Participatory budgeting can serve as an alternative or complementary mechanism to a CAB in the following ways:

- **Direct control over funds:** PB allows community members to have direct control over how certain funds are spent, which aligns with the goal of a CAB in ensuring funds are used according to community priorities.
- **Community engagement and empowerment:** PB can enhance community engagement by making the budgeting process transparent and participatory. This empowerment can lead to greater civic involvement and satisfaction with local governance, potentially even increasing trust and reducing bureaucracy as community members see their contributions directly influencing outcomes.
- **Flexibility and scope:** While a CAB might be limited to overseeing the use of fines from developers under BPS policies, PB can be applied to various aspects of a city's budget, providing a broader impact on community development.
- **Transparency and accountability:** The PB process is typically very transparent, with clear steps and outcomes that are publicly shared. This can help in building accountability, as the community can directly see how their decisions are translated into action.
- **Policy innovation:** As community members are directly involved in deciding on projects, this can lead to innovative solutions that government officials might not have considered. It encourages a bottom-up approach in policymaking and project management.

In scenarios where traditional models like CABs face bureaucratic challenges, PB can offer a more dynamic and engaging alternative. However, for PB to be an alternative or complementary to a CAB, it is crucial that its scope be carefully designed to include decisions about environmental and sustainability funds, ensuring that the specific goals of the CAB are still met. This might involve setting aside a dedicated portion of the PB process specifically for sustainability projects or for managing BPS fines, thereby aligning with the original intent of the CAB.

FIGHT TODAY

FOR A BETTER

TOMORROW

Conclusion

Conclusion

The biggest question for governments and elected officials is how willing they are to defer to community ownership. It is clear that communities are bearing the brunt of economic inequities, and living with devastating environmental impacts on their health and infrastructure, all due to the regulatory and political status quo. To pivot toward justice and environmental health, our systems must shift influence and authority from more traditional power holders and makers to marginalized populations.

Creating a community accountability board (CAB) and ensuring it can effectively influence policy is a complicated and lengthy process. All parties need to carefully consider many sensitive issues related to past harms and community needs, what powers a CAB will have, how its members will be appointed, and the ongoing support given to the CAB to ensure it is truly community governed. Through these efforts, CABs can play a pivotal role in driving continuous improvement in building standards, reducing carbon emissions, and enhancing overall community resilience. In the cases where creating a CAB isn't feasible, cities are encouraged to explore the community based infrastructure that already exists and adapt democratic systems at their disposal, like participatory budgeting.

As we progress through the climate crisis and seek out equitable solutions and policies that lead to a more just way of living, sustained investment in community-based, decision-making processes must be prioritized.





Glossary

Glossary

A | **Affordable housing (AH)**
Refers to housing units that are affordable to households with incomes at or below the median income for a region, ensuring that these households spend no more than 30% of their income on housing costs, including rent or mortgage payments and utilities. This standard is used to prevent cost burdens that can compromise a household's ability to afford other essential expenses such as food, healthcare, and transportation. Affordable housing includes a variety of housing options, such as public housing, housing funded by programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and housing provided by non-profit organizations or community land trusts.

B | **Building decarbonization**
Efforts to reduce or avoid adding carbon emissions from buildings through various measures, including improving energy efficiency, retrofitting for renewable energy, and adopting sustainable building practices. This process is crucial for mitigating climate change, as buildings contribute significantly to overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Building performance standard (BPS)

A policy that sets specific deadlines for existing public and private buildings over a certain size to achieve quantified standards of performance across one or more metrics—such as energy use, water use, and/or greenhouse gas emissions. The standards become more ambitious over time, driving continuous, long-term improvement in the building stock. BPS complement traditional building energy code approaches, but work quite differently.

C | **Community-based organizations (CBOs)**
Non-profit groups operating at a local level to address the needs and issues of residents. They engage in advocacy, provide educational resources, and offer various services to improve community welfare. CBOs are often involved in grassroots movements and work closely with local populations to ensure their voices are heard in policy-making processes.

Community governance

Systems and processes that allow community members to participate directly in decision-making that affects their lives. Effective community governance ensures that policies and practices reflect the needs and priorities of the community, particularly those who are most affected by issues like climate change and housing insecurity.

D | **Decarbonization**
Processes that remove carbon from or avoid adding carbon to the Earth's atmosphere. In the case of buildings, this generally means focusing on efficient, low-carbon materials and operations. Decarbonization is essential for mitigating climate change and achieving sustainability goals.

Dillon's Rule

A legal principle stating that municipalities can only exercise powers explicitly granted by the state government. Under Dillon's Rule, local governments must have clear authorization from the state legislature to enact laws or policies, limiting their autonomy compared to states operating under municipal home rule.

Glossary (cont.)

E

Electrification

Process of replacing technologies that use fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, and methane gas) with those that use electricity, often generated from renewable sources. In the context of buildings, electrification involves transitioning building systems (like heating, cooling, water heating, and cooking) and appliances that traditionally rely on fossil fuels to electric power. This transition is crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, and supporting the integration of renewable energy into the power grid.

Energy burden

The percentage of household income spent on energy costs. High energy burdens can indicate economic stress, particularly in low-income households. Reducing energy burdens through efficiency improvements and supportive policies is crucial for achieving energy equity and alleviating financial strain on vulnerable populations.

Environmental justice

The equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, in policy decision-making processes that shape their communities. It aims to ensure that no group of people, especially marginalized communities, bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental impacts.

F

False solutions

Approaches to climate change that do not address the root causes and may exacerbate existing ecological and economic crises. These solutions often exclude frontline and marginalized communities, extract wealth from them, and concentrate political power elsewhere. Examples include initiatives that focus solely on carbon reduction without considering broader social and environmental justice issues.

Frontline communities

Communities that experience the most immediate and worst impacts of climate change and are most often communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities

G

Greenhouse gas emissions

Gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O), that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, contributing to global warming and climate change. Reducing these emissions is essential for mitigating climate impacts and achieving sustainability goals.

M

Municipal Home Rule

A governance system that grants local governments a broader degree of self-governance. It allows municipalities to enact laws and policies without needing explicit state approval, provided they do not conflict with state or federal laws. This autonomy enables local governments to address specific community needs more effectively.

Glossary (cont.)

O

Open Meeting Laws (Sunshine Laws)

Require that meetings of governmental bodies be conducted openly and transparently. These laws ensure that the public has access to governmental decision-making processes, promoting accountability and preventing secretive practices. They typically mandate advance notice of meetings and the public availability of meeting agendas and minutes.

Open-Records Laws

Regulations that provide the public with access to government documents and records. These laws ensure transparency by allowing citizens to request and review records related to governmental decisions and activities. Open-records laws vary by state but generally cover a wide range of documents, including emails and meeting notes.

P

Preemption

When state law supersedes local law, preventing municipalities from enacting regulations in certain areas. This legal doctrine ensures uniformity across a state but can limit local governments' ability to address unique community issues, including those related to environmental policies and building standards.

T

Tenant protection

Laws and policies designed to safeguard renters from unfair treatment, such as arbitrary eviction, excessive rent increases, and unsafe living conditions. These protections are vital for ensuring housing stability and preventing displacement, particularly in the context of building decarbonization and other housing-related initiatives.



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