



MODULE 1: MUNICIPAL ROLE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Massachusetts Housing Partnership Training – March 18, 2026

Role of the Municipality vs. Role of the Developer

- Identify the Need
- Project Design
- Financing
- Community Support
- Monitoring & Compliance
- Realistic Timeline

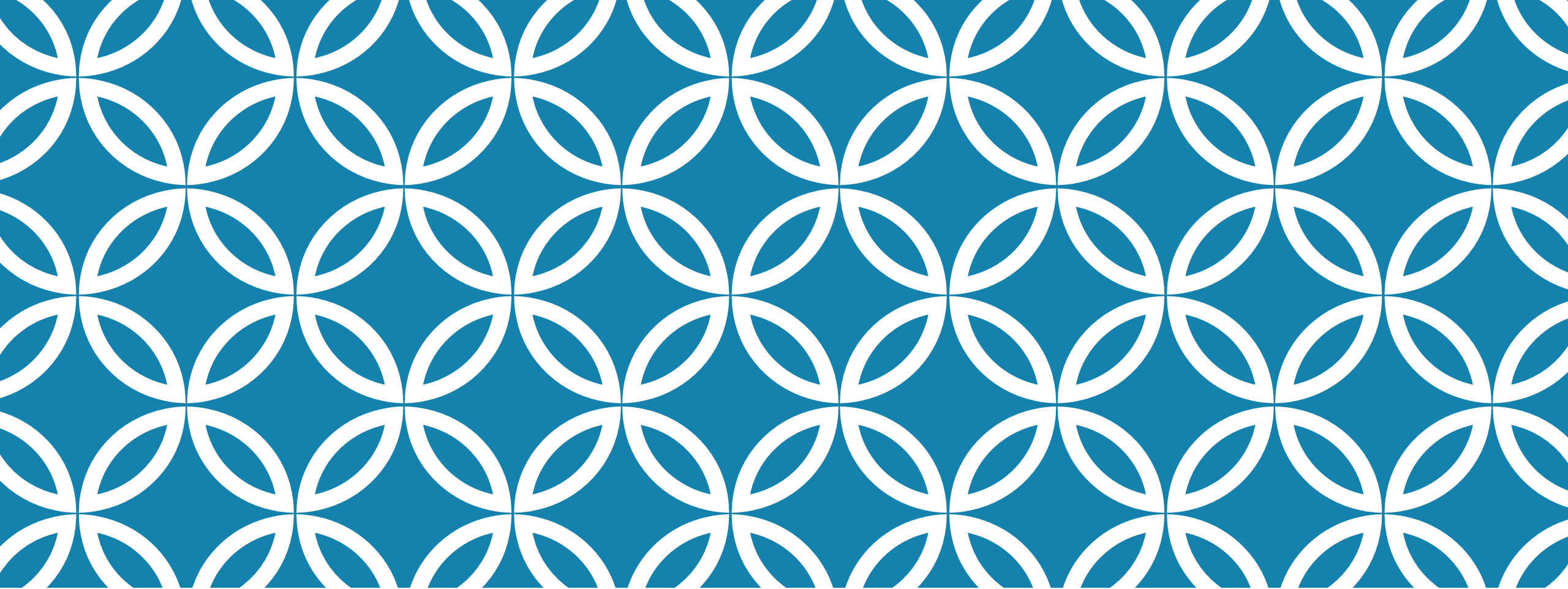
Development Example

- The Residences at Lawrence Hill
Wellfleet, MA

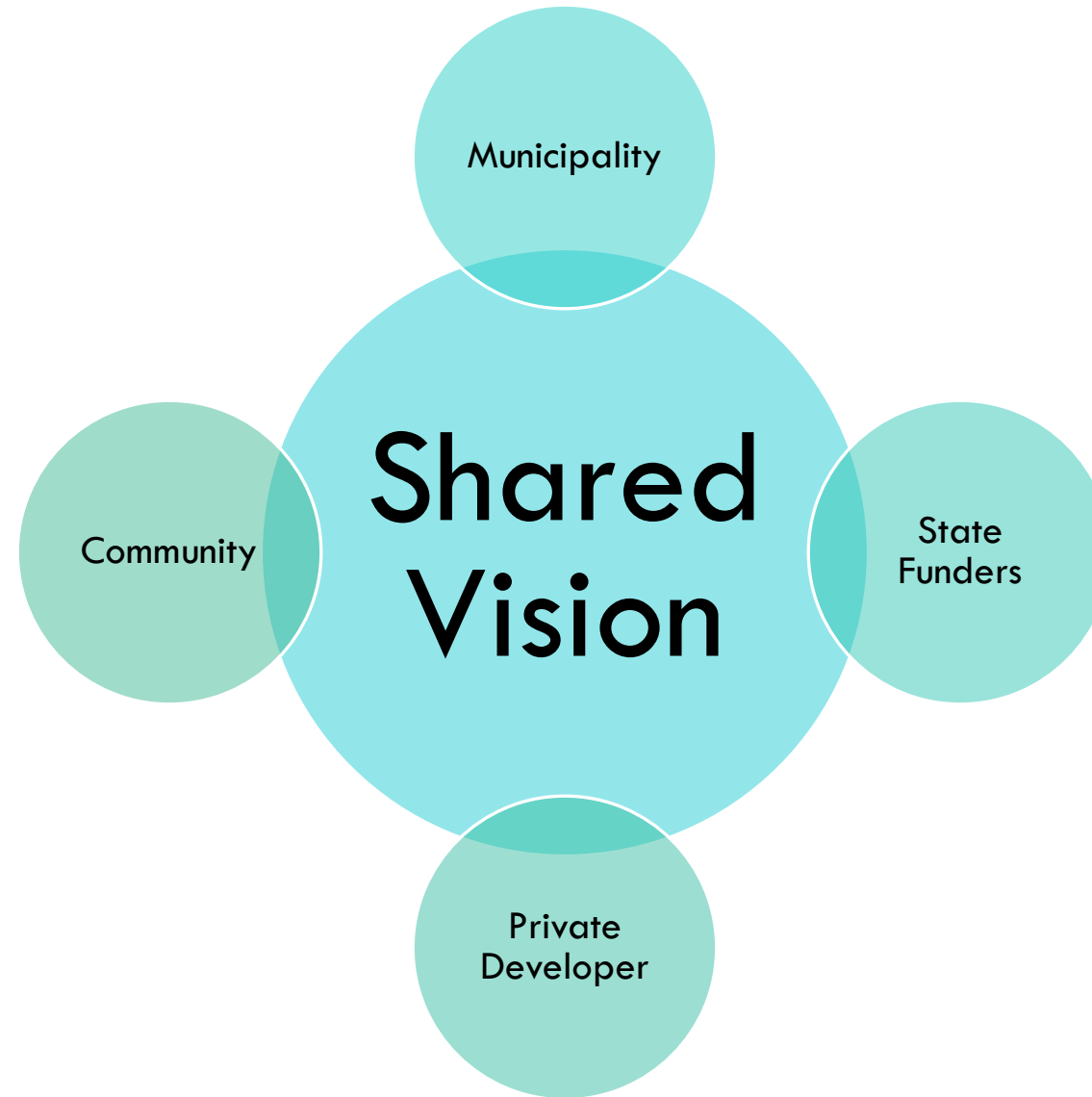
QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Type into the chat!





IDENTIFY THE NEED |



Municipality

Shared
Vision

State
Funders

Private
Developer

Community

THE DEVELOPER



Site of Amherst Community Homes., Amherst, MA

Centrally Located

Access to public transit

Buildable

Public Utilities

Viable Scale

Available with patient seller

Reasonable acquisition cost


Sensible to State Funders

Site Selection is half the battle!

THE DEVELOPER

What is Viable Scale?

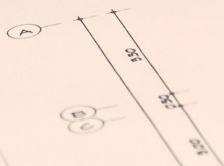
During Development	During Operations
Access to financing (LIHTC)	Financially stable operations
Ability to pay for common areas/site amenities	Ability to pay for on-site staff or support services
Ability to cover fixed costs (acquisition)	Ability to cover fixed costs (elevator maintenance)
	Ability to pay for capital repairs



**MUNICIPAL
ACTIONS TO
ENCOURAGE
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT**

ELECTRICAL SYMBOLS

ceiling chandelier, fan
 recessed light
 1200w



THE MUNICIPALITY

Needs Assessment + Community Input

Housing Production Plans

- Needs Assessment
- Goals & Strategies
- ID specific sites
- Input from citizens & private developers
- Approved by Planning Board + Elected Officials
- Approved by EOHLC

Strategic Plans/Master Plans

- Needs Assessment
- Goals & Strategies
- Robust community engagement



City of Easthampton, Housing Production Plan. Concept design by Dodson & Flinker

THE MUNICIPALITY



Middleborough, MA

Zoning + Permitting

Flexible Zoning Codes

- By-Right/Site Plan Review for multi-family buildings
- Adopt 40R Districts
- Zoning Incentives for affordable housing
 - reduced parking, higher densities

Streamlined Permitting Process

- Municipal Permitting Guidebooks
- Roundtable Tech Review

ZONING: TO 40B OR NOT TO 40B, THAT IS THE QUESTION...

Time

- Adds 1+ years to permitting

Zoning Waivers

- Flexible design
- Tool to reach viable scale

Robust public process

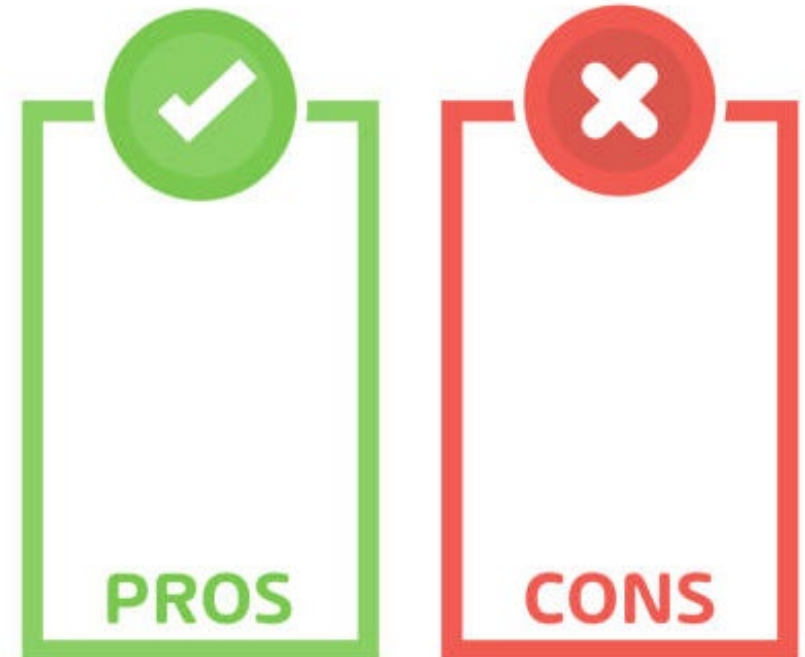
- Multiple opportunities for community feedback

Developer Risk

- Lengthy process + associated costs
- Site control required
- Safe Harbor denial
- Lawsuits

Municipal Risk

- Inexperienced ZBA (use MHP's Tech Assistance program!!!)
- Lawsuits



THE MUNICIPALITY



Source: Community Preservation Coalition

Advocacy + Funding

Active Housing Committees & Advocates

- Housing Trusts
- Housing Partnerships
- Local Champions + Stakeholders

Local Funding for Affordable Housing

- CPA
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Inclusionary Zoning - Payments in Lieu
- CDBG, HOME

THE MUNICIPALITY

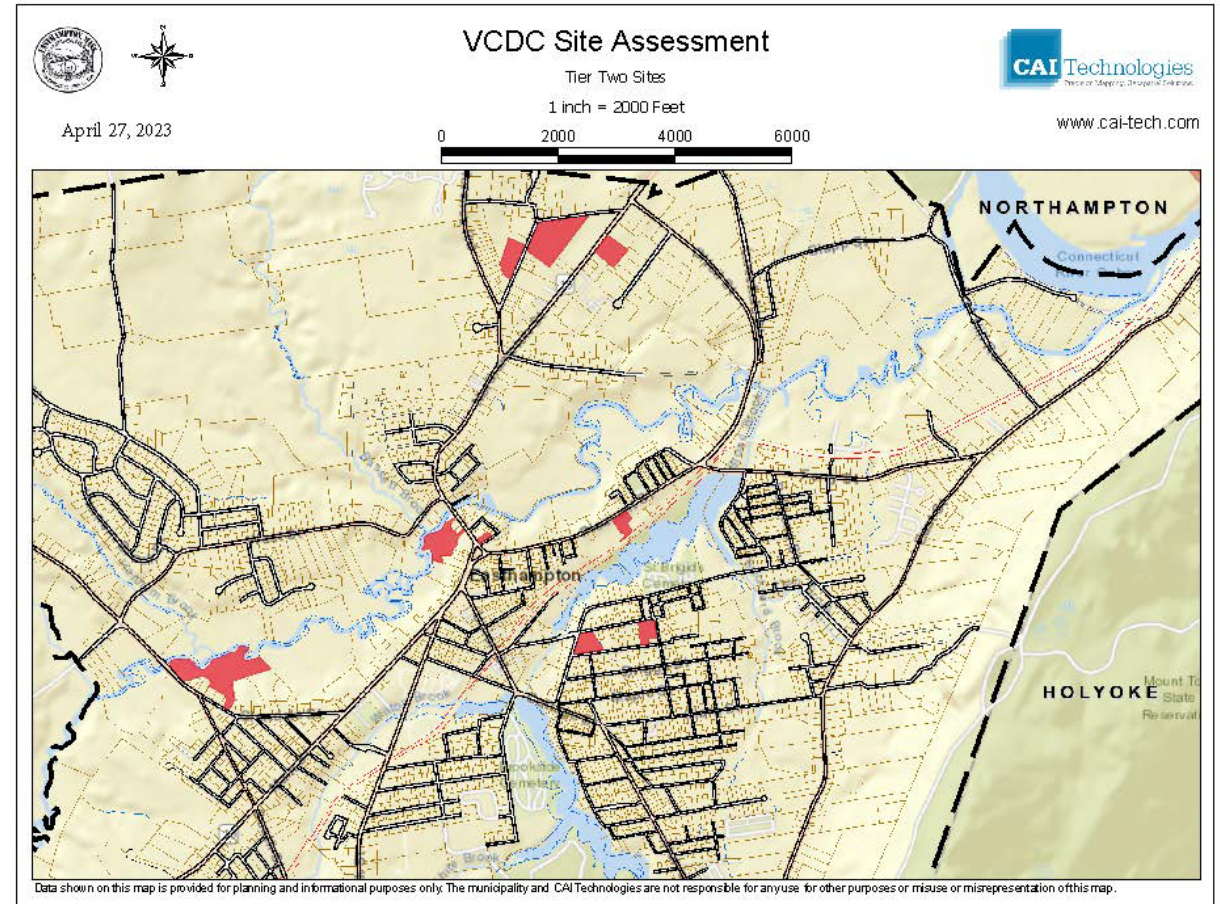
Connector + Matchmaker

Municipal Staff & Committees

- Know available sites + willing sellers
- Know active housing developers
- Understand community vision
- Know public infrastructure needs

Elected Officials

- Applications for state grants to support private housing (One Stop for Growth)
- Approve local matches (CPA)
- Vocal advocates for projects



STATE FUNDER (EOHLC)



TRANSIT ORIENTED +
WALKABLE LOCATION



MEETS COMMONWEALTH
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



SHOVEL READY



NO "RED FLAG" ISSUES
(HAZMAT, ETC.)

MUNICIPAL SITES — THE “WHITE ELEPHANT”

Before you RFP, consider the following:

Hire a Consultant

- For land disposition, community process

Do a “Fit Test”

- Work with architect (or friendly developer) to assist
- Should meet state design requirements for affordable housing
- Sets a realistic expectation on number of units

Conduct Due Diligence

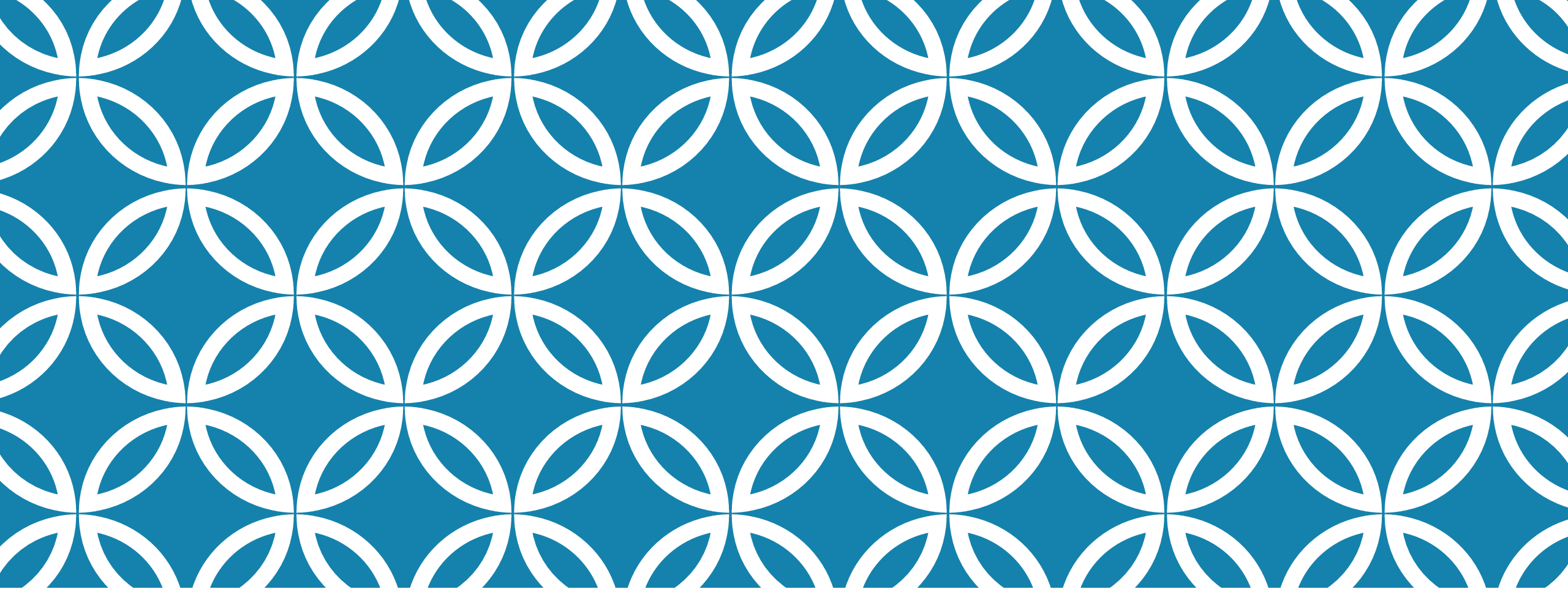
- Existing condition site survey
- Asbestos and lead paint testing
- Phase I ESA/Limited Subsurface Investigations
- Structural engineering
- Location + quality of public infrastructure

Set low acquisition cost

- Consider selling for \$1
- Costs recaptured in future property taxes

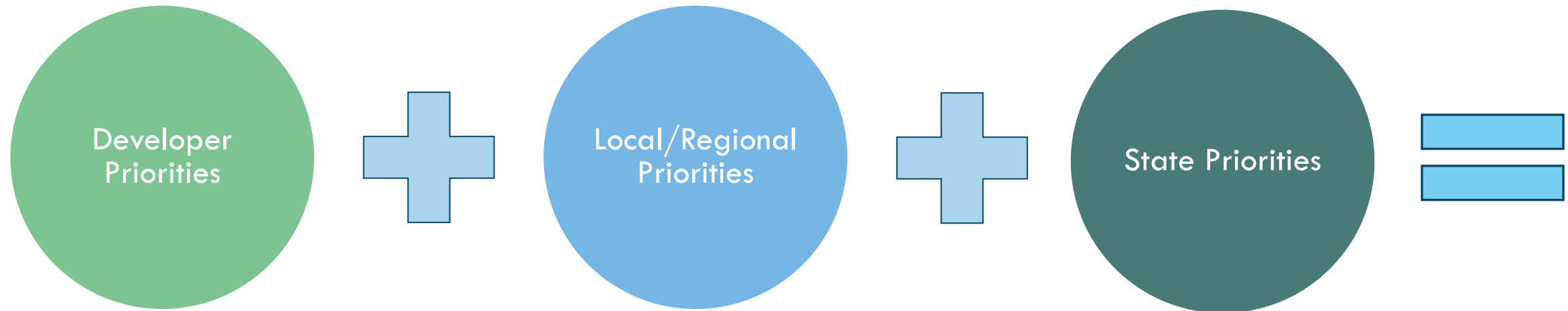


Center Elementary School, Easthampton



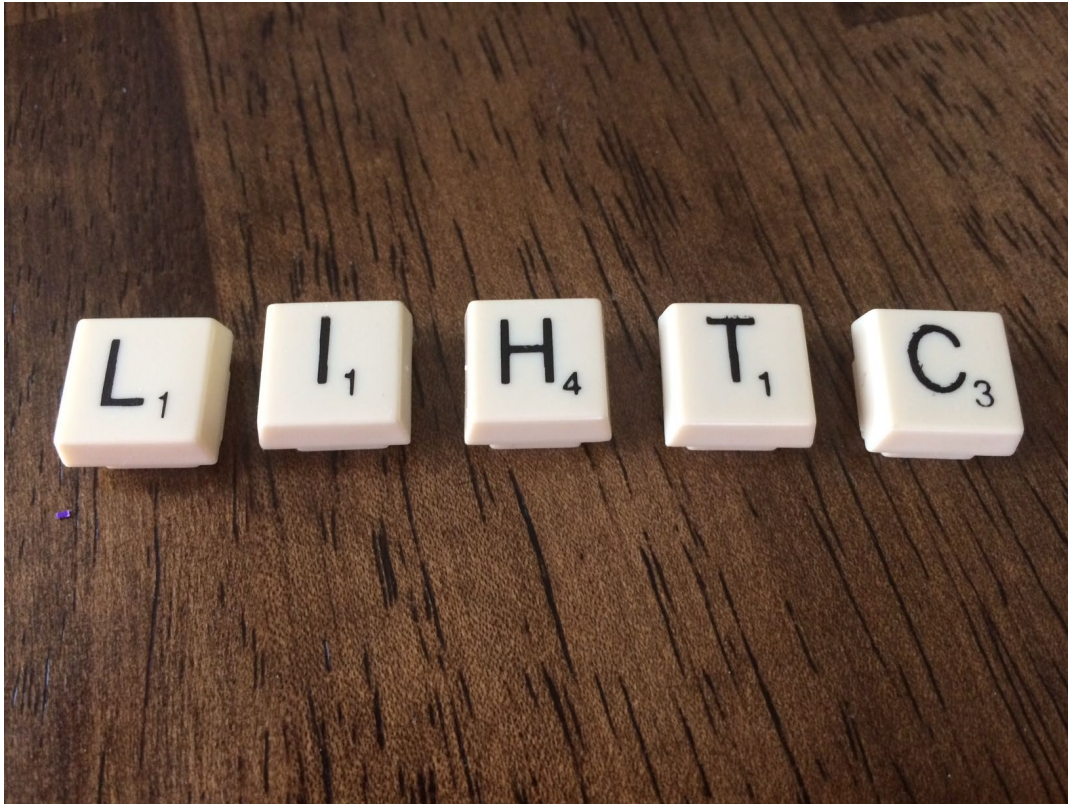
PROJECT DESIGN |

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



**Affordable housing needs
partnerships to be successful!**

STATE FUNDER (EOHLC) - QUALIFIED ALLOCATION PLAN



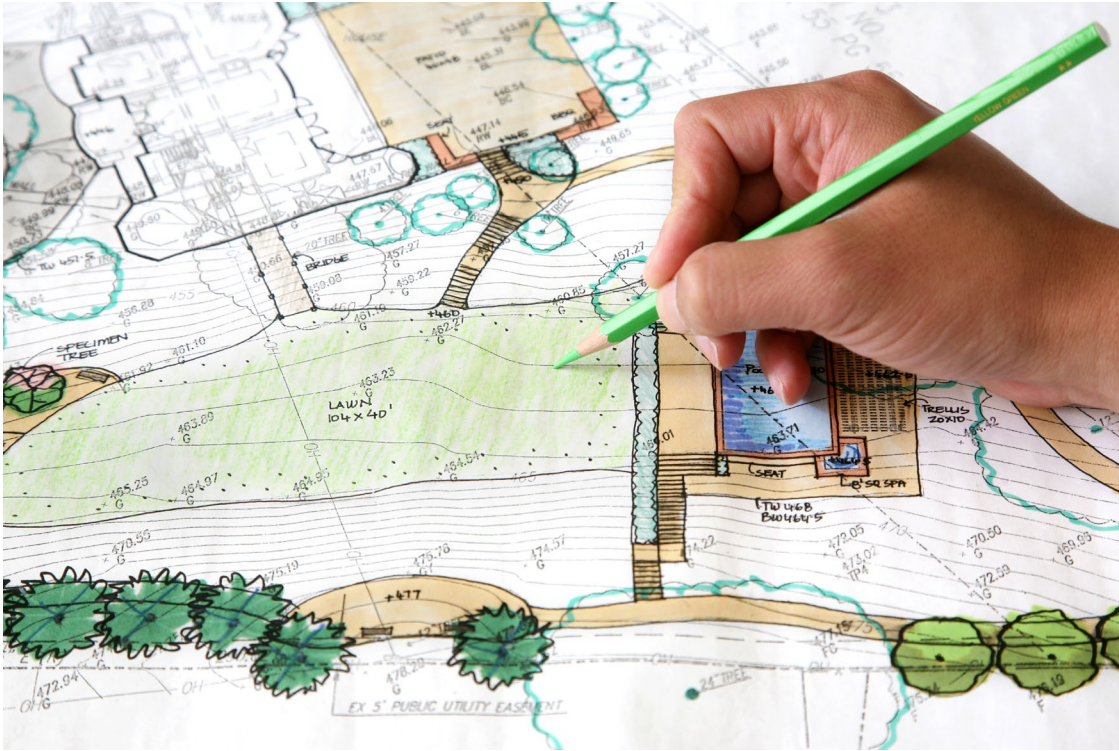
State plan for distribution of LIHTC + “soft debt”

Annual application + highly competitive

Must meet state QAP priorities/criteria to be considered for funding:

- Annual funding caps
- Site control + zoning permits
- Design Standards
- Enterprise Green Communities (EGC) certification
- Required local match
- Units set aside for special populations
- Required % of units for ELI (30% AMI)

THE MUNICIPALITY



Roundtable Tech Review

- Brings municipal staff + developer together for plan review
- Multiple mtgs at stages of design
- Includes Planning, Conservation, Building, DPW, Public Safety
- Ensures developer there are no surprises in permitting
- Ensure proposed project meets community plans

Legal

- Shepherd easements, agreements, deed restrictions, local funding requests though the approval process

THE MUNICIPALITY

Advocacy + Local Supporters

- Public, vocal supporters – inside and outside government
- Advocate at public meetings, newspaper, social media
- Updates public on project milestones
- Be able to identify and address “red herring” items
- Brief developer of abutter concerns before permitting

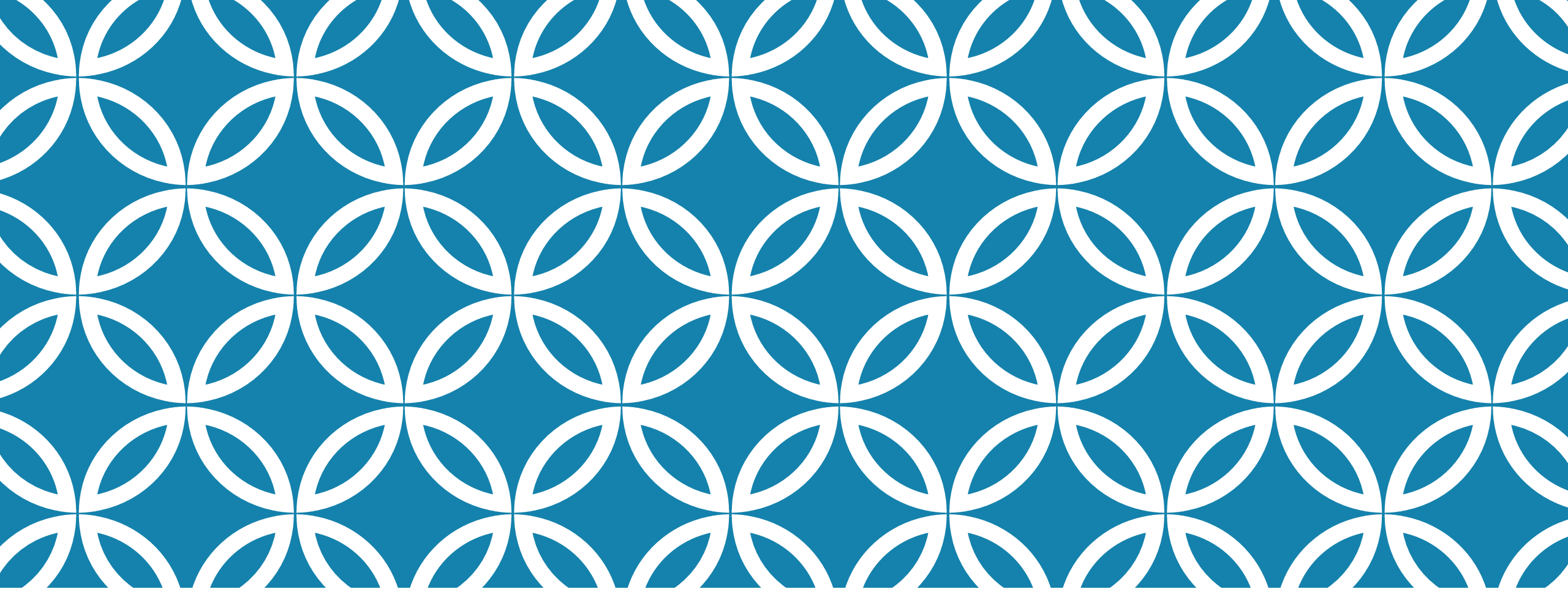


THE DEVELOPER



**QUESTIONS &
COMMENTS**





FINANCING



WHO PAYS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT?

**LOCAL/
GRANTS**



LOANS



**STATE
FUNDS**



**TAX
CREDITS**



WHAT IS IT PAYING FOR?

Use	% of total (est.)
Acquisition	4%
Construction	70%
Soft Costs	13%
Required Reserves for Operation	3%
Developers OH/Fee	10%
TOTAL	100%

WHY IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SO EXPENSIVE?

Legally complex

High design standards from EOHLC

- Accessibility
- High Energy Efficiency (Passive House)
- Bedroom SF and distribution

High + unpredictable construction costs

Specialized consultants

The Result: Multiple Funding
Sources Needed!

(Average 6-12 per project)



THE MUNICIPALITY



Advocate & support requests for local funds

- Local funding match required by state
- Needed early to leverage other funding

Apply for state funds that support housing

- MassWorks
- HousingWorks Infrastructure Program
- Housing Choice
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

Letters of Support for grants/foundations

THE MUNICIPALITY

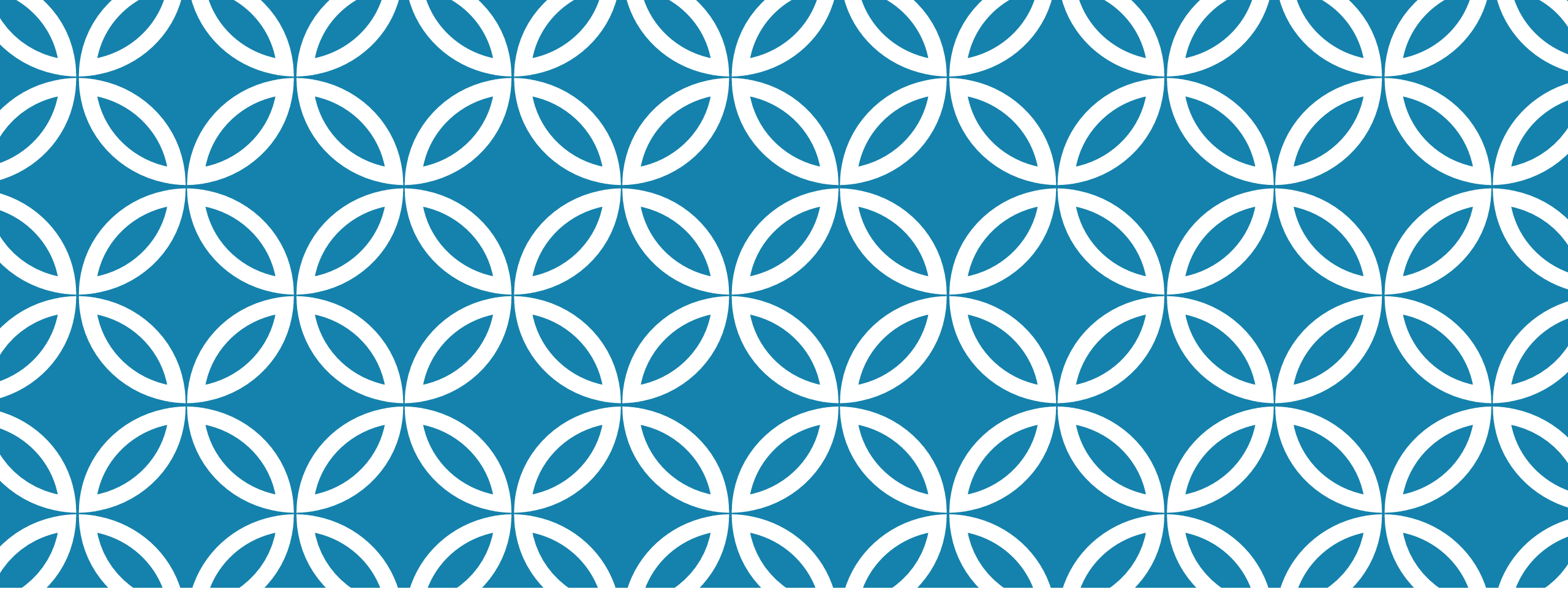
Budget is finalized at finance closing

- Fluctuating construction pricing – supply chain, tariffs, oil prices
- Shifting interest rates for loans
- Unforeseen conditions

Developer's job to fund the gaps

- Might require multiple requests for funding to municipality based on market changes





MONITORING & COMPLIANCE



FEDERAL LIHTC / STATE FUNDED

Reviewed and approved by EOHLC at financing:

- Affirmative Fair Housing + Marketing Plan
- Supportive Services Plan
- Management Plan

Quarterly compliance by LIHTC equity for 15 years

Annual compliance EOHLC length of deed restriction

Annual compliance by municipality if deed restriction is longer than state

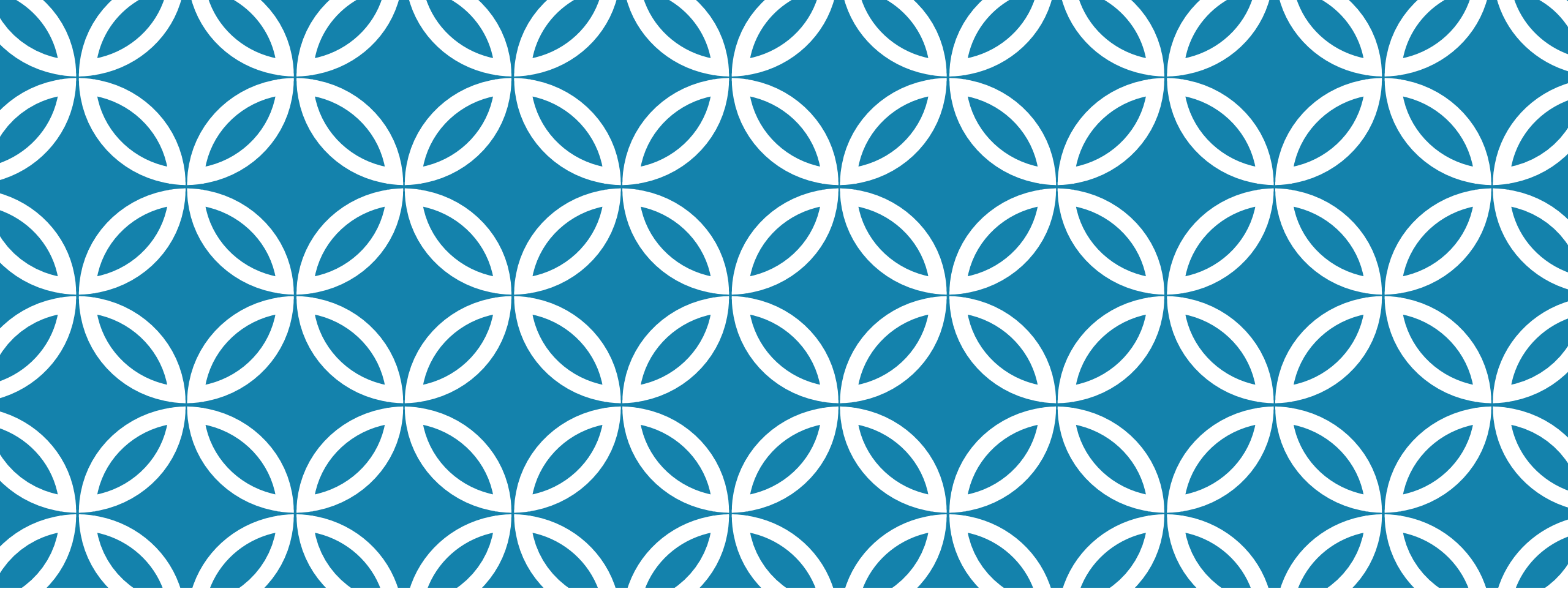


LOCAL FUNDS ONLY



Local sources such as CPA, CDBG, HOME

May require staff time to review tenant income certifications annually for reporting to program reps



COMMUNITY SUPPORT |

THE MUNICIPALITY

Cultivate Local Champions

Who they are:

- Active in local government, churches, non-profits
- People with lived experience
- In and outside local government

What they do:

- Make affordable housing an important agenda in their community
- Show up + speak out in favor of housing
- Write op-eds, attend meetings

Need help organizing? Hire CHAPA!



Municipal Engagement Initiative

Cultivates advocates outside local government
Works with residents to change the conversation
about affordable housing

THE DEVELOPER

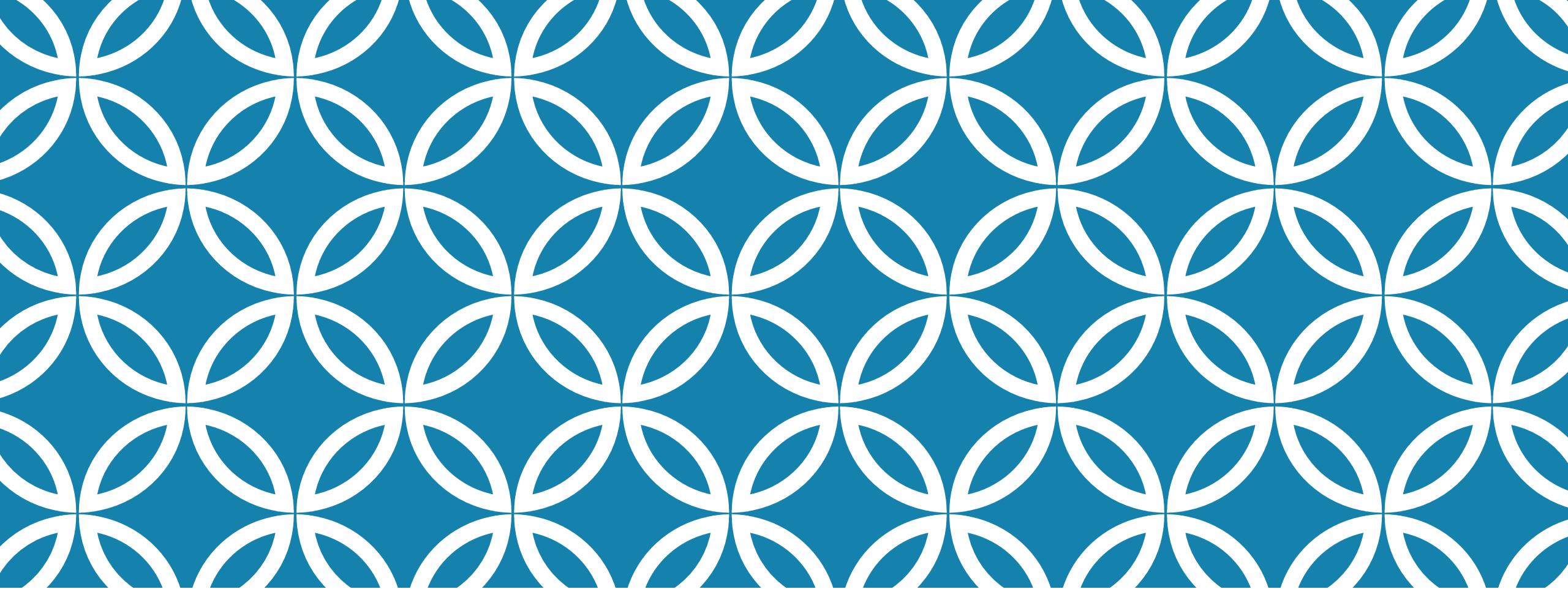
Pre-Permitting

- Roundtable Tech review
- Brief municipal boards + community leaders
- Neighborhood events (in-person + zoom)
- One-on-one with abutters
- Goal: Address opposition before get to permitting (and avoid lawsuits)

Post-permitting

- Project updates to staff, boards, neighbors
- Ribbon cuttings - post construction





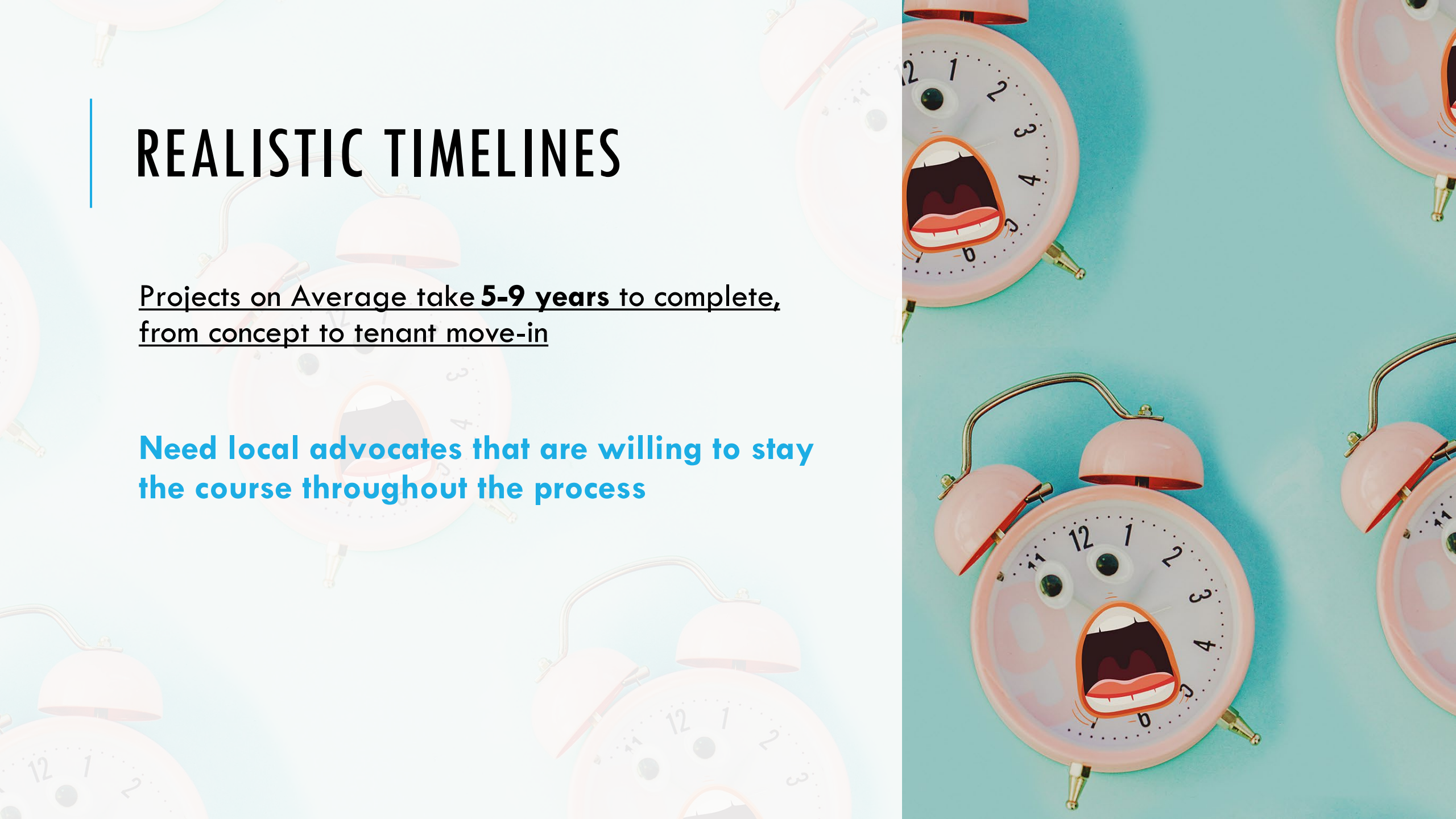
REALISTIC TIMELINES



REALISTIC TIMELINES

Projects on Average take **5-9 years** to complete,
from concept to tenant move-in

**Need local advocates that are willing to stay
the course throughout the process**



THE DEVELOPER



Longer process = more expensive
due to:

- Escalating building costs
- More time for paid consultants
- Plan revisions as codes change
- Carrying costs
- Pre-development loan interest

THE MUNICIPALITY

How to help

Expediated Permitting + Flexible Zoning

Municipal point person for developer that responds to permitting, funding, and legal questions + helps move through the public process

Active and vocal advocates both inside and outside city/town hall that are in it for the long haul!



**QUESTIONS &
COMMENTS**

