

Off-Site Construction Due Dilligence Checklist

SOLUTIONS FOR COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

A Site Feasibility Checklist for Modular Development

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Welcome & Overview

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) operate in an increasingly challenging landscape. Balancing long-term affordability, tight capital stacks, complex site restrictions, and rising on-site labor costs requires creative, forward-thinking solutions.

Modular construction offers a high-quality, efficient, and cost-predictable alternative to traditional stick-built housing. By shifting a significant portion of the building process off-site into a controlled factory setting, CLTs can achieve:

- **Shorter Construction Timelines:** Simultaneous site preparation and building fabrication dramatically compress development schedules.
- **Greater Cost Certainty:** Controlled factory environments reduce material waste, weather delays, and unpredictable labor overruns.
- **Superior Quality Control:** Precision manufacturing and standardized state-level inspections ensure highly durable energy-efficient structures built for generations of community stewardship.

Our team at Module understands the nuances of community-led development. Having collaborated directly with organizations like Durham Community Land Trustees and City of Bridges CLT, we have seen firsthand how off-site construction can successfully unlock infill sites, expand local housing stock, and advance permanent community affordability.

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How to Use this Guide



Modular construction changes *when* and *how* critical project decisions are made. Because a significant portion of design, engineering, and logistics is locked in early, thorough upfront due diligence is essential.

This site feasibility due diligence checklist is designed as an operational roadmap for CLT developers, project managers, and housing leaders evaluating potential sites for modular suitability.

Scope of the Toolkit

1. Phase 1: Feasibility evaluates lot configuration, slope tolerances, setback limits, and direct utility frontage to determine basic physical fitness for volumetric construction and helps establish scope for on-site work.
2. Phase 2: Logistics, Staging & Crane Operations Assesses transportation routes from factory to site, module staging requirements, overhead line clearances, and crane pick zones—frequently the largest variables in urban infill settings.
3. Phase 3: Project Team, Design & Financial Feasibility Guides team assembly (AOR, GC, Set Crew), aligns factory design constraints (widths, lengths, truss impacts) with zoning, and ensures financial draw schedules and lender expectations account for off-site manufacturing milestones.

Note: This checklist provides baseline guidance rooted in Module's Developer Playbook. Because local zoning codes, state modular regulations, and site conditions vary across jurisdictions, use this tool to guide initial site control and pre-development reviews, tailoring specific line items as your project progresses.



MODULE

1A. Lot Size and Configurations

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Available scaled survey with topography that identifies utilities <i>Critical for determining feasibility</i>	
☐	Fronting a collector/connector road; Alley access present OR corner lot preferred <i>Preferred for crane staging, transportation and neighborhood support</i>	
☐	Topography is flat or slopes away from the street, <i>no more than 10% of grade change across length of home.</i> <i>Avoids costly grading; reduces crane complexity</i>	
☐	Including minimum setbacks, infill lot widths of 20'-35' and 75' of depth <i>For best fit; check with your municipality setback requirements</i>	
☐	Water and sewer available directly at the frontage street <i>No offsite extensions required</i>	
☐	Site control established by developer <i>Financing sources carry from acquisition through construction loan to permanent financing</i>	
☐	Prior structures identified, especially filled basements <i>Impacts excavation scope and basement vs. crawl space decision</i>	



1B. Project Team Assembly

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Modular factory/manufacturer identified and capacity confirmed	
☐	Architect of Record (AOR) engaged – experienced with modular permitting Licensed stamps may be needed to secure local permits	
☐	Site Civil Engineer retained for grading, paving, and utility infrastructure	
☐	Structural and MEP engineers confirmed (often employed by the factory) Understand structural connections and on-site MEP connection details	
☐	General Contractor (on-site) identified – experienced with modular set coordination	
☐	Set crew vetted: modular experience, familiarity with crane operator, safety practices	
☐	Lender/financing partner identified with flexible terms or prior modular experience	
☐	CLT development director, construction manager, or owners rep identified	



1C. Design Parameters Confirmed

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Module dimensions within shipping limits Width 16' or less, length 60' or less, height 14 or less	
☐	Floor/ceiling truss impact assessed against zoning height caps	
☐	Roof type confirmed Pitched modules shipped separately or folded; flat roof set day	
☐	Site accessories scoped as on-site work post-set Decks, porches, canopies, carports	
☐	Design optimized for off-site fabrication to maximize factory scope and time savings	



2A. Financial Feasibility

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Hard cost budget prepared separating off-site (module) vs. on-site (GC) scope	
☐	Transportation costs budgeted Range: \$2,000 to tens of thousands depending on distance and permits	
☐	Crane rental costs budgeted \$5,000–\$20,000/day; plan for multi-day set on larger project	
☐	Staging site lease costs estimated	
☐	Set crew costs estimated and included in GC scope	
☐	Builder's risk insurance confirmed to cover modules at staging site and through set	
☐	Factory deposit requirements confirmed Typically 20-30% to reserve production slot	
☐	Lender's familiarity with modular confirmed – distinguish from manufactured/HUD housing	
☐	Modular draw schedule discussed with lender <i>Banks typically release funds only after modules are affixed to foundation</i>	



2B. Transportation Route (Factory → Staging Site → Project Site)

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	No bridge clearance conflicts along route Modules typically require ≤ 14 ft height clearance	
☐	Road widths are sufficient for wide-load transport Standard max width: 13'11"; with permits up to 15'11"	
☐	No prohibitive turning constraints at key intersections Module trailer length is especially challenging on infill routes	
☐	Transportation permits identified for module width, state borders crossed, and police escort needs	
☐	Factory is within ~500 miles of project site Preferred range for cost-effective transport	



2C. Staging Site

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Staging site identified within 1 mile of project site	
☐	Staging site has adequate space to store all modules safely and securely Allows trucks to deliver, unhitch, re-hitch, and depart without conflict	
☐	No low-hanging obstructions, busy intersections, or steep elevations at staging site	
☐	Set crew has workspace at staging site for module preparation	
☐	Storage timeline and costs confirmed Larger projects (15–45 modules) can incur significant staging costs if set is delayed	



3A. Crane Staging & Crane Pick Site

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Crane staging location identified: public Right of Way (ROW), alley, private road, or on-site	
☐	Crane pick site (where modules are lifted) evaluated for obstructions Power lines, trees, neighboring buildings, street closure permits for public ROW	
☐	Overhead power lines assessed Lines on opposite side of street = typically OK; same side = coordinate with utility provider or find an alternative	
☐	If power lines conflict: utility provider engaged for temporary de-energization, relocation, or covering	
☐	Preliminary crane size discussed with crane company based on module weights (500 lbs/lb) and site layout	
☐	Installation Allowance should be developed into equipment rental budget	



3B. Permitting and Inspections

✓	Checklist Item	Notes/Findings
☐	Factory state permitting confirmed – factory to manage state compliance	
☐	Local/city permits identified for on-site work: foundation, utilities, final occupancy	