
Summary of Key Learnings: Role of the Co-operative Board in Development MEF Session

The following provides a breakdown of the role of the co-op board in each development phase.



Feasibility Phase:

- Assess whether the project is realistic and financially viable
- Evaluate site constraints (i.e. environmental, zoning etc.) funding opportunities, risks, and long-term affordability
- May need to hire professionals to rely on for feasibility data, facts, context etc. (often involves a community needs assessment or market study)
- Make a key GO/NO-GO decision based on evidence gathered and risk analysis



Design Development Phase:

- Provide oversight of design direction (not technical design work), to ensure the design features reflect the co-op's needs
- Approve schematic designs and monitor cost escalation
- Balance trade-offs between cost, quality, accessibility, and sustainability
- Ensure alignment with funding program requirements and co-op priorities i.e. environmentalism, serving a particular community, affordability etc.
- Hire qualified professionals



Construction Phase:

- Oversee project delivery at a high level (not day-to-day involvement)
- Monitor costs, risks, delays, and contractor performance
- Approve major changes such as contingency use or scope adjustments
- Maintain clear separation between governance and operational roles



Operations Phase:

- Uphold legal and fiduciary responsibilities (by-laws, policies, compliance)
- Oversee long-term financial sustainability and reserve planning.
- Support strong member relations and democratic accountability

Funding Factors: showcase clear mission and alignment with community needs, create early connections with funding partners and be aware of their requirements, conduct early due diligence with municipalities & introduce any aspects of modular or alternative construction early on.

INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITY 1 • [25 minutes]

- **Step 1** • Do a round of introductions at your table (30 seconds each), introduce yourself
- **Step 2** • As a group, brainstorm 3-6 key board responsibilities during each of the 4 Development phases: Feasibility, Design Development, Construction, and Operations using this worksheet (you can recreate this worksheet on your papers)
- **Step 3** • Think about and note down the challenges your board has faced during these responsibilities- what CHF Canada (or other) resources/ programs/ trainings helped you overcome them? Share with plenary.

Before leaving, take a photo of this worksheet so you can take your work with you!

ACTIVITY 2 • SCENARIOS

Step 1 • Consider the unique scenario listed for each phase of the development process. Brainstorm with your group, on how to answer each of the questions.



	FEASIBILITY	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT	CONSTRUCTION	OPERATIONS
Activity pt.1				
Activity pt.2	<p>You've identified a promising site, but: costs are higher than expected, Zoning approval is uncertain, a funding program deadline is approaching. Do you proceed, pause, or stop? If stop, what is your alternative? If pause, what will be done during this pause and for how long?</p>	<p>Your architect proposes: more accessible units (aligned with mission),but these require higher costs/ unit that may push rents up, funders haven't increased funding. What do you prioritize and what is your rationale?</p>	<p>Mid construction: major cost overrun emerges and the contractor requests contingency use. This delay will push move-in by 5 months. What does the board do?Why?</p>	<p>First year after opening: -Maintenance costs are rising -Members are resisting housing charge increases -Reserve fund is underfunded What is the board's plan of action?</p>