

Capital Project Development Stages Roadmap

Power shapes what gets built, who benefits from investment, and which communities are able to thrive over time. Yet too often, communities of color are excluded from the decisions, funding, and technical processes that shape development in their own neighborhoods.

The Capital Project Development Stages Roadmap is designed to help shift that dynamic. Translating community ideas into built projects takes planning, coordination, and the right tools. Our roadmap offers a straightforward guide to help you navigate the key stages of capital project development, from early community visioning and feasibility to construction.

To make this process smoother and more actionable, we've focused on three critical moments during the development process where this roadmap is most useful:



The Universal Design Stages Defined

0–10%

**Community Visioning
& Ideation**

The foundational stage where you define the problem, surface community needs, and begin shaping a shared vision for the project.

15%

**Early Feasibility
& Site Control**

Stage where you establish the initial project structure and confirm feasibility including building out your core team and identifying and securing early pre-development funding and technical support to move forward with acquisition and/or securing site control.

30%

**Concept Development
& Funding Readiness**

Actionable stage where you move from vision into tangible project concepts that can be tested, cost-estimated, and shared with potential funders. This is the stage where your project becomes fundable and you engage funders for implementation funding.

VALLEY OF DEATH (5–30%)

A high-risk phase where a project has moved beyond an idea, but isn't yet developed enough to secure full funding, permits, or partners.

Challenges include:

- Limited committed funding despite existing interest
- Shifting scope, costs, and design
- Unresolved technical, site, or regulatory issues
- Resource gaps that hinder progress

Tips to navigate it:

- Secure early “bridge” or predevelopment funding for planning, coordination, engagement, and site control and/or acquisition
- Strengthen your core technical and project team
- Develop clear concept designs and cost ranges
- Align community vision with funder expectations
- Clarify and lock scope early to avoid repeated redesign cycles

60%

**Entitlement
& Final Design**

Pivotal stage where you finalize technical designs and ensure the project meets all regulatory and code requirements.

90%

Construction Readiness

Due diligence stage where you ensure all design, financial, and administrative elements are finalized to transition smoothly into construction.

100%

Construction Begins

Celebratory stage that marks the shift from planning to execution, where construction starts!



How to Use the Roadmap as a Tool

This is a versatile tool that you can use with your team to track progress and stay aligned on project goals and scope. Here's how to make the most of it:

Start with the Right Stage

- Review the stages below and begin where your project currently stands. If you're still in the visioning phase, focus on the 0–10% stage. If you're ready to hire consultants, jump to the 15% or 30% stage.

Use It as a Conversation Starter

- Share the roadmap with your team and stakeholders to ensure everyone understands the project's progress and next steps. Use the readiness questions at each stage to engage in productive conversations.

Track Progress with Milestones

- At each stage, review the milestones and activities to ensure you're on track. Celebrate small wins and address challenges early to avoid delays.

Revisit and Adapt

- Projects evolve and so should your roadmap. Revisit it regularly to adjust timelines, roles, budget, and priorities as needed.

Capital project development is a complex journey that requires structure, intentionality and clear communication to keep teams and stakeholders aligned. While the stages outlined here provide a clear path forward, it's important to remember that this process isn't always linear. Projects may loop back, pause, or accelerate unexpectedly. Use this roadmap as your guide to navigate each phase, understand where you stand, and identify what comes next. With activities, milestones, and discussion questions at every stage, it's designed to help you maintain momentum, adapt to challenges, and ultimately set your project up for long-term success.



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

0–10%: Community Visioning & Ideation

Engage The Right Stakeholders

- Community leaders and residents actively engaged
- Community-based organizations established as project partners
- Early project champions identified
- Local public agencies or institutional partners engaged (as needed)
- Trusted facilitators or staff supported early engagement

Key Activities

- Facilitated community meetings, listening sessions, and workshops
- Conducted surveys, interviews, and storytelling sessions
- Mapped community assets, needs, and gaps
- Identified early community champions and stakeholders
- Documented shared values and emerging priorities



Are you ready to move forward?

Who is engaged in shaping the vision and who still needs to be included?

Is there shared agreement on the vision?

Are needs and assets clearly documented?

Milestone: Project Has A Clear Community Driven Vision



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

15%: Early Feasibility & Site Control

Build The Project Team & Secure Site Control

- Core project team established
- Early funders engaged
- Technical advisors identified
- Community representatives included for alignment and accountability
- Anchor or institutional partners engaged for long-term support
- Commercial real estate broker and legal counsel identified

Key Activities

- Completed site identification
- Entered into site control agreements
- Obtained necessary property reports and information
- Identified property opportunities and constraints (i.e. land use, zoning, accessibility, etc.)
- Developed architectural test fit and/or early concept designs
- Developed early project budget
- Acquisition funding and/or financing committed



Readiness Check

Are you ready to move forward?

Is there a fully formed core project team with clear roles to carry out daily operations?

Is there real committed early funding (not just interest) and a path to identify remaining funds or fundraise to close the funding gap?

Do you have at least 3% of the purchase price available for a downpayment?

Is there alignment across stakeholders on scope and direction? Can you confirm that the property meets your community vision and/or program space needs?

Milestone: Project Team Assembled, Initial Funding Secured, Site Control In Place, & Financing In Place To Close On Acquisition



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

30%: Concept Development & Funding Readiness

Secure Early Financing & Buy In

- Core project team and key technical partners onboarded (project manager/ owner's rep; architects and design team, cost estimators or predevelopment consultants, commercial real estate broker and legal counsel)
- Community stakeholders engaged for feedback and validation
- Early funders and capital partners secured
- Capital campaign consultant/ committee selected
- Local agencies engaged for early permitting input

Key Activities

- Completed concept drawings and prepare for schematic designs
- Refined project scope and program elements
- Acquisition funds/financing secured & entire project preliminary budget prepared
- Acquisition due diligence and contingencies removed
- Entitlement permitting strategy identified
- Land use and zoning, intended use is confirmed compatible
- Planned operating, rev/exp model refined
- Identified fundraising capacity and likely prospects/timing to secure funds



Are you ready to move forward?

Does the concept reflect the community vision?

Is the budget realistic and feasible? Do you have additional predevelopment funds secured, or in process to move the project forward?

Do you have a reasonable fundraising strategy to identify, solicit and secure additional funding and/or financing to complete the project?

**Move Forward When: Site Control Complete & Project Is Funder Ready
"Shovel Worthy"**



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

60%: Entitlement & Final Design

Finalizing Design & Securing Entitlements

- Owner/ capital project led executed design and entitlement process
- Project manager/ owner's rep supported
- Full design team (architects, engineers, consultants) finalized design
- Regulatory and permitting agencies submitted permit approvals
- Cost estimators finalized budget
- Community representatives led final alignment and accountability
- Funders and/or financing partners committed funds

Key Activities

- Completed schematic design (detailed architectural and engineering plans)
- Budget/ cost estimate and schedule updated
- Entitlement, conditional use and/or change of use permits submitted
- Environmental review/studies submitted (if needed)
- Engagement initiated with general contractor for preconstruction, cost estimating and constructability review
- Public community engagement strategy confirmed and executed
- Additional funding and financing prospects identified



Readiness Check

Are you ready to move forward?

Have you identified your entitlement strategy and the appropriate advisors to execute?

Is the project still within the proposed budget and schedule?

Do you have continued confidence in the ability to fundraise and/or identify additional funds to complete the project?

Milestone: Project Plans Are Ready For Approval & Bidding



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

90%: Construction Readiness

Prepare For Construction

- Owner/ capital project lead executed construction onboarding
- Project manager/ owner's rep supported
- General contractor and subcontractors onboarded
- Funders and/or financing partners disbursed funds
- Legal and procurement teams executed contracts
- Permitting agencies submitted final approvals
- Regulatory agencies approved final sign-offs

Key Activities

- Finalized construction documents
- Final project budget and funding secured
- Obtained final permits and approvals
- Executed construction contracts
- Finalized insurance and bonding
- Established construction oversight and reporting systems



Are you ready to move forward?

Is the full project budget secured? Are funds accessible and ready to deploy?

Are all permits, funding, and contracts fully secured?

Is there clear accountability for construction oversight?

Milestone: Project Is Construction Ready "Shovel Ready"



CAPITAL PROJECT STAGES BREAKDOWN

100%: Construction Begins

Break Ground

- General contractor and subcontractors initiated construction
- Owner/ capital project lead initiated construction oversight and monitoring
- Project manager/ owner's rep supported
- Funders engaged for reporting and compliance
- Inspectors and regulatory agencies engaged
- Community stakeholders engaged and monitoring progress

Key Activities

- Mobilized contractor and construction team
- Began site preparation and hosted groundbreaking
- Implemented construction schedule and phasing plan
- Monitored progress through reporting and site visits
- Managed change orders and issue resolution



Readiness Check

Are you ready to move forward?

Is construction on schedule and within budget?

Are community members informed and engaged during construction?

Are issues being tracked and resolved quickly?

Milestone: Project Construction Begins

