Course Overview

The Small Scale Development Workshop is a day-long session designed to introduce the principles and implementation mechanisms behind neighborhood based development projects. The workshop offers specialized training on how to create small projects, like 1-3 story buildings with less than 20 units, which are residential, commercial or mixed in use. The course assumes you know a lot about where you live, but not necessarily much about the real estate process or building development.

Through presentations on finance, design and site selection, a hands-on practice exercise, and networking with local like-minded people, this workshop is the first step to becoming a small developer yourself or creating a supportive ecosystem for small development in your city.

Learning Objectives

- Get a big picture view of small scale real estate development and the value it provides in a community
- Understand how a building makes money and how to analyze what kind of building your local market will support
- Learn the first steps in formulating your own project and how to get started as a developer with little to no resources
- Learn how to read and interpret zoning to see what and where you can build
- Discover where you need help filling the gaps in your skills and expertise
- Meet people who can help you
7:30 AM - REGISTRATION OPENS
8:00 AM WELCOME

Power of the Incremental Approach
Incrementalism is best paired with time. By rooting in a neighborhood, building relationships and making many small improvements over time, a small developer can build wealth in their community.

Business Models and Skill Sets
What kind of projects are you interested doing? How will that be structured? What skills do you have and whose help do you need?

Right-Sizing Your Project
By evaluating zoning, financing tools, and building codes, a project can conform to systemic thresholds that control costs and minimize risk.

Building Arts 101
A small developer who understands architecture, urban design and planning fundamentals can create more value with their project while contributing to the health, safety, and welfare of their community.

Market Research & Site Selection
Finding the right site or building as the critical first step to any development project. Understand how to establish a baseline range for the rents, sales and other variables in your neighborhood and pay the right price for property.

12:00 PM - LUNCH AT THE VENUE (PROVIDED WITH REGISTRATION)

Zoning
Understand the key regulatory basics that shape a project's physical form and the typical processes that govern what is allowed by-right versus with special permission.

Project Pro formas
Get familiar with a financial pro forma template and the important concepts, key terms, and industry jargon that show how a building makes money.

Hands-on: Site Planning and Pro forma
Apply everything learned so far in the day to layout a building on a site by following a sample zoning code and then filling out a project pro forma to see how the project performs financially under many conditions.

Financing a Project
A great project needs a great plan for obtaining permanent mortgages and construction/renovation loans. To get there, a small developer will need a written financial package and a verbal pitch to present to a bank and/or private investor.

Buying a Property:
A basic overview of the process for purchasing property and the elements of the crucially important due diligence process.

Final Q&A and Wrap-up
5:00 PM - CONCLUSION