When are the Community Benefit Agreements the right strategy for achieving community benefits? This research explores CBA efforts in Los Angeles, New York City, Denver and Toronto.

**Research Aims:**

**Purpose:** to understand how local city government and community context shape the effectiveness of CBAs as a strategy for integrating community goals into projects.

- How does the existence of local laws governing affordable housing, living wages or other typically sought benefits affect CBA efforts?
- What type of community capacity is required for binding agreements?
- How does the position of planning in city government affect agreements?

To highlight issues we thought might be important, we selected a set of cities that varied greatly in the:

- position of planning in city government, and its strength in shaping development
- strength of community organizations interested in CB issues
- access to government resources/political leverage from outside the city

**Key results to date:**

**Emerging themes -- Remaining questions**

Local laws can be activated, translated to local context through CBAs. Denver’s living wage provisions of TIFs, Toronto’s new Transformative Projects tool, and New York City’s living wage policies were all linked to CBA campaigns. All required citywide support.

- How can this be translated into more lasting impact?

Community capacity often supported by union funds, organizing staff. Organizations representing community interests all received support from unions, to varying degrees.

- How might local organizations representing the community in local planning processes participate in discussions of broader community needs?

Planning departments keep large projects separate, one-off. Politics of planning seen in power of local planners, politicians and opening for community role.

- How might experience of large projects be used to link planning to other departments with purview over broader set of needs?