

Centering Health Equity

getting started guide

See full report at : centeringequity.org/v0-beta-frameworks

Centering Health Equity: Getting Started Guide

v0.1 June 2021 beta

Centering Health Equity is a project to support stronger communities and business success through health equity in the built environment. It envisions a radical shift toward inclusion across the multi-sector fields that influence the design, delivery, and operation of real estate and public sector projects.

*Centering Health Equity is published by Mithun and the Green Health Partnership. **See full report at : centeringequity.org/v0-beta-frameworks***

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Acknowledging Team Positionality

Collectively, the Centering Health Equity team is majority-White, practicing in White-led multi-sector fields of built environment practice. We want change. We recognize that we are addressing these issues from our own positions of power and privilege.

As we approached this project, we asked ourselves:

How can we use that power to combat racism and health inequities? How can we challenge best practices and continue to improve? And how best can we use our skills as researchers and integrated thinkers for healing and empowerment?

We started by doing our own, self-funded work to learn and map the fence of injustice within our own industry. Our research to understand barriers to health equity drew guidance from the Salzburg Seminar's [Confronting Power and Privilege statement](#) and [Design as Protest Collective's Design Justice Demands](#). We chose a mixed-methods assessment approach including engagement with a convenient sampling of practitioners to map decision-making within project implementation, literature review and applied lessons from active Mithun implementation projects and GHP research projects. We sought review from built environment experts at the policy, programmatic and institutional levels.

We recognize that the most effective solutions to dismantle inequity have come from, and will continue to come from, people who are most impacted and who have both lived experience and professional expertise with the challenges that we are trying to overcome. During the research and engagement process, we sought lessons from projects that shift power and resources to BIPOC and marginalized communities, through influence on project decisions, leadership and capital.

The purpose of a continued open-source approach is to test and evolve the recommendations in a way that expands engagement of BIPOC and marginalized communities and continue to use the Framework as a platform to lift untapped BIPOC and marginalized communities' professional and lived expertise and shift power within our industries.

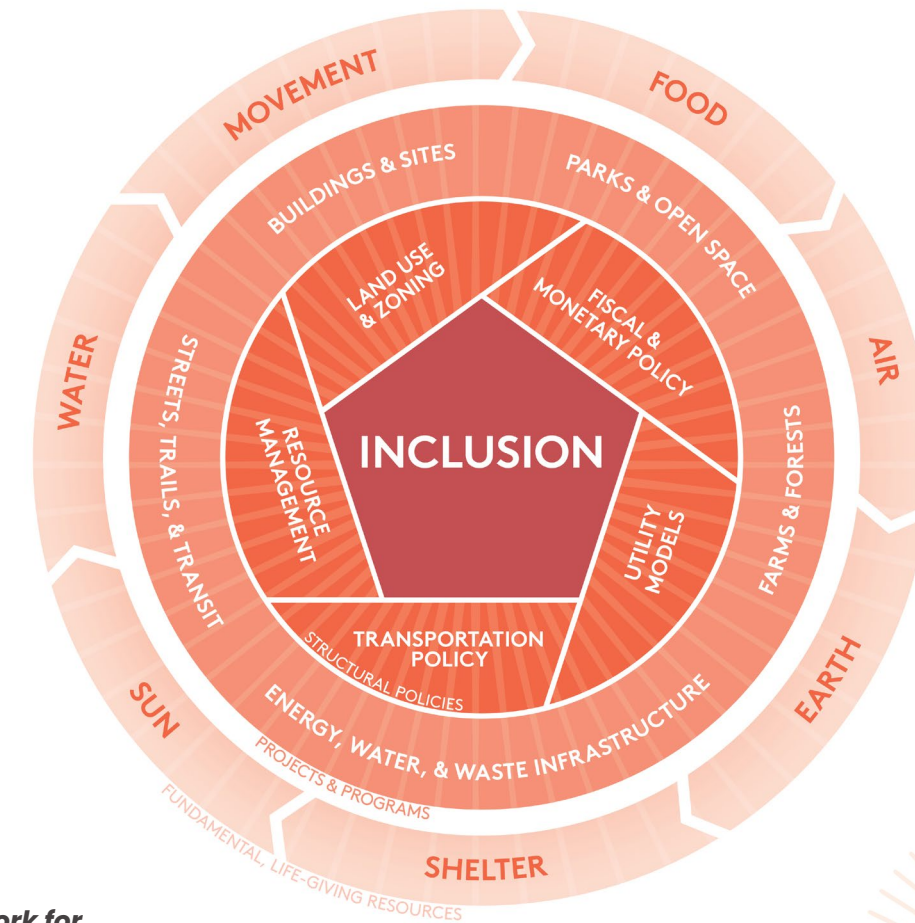
what does health equity mean?

"Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible."

This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."

¹ Braveman P, Arkin E, Orleans T, Proctor D, and Plough A. What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make? Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2017.

Built environment projects, real estate, and infrastructure are people's **first line of access** to health equity. They mediate life-giving resources like shelter, clean air and water, and access to food.



Conceptual Framework for Centering Health Equity in the Built Environment

Projects, real estate, and infrastructure mediate life-giving resources. By centering inclusion in our work, we can all accelerate health equity through our collective fields within the built environment.



how can we challenge our practice?

Small moments may have a significant impact on the health of all people who interact with our projects and shifting even one decision to center health equity may make a big difference. Because real estate decisions move quickly relative to the life span of an asset or building and often are dictated by the requirements of the investment mechanisms and funding programs that support them, teams should be ready with a set of strategies and resources that they can deploy.

By understanding the drivers within the built, social and service environments of our communities and infrastructure, practitioners can pivot to center health equity.

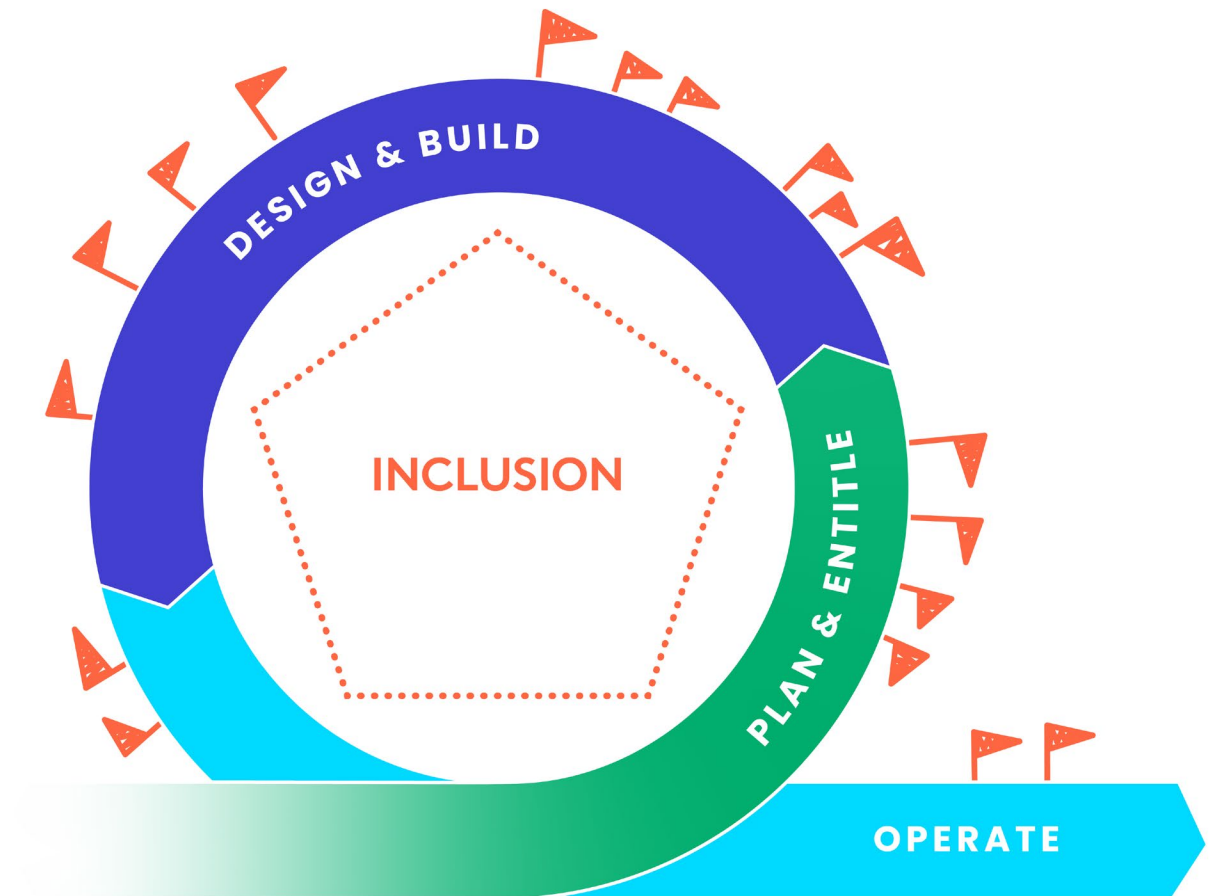
The beta Centering Health Equity Action Framework is a guide to help teams challenge conventional project delivery.

It was developed as a holistic, integrative process to improve project delivery and operational efficiencies and to better achieve triple bottom line outcomes.

The beta Action Framework is designed to be flexible, and can be applied at any stage of a project. It is a continual improvement process, intended to help practitioners respond to changing needs, risks, and opportunities in the built environment.

We envision this shift in practice toward radical inclusion will help us build back better and set the course towards stronger communities and thriving businesses.

At every stage of project delivery, real estate and built environment practitioners have the power to plant flags and challenge conventional practices within their sphere of influence. **By shifting just a few critical decisions and processes at key moments, practitioners can work towards health equity outcomes as a strategic imperative.** Examples can be found in the Project Breakdowns section of the full [Centering Health Equity report](#).



By improving our project delivery process and focusing on **social inclusion, we can support stronger communities and triple-bottom line business success.**

how does my project team get started?

The beta Action Framework can be used as a learning agenda, a conversation guide, or a resource. It is structured with a series of example questions to help spur new thinking and resources for additional learning.

Taking a first step can be as simple as personally reflecting on the essential questions in Strategy 1.

“What is the history of the community impacted by and served by the project? How might we be inclusive in our definition of project user or customer?”

For project teams who are interested in using this beta Action Framework, we suggest that you begin there, and move through essential questions in each of the five strategies for process improvement. We’ve provided a series of questions on the following pages to help you and your project team get started before diving into the five strategies.

Together, as a team, you can use this [Getting Started Guide](#) to take action on health equity. For additional context and project examples, please review the full [Centering Health Equity Report](#).

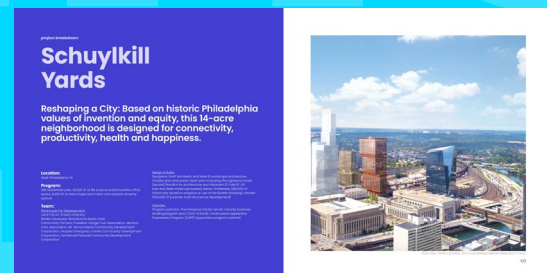
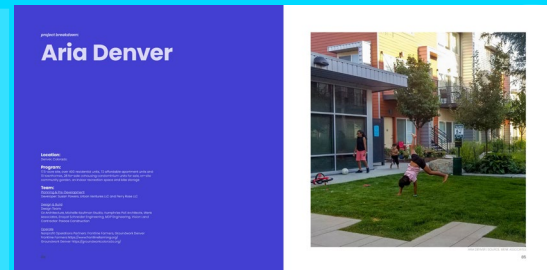


1

Without doing more harm, how can we learn about the history of the community impacted by and served by the project? How might we be inclusive in our definition of project user or customer?

Use this space to brainstorm ideas with your team.

Check out the **Aria Denver** (pg. 84) and **Schuylkill Yards** (pg. 104) case studies in the full [Centering Health Equity report](#) to learn more about how project teams addressed these questions.

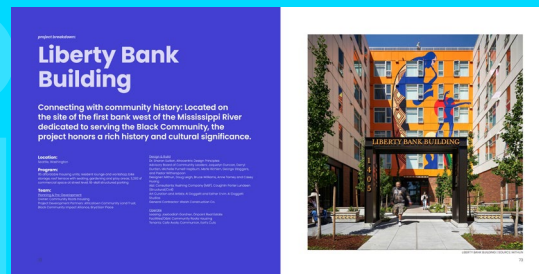


2

How does our project team and delivery structure promote or reduce health equity?

Fill out the [influence map](#) and [critical path decisions worksheet](#).

Check out the **Liberty Bank Building** case study on page 72 in the full [Centering Health Equity report](#) to learn more about how a project team addressed this question.



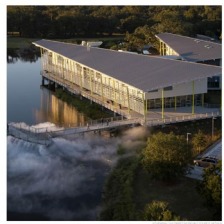
3

How might our project team, scope of work and goals be shaped in an equitable and inclusive manner?


Fill out the [capital flow worksheet](#).

Check out the **Louisiana Children's Museum** (pg. 78) and **CineMassive at 171 Armour** (pg. 114) case studies in the full [Centering Health Equity report](#) to learn more about how project teams addressed this question.

Louisiana Children's Museum
Empowering New Generations and Taking Learning Outside



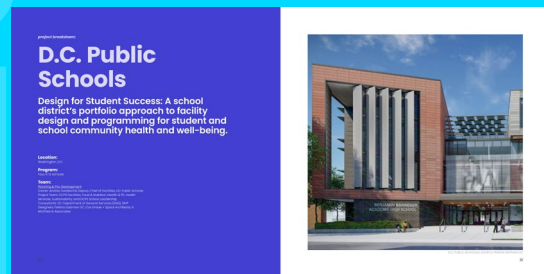
CineMassive at 171 Armour
Intown Industrial: Enhancing the aesthetic, cultural and historic quality of Atlanta's urban experience by providing connectivity and preserving diversity for an intown neighborhood.



4

Have we reviewed the project performance, requirements and standards for health equity priorities and goals at each major project milestone to determine positive or negative impact and efficiencies?

Check out the **D.C. Public Schools** (pg. 90) and **Waterloo Terrace** (pg. 108) case studies in the full [Centering Health Equity report](#) to learn more about how project teams addressed this question.



5

How are we evaluating our impact on health equity and reporting on our progress to stakeholders, community and the industry?

Check out the **Sun Valley EcoDistrict** case study on page 96 in the full [Centering Health Equity report](#) to learn more about how a project team addressed this question.



6

Now that you've made your way through the first five questions in this Getting Started Guide, we suggest you summarize your ideas to establish a health equity centered team project charter.

From there, we suggest you move through the [beta Action Framework](#), which provides prompting questions around key strategies at different stages of the project delivery process.

additional worksheets

- influence map and critical path decisions worksheet
- capital flow worksheet

influence map and critical path decisions worksheet

look at the diagram on the right.

This diagram is a template that describes some examples of pivotal moments and decisions that are common in project delivery. It is here for you to customize!

When do the critical decisions occur during the project delivery process? What is the decision-making structure? Who is sitting at the table and what are the decision criteria?

Add your notes or customize the timing and critical path decisions for your own project delivery. Add key dates to a calendar and review the Strategies and Question Guide!

Are there opportunities for inclusion and advancing procedural health equity in your project through broadening participation, cross-sector partnerships or shifting the timing or scope of tasks to serve as critical path inputs?

See ideas from the Full-Capacity Health Equity Report.

share your ideas, questions, etc. here >>

capital flow worksheet

look at the diagram on the right.

It describes some examples of **financial** capital flows and the roles of various stakeholders who are common in real estate development.

financial People may provide **social** capital in many ways during project delivery. Examples are by contributing their time and expertise to help understand the community, place and identity or by contributing their relationships and social connections to find tenants or partner organizations.

social

environmental **Environmental capital** includes the raw materials that are necessary to construct a project, like the land, energy and building materials. The environment also is affected by outputs of the project's operations and management. For example through projects on water and air quality.

Considering the **environmental, social, and governance (ESG)** forms of capital together is known as the triple bottom line (TBL) a structure for reporting performance on these three measures.

How does value flow between people and place as a result of this project? Consider the flow of environmental, social and financial resources in your project. Are environmental and social impacts being accounted for or are they being treated as externalities?

Add your notes or customize the capital flows for your own project delivery. Add notes about the stakeholders who are capturing value through the project and review the Full-Capacity Health Equity Report!

Are there unrealized opportunities for inclusive value creation and expanding structural health equity through broadened team structures, ownership models or a regenerative rather than extractive approach to environmental resource flows or social capital?

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influence map and critical path decisions worksheet

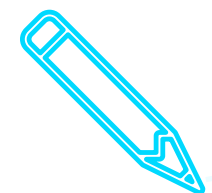
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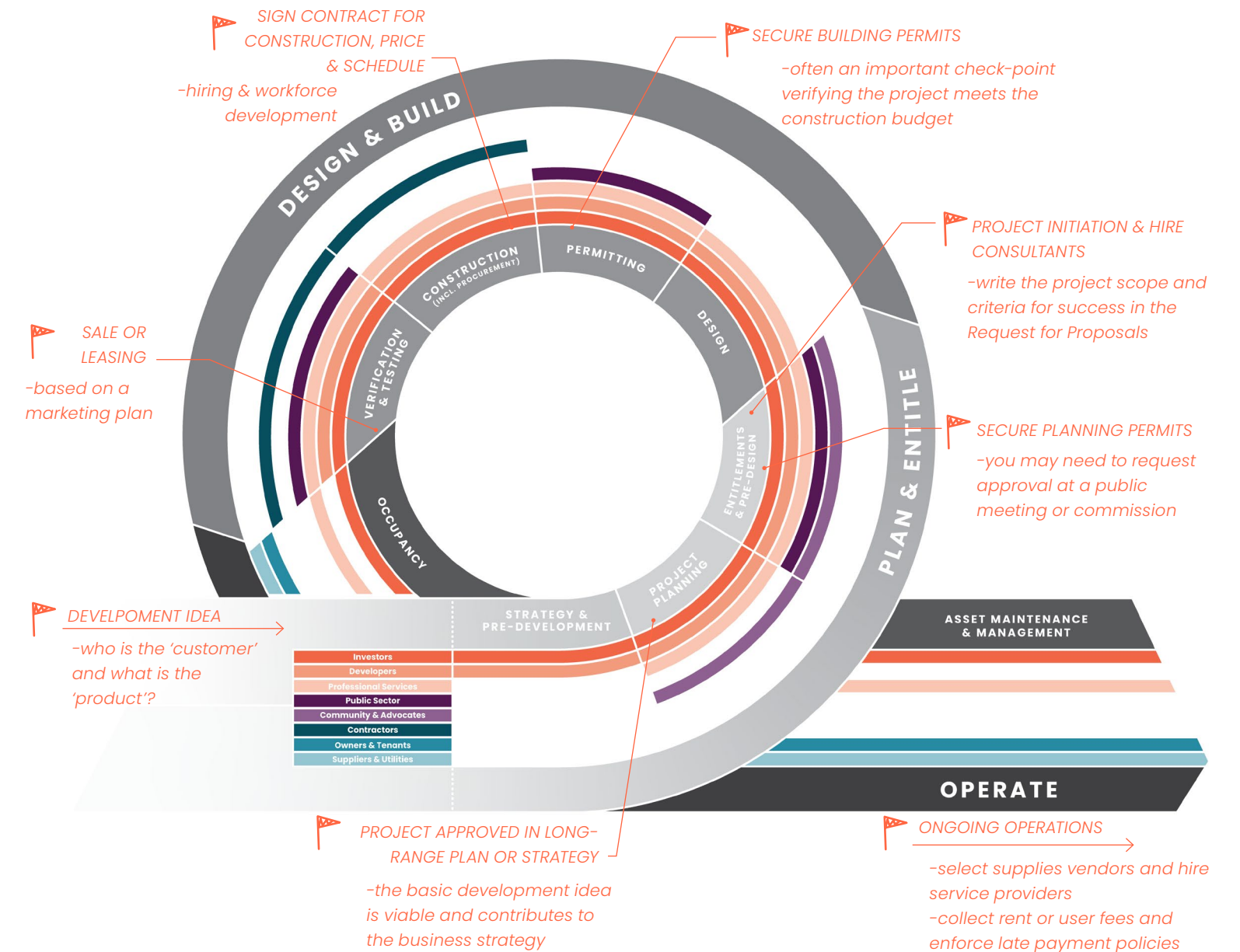
Seek ideas from the full [Centering Health Equity Report](#).



Who are our project delivery stakeholders?

Investors
Developers
Professional Services
Public Sector
Community & Advocates
Contractors
Owners & Tenants
Suppliers & Utilities

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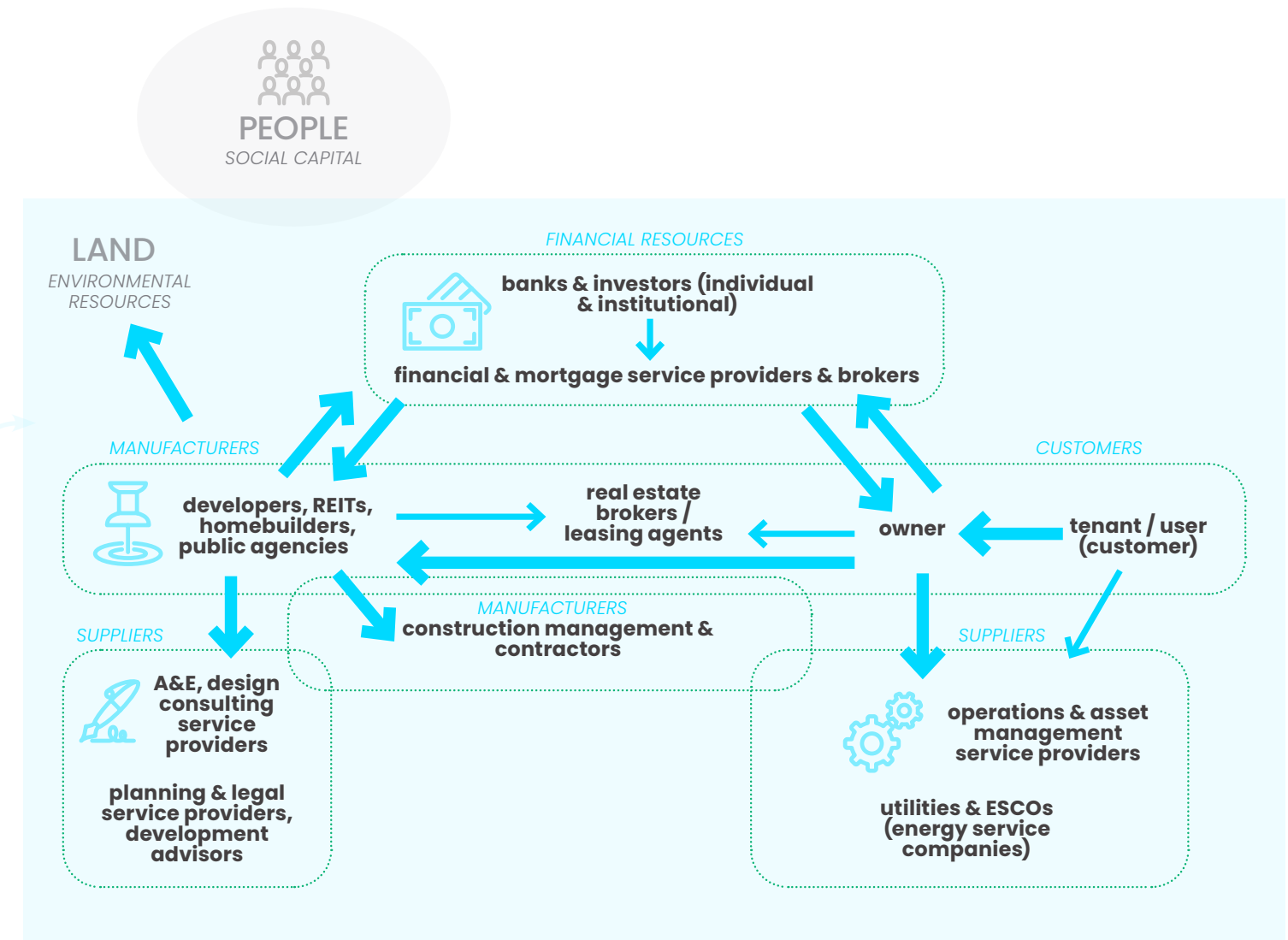
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This diagram, a template describing some examples of **financial** capital flows shown as blue arrows and the roles of various stakeholders who are common in real estate development. It's here for you to customize!



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