BAD Buildings Toolkit

An Overview of the WVU BAD Buildings Program

Updated September 2025

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BAD Buildings Toolkit

1. Introduction

1.1 The BAD Buildings Program

The WVU BAD (Brownfield, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is a statewide initiative of the Brownfields Assistance Center (BAC) at West Virginia University to provide communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local revitalization efforts. The program helps communities address barriers to identifying, prioritizing, and redeveloping BAD Buildings.

Attachments for this section:
BAD Buildings FAQs
BAD Buildings Info Sheet

'BAD' is an acronym, meaning brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated. Brownfields are properties whose redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the potential presence of harmful environmental contaminants (lead-based paint, petroleum, heavy industry, commercial uses). The terms abandoned and dilapidated refer to vacant and/or neglected properties that are blighted or in disrepair. Blight refers to properties that are perceived as problematic in some way. This includes appearing unsafe or unpleasant or properties posing a threat to neighborhood property values.

In addition to being eyesores for community residents, BAD Buildings pose several threats and hazards to the community. Their presence can hinder economic development and investment; constrains municipal revenue and budgets; and can result in health and safety hazards via falling structures, lead-based paint, or other potential contaminants.

While this document is primarily aimed at addressing dilapidated structures, vacant lots can create some of the same issues and are often addressed in the same community efforts. Throughout the document, language will often refer to structures or properties; however, tools can be adapted to address vacant lots, and the survey is designed to allow for tracking of vacant lots and their specific nuances and conditions.

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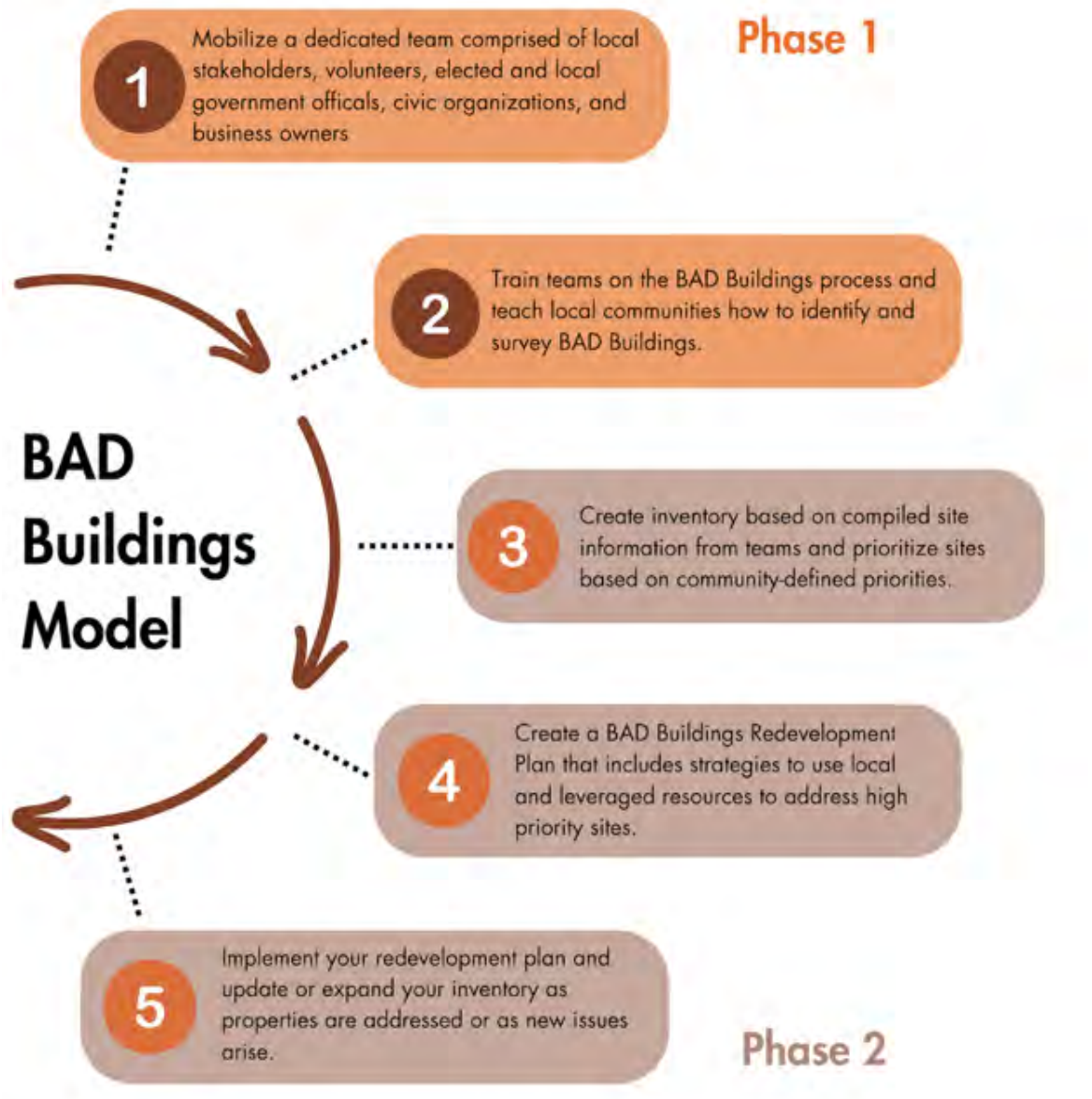
1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an in-depth overview of the WVU BAD Buildings process. This toolkit serves as a guide for BAD Buildings-related activities and is provided to participating communities as well as communities that may be interested in learning more or participating. The BAD Buildings Toolkit includes an overview of the process, as well as additional resources and templates to guide stakeholders through the process.

Figure 1: BAD Buildings Model

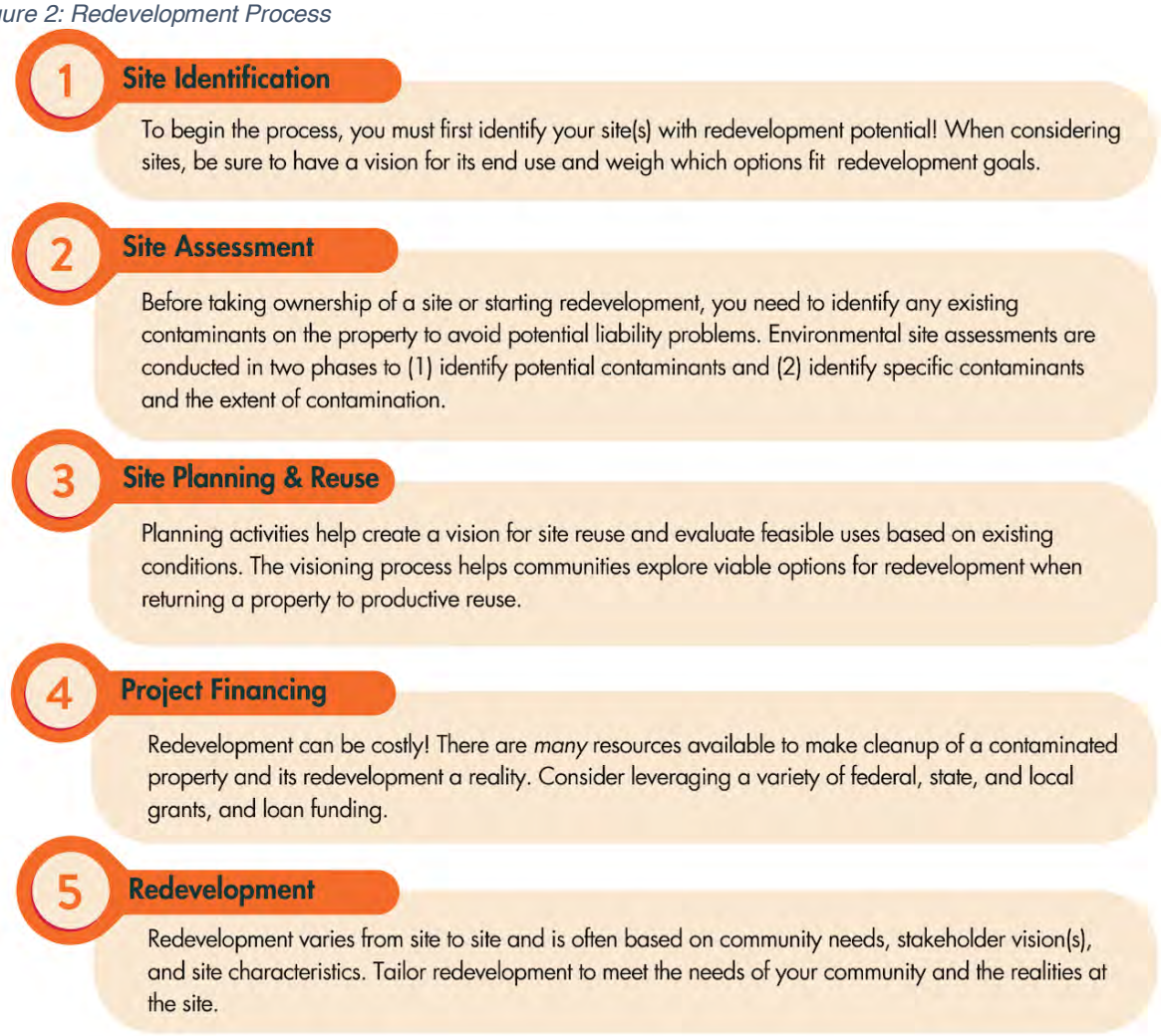


The WVU BAD Buildings program uses a five-step process with two phases to prepare a team and train community members, collect and prioritize inventory data, and develop a final report that incorporates community-defined priorities to create recommendations for the team to work toward redevelopment goals. See **Figure 1** for more details on the process. Supplementing each step of the process described below are companion resources that help stakeholders complete inventory-related preparation and engagement activities to make the process go as smoothly as possible. Companion resources are referenced throughout in the respective section to which their material applies.

BAD Buildings staff recognize that each community possesses unique circumstances and conditions regarding blight. WVU BAD Buildings tailors data collection and prioritization to each community and its capacity to help overcome obstacles to redevelopment by building stakeholder capacity and raising awareness of redevelopment opportunities and resources. The core principle of the program is community engagement. BAD Buildings staff do not conduct inventories in a community without stakeholder engagement and local leadership and all BAD Buildings-related sessions held in the community are open to the public to promote engagement from community stakeholders. More details on identifying stakeholders for participation can be found in **Section 2.**

The objective of this process is to create actionable tasks a community can take to address brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated sites as well as to create a framework for building capacity to return blighted properties to productive reuse and meet community revitalization goals. For redevelopment of blighted and brownfield properties, site identification (inventorying) is only the first step. **Figure 2** provides a visualization of the redevelopment process. One of the biggest pieces of the redevelopment puzzle is community engagement, which should occur at every step of the redevelopment process, and the BAD Buildings process calls for inclusion of a broad group of stakeholders throughout.

Figure 2: Redevelopment Process



2. Forming Your Team

2.1 Team Composition

The most critical component of the BAD Buildings program are the teams. Without volunteer-led teams, none of the work would be possible. Throughout the process and this toolkit you will see references to two key types of teams – Core Teams and BAD Buildings Teams:

> **Core Team**- The core team consists of 3-5 stakeholders in the community who are actively involved in planning and coordination efforts for in-person events and other activities of the BAD Buildings Team. Core team members are asked to actively participate in both in-person community sessions and virtual planning sessions with WVU staff. Essentially, the core team serves as the point of contact throughout the process, assisting WVU BAD Buildings staff with understanding the needs of the community, coordinating for event planning, and building stakeholder relationships.
>
> **BAD Buildings Team**- Broader term used for any stakeholder in the community who participates in the process or attends public inventory, prioritization, or engagement sessions. Sign-in sheets are used for every community visit or meeting. Individuals on the sign in sheet will be notified as Team Members via the email provided when future community engagement sessions are scheduled. All participants are given the option to opt-out of communications at any point.

2.2 Identifying Stakeholders

Once Core Team members are identified and an inventory day has been scheduled, it is time to recruit additional team members. The broader BAD Buildings team will consist of a variety of stakeholders. Stakeholders are simply individuals or groups with an interest, or stake, in the community. Identifying stakeholders involves considering which individuals and groups are impacted by abandoned and dilapidated structures. These considerations should include groups which may not traditionally be considered during economic and community development efforts, such as historical societies, hobby groups, gardening clubs, etc. In short, any groups within a community can be considered as stakeholders and provide valuable input from their various perspectives and backgrounds. The **Stakeholder Engagement Matrix** further details the process of identifying and recruiting community stakeholders.

For promotion of the meeting and recruitment of Team Members, the Core Team should allow for at least one month of lead time between scheduling the event and the day of the

inventory session. This allows plenty of time to advertise information to the community and for Team Members to make necessary arrangements to attend the meeting.

Attachments for this section:
Stakeholder Engagement Matrix
Community Notice Letter
Sample Meeting Graphics and Flyers
Community Survey Press Release

2.3 Recruiting Team Members

Once stakeholders are identified to round out the Core and BAD Buildings teams, a variety of means should be employed to officially recruit them. The Core Team should be recruited from stakeholders that are willing to regularly attend BAD Buildings meetings and communicate with WVU BAD Buildings staff. Core Team members are generally involved with local government or prominent local organizations. A "community champion" will serve as the Core Team coordinator and main point of contact throughout the BAD Buildings process. This individual is generally well-known in the community and has knowledge of current local initiatives and events.

Stakeholders being recruited for the broader BAD Buildings team will be expected to attend sessions that are open to the community, such as Survey and Inventory training, Prioritization Sessions, and the Final Report Presentation. These stakeholders generally consist of community members at large and members of community organizations.

Communities consist of individuals of a wide age range, varying technological proficiencies, and engagement with local occurrences. Newspaper advertisements, social media posts and stories, personalized letters, batch emails, and word of mouth will help to ensure that messaging reaches a wide demographic.

WVU BAD Buildings staff can assist with event advertising in the form of creating social media graphics for communities to share online, run in the local newspaper, or print flyers to be posted throughout the community. The **Community Notice Letter**, **Sample Community Flyers**, and **Community Survey Press Release** can be edited to best fit targeted audiences.

3. Training the Team

3.1 Inventory Training

BAD Buildings inventory days mark the official start of the BAD Buildings process in participating communities. These sessions are open to the public, and participation from a variety of stakeholders is encouraged. During these sessions, WVU BAD Buildings staff conduct a training session with attendees that introduces the basics of the BAD Buildings program, its process and timeline, and teaches attendees how to conduct windshield

surveys in the field. The term *windshield survey* refers to surveys in which participants collect data without crossing property lines or trespassing on private property. Information is collected based on what is visible from the nearest public right-of-way.

Attachments for this section:
Meeting Sign-In Template
Regrid Community Toolkit
Conversations with Property Owners

3.2 Introduction to Regrid: A Property Mapping Tool

Regrid is a property inventory tool application. It has assembled parcel data throughout the United States and provides property data, including property size, property value, ownership information, and land use codes for properties organized by parcel designation. This tool allows BAD Buildings communities to access information on sites in quick and central locations, making the follow-up steps after the inventory process more streamlined and efficient. Regrid data is pulled from public databases, such as County Assessor information, and populated into a GIS-based platform that can be accessed via internet browser or through the Regrid Mobile App.

At the start of the BAD Buildings process, WVU BAD Buildings staff train community volunteers on the process and the app, demonstrating its use as inventory efforts begin in the community. For more information on Regrid, see the accompanying Regrid How-To Manual in the Train Your Team section of the BAD Buildings Toolkit.

4. Surveying & Inventory

Abandoned and dilapidated structures are more than just eyesores—they pose serious health, safety, and economic risks to communities. Unmanaged dilapidated and abandoned structures can attract crime, decrease property values, and hinder neighborhood revitalization efforts. A proactive approach to identifying and inventorying these structures is essential for municipalities and community stakeholders seeking to revitalize neighborhood and protect public welfare. Having an up-to-date, comprehensive inventory of abandoned and dilapidated properties is foundational for effective governance, revitalization efforts, potential grants, and improving the quality of life in communities. It turns hidden liabilities into visible opportunities for positive change.

4.1 Developing an Inventory Framework

An effective inventory framework provides a description of property type, structural conditions, and occupancy status. The inventory framework of WVU BAD Buildings program is based on the following aspects.

Attachments for this section:
BAD Buildings Survey Sheet

Property Type

Understanding the type of property is essential for accurately assessing land use, redevelopment potential, and zoning compatibility. Properties vary widely in their design, function, and occupancy. This classification helps inform decisions based on current or intended use.

- **Single-family (Residential):** A **single-family** house is a standalone residential structure designed to be occupied by one household. Unlike multi-unit buildings, it does not share walls with any other homes and typically sits on its own plot of land. These homes often include a private yard, driveway, garage, and multiple bedrooms and bathrooms, offering space and privacy for the residents.
- **Duplex:** A **duplex** is a residential building divided into two separate living units, typically side-by-side or stacked one above the other. Each unit usually has its own entrance, kitchen, bathrooms, and living spaces, making it ideal for extended families, rental income, or shared ownership.
- **Multi-family:** A **multi-family** home is a residential building designed to accommodate more than one household within separate living units. These units can be side-by-side or stacked on different floors and typically have their own entrances, kitchens, and bathrooms. Common types include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and larger apartment buildings. Multi-family homes are often used for rental purposes.
- **Commercial use only:** A **commercial use only** property is a building or space that is legally designated for business activities rather than residential living. These properties are typically used for offices, retail stores, restaurants, warehouses, or other business operations. Zoning laws strictly regulate their use, meaning they cannot be used for permanent housing.
- **Mixed-use:** A **mixed-use** property is a type of real estate that combines residential, commercial, and sometimes even light industrial spaces within a single building or development. Common examples include buildings with retail shops or restaurants on the ground floor and apartments or offices on the upper floors. Mixed-use developments are often found in urban areas and are designed to promote walkability, reduce the need for commuting, and create vibrant, multi-functional communities.
- **Vacant Lots: Vacant lots** are parcels of land that are undeveloped and have no existing buildings or structures on them. These lots can be found in residential, commercial, or industrial zones and may be used for future construction, investment, or agricultural purposes.

While most questions are designed for properties with structures, there are questions specifically for vacant lots.

- **Other: Other** is used when the use is unknown or difficult for surveyors to ascertain at the time of the survey.

Structural conditions

Structural conditions reflect a building's integrity and safety. Evaluating elements like the frame, roof, and windows helps identify deterioration and guide repair or redevelopment decisions.

1. **Building Frame/Structure:** this section focuses on the walls, exterior, and visible foundation of a structure. Properties which have noticeable damage to their frame or foundation may be in significant states of dilapidation.
2. **Roof/Chimney/Gutters:** this section includes description of the state of dilapidation of a property's roof and chimney; damage to either is often a sign of significant problems throughout the property. In addition, damaged gutters may quickly lead to more significant damage to a roof or wall.
3. **Windows/Doors:** this section addresses any visible dilapidation to the entrances to a property. Damaged or missing windows/doors is a sign of possible significant interior damage as well as a public safety hazard, allowing access of animals, criminal activity, and curious children who could be injured.
4. **Siding/Veneer/Paint:** this section covers the largely aesthetic issue of dilapidation, although significant damage to the siding/paint of property may be indicative of more serious structural issues.
5. **Porch/Entrance Overhang:** minor issues with a dilapidated porch, such as peeling paint, contribute to aesthetic dilapidation while major issues, such as a collapsing porch indicate more serious structural problems as well as contribute to hazardous conditions of the property.

Survey Categories

Survey categories classify buildings based on visible structural condition and safety. Buildings/properties are labeled as follows which helps prioritize interventions and redevelopment efforts.

- **Major Problem** – Structure with severe foundation issues (tilting or leaning (with cracks), exposed interior (missing doors, windows) collapsing walls or roofs, burnt out and visible decay, appears inhabitable, posing serious safety, health and environmental concerns.
- **Minor Problem** – Structures showing deterioration and code violations, poorly maintained, broken windows, doors, peeling paint, signs of vacancy, garbage accumulation, overgrown yard, but not an immediate safety hazard and viable for adaptive reuse.

- **No Problem** – Structure is in good condition, well maintained, intact exteriors, appears habitable with no visible hazard.

4.2 Data Collection

Inventory Day

BAD Buildings inventory days mark the official start of the BAD Buildings process in participating communities. These sessions are open to the public, and participation from a variety of stakeholders is encouraged. During these sessions, WVU BAD Buildings staff conduct a training session with attendees that introduces the basics of the BAD Buildings program, its process and timeline, and teaches attendees how to conduct windshield surveys in the field. The term *windshield survey* refers to surveys in which participants collect data without crossing property lines or trespassing on private property. Information is collected based on what is visible from the nearest public right-of-way.

The purpose of using teams for this process is to make survey data collection as objective as possible. Since the BAD Buildings process involves the collection of qualitative data that documents the current conditions of certain blight indicators, teams help to build consensus on the conditions of specific aspects of the property. For more information on data collection and definitions of blight severity, see the accompanying BAD Buildings **Survey Questions** handout. As surveys are conducted, one member of each team, identified as the team lead, will document survey responses directly into the Regrid mobile application. All team members will be provided physical handouts of their assigned survey zone, as well as survey questions and definitions. WVU BAD Buildings staff will work with the core team in advance to identify priority areas for the inventory session. Identified focus areas are referred to as 'target zones.' These zones are drawn directly into Regrid to help the team keep track of location and survey metrics.

Inventory Day Agenda

When conducting community inventory sessions, WVU BAD Buildings staff plan within a timeframe of 4-6 hours for the entirety of the session, depending on the size of the community. Public inventory sessions should be scheduled at a time that will allow ample daylight to complete surveys in the field, while hopefully accommodating as many volunteer schedules as possible. This often means that meetings must be scheduled in the afternoon, which can have negative impacts to maximizing turnout. To compensate for scheduling conflicts with inventory sessions, we encourage communities to consider scheduling prioritization and final report sessions in the evening to allow for a broader audience and engagement from a more diverse array of stakeholders in the community, or to think of other ways community members might submit properties for inclusion in the inventory. This could also be addressed by hosting an Inventory Day on a weekend, when

fewer stakeholders are likely to be working. A **Sample Agenda** for an Inventory Day is provided in the toolkit.

Data Collection and Analysis Tools

Regrid

WVU BAD Buildings uses the Regrid App to share the windshield survey questions outlined above with local teams/volunteers (participants). The survey questions are created on the desktop and made accessible on mobile devices to community volunteers at no cost. The participants access and complete a survey with property information along with photos of the current state of the buildings. The buildings are evaluated based on the criteria discussed above in the section **Developing an Inventory Framework** including property type, structural condition and status of the structures/properties.

Regrid is a practical and user-friendly mobile and web-based mapping tool for parcel-based data collection. It provides access to nationwide parcel data in the United States. Data includes parcel boundaries, ownership information, land use data and other information. It allows users to collect custom field data directly linked to specific parcels, making it a valuable resource for conducting property inventory.

At the start of the BAD Buildings process, staff train community volunteers on the process and the app, demonstrating its use as inventory efforts begin.

ArcGIS Pro

ArcGIS Pro, developed by Esri, is a powerful geographic information system used for advanced spatial analysis, mapping, and data visualization. Parcel maps are created from the data captured in Regrid during BAD building inventory. These maps are shared with the stakeholders to provide an overview of the inventoried properties and their location within the community boundaries.

Surveying Without Adequate Cell Service

In areas with poor or no cell service, Regrid will be unable to upload survey results in real time. Users can now upload a queue of survey results to Regrid without service, and they will be added once the device is reconnected to service.

An alternative to using Regrid in areas of poor service is to print out paper surveys and distribute them to the survey team. In addition to the paper surveys, surveyors should continue to take pictures of surveyed properties. Surveys can be entered into Regrid, along with images taken on surveyors' personal devices.

1. Make sure that there is internet service at the survey site before conducting inventory. If there is a problem, the BAD Buildings team should be notified so that paper survey will be provided on survey day.

2. After the paper survey is conducted, the BAD Buildings team will enter the survey data into Regrid. The surveyors still need to take pictures and send them later via email or other photo sharing methods.

Common Pitfalls with Data Collection

There may be issues with the surveyed properties. This could be because one parcel might contain multiple buildings, one structure may have crossed multiple parcel lines, or parcel lines may not align properly. The team should flag anomalies for manual review by overlaying imagery and surveys.

If there are multiple structures in one parcel, two entries should be recorded in Regrid for the same. The note field could be used to explain why there are two surveys for one parcel.

When a structure spans more than one parcel, a larger portion of the structure will be used to assign a parcel, surveyors should complete the survey for the parcel on which the majority of the structure sits, including a note about adjacent parcel(s).

4.3 Categorizing Properties Based on Survey

Classification by conditions

To support effective property assessment and prioritize redevelopment or intervention strategies, buildings are classified into four condition-based categories: **Good**, **Fair**, **Poor**, and **Should Be Demolished**. Each type is categorized based on observable physical deterioration, structural integrity, maintenance level, habitability and safety. A total number of entries of 'major problem', minor problem', and 'no problem' for each associated building/property are counted to assign appropriate category. Each category is explained below.

- **Good:** Buildings/properties in **Good** condition are structurally sound and well maintained. They exhibit no signs of major damage and require no more than two minor repairs, such as fixing a gutter or replacing a damaged windowpane. Foundations are stable, and the structure is neither leaning nor tilted. General upkeep—like painting or minor exterior maintenance—may be necessary, but these buildings are fully habitable and represent minimal risk.

- **Fair:** Buildings/properties rated as **Fair** remain structurally sound but show signs of gradual wear and neglect. They may need three or more minor repairs and

possibly one major repair, such as a partial roof replacement or foundational patching. These buildings can typically be restored to good condition with a moderate investment, making them suitable candidates for rehabilitation programs.

- **Poor:** Buildings/properties in **Poor** condition may no longer be structurally sound and present visible signs of severe deterioration. Issues can include sagging porches, broken or boarded windows, damaged siding, or a failing roof. Two or more major repairs are required to restore these structures to safe, livable standards. These buildings often pose health and safety concerns and require significant resources for rehabilitation.

- **Should Be Demolished:** Structures classified under **Should Be Demolished** are considered unsafe for occupancy due to serious structural failures, such as leaning walls, fire damage, or compromised foundations. These buildings cannot be cost-effectively or safely rehabilitated and often represent a hazard to the surrounding community. In such cases, demolition is the most viable option to eliminate risk and make space for new development.

5. Prioritizing the Inventory

Following each round of surveying brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated properties, the inventory list grows, additional conversations about the community and its needs take place, and ideas for next steps begin to take shape. Oftentimes, the inventory can feel overwhelming, and it may be difficult to ascertain where to start working towards placing properties back into productive reuse.

A structured yet welcoming prioritization session with community members, property owners, and members of local and regional government helps to break the inventory down and identify best candidates to pursue for initial revitalization efforts. Prioritization can also serve as a time where short and long-term plans for the community and priority properties are discussed, and aspects of the inventory reviewed.

While a comprehensive inventory is the first step to addressing community blight, it is unfeasible to work from the full list of properties. Determining which properties have the most detrimental impact or pose risks that require urgent action makes the list easier to manage. For the sake of time and feasibility, all inventoried properties cannot be discussed during the same prioritization session.

To initially narrow down the list, Staff will meet with the Core Team to establish which types of properties and property conditions to focus on. For example, properties ranked as *Poor* or *Should be Demolished* are often the properties that contain the most severe blight indicators and pose a risk to health and safety in the community.

Attachments for this section:
Defining Community Priorities
Sample Priority Definitions
Prioritizing Properties Instructions
Sample Prioritization Grid

If there are several properties (more than 30) ranked in the *Should be Demolished* category, define a list of 20-25 sites or addresses where known or documented issues may necessitate further action. The identified sites *must* be in the existing inventory.

Once a subset of properties is defined, the community is asked to define 3-5 priorities for redevelopment. Staff should have a general idea of community wants and structures that may be good candidates for revitalization as they have engaged with community members over the course of several months, which can help guide the conversation, using the **Defining Community Priorities** worksheet. Diverse input is crucial, so several local stakeholders should be included in this discussion. This internal meeting will help to further flesh out these wants into more detailed priorities. Ample time should be provided to promote the event via social media, local message boards, etc. to reach as many community members as possible. Guidance on determining community-defined priorities is broad, but some common examples include:

- **Visibility:** Is the property located on a main street or in a high traffic area?
- **Health and Safety Concerns:** Is the property structurally sound? Is there ease of access via broken windows, busted down doors, etc.? Are there pests?
- **Blight Concentration:** Is the property located in close proximity to other blighted structures?
- **Cooperative Property Owners:** Is the owner, if known, likely to cooperate? Are there any city-owned properties that can be addressed first?
- **Brownfields:** Is there a likelihood that the site may have environmental contaminants?
- There are many more options for community priorities! If your community is unsure where to start, BAD Buildings staff can help guide the conversation toward potential options.

Additional information on these and other common priorities are included in the **Defining Community Priorities** worksheet.

Following the meeting with the Core Team, staff members will develop a **Prioritization Grid** and slides, which include property profiles. The Grid lists each priority at the top of

the columns, under which a score is assigned (see example below). Property profiles include the address, structure condition (Good, Fair, Poor, or Should be demolished), property type (single family, commercial, mixed use, etc.), and images of the structure from initial windshield surveys.

The Core Team will then set a date for a public meeting where community members are invited to attend and provide their input. While this meeting occurs in person, it is suggested to provide a Zoom/Teams link so those who are unable to attend can still participate. Staff members will provide each community member with a scoring matrix and a handout describing the identified priorities.

Once the community has identified a set of problem properties and 3-5 priorities to inform the discussion, you are ready to hold a prioritization session. The prioritization session uses the **Prioritization Grid** where properties are listed on the left-hand column and community-defined priorities across the top of the grid. The grid uses a one to three scale with three being the worst condition/highest priority. See the **Prioritizing Properties Instructions** for additional guidance. For each listed property, we'll engage in a discussion and provide a ranking of one to three for each community priority. Properties that receive the highest cumulative score once rankings are tallied are considered top priority sites for the community. These are the sites that should be targeted for remediation/redevelopment first.

Note: Ranking properties in prioritization does not tie the team or community to addressing in this order. Circumstances can change and unexpected opportunities can arise, but having a prioritized list allows you to proactively pursue opportunities in a more purposeful way.

The prioritization process is intended to be reiterative, which means as the first wave of prioritized properties are addressed, either through remediation or demolition, the community can move to the next set of properties by completing another prioritization session. This breaks the list of properties into several smaller, more manageable sets that can be worked from until known issues are addressed. The idea is to hold prioritization sessions as properties are addressed and to continue doing so until there are no remaining properties in the inventory. It is important to note that this may take time- and that's okay! Change does not happen overnight; this step is intended to help the community find an objective way to define its long-term goals for remediating blight.

Following the prioritization community session, Staff will update the inventory list to rank properties from high to low priority. Once the inventory list is finalized and prioritized, it will be shared as part of the Final Report. Prioritization will inform the development of the

Final Report by helping to identify short and long-term “next steps,” as well as identifying potential funding sources that best align with the needs of priority structures. Priority structures also receive additional analysis as outlined in the next section.

6. Analysis

The analysis of brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated structures is a critical process aimed at understanding the physical, legal, and social conditions surrounding neglected buildings. This analysis involves evaluating the structural integrity, environmental hazards, and potential risks these properties pose to public safety and community wellbeing. It also considers the historical significance, ownership status, and zoning constraints that may affect future use. By systematically assessing these factors, authorities and stakeholders can determine whether a structure should be rehabilitated, repurposed, or demolished. This process supports informed decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic redevelopment efforts aimed at revitalizing affected neighborhoods.

The inventory data retrieved from Regrid will be analyzed by checking for duplications errors or missing values and then categorized into standardized classifications. The results will be presented in the form of tables, charts, and maps with a basic summary of datasets such as total inventoried properties, percentages of types and status of properties.

6.1 Analyzing Inventory Results

- **Identifying Priority Properties:** Once the preliminary dataset of all inventory properties is completed, WVU BAD Buildings team analyzes the data based on the extent of damage to the properties. The damage is rated based on risk description (major problem’, minor problem’, and ‘no problem’) to the associated structural conditions such as building frame, roof/chimney/gutter, windows/doors, siding/paint, porch/entrance of the respective building.
- **Risk Assessment Matrix:** The BAD Buildings team creates a risk assessment matrix based on the number of entries of ‘major problem’, minor problem’, and ‘no problem’ to the associated building. The higher the number of major problems, the higher the likelihood of risk occurring and its impact. The team categorizes the inventoried properties into Good, Fair, Poor and Should be demolished categories, according to the classification conditions found in the Surveying & Inventorying section. This matrix helps determine which buildings need urgent attention, what kind of mitigation is necessary, and how to allocate resources effectively.

- **Potential for Rehabilitation or Redevelopment:** Potential for rehabilitation or redevelopment will be assessed based on the structural integrity, health and safety, historical and cultural value, market demand, zoning compatibility, ownership status, and resources.

6.2 Reporting and Public Sharing

WVU BAD Buildings team prepares a preliminary report based on the preliminary data. This includes a total number of buildings/properties assessed including type, condition, physical address, parcel number, location, ownership, key findings and summary statistics. WVU BAD Buildings team creates maps of the inventoried buildings/properties to provide visualization and spatial context such as how many properties are in floodplain.

WVU BAD Buildings team discusses the preliminary findings with the stakeholders, including the core team and community. Usually, this is a virtual meeting with the core team. Once the team gets feedback on the preliminary results from the meeting, the results will be updated. Some of the properties that need immediate attention such as those rated *poor and should be demolished* will be used in combination with the photos taken during the inventory to produce an inventory profile for the associated building/property.

7. Implementing Next Steps

Next Steps directly relate to short-term actions and objectives that the community can undertake to address blighted structures that were identified during the inventory process. These steps seek to capitalize on engagement from an array of stakeholders and includes (but is not limited to) local government officials, community-members, BAD Buildings Team members (that's anyone who has attended and participated in public inventory and prioritization sessions), and property owners.

Attachments for this section:
Friendly Letter Template
Creating a Neighborhood Association
Partnership Development
Rapid Assessment Tool for Deconstruction

7.1 Engaging Property Owners

One of the primary tools available to BAD Buildings Teams is engaging property owners in the process. Though the process itself is linear, new stakeholders can and should be introduced throughout the BAD Buildings Program. As new stakeholders are brought on board, the BAD Buildings Team can bring them up to speed on what has happened during the community inventory session and what priorities the community has chosen to focus on for prioritization of the inventory.

Setting a Positive Tone

During the BAD Buildings process, it is always encouraged that BAD Buildings Teams have support from the local municipal government by maintaining open lines of communication and remaining transparent with one another throughout the process. However, it is important to emphasize that when the community works toward engaging property owners whose properties may be included in the inventory that they set a positive and up-lifting tone. The intention of bringing property owners into the conversation is to build a basis for cooperation. We cannot do this without first setting a positive tone for the conversation. The first steps to engage property owners should always be to welcome them to attend BAD Buildings Team meetings, ask questions, and/or share their intentions for the property or their challenges in realizing those intentions. Blight remediation can be costly, so the first step should always be understanding the issues and resource gaps that property owners may face in upkeeping properties.

More information on code enforcement is included below, but legal reprimand for property conditions is usually considered the last alternative for addressing BAD Buildings. This is where relationship-building with local government officials comes in. Local governments carry the capacity for enforcement and can be brought into the conversation when individuals are otherwise uncooperative, combative, or uninterested in addressing blight.

Friendly Letter Templates

Given the information above, how do BAD Buildings Teams work toward engaging property owners and opening lines of communication? For this, the **Friendly Letter Template** serves as a tool for communities to begin conversations. The friendly letter template (see accompanying handout in the Implementing Next Steps Section of the BAD Buildings Toolkit) is a resource that was developed to help BAD Buildings Teams address properties/property issues with the owner whose property was surveyed. Friendly letters are sent by BAD Buildings Teams, meaning the local stakeholders that have regularly attended BAD Buildings-related events/activities and have played a role in inventory development. It is important to stress that these letters are sent *without* local government officially signing on. This strategy is a low-hanging fruit for stakeholders to reach out to property owners on behalf of the BAD Buildings Team. Setting a positive and welcoming tone is crucial so that property owners know that this is *not* a letter from code enforcement and that the team is encouraging cooperation and collaboration to potentially help them locate resources to address blight.

- The friendly letter template contains a signature block that requires the input of contact information for transparency purposes. It is entirely up to the team to decide how they feel comfortable signing off. Team members do not have to include any personally identifiable information, and the BAD Buildings Team name

can be supplemented anywhere that 'name' appears in the prompt. If team members are not comfortable including their phone number or email address for contact, they can use a local government contact, if the local government agrees to do so. *It is important to reiterate that this is not a letter of reprimand from code enforcement.* In the case of local government contact information being used on the sign-off of the letter, this would simply serve as a point-of-contact for the BAD Buildings Team to welcome property owners into the conversation.

- The response rate for friendly letters is typically higher than what is initially perceived. This is why setting a positive tone is such a crucial part of the communication process. Property owners are much more willing to collaborate with stakeholders when they are allowed a space in the conversation.
- Often, a property owner's reaction to a friendly letter can be impacted by who sends the letter. For example, if there is a team member who knows the property owner personally, consider having them sign off on the letter (if they are comfortable doing so) and initiating conversation.

Local Government Involvement

In the event that local property owners are uncooperative or unresponsive, or persistent absenteeism presents an issue, BAD Buildings Teams must rely on building partnerships with local government to help address blighted properties. More information is provided on code enforcement below, but it is important to note here again that local governments are the entities that hold enforcement power. This is why BAD Buildings Teams are encouraged to include local government officials from the start of the BAD Buildings process to build partnerships, introduce them to volunteers and stakeholders, and keep officials informed of BAD Buildings-related efforts in the community.

Community leaders should remain proactive in learning best practices and establishing partnerships with county agencies or other municipalities. It is important to emphasize here that community volunteers cannot do this part of the process alone- The crux of this effort must rely on cooperation with local city government and/or county agencies that have the authority to create and administer such a department.

Code enforcement is the number one tool available for municipalities to address blighted and dilapidated structures. Without this mechanism, there is little to no capability for legal enforcement to address blight.

Because of the legal nature of such codes, WVU BAD Buildings staff are unable to provide specific actions or recommendations related to updating codes and ordinances. In order to address needed updates, community leaders are strongly encouraged to consult with an attorney prior to adopting new ordinances. Despite limitations, WVU BAD Buildings

staff can assist community leaders with building partnerships and capacity with local and county officials that may be interested in learning more about the efforts undertaken as part of the BAD Buildings process, including the inventory process, what information is collected, and how the community defined its priorities to rank properties. Additionally, WVU BAD Buildings staff can assist with coordinating calls and providing networking opportunities with relevant agencies and officials that may be able to provide insight into best strategies and approaches for community leaders.

7.2 Preventing Blight

While observation of community blight and the documentation of conditions is relatively straightforward, prevention of future blight in the community can be a bit trickier to manage. Most of the tips and tricks provided below rely on continued engagement and support from a broad array of stakeholders and embrace a proactive, rather than reactive stance on eliminating the chance of future blight.

Manage BAD Buildings Inventory

The inventory created through the BAD Buildings Program is referred to as a 'living' inventory, which means that even after the formal BAD Buildings process is completed, the community retains access to its related materials in Regrid. At any time, BAD Buildings Teams can update existing inventories, remove properties from the existing list of inventories, or add properties to the inventory as conditions warrant.

Managing the BAD Buildings inventory in your community is the best way for BAD Buildings Teams to remain proactive in addressing blight in the community. In addition to managing properties as they are addressed or as blight conditions change on other properties with time, it is good practice for BAD Buildings Teams to engage in regular spot-checking of the existing inventoried properties, where possible, to gauge whether more widespread and coordinated updates to the data may be needed. Spot-checking is especially recommended in areas of high blight concentration. Doing this will allow the BAD Buildings Team to effectively manage the inventory over the long-term and address changing conditions as they arise.

Embrace Cooperation

As noted previously, blight remediation can be costly, so BAD Buildings Teams are encouraged to embrace cooperation among a diverse array of stakeholders and partner agencies that may include but is not limited to local volunteers, community activists, local non-profit leaders, local government officials, religious organizations, and civic organizations. A neighborhood association is a stakeholder group with a focus on improvements and representation within delineated boundaries of a community. Information about establishing associates can be found in the attachment, **Create a**

Neighborhood Association. Long-term strategizing is crucial to maintaining momentum while increasing community engagement and support. In particular, low population/low-income, rural, and limited capacity communities may neither have the resources to apply nor manage large-scale funding applications. Often, partner organizations and agencies can assist with identifying mechanisms that allow these communities to tap into funding streams available via local or regional agencies for planning and redevelopment efforts.

Document and Track Progress

As a capacity-building program, maintaining the momentum gathered in the community by bringing together the BAD Buildings Team is of utmost importance. BAD Buildings Teams should continue to meet regularly, collaborate with one another, and share successes. As a way to measure this success and keep the community engaged, it may be helpful for the BAD Buildings Team to collaborate with stakeholders and local government officials to document and track progress related to blight remediation.

In addition to boosting morale, having a documented and proven track record for addressing blight may help the community build capacity to access more resources as goals shift from remediation to redevelopment and prevention.

Consider Other Methods

When efforts brought forth by the BAD Buildings Team to increase cooperation and encourage property owner engagement fall short, teams should rely on continued involvement with local government officials to take steps to address blight in the community. Local governments have a variety of tools and mechanisms at their disposal to help address blight. However, if the community's local government has limited capacity, WVU BAD Buildings staff can assist in connecting officials to broader external stakeholders that have access to information and resources that can be tailored to fit the needs of specific communities.

7.3 Visioning

Once the community has gone through the BAD Buildings process to inventory and prioritize sites, the community should develop a vision that will include a strategy for vacant and dilapidated properties. Vacant buildings and lots reduce a community's marketability and can create health and safety issues. By establishing a vision, your community knows what priorities are important, and this will enable you to pursue resources and funding to achieve redevelopment goals.

Prioritization of inventoried sites will help guide the community vision by establishing focus areas and potential redevelopment uses for each site. It is important to have a vision beyond demolition since identification of a site reuse significantly increases

competitiveness for funding by creating more opportunities for funding sources, illustrating that the community has a viable plan, and differentiating it from other communities.

Remember to invite key stakeholders to the discussion. For suggestions on who to include, reference the **Stakeholder Engagement Matrix**. Questions to guide a visioning process might include:

- What do we like most about our community?
- What do we most want visitors to notice?
- Do we have enough of the right-sized housing to meet demand?
- Is there enough affordable housing?
- How can we make our community more attractive to business development?
- What can we do to keep our current residents?
- What do I want my community to look like once we eliminate dilapidated buildings and/or vacant lots?
- How can community groups, local government, non-profits and housing agencies work
- together to improve the condition of our community?

7.4 Demolition, Cleanup, and Rehab

After sites have been identified and prioritized according to their criteria, communities will take steps to address them. This includes due diligence before acquiring property, identification of potential contaminants, planning to cleanup and remediate known contaminants, and identification of funding sources.

Due Diligence

Do not purchase or take ownership of a property without first conducting All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI)/Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). Conducting AAI/Phase 1 ESA provides liability protection to the new owner when completed prior to purchasing a property. Without this, new owners could be considered the potentially responsible party (PRP), making them liable for contaminants on site. The results of AAI/Phase I ESA findings identify the presence of potential contaminants based on research of past uses, allowing purchasers the opportunity to better understand what they may be facing. Additionally, not conducting due diligence before taking ownership may negatively impact eligibility for funding opportunities, such as EPA Brownfields Cleanup grants.

How to Fund Demo, Cleanup, and Rehabilitation

Demolition, cleanup, and remediation can be paid for by a combination of public and private financing, including grants and loans. Sources of funding include grants, loans,

and technical assistance, tax credits, and foundations. WVU BAD Buildings staff are available to assist with funding and assistance identification.

EPA Brownfields Redevelopment Funding

There are two types of EPA funding available for brownfield redevelopment: grants and technical assistance.

EPA Brownfield Grants	EPA Technical Assistance
• have hard application deadlines – must prepare in advance • are nationally competitive • applicant is responsible for grant oversight • assessment grants are usually for multiple sites	• sites are selected locally, on a rolling basis • regionally focused • funding process facilitated by EPA • helps establish familiarity with EPA process • generally targeted at one site or some contiguous sites

Additional Funding Sources

EPA Brownfield Grants and TA alone will not bring a brownfield redevelopment project to fruition. Any development project (brownfield or otherwise) requires multiple funding sources to cleanup, remediate, and redevelop sites. Examples to consider are listed below.

<u>Tax Credits</u>

- Historic Rehabilitation: promote rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures
- Low Income Housing (LIHT): private equity use for development of affordable housing
- New Markets: provides incentives for economic growth and community development in distressed communities with private investment
- State-Specific: vary by each state and respective agencies

<u>Loans</u>

- Traditional Lending: borrowing money to be repaid over set period which includes interest
- Socially-minded lenders (those who have social impact component): committed to environmental or social good, not solely profit
- Private Investments: known as alternative investment; often use investment funds instead of bonds, cash, or stocks

- Equity Investors: known as stocks; purchase of pieces of companies
- Community Reinvestment Act (CRA): est. in 1977 to reduce discriminatory credit practices; encourages banks to meet credit needs of their chartered communities

Other Sources

- Other Federal Programs: DOT, EDA
- State-Specific Programs: Partner Community Capital, Preservation Alliance of WV
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) (Blight Removal): provides funding for economic and community development projects to encourage more state, federal, and private resource investment
- USDA: provides variety of grants and loans, including housing assistance and rural development assistance

8. Additional Resources

Identifying, prioritizing, and addressing abandoned and dilapidated properties is a long and complex process that requires input from local stakeholders, subject matter experts, and often elected officials. The WVU BAD Buildings program brings together these stakeholders to tackle this work collaboratively and efficiently. This toolkit is designed as a companion to participation in the WVU BAD Buildings program. However, communities could also use the resources to implement the model independently.

In the following pages, you will find companion tools for each step of the process to help your local BAD Buildings team implement this model. The Toolkit can be referenced throughout your BAD Buildings experience and revisited as needed, as you update your inventory in an ongoing effort to reduce and prevent blight in your community.

Tools for BAD Buildings Overview

BAD Buildings FAQ

BAD Buildings One-Pager

Tools for Forming Your Team

Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

Community Notice Letter

Sample Meeting Graphics and Flyers

Community Survey Press Release

Tools for Training the Team

Meeting Sign-In Template

Regrid Community Toolkit

Conversations with Property Owners

Tools for Survey & Inventory

BAD Buildings Survey Sheet

Tools for Prioritization

Defining Community Priorities

Sample Priority Definitions

Prioritizing Properties Instructions

Sample Prioritization Grid

Tools for Next Steps

Friendly Letter Template

Creating a Neighborhood Association

Partnership Development

Rapid Assessment Tool for Deconstruction

WVU BAD Buildings

What is BAD Buildings?

WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings program provides technical assistance, research, and other resources to rural communities to address abandoned and dilapidated properties. The program uses a step-by-step community-based and volunteer-led approach to develop or enhance local revitalization efforts. We help communities access site analysis tools and resources needed to transform dilapidated properties into vibrant community assets.

Why BAD Buildings?

In addition to being eyesores, abandoned or dilapidated buildings pose a number of threats and hazards to the community. Their presence can result in health and safety hazards, constrain municipal revenues, and hinder economic development.

Health and Safety Hazards

BAD Buildings in your neighborhood can pose health and safety hazards. According the U.S. Fire Administration (1), some of the most common problems with these properties include: fall and trip hazards, unstable structures, hazardous materials on site (lead paint, etc), standing water in basements, vermin, such as rats.

Decreased Property Values

The presence of abandoned and dilapidated properties has direct impacts on adjacent property values. Research cited by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2) suggests that the presence of a vacant or distressed structure within 500 feet of a home can depress both property value and sale price.

Reduced Tax Revenue

Property taxes are one of the largest sources of revenue for local governments. The Center of Community Progress (3) notes that vacant or dilapidated structures decrease taxability of surrounding properties and can result in high maintenance and abatement costs for local governments

Slowed Economic Growth

BAD Buildings can result in slowed economic growth because of a combination of the above listed factors. Together, they create a cycle of disinvestment that harms neighborhoods and communities.

(1) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (2023, April 1). Reducing arson at vacant and abandoned buildings. U.S. Fire Administration. https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/arson/vacant-abandoned-buildings/.
(2) https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/winter14/highlight1.html.
(3) How vacant and abandoned buildings affect the community. Center for Community Progress. (2024, April 10). https://communityprogress.org/blog/how-vacant-abandoned-buildings-affect-community/.

(304) 293-7002 | https://badbuildings.wvu.edu/

The Process

1. **Initial Consultation Meeting**

   Community stakeholder(s) contact WVU BAD Buildings to schedule a consultation. BAD Buildings process is presented to the community and planning for inventory day and target areas is discussed.

   Form BAD Buildings Team

   Teams are comprised of local stakeholders. Teams are formed through an open community meeting.

2. **Train Teams and Conduct BAD Buildings Inventory**

   WVU BAD Buildings program staff train teams on how to identify, survey, and research structures in their community. After the training, teams conduct surveys in designated survey zones.

3. **Survey and Data Analysis**

   WVU BAD Buildings analyzes inventory data and meets with core team to discuss community priorities and redevelopment goals. The core team consists of 3-5 community members who are identified in the initial consultation with WVU BAD Buildings.

4. **Community Prioritization Meeting**

   WVU BAD Buildings facilitates community meeting to prioritize properties and kickstart the visioning process.

5. **Prepare BAD Buildings Final Report**

   WVU BAD Buildings develops final report for community which summarizes key data and provides recommendations and resource opportunities tailored to community-defined priorities.

6. **Present Final Report to Community**

   WVU BAD Buildings present final report findings to the community.

7. **Ongoing Technical Assistance**

   WVU BAD Buildings facilitates ongoing assistance to community to assist with advancement of redevelopment goals.

The Timeline

- 1, 2 — Month 1
- 3 — Month 2-3
- 4 — Month 3-4
- 5 — Month 4-5
- 6 — Month 5-6
- 7 — Month 6 and beyond

(304) 293-7002 | https://badbuildings.wvu.edu/

WVU BAD Buildings FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Below are some answers to commonly asked questions about the Brownfield, Abandoned Dilapidated (BAD) Buildings process...

What is the BAD Buildings Program?

The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings program provides technical assistance, research, and other resources to communities to address abandoned and dilapidated properties. The program uses a step-by-step community-based and volunteer-led approach to develop or enhance local revitalization efforts. We help communities access site analysis tools and resources needed to transform dilapidated properties into vibrant community assets.

What are BAD Buildings?

'BAD' is an acronym, meaning brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated. Brownfields are properties whose redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the potential presence of harmful environmental contaminants (lead-based paint, petroleum, heavy industry, commercial uses). The terms abandoned and dilapidated refer to vacant and/or neglected properties that are blighted or in disrepair.

Why address 'BAD' Buildings?

In addition to being eyesores for community residents, BAD Buildings pose a number of threats and hazards to the community. Their presence can hinder economic development and investment; constrains municipal revenue and budgets; and can result in health and safety hazards via falling structures, lead-based paint, or other potential contaminants.

Is there funding available through the program?

The BAD Buildings program is a technical assistance and capacity building program. Therefore, no *direct* funding is available. This program uses community engagement to bring together a diverse array of community stakeholders to create an inventory of brownfield, abandoned, and dilapidated properties. Once an inventory is created, we can assist with locating potential funding resources based on specific community needs.

What is the cost of the program?

Free! All of the resources provided through the BAD Buildings program are of no cost to the participating community!

How do I get started?

If your community is interested in the BAD Buildings Program, contact us at the information listed below! We can provide an informational program overview, educational materials, and tips/tricks on building a team to get started!

(304) 293-7002 | https://badbuildings.wvu.edu/

Creating Your Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

Community issues like abandoned and dilapidated property are best solved with input from all the stakeholder groups in your community. To effectively address the issues surrounding abandoned and dilapidated structures, you will need to identify all potential stakeholder groups and find ways to get them involved. This activity will help you identify those stakeholders, understand how they can be involved, and find ways for them to contribute to the community solution.

Task 1:

Identify each community group or member potentially impacted by abandoned and dilapidated properties. Consider groups you might not traditionally associate with this issue. What social groups are you part of? Are there groups surrounding hobbies like gardening in your town? Why should these groups care about BAD buildings? Why should they be engaged?

> List all stakeholder groups and the reason they should be engaged in the Stakeholder Engagement Matrix on the reverse page.

Task 2:

Remember: community support and engagement are critical to the success of your efforts. A strategic approach to engaging impacted individuals and groups about an issue can facilitate maximum short-term stakeholder interest and long-term stakeholder involvement.

> Consider all the stakeholder groups you have identified. In the third column of your matrix, add a strategy for recruiting and encouraging their involvement. How can they be reached? What will help galvanize their support?

Task 3:

Getting stakeholders engaged and involved in your efforts means more than getting them to attend meetings. Once you have recruited them, how can they best contribute to the community's success?

> What skills or resources do they bring to the table that can be employed for the benefit of the community? How can they have a positive impact on the issues surrounding BAD buildings in your community? List these in the last column.

Stakeholder Engagement Matrix

Who needs to be engaged?	Why should they be engaged?	How can you get them engaged?	What action steps can they take?	Who will contact identified stakeholders?

Who are the Stakeholders?

An effective local effort includes all stakeholders throughout each step of the process to eliminate blight in a community. The groups listed below are examples of organizations or community members who are typically impacted by the existence of blight and abandoned/dilapidated buildings – and who might provide relevant resources and support.

- Neighbors
- Local business owners
- Elected officials
- Code enforcement department
- Police department
- Fire department and volunteer fire fighters
- Board of education
- Youth groups including youth rehabilitation programs
- Hospital administrators
- College or university faculty and staff
- Non-profit organizations
- Housing authorities
- Faith institutions and leaders
- Family resource networks or social services
- Historic Preservation organizations
- Arts councils
- Local realtors
- Local banks
- Economic development authorities
- Utility department
- Solid Waste Authority

Community Notice Letter Template

Dear Resident,

My name is *[insert name of sender]* with the *[insert name of community]* BAD Buildings team. I am a local resident and have engaged with the Brownfields Assistance Center at West Virginia University to address problem structures in our community. This is a volunteer-based, locally led initiative.

The BAD (Brownfield, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings program, a community-led initiative, will soon be underway in your community. The goal of the program is to alleviate blight, and spur redevelopment in our community. Our group of volunteers has come together to lead the way in an effort to reach this goal. We are working together with all residents to make *[name of town]* a safe and healthy place to live. Ultimately, we hope to return properties to productivity, so they become an asset to the community rather than a hindrance.

As part of the program, our team will be identifying vacant or dilapidated buildings in *[name of town]*. In the coming weeks, you may notice community members walking in your neighborhood conducting surveys on these properties. Once all buildings are identified, the properties will be prioritized, and our team will begin to work towards addressing each property.

For the BAD Buildings program to be most effective, we cannot do this alone. We need your help to make *[name of town]* the best place it can be. If you would like to join our team, or if you have information on BAD Buildings in your neighborhood, please reach out to [local contact name and information]

Thank you,

[Local Resident, BAD Buildings Team]
[Contact Info]

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION

Friday, May 23rd

11:00am - 4:00pm

Kimball Town Hall

27737 Coal Heritage Rd

Kimball, WV 24853

For more information, contact

[insert local point of contact information]

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION in Petersburg, VA

Wednesday, April 23rd 2025

11:00am - 4:30pm

Petersburg Public Library,
Conference & Event Center
201 W Washington St

For more information, contact *[insert local point of contact]*

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION in Clifton Forge, VA

Thursday, May 22th 2025

9:00am - 3:00pm

Historic Masonic Theatre,

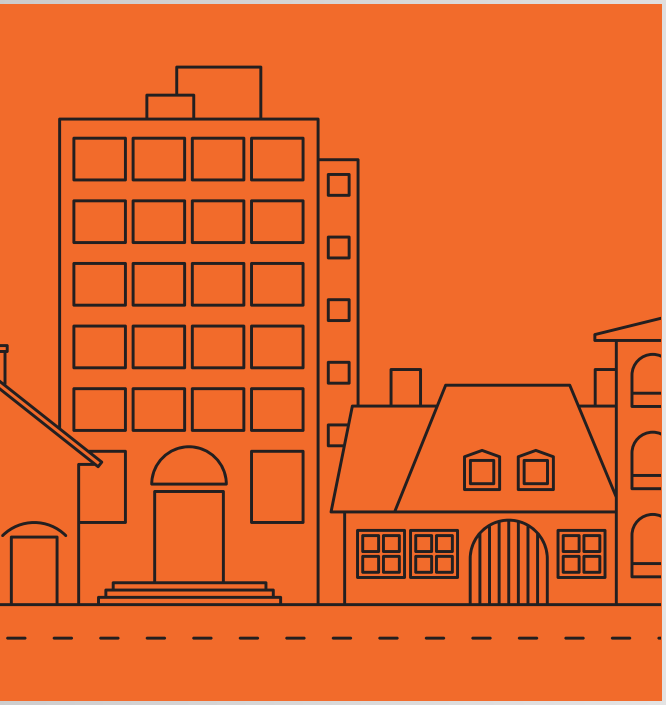
510 Main St

Clifton Forge, VA 24422

For more information, contact *[insert local point of contact]*

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION in Kimball, WV



Tuesday, February 11th 2025

11:00am - 4:00pm

Kimball Town Hall,

27737 Coal Heritage Rd

Kimball, WV 24853

For more information, contact *[insert local point of contact]*

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION

[Insert Community Name]

The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is a statewide initiative providing communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local abandoned and dilapidated buildings revitalization efforts. The program helps communities address barriers to identifying, prioritizing, and redeveloping BAD Buildings.

[Insert Date Here]

Time

Location

Address

Contact Information

BAD Buildings Program

PRIORITIZATION DAY in Mullens, WV

Monday, February 10th 2024

12:00pm - 3:00pm

@ Mullens Opportunity Center (MOC)

309 Guyandotte Avenue

For more information, contact *[insert local point of contact]*

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION

in Mullens, WV

The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is a statewide initiative providing communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local abandoned and dilapidated buildings revitalization efforts. The program helps communities address barriers to identifying, prioritizing, and redeveloping BAD Buildings.

Wednesday, October 9th 2024

11:00am - 5:00pm

@ Mullens Opportunity Center (MOC)

309 Guyandotte Avenue

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION

in Petersburg, VA

The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is a statewide initiative providing communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local abandoned and dilapidated buildings revitalization efforts. The program helps communities address barriers to identifying, prioritizing, and redeveloping BAD Buildings.

Thursday, January 9th 2024

11:00am - 4:30pm

Petersburg Public Library

201 W Washington St.

BAD Buildings Program

COMMUNITY INVENTORY SESSION

in Durbin, WV

The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is a statewide initiative providing communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local abandoned and dilapidated buildings revitalization efforts. **All community members are welcome to attend.** Training will be provided on how to use Regrid, conduct surveys, and begin inventorying parcels.

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

11:00am - 4:00pm

Durbin Community Library

4715 Staunton Parkersburg Turnpike

Durbin WV

BAD Buildings Program

Come Join Us For

PRIORITIZATION DAY!

After surveying and inventorying the abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the community, we are meeting to assess the 25 high priority properties identified in coordination with the Town of Kimball. Establishing clear priorities helps guide proactive decision-making, ensures readiness for unexpected opportunities, and prevents the process from becoming overwhelming. For more information, contact *[insert contact information]*

WEDNESDAY
8 OCTOBER, 2025

FROM
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

KIMBALL TOWN HALL
27737 COAL HERITAGE RD,
KIMBALL, WV 24853

BAD
Buildings Program

Come Join Us For

PRIORITIZATION DAY!

After surveying and inventorying the abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the community, we are meeting to assess the 25 high priority properties identified in coordination with the Town of Kimball. Establishing clear priorities helps guide proactive decision-making, ensures readiness for unexpected opportunities, and prevents the process from becoming overwhelming. For more information, contact [insert contact information]

WEDNESDAY
8 OCTOBER, 2025

FROM
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

KIMBALL TOWN HALL
27737 COAL HERITAGE RD,
KIMBALL, WV 24853

BAD
Buildings Program

123-456-7890

www.reallygreatsite.com

@reallygreatsite

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACTS:

[LOCAL CONTACT]

Volunteers Needed: _____ BAD Buildings Team Conducting Community Inventory and Planning

The _____ BAD Buildings Team, a group of local volunteers, elected officials, and business and property owners, are conducting a community-wide survey to find potentially abandoned, dilapidated, or vacant properties. These properties can pose health and safety hazards, negatively impact community morale, and reduce adjacent property values and tax revenues. Surveying will be completed throughout the next few months.

The survey and the work of the Team is supported by assistance through the WVU BAD Buildings program at the Brownfields Assistance Center at WVU. The WVU BAD (Brownfields, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is designed to help communities address barriers to the reuse and redevelopment of abandoned and dilapidated buildings. Program resources are provided to communities at no cost.

The ultimate goal of the local BAD Buildings Team is to work with property owners to return abandoned and underutilized properties to productive, positive uses that will benefit the entire community. These uses may include a variety of possibilities, such as new families moving into renovated homes, new businesses occupying underutilized commercial spaces, or new parks and gardens in residential neighborhoods.

Additional information about WVUBAD Buildings can be found at badbuildings.wvu.edu, or by contacting program staff at (304) 293-7002. The _____ BAD Buildings Team can be reached by contacting _____ at _____.

BAD Buildings Sign-In

[TEAM NAME]

Name	Email	Phone	Organization
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
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Name	Email	Phone	Organization

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BAD Buildings Program

Developed November 2024

Revised June 2025

HOW TO USE REGRID

WVU BAD BUILDINGS

This guide is for educational purposes only. WVU BAD Buildings is in no way affiliated with Regrid. This guide is solely intended for community members and stakeholders to familiarize themselves with using Regrid desktop and mobile app to assist with inventory creation in the BAD Buildings program.

Table of Contents

BAD
Buildings Program

1. Introduction

1.1 BAD Buildings Program

The WVU BAD (Brownfield, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program is an initiative of the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center (NBAC) to provide communities with a step-by-step process, technical assistance, and site analysis tools to develop or enhance local abandoned and dilapidated building revitalization efforts. The program helps communities address barriers to identifying, prioritizing, and redeveloping BAD Buildings.

1.2 What is Regrid?

Regrid is a site analysis and property data mapping tool that compiles local assessor and other publicly available data of parcels across the United States. In addition to ownership information, Regrid compiles U.S. Postal Service (USPS) vacancy indicator data, zoning and parcel information (if available), estimated structure counts on parcels, and flood data.

Regrid allows users to add survey sets to collect data on selected parcels. The WVU BAD Buildings Program uses a survey response set that collects information on the structure type and a checklist of structural conditions. Specific information on survey question content can be found in the section titled *WVU BAD Buildings Surveys*. Local government officials and stakeholders, referred to hereafter as BAD Buildings Teams, are given access to the WVU BAD Buildings Regrid account to collect data on inventory days in local communities and to manage and maintain the community's associated inventory data in the long-term. This allows BAD Buildings Teams to have access to survey projects and actively engage in the inventory process.

1.3 Why Regrid?

This purpose of this document is to assist BAD Buildings Teams with navigating and maintaining their inventory data sets through Regrid. As part of the BAD Buildings Program's efforts, staff assist communities with creating a living inventory, which is a dynamic set of data that can be amended as new properties fall into blight or as existing blighted properties are addressed. The inventory created through Regrid can be updated by BAD Buildings Team members at any time as conditions change; properties can be removed if blight indicators are addressed, or new properties can be added as conditions warrant.

Regrid is used as the accompanying data survey tool for the WVU BAD Buildings Program because of its user-friendly nature. Local stakeholders and community members can easily

be invited to access the account by WVU BAD Buildings staff, and multiple sources of property information and data can be easily accessed in one place.

2. Getting Acquainted with Regrid

2.1 Accessing Regrid and Creating an Account

Once WVU BAD Buildings staff establish contact with a community, we ask that they identify three to five people comprising a diverse array of stakeholders (i.e. local government officials, church organization members, civic organization members, active community volunteers, etc) to create what is known as the *core team*. The core team members are those who assist our staff with coordinating and planning in-person community visits, site inventory days, prioritization of properties, and the maintenance of the inventory data.

Core team members are given access to Regrid. During community inventory sessions, BAD Buildings Teams break into groups of 2-3 people to survey defined target zones that are priority areas for redevelopment or addressing blight. When surveying in the field, one person in each group will input survey data into Regrid ensuring that the team comes to a consensus on structural conditions before submitting. One survey should be submitted per site, where possible, but where necessary, more than one survey can be submitted on the same site/structure. Please ensure that this is only done if there is a mistake in the previous submission or if there is more than one structure on the site to survey.

Once the core team is established, these members will be granted access to the WVU BAD Buildings account. To access the account and create log in credentials the user *must* follow these steps: (Please ensure that you are creating an account and logging in from the desktop version of Regrid).

Creating a Regrid Account and Accessing a Project

1.) BAD Buildings staff will send an invitation to create an account to the email address that the team member has provided.

2.) Click the link in the invitation email and follow the prompts to create account log in credentials.

3.) Log in to Regrid account using the credentials created in Step 2.

4.) Logging into the account takes users to the account dashboard. Navigate to the top of the screen in the tool bar and click 'Go to the Map.'

5.) Once in the map view, navigate to the box on the left-hand side of the screen and click the folder titled 'Projects.'

6.) Hit 'Select a Project' and scroll to find the name of the community. Click the desired community and the survey area will populate in the map, along with any completed surveys.

It is important to note here that each time a team member logs in to their Regrid account, they will have to follow Steps 4-6 above. Since WVU BAD Buildings staff work with a number of communities, all projects are listed on the map dashboard- Please only access the project that is specific to your community inventory.

If at any time the community adds members to the core team who need access to Regrid, or if someone has an issue logging into their account, please contact someone at WVU BAD Buildings and we can assist with troubleshooting errors and with sending invites for new team members to create an account.

2.2 Navigating the Regrid Database

Once logged into Regrid, it is important learn how to navigate the database, select a property, and view its associated data. Figure 1 below shows an example of the map view on Regrid desktop. The yellow boxes that appear are property parcels, which have been synced with available county assessor data.

Navigating to and selecting a property highlights the selected parcel in red. On the lefthand side of the screen, the 'Parcel Data' tab contains data available from other sources. When navigating the 'Parcel Data' tab, parcel details, ownership information, mailing addresses, and more are viewable. Viewable data may differ from property to property, depending on what information is available on that specific property. One important note here is that the 'Property Sales & Value' header includes the most recent tax year that information for the selected parcel was populated from outside sources. Occasionally, some ownership information is outdated or incorrect, so it is important to double-check that any incorrect data or suspected errors are flagged.

Community inventories of properties will populate in the 'Datasets' tab. Users can also choose to 'Follow' properties, which bookmarks certain parcels without submitting a survey.

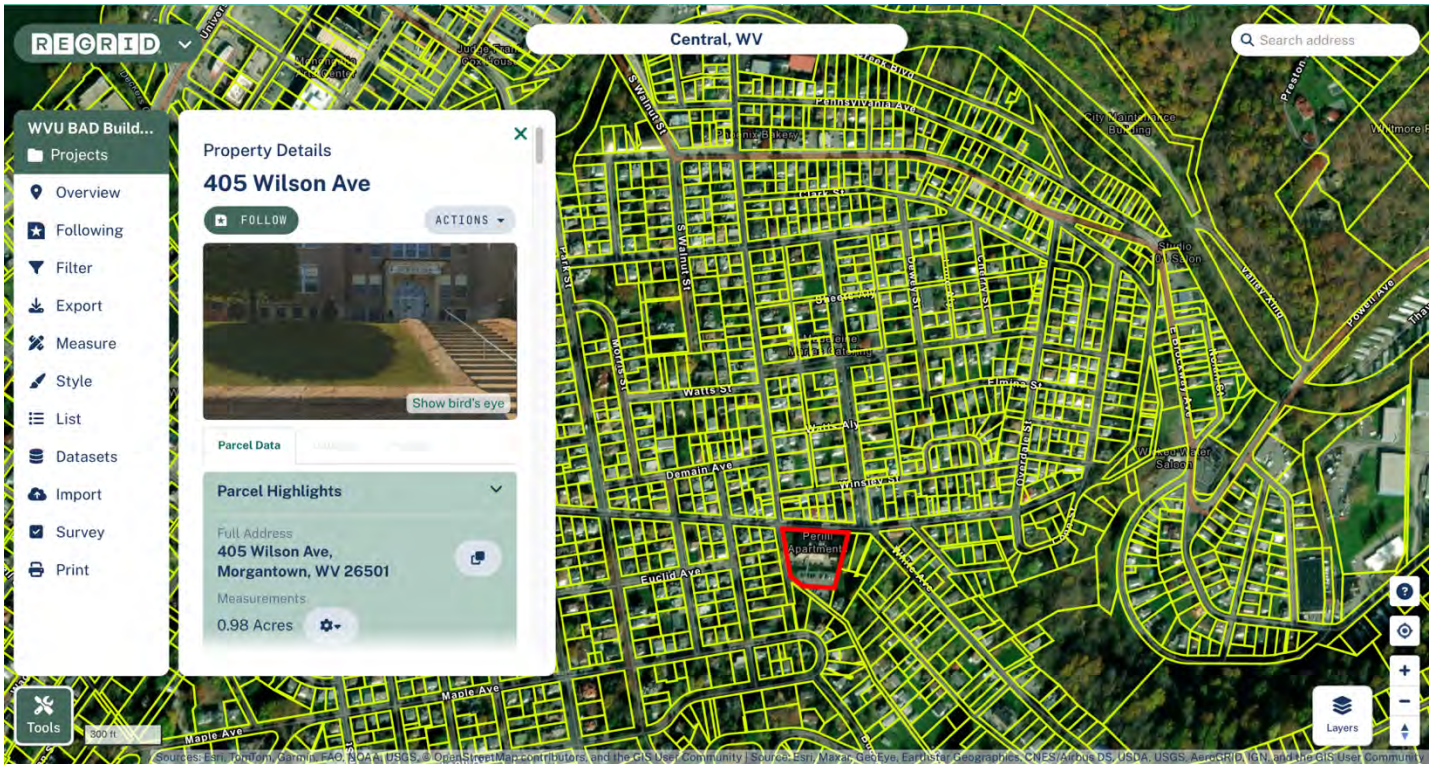


Figure 1: Screen capture of parcel view on Regrid desktop.

3. Preparing to Survey in the Mobile App

3.1 Regrid Mobile App Basics

The Regrid Mobile App is used to conduct community surveys in the field. The application is available on both the Apple and Google Play App Stores. To access, simply download the application and log in using the credentials created when activating the account via email invitation. If there is trouble accessing an account when attempting to use the mobile app, please contact the WVU BAD Buildings team and someone on staff will help with troubleshooting the issue and ensuring that the email invitation was sent and processed for account creation.

After logging into the mobile app, community surveyors should ensure that *Survey Mode* is enabled. To do this, navigate to the horizontal three lines, or 'hamburger icon' at the top left of the screen on the app. Click the icon and a dialog box will appear. Locate the button that says, '*Survey mode'* and toggle the button to turn it on. Once this is turned on, a box will appear below with the community's name of the project you currently have opened. If the name is correct, no further changes are needed, and the survey project should refresh and

populate as normal in the map. If the name is incorrect, hit the '*See More'* button, navigate to the project with your community's name and select. The correct project should then populate into the map. See Figure 2 below for more details of what this looks like in the mobile application.

3.2 Preparing to Survey Properties

Pending reliable cell service, the app keeps track of the user's location using a blue dot that

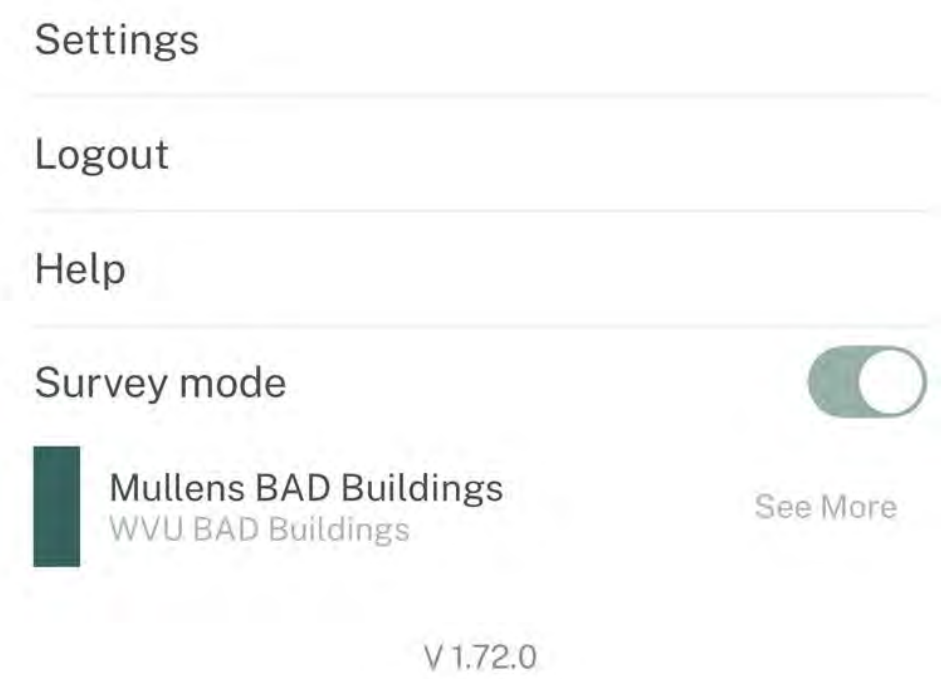


Figure 2: Accessing the 'Survey Mode' option in Regrid Mobile App

will appear on the screen. BAD Buildings Teams are asked in advance to identify priority areas for the inventory. These priority areas are referred to as *target zones*. During a community inventory day, the BAD Buildings Team will be split into smaller groups of 2-3 people and assigned to a specific target zone to complete surveys. The boundaries of these target zones are drawn directly in the Regrid community project map by BAD Buildings staff and are easily identifiable by their white-colored outline. As your phone keeps track of your location, it will note in the top center of the screen which zone you are surveying within. This helps volunteers stay familiar with their surroundings while in the field and assists with ensuring that each team stays within its assigned boundary to avoid potentially duplicating surveys in another target zone. See Figure 3 below for more detail.

Community members are asked not to draw new target zone boundaries in the community project. If a community needs assistance creating new zones for additional inventories,

Figure 3: Example of Regrid Target Zone in the Mobile App.

notify WVU BAD Buildings staff and we can assist with ensuring that the proper boundaries are identified and added to the map.

Once assigned to a target zone, survey teams will head into the field and prepare to begin surveying properties. Before starting, there are a few important things to keep in mind. First, be sure to keep track of the target zone identified at the top of the screen in the mobile app and ensure it aligns with the zone the team was assigned at the start of the inventory. Second, BAD Buildings Team members are reminded that these are *windshield surveys,* meaning that surveyors do ***not*** cross property lines to obtain pictures or get a better view of a property. As objectively as possible, the point is to collect data on the conditions of the structure from behind the property line.

4. WVU BAD Buildings Surveys

4.1 Conducting a Survey

When the BAD Buildings Team is ready to begin conducting surveys on properties, groups will head to their assigned target zone and identify the first property to survey. The BAD Buildings Team will break into smaller groups of 2-3 people with each assigned a target zone. Only one person in each of these smaller groups will have access to Regrid. However, the person operating Regrid is asked to discuss the structural conditions with the whole group, ensuring that a broad consensus is reached before selecting a response in the survey. This helps to ensure that properties are classified as objectively and as fairly as possible.

Once the group identifies a structure to survey, click the associated parcel in the Regrid app. The selected parcel will highlight in red. Before starting the survey, ensure that the *correct*

parcel is selected and that the physical address that appears on the screen coincides with the physical address that is visible on the structure. If there is no visible physical address on the structure, or if you are surveying a vacant lot, use your best judgement of the surroundings to identify the parcel. The birds-eye map view on the Regrid app can assist with identifying surroundings in the community, as well. Upon selecting a parcel, a box will appear at the bottom of the screen with basic ownership information and associated parcel data. See Figure 4 below for more details.

Yellow lines identify parcel boundaries.

Selecting a parcel in Regrid changes the highlight from yellow to red.

Once a survey is submitted, parcels will be highlighted in purple. This indicates that the survey has populated, and the data is saved.

White lines identify target zones. Additionally, the target zone where the user is located (or the target zone selected on desktop) is identified on the screen.

Basic owner information appears here when a parcel is selected.

Select this button to start a survey.

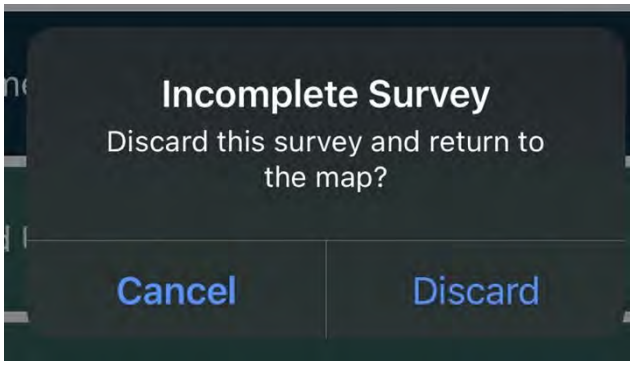
Figure 4: Regrid Mobile App with surveys

Once the surveying team has determined that the correct parcel has been identified for the structure, hit the '*Survey* +' button. This button prompts you to begin answering the structured survey questions that the WVU BAD Buildings program uses; more information on this survey and a copy of the questions can be found below. If at any time you make an error

and need to go back to a previous question, click '*back'* in the top left corner of the survey screen. If you need to cancel the survey for any reason, hit the back button until it returns you to the first survey question. Hit '*back*' one additional time and a dialog box, shown in Figure 5, will appear. Hit '*Discard*' if you want to stop the survey.

After a survey is started, the app will prompt you to answer the questions, which include details about the type of the structure and a structural condition checklist. At the end of the structural condition checklist, please add any notes that may be needed on the site into the dialog box that appears. The more notes on the site, the better, as this helps WVU BAD Buildings staff analyze the data after surveys are submitted. Lastly, the user will be prompted to add photographs of the structure. Try to include several of these from different angles if conditions permit and you can do so without crossing property lines. Once finished, hit '*Submit*.' When you hit submit, the parcel you have surveyed will briefly be shaded yellow, which indicates that the data you have entered is populating. Once it has populated successfully, the parcel will turn purple. If the parcel does not turn purple after approximately 30 seconds, check your cell service to ensure good connection. If the issue persists, flag the address and notify WVU BAD Buildings staff for troubleshooting.

Figure 5: Incomplete Survey dialog box in Regrid Mobile App



If the survey has populated and you have realized that you forgot to include something or realize that there are multiple structures on the parcel, you can submit multiple surveys per parcel, though it is encouraged to keep this to a minimum and to only do this where necessary as it makes analysis of data more difficult with duplicative property entries. *If for any reason you must submit a second survey on the same site, indicate the reason why in the text box titled 'Notes' at the end of the survey.*

4.2 WVU BAD Buildings Survey

The WVU BAD Buildings Program uses a standardized set of survey questions to collect consistent community-wide data on properties and structures. The purpose of the survey is to observe key conditions as objectively as possible and to determine whether each category on the checklist has no problems, minor problems, or major problems. The survey is composed of two sections. The first section is property type classification, which identifies the type of structure that is being surveyed. The remainder of the questions are formatted as

multiple choice and are the structural condition checklist. These questions collect data on key structural elements (also referred to as blight indicators) and the overall condition and stability of the structure itself, or the property conditions in the case of a vacant lot. An overview of the survey questions is listed below:

WVU BAD Buildings Survey Questions

Survey questions are uploaded into the community's project on Regrid prior to beginning inventory and data collection. Communities are asked to refrain from attempting to edit or remove questions from the survey dataset. If you need help or think that the community could benefit from adding additional parameters to the survey, please contact a member of the WVU BAD Buildings Program staff for assistance.

1.) **Property Type**
   - **Single-Family**
   - **Duplex**
   - **Multi-Family Units**
   - **Commercial Only**
   - **Mixed-Use**
   - **Vacant Lot**
   - **Other (intended use is not immediately clear to the surveying team).**

2.) **Building Frame and Structure**
   - **No problems**
   - **Minor problems**
   - **Major problems**

3.) **Roof, chimney, and gutters**
   - **No problems**
   - **Minor problems**
   - **Major problems**

4.) **Windows and doors**
   - **No problems**
   - **Minor problems**
   - **Major problems**

5.) **Siding and paint**
   - **No problems**
   - **Minor problems**
   - **Major problems**

6.) **Porch entrance and overhang**
   - **No problems**
   - **Minor problems**
   - **Major problems**

7.) **Notes (Free-text format. Add *any* additional details).**

8.) **Photos (be sure to try to get different angles documenting conditions).**

As the BAD Buildings Team completes community surveys in Regrid, it is important to evaluate each property as fairly and objectively as possible. The team member operating Regrid should confirm that each response has a group consensus before moving on to the next question in the survey. Additionally, groups should avoid using ownership data or any synced parcel information to make decisions when conducting surveys. *The data collection portion of the inventory process is concerned only with documenting the conditions of the site, as viewed from behind the property line.*

Additionally, surveyors are reminded to heed the classifications of major versus minor problem indicators in survey responses. Ensuring that each response corresponds most closely with the criteria provided prevents incorrect data from being incorporated into the surveys. Based on responses in surveys, properties are ranked as *Good, Fair, Poor,* or *Should be Demolished. Identifying blight indicators incorrectly in the surveys will directly skew the data and impact the classification of properties*. See Figures 6 and 7 for a more detailed look at blight indicator criteria and definitions of structure conditions.

Figure 6: Blight Indicators used in the WVU BAD Buildings survey

BAD Buildings Blight Indicators Guide

Building Frame & Structure

Minor: Building is not leaning, but foundation may need minor repairs. Wall structure (such as wooden studs) may be exposed but not damaged.

Major: The building may be leaning or tilting. The foundation needs major repair or is missing a significant amount of material. Wall structure (such as studs) may be exposed and heavily damaged.

Roof, Chimney & Gutters

Minor: Minor deterioration; Improper roof repairs, missing shingles. Mortar missing from chimney; gutters absent or in need of repair.

Major: A lot of deterioration. Missing material, holes in roof, roof sagging. Significant amounts of mortar or bricks missing from chimney; Chimney leaning.

Windows & Doors

Minor: Window frames or sills need some restoration work or paint is beginning to peel on frames.

Major: Windows or panels missing; Rotted frames. Doors missing or rotted. Paint on window frames in poor condition and peeling heavily.

Siding/Veneer/Paint

Minor: Some peeling or cracking exterior paint. Brick and mortar needs word but still intact.

Major: Building has a significant amount of mortar missing. Missing or unsecured bricks. Significant amount of siding or paint deteriorated and falling off of the structure .

Porch/Entrance Overhang

Minor: Minor separation of porch/ overhang from building. Porch/ overhang sagging and paint needed.

Major: Significant deterioration; steps missing. Supports for roof/ overhang rotted or falling. Partial collapse.

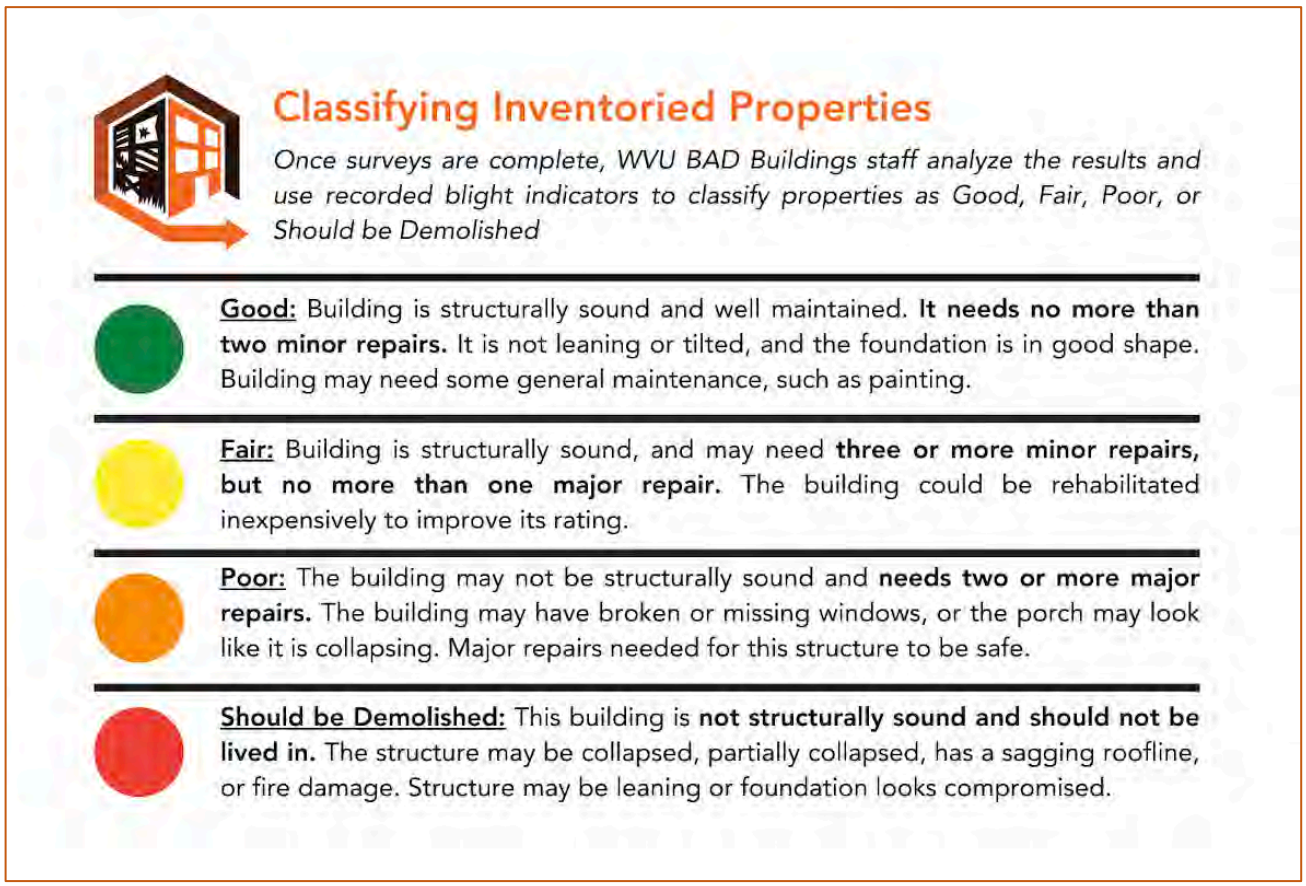


Figure 7: Criteria used for classifying properties based on survey responses.

4.3 Editing Existing Surveys

Edits can be made to existing inventory datasets at any time. Edits cannot be made in the Regrid Mobile App, so community members tasked with managing inventory edits will need to log in to their account on Regrid desktop in order to edit survey data. *Any time that existing survey data is edited, or properties are added or removed from the inventory, the community should contact WVU BAD Buildings staff to notify them of the changes.* WVU BAD Buildings staff manage the master spreadsheet of the inventory data, so changes will need to manually be added to this spreadsheet.

To edit an existing survey on a site, follow these steps:

1.) Log in to Regrid desktop and navigate to your community's project in the map view.

2.) Find and select the parcel where data needs to be edited. If it is difficult to locate, use the search bar in the top right of the screen. Type either the address or the parcel number to search for the property.

3.) The selected property will be highlighted in red and a dialog box with parcel data will appear. Select the *'Datasets'* tab in the top center and locate the survey data that you need to edit. **See Figure 8 below for help locating this feature.**

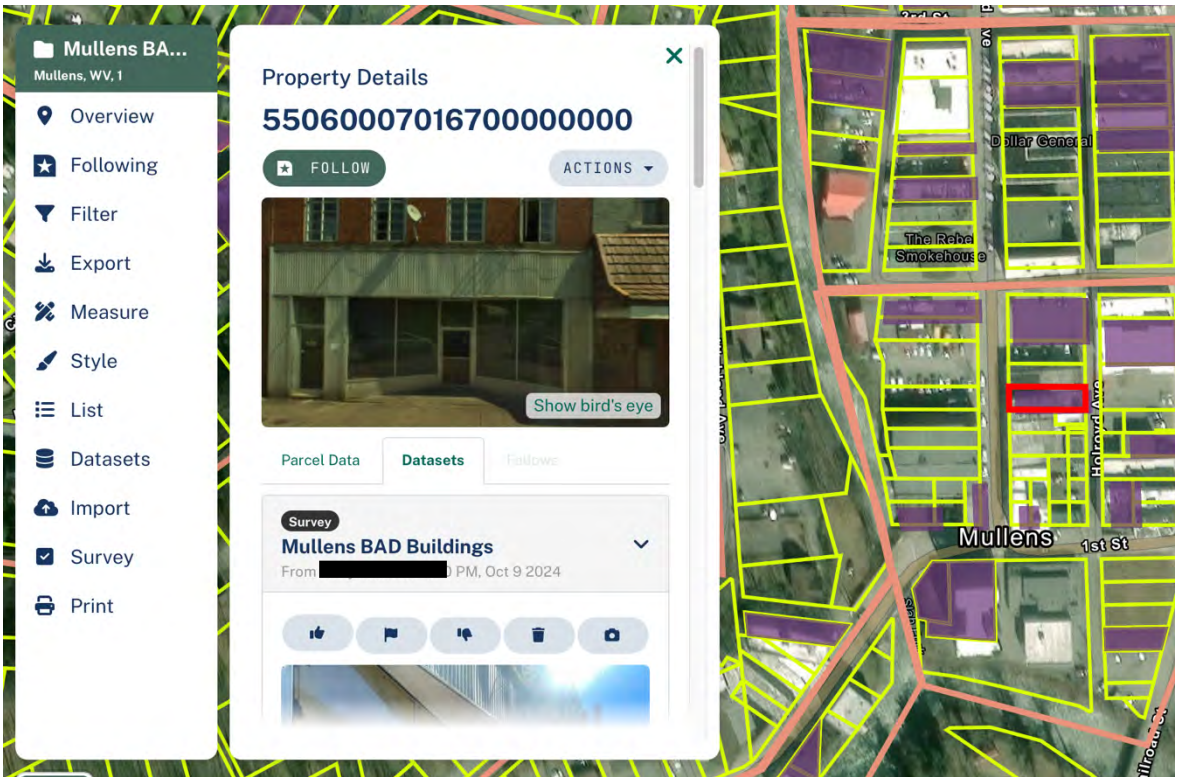


Figure 8: Navigating to the 'Datasets' tab in Regrid Desktop.

4.) Scroll to the associated data where edits are needed. A dotted line appears underneath the survey responses. Click the dotted line and a dialog box opens. Select the correct response and hit the check mark button. **See Figure 9 below.**

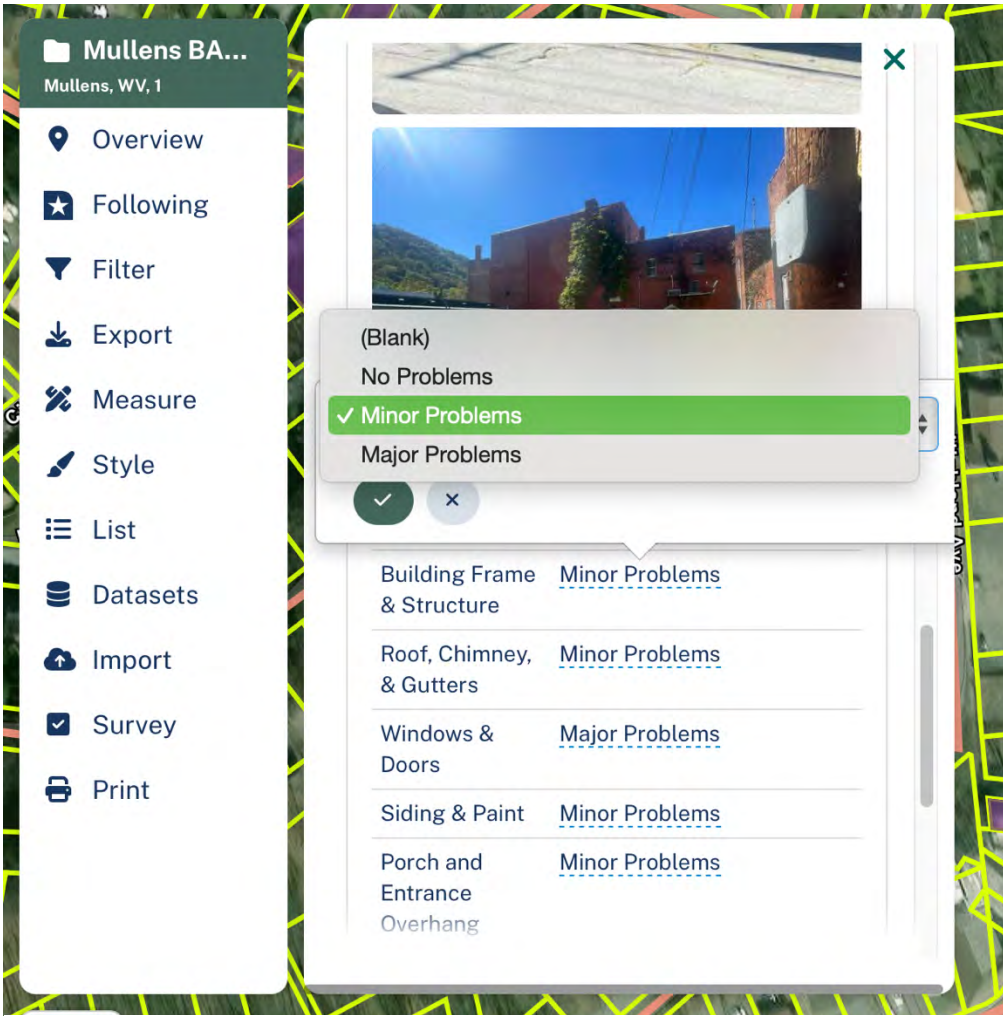
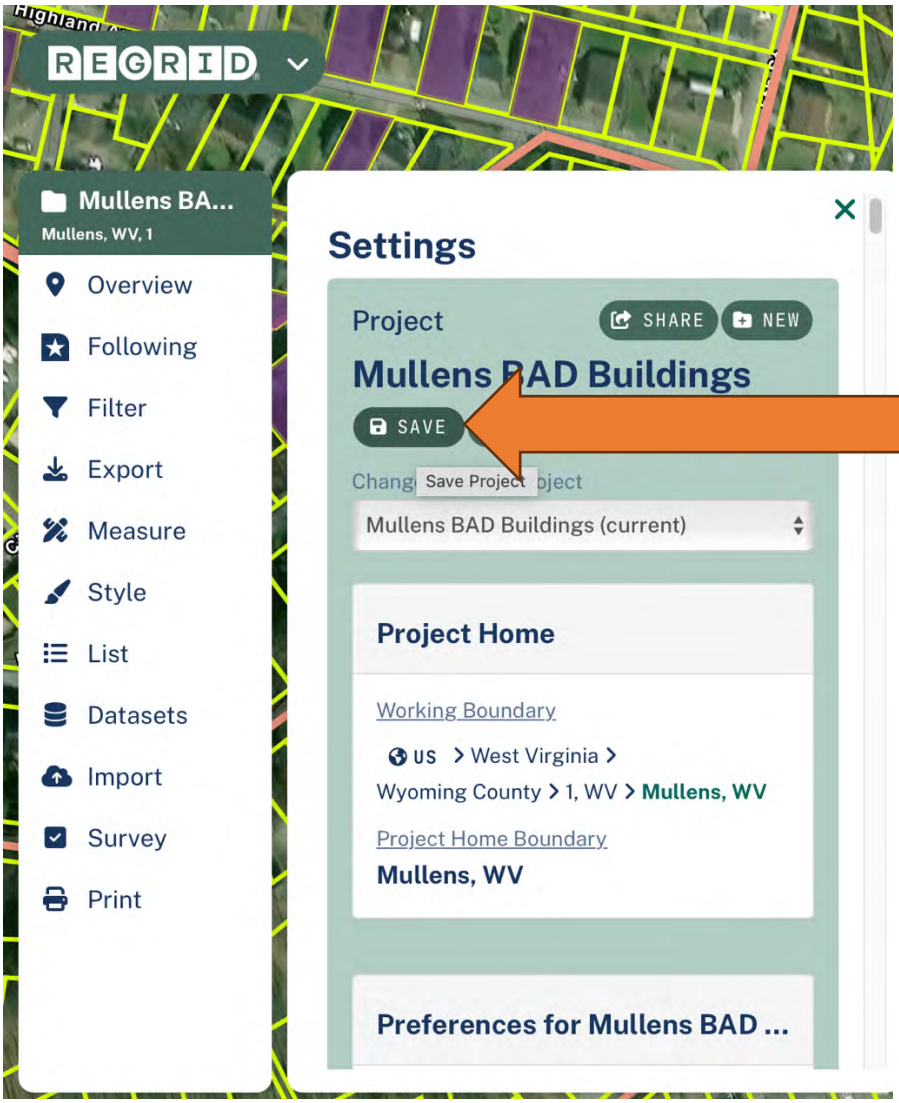


Figure 9: Editing survey data in Regrid desktop.

5.) *All edits must be saved in the project*. Once you have finished making an edit on a property, locate the project dashboard on the left-hand side of the screen. Click the community's name at the top of this box to open the box titled '*Settings*.' Locate the '*Save*' button and click. **See Figure 10 below for help locating this.**



To save edits - locate this button and click. The screen will refresh. If it does not refresh automatically, refresh the page and then check to make sure that edits were saved. *Any saved edits will appear below the survey in a section titled* ***Revisions.*** **Revisions keep track of the original response, how the response was edited, and who edited a survey.**

Figure 10: Saving project edits in Regrid desktop.

In addition to editing survey data, existing survey can be deleted from the dataset. This step should only be completed as conditions are addressed and blight indicators are no longer present on the property that was surveyed. *If this is the case and survey data needs removed, please coordinate with WVU BAD Buildings staff to ensure that the property is removed both from Regrid and any associated spreadsheets that house the community's inventory data*. It is recommended that BAD Buildings Teams identify a way to keep these properties in a format that allows you to continue to track them and to measure your success in addressing blight in the community.

5. Conclusion

Congratulations! Your community members are now set to navigate Regrid and conduct surveys in the field! Regrid is used as the accompanying mapping tool for the WVU BAD

Buildings Program because of its relative user-friendliness compared to other platforms. However, if at any time the community is having trouble accessing or operating Regrid, please contact WVU BAD Buildings staff. The services and technical assistance we provide to communities are *always* at no cost, and we're happy to help!

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Conversations with Property Owners

Volunteers may be approached by property owners or neighboring property owners with questions when conducting windshield surveys in their communities. This document guides volunteers through these conversations and is intended to open lines of communication between Team Members and community members who may not have heard about the process. It is important for all members of the community to feel welcome, so setting a positive tone is important!

Who am I?

I am one of a group of volunteers in [insert community name] working to improve the overall conditions of our community by addressing brownfield, abandoned, dilapidated, and blighted properties. We are working with all residents to make it a safe and healthy place to live. Our goal is to return properties to productivity so they become assets to the community.

What is the goal?

As a team, our goal is to:

- Collect background information on the site, where possible.
- Determine what the owner's intentions may be for the site.
- Determine what challenges the owner may face, if any.
- Determine how we can bridge gaps to assist with challenges and address blight.

What will the BAD Buildings Team do with collected information?

Our survey team will share collected survey information with the rest of the team. We are going through the properties in our town and collecting data on current conditions. We will work on prioritizing sites that will support an improved community aesthetic and are realistic. We want to make our community a safe and healthy place to live.

The owner has plans, but has run into challenges. How can I help?

As volunteers in our community, we always want to encourage transparency! We plan to work with property owners on overcoming challenges. We can provide assistance with helping to sell the property, managing cleanup, and working with local government or other agencies to get connected to resources or funding.

Property owners are welcome and encouraged to attend future BAD Buildings meetings to discuss properties. I'd like to keep you in the loop, and we can continue to exchange ideas about how we can best support you and hear what actions you have taken or want to take on your property. How does that sound?

COMMUNITY SURVEY OF VACANT AND DILAPIDATED PROPERTY

Below are the pre-set survey questions that are used during the inventory and data collection portion of the BAD Buildings process. This questionnaire has been synced with the community's project in Regrid, the mapping software used to complete BAD Buildings inventories. During the inventory, one member of each surveying group will document responses directly into the Regrid Mobile App. This document is a guide for team members to engage in conversation regarding property conditions and reach a consensus on responses before submitting responses on Regrid.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Type:

See 1A Below:

- Single family
  - One living unit on the site. Property is a stand-alone single-family home. This includes townhomes.
- Duplex
  - Housing that is attached by a shared wall. This can include side walls where both dwellings are in the same structure or dwellings where one unit is downstairs and a second is upstairs.
- Multi-family units
  - More than two living units are present in the structure.
- Commercial
  - Structure is primarily used for business or commercial purposes with no sign of residential units.
- Mixed Use commercial/residential
  - Structure may have a defined area for retail/commercial space but is also used for residential units (often on the upper floors).
- Other (specify)
  - This category is used for properties whose past uses/intended use may not be immediately clear to the person(s) surveying the structure.

See 1B Below:

- Vacant lot
  - No structure is present on the site.

1A. STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS CHECKLIST

Building Frame/Structure:

- No problems
- Minor: Building is not leaning, but foundation needs minor repairs. Wall structure (such as wood studs) exposed but undamaged.
- Major: The building is not straight – leans or tilts. The foundation needs major repair or is missing a lot of materials. Wall structure (such as wood studs) exposed and damaged or deteriorated.

Roof/Chimney/Gutters:

- No problems
- Minor: Minor deterioration; Improper roof repair; Some mortar missing from chimney; gutters in need of repair.
- Major: A lot of deterioration, missing material, holes in roof, or sagging roof. Significant mortar or bricks missing from chimney or chimney is leaning.

Windows/Doors:

- No problems
- Minor: Window frames or sills need restoring, or paint is peeling.
- Major: Windows missing, missing panes, wood sashes are rotting to pieces; doors missing or rotted.

Siding/Veneer/Paint:

- No problems
- Minor: Some peeling or cracking paint; brick mortar needs repointing but intact.
- Major: Building missing many bricks; significant amount of siding is deteriorated or falling off.

Porch/Entrance Overhang:

- No problems
- Minor: Minor separation of porch / overhang from building; porch / overhang sagging; paint needed.
- Major: Significant deterioration; steps missing; supports rotted or failing; partial collapse.

1B. VACANT LOT CONDITIONS

Please mark the condition of the vacant lot as met by the definitions below:

Good:

- Lot has minimal overgrowth, litter or debris

Fair:

- Lot has moderate overgrowth, some litter or debris is present on the site

Poor:

- Lot is heavily overgrown with excess litter and/or debris on the site

2. NOTES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

As surveys are completed, please be sure to include any relevant notes for both structures and vacant lots. The team member submitting responses in Regrid will be prompted to include notes. This can include flagging anything that excludes visibility, whether the surveyed site encompasses multiple parcels, or anything else that is worth noting and can help with data analysis. Regrid also requires *at least* one photo to be submitted alongside the survey, but teams are encouraged to submit 2-4, if possible, depicting the property from different angles.

Definitions of Structure Conditions:
This will be completed by BAD Buildings Staff during data analysis and will be determined based on responses above.

Good: Buildings/properties in Good condition are structurally sound and well maintained. They exhibit no signs of major damage and require **no more than two minor repairs**, such as fixing a gutter or replacing a damaged windowpane. Foundations are stable, and the structure is neither leaning nor tilted. General upkeep—like painting or minor exterior maintenance—may be necessary, but these buildings are fully habitable and represent minimal risk.

- **Fair:** Buildings/properties rated as Fair remain structurally sound but show signs of gradual wear and neglect. They may **need three or more minor repairs**

and possibly **one major repair**, such as a partial roof replacement or foundational patching. These buildings can typically be restored to good condition with a moderate investment, making them suitable candidates for rehabilitation programs.

Poor: Buildings/properties in Poor condition may no longer be structurally sound and present visible signs of severe deterioration. Issues can include sagging porches, broken or boarded windows, damaged siding, or a failing roof. **Two or more major repairs are required** to restore these structures to safe, livable standards. These buildings often pose health and safety concerns and require significant resources for rehabilitation.

- **Should be demolished:** Structures classified under Should Be Demolished are considered unsafe for occupancy due to serious structural failures, such as leaning walls, fire damage, or compromised foundations. These buildings cannot be cost-effectively or safely rehabilitated and often represent a hazard to the surrounding community. In such cases, demolition is the most viable option to eliminate risk and make space for new development.

Define Community Priorities

An important step in addressing blight in your community is to perform an inventory of the vacant or dilapidated properties in your neighborhood or chosen geographic area. Once that is done, it is important to prioritize the properties to determine which ones impact the community the most and require most urgent action.

This must be done in a systematic way that is as objective as possible. In order to avoid conflicts over someone feeling like their property was identified unfairly, it is important to be able to show that there was a process of selection.

How do you determine your community's priorities? The following questions will help you to establish these priorities to be able to work toward your goals. You might also want to reference the Visioning worksheet as well.

Remember to invite key stakeholders to the discussion. For suggestions on who to include, reference the Stakeholders suggestions.

Generative Questions:

1. What are some challenges that my community currently faces? Some suggestions are:
    - Criminal activity
    - Health and safety
    - Visibility of vacant / dilapidated properties
    - Concentration of vacant / dilapidated properties
    - Opportunities for economic development
2. What type of change do I want to make in my community?
3. What do people notice most when visiting our community?
4. How can we make our community more attractive to business development?
5. What can we do to keep our current residents?

Once you know your community's priorities and have completed an inventory of the abandoned properties in your neighborhood, the next step is to prioritize the properties in the inventory. See the **Prioritizing Properties Instructions** and **BAD Building Prioritization Grid** for support on this.

Sample
Community Priorities

Dilapidation (health & safety)

3 – High Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'should be demolished'. Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' and the structure is unsecured. Vacant lots that are unsecured with significant debris constituting a potential safety risk.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' and the property is secured. Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair' and the structure is unsecured. Vacant lots that are secured and inaccessible, but have a significant amount of debris constituting a safety risk.

1 – Low Priority: Any property that received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair' and the structure is secured. Vacant lots with little or no debris.

Redevelopment / Reuse Potential

3 – High Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair'.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair'. Any vacant lot.

1 – Low Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' or 'should be demolished'.

Visibility

3 – High Priority: Any property located along major gateways into town or primary neighborhoods. Any property located along major routes through town. These areas are:_____.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property located along highly traveled roads that are not gateway entrances. These areas are:_____.

1 – Low Priority: Any property not located on a major gateway or highly traveled road.

Vacancy

3 – High Priority: Any property that has been vacant for 5+ years.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property that has been vacant for 2 or more years, but less than 5.

1 – Low Priority: Any property that is occupied, or has been vacant for less than 2 years.

Prioritizing Properties Instructions

Determining the vacant and dilapidated buildings to be addressed by either a community group or municipality must be done in a systematic way that is as objective as possible. In order to avoid conflicts over someone feeling like their property was identified unfairly, it is important to be able to show that there was a process of selection.

1. A survey of every property that appears to meet the criteria for vacant and dilapidated buildings needs to be filled out and kept on file. This criteria is on the survey form in the toolkit.

2. The survey attached to the toolkit has a list of criteria to help the survey taker to determine whether to put the property in a category of "good", "fair" or "poor." The community can change the rating system to meet its own needs or values but the criteria need to be written down and agreed on ahead of time.

3. The next step is to prioritize the properties, because it is impossible to work on all the problems at once. Again, you need to have an objective reason for addressing one property over another.

The Prioritization Grid helps a community to determine which properties are important to address first.

Prioritization Grid:
This grid determines which property is the worst according to the following criteria:

- Health and Safety
- Visibility (A dilapidated property that is on the main road is worse than one that is off the beaten path.)
- Redevelopment / Reuse Potential
- Blight Concentration (The property is next to or very near other vacant and dilapidated properties.)

On the grid, the properties are listed in the left hand column and the criteria are across the top. If there is an overwhelming number of properties, the community may choose to prioritize those properties first, that are in the "poor" category as determined by the survey. If possible, all the properties should be prioritized with the grid process. **This grid uses a one to three scale with three being the worst. The properties with the most points would be the worst properties (the ones that need to be addressed first).**

Further guidance on Rating Factors:
Each community can set their own criteria for the rating factors. The following are illustrative examples of how a community may want to explain their criteria.

Suggested Criteria

Health and Safety:

3 – High Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'should be demolished'. Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' and the structure is unsecured. Vacant lots that are unsecured with significant debris constituting a potential safety risk.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' and the property is secured. Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair' and the structure is unsecured. Vacant lots that are secured and inaccessible, but have a significant amount of debris constituting a safety risk.

1 – Low Priority: Any property that received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair' and the structure is secured. Vacant lots with little or no debris.

Visibility (Gateways):

3 – High Priority: Any property located along major gateways into town or primary neighborhoods. Any property located along major routes through town.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property located along highly traveled roads that are not gateway entrances.

1 – Low Priority: Any property not located on a major gateway or highly traveled road.

Redevelopment / Reuse Potential:

3 – High Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair'.

2 – Medium Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'good' or 'fair'. Any vacant lot.

1 – Low Priority: Any property that has received a 'property condition' survey score of 'poor' or 'should be demolished'.

Blight Concentration:

3 – Four or more properties on a street or intersection where the average condition of the properties is poor or worse

2 – Four or more properties on the same street or intersection where the average condition of the buildings is fair

1 – Three or less vacant properties on a single street or intersection

Example Prioritization Grid

Property Address	Health and Safety	Visibility	Redevelopment / Reuse Potential	Blight Concentration	Total Score
414 Elm Street	2	2	1	2	7
290 Fairmount Drive	3	1	2	1	7
6377 West Run Road	2	3	2	3	10
185 Maccorkle Avenue	1	2	2	1	6
506 Elm Street	3	2	3	2	10
2138 West Run Road	3	3	3	3	12
774 Greenview Road	2	2	2	1	7
213 Cedarcrest Drive	1	1	3	1	6
467 Lyndhurst Drive	3	2	2	1	8
3314 West Run Road	2	3	3	3	11
2280 Somerset Road	2	2	1	2	7
111 Fairmount Drive	2	1	1	1	5
3567 Somerset Road	1	2	2	2	7
5840 West Run Road	3	3	2	3	11
200 Beech Avenue	2	1	2	1	7
127 Cedarcrest Drive	3	1	2	1	7
1872 Somerset Road	3	2	3	2	10
307 Elm Street	2	2	1	2	7
5721 West Run Road	1	3	2	3	9

Other Criteria to Consider

Affordability:

3 – Funding is available for rehabilitation or demolition through available grants and resources, and pre-development steps are complete, allowing for the project to start within 90 days.

2 – Funding, permissions from regulatory agencies and other pre-development steps can be completed within 12 months

1 – Demolition or rehabilitation of the property are beyond the means of the owner, non-profit/for-profit developers or local government.

Shortest Time Frame:

3 – Rehab, reuse or new development can be completed in 1-2 years.

2 – Rehab, reuse or new development will require a 2-3 year timeframe including overcoming funding and other obstacles such as title issues.

1 – Rehab, reuse or new development will require a 3-5 year timeframe.

Consistent with Community Vision:

3 – Action on this building or land directly addresses the goals of the group.

2 – Action on this building or land will address complementary issues towards achieving the goals of the group.

1 – Action on this building or land will not advance the vision or the values of the group as expressed in documents approved by the group.

Site Control:

3 – Ownership of site known; Owner is the city or community redevelopment entity; or - owner has relationship or established dialog with community or team and is willing to work on the property or willing to sell or transfer property ownership to another responsible entity; there are no known title complications or heirship issues

2 – Site ownership is known; the site owner's intentions or relationship to the community and team are unknown; there are no known title complications or heirship issues

1 – Site ownership is known but the owner is unwilling to work with the community or team; there are complicated title or heirship issues with the property; or if the ownership is unknown and has been difficult to identify

Historical Value:

3 – Property is on the National Historic Registry or a contributing structure on a registered Historic District

2 – Property is not on a national registry but is historically significant to the community such as oldest structure in town, a particular era and style of architecture, or a location where significant events occurred

1 – The property has no historical significance

Consistent with Needs of Investors / Partners:

If structures fit the needs of the investors and partners willing to bring capital to redevelop or rehabilitate property, these can also be rated

Brownfield Property:

Properties can also be rated based on contamination for reasons other than health and safety. This may be due to the community receiving funding specifically to clean up contaminated sites making them priorities over clean sites

Prioritizing Grid for Vacant and Dilapidated Properties

Give a ranking for each criterion under the identified property. One (1) is lowest priority and three (3) is highest priority.

Property Address	Redevelopment/Reuse Potential OR Dilapidation (Health & Safety)		Visibility (Gateways)	Duration of Vacancy	Total Score
	Redevelopment	Demolition			

Dear Neighbor,

My name is contact volunteer name, and I am a member of the Name of BAD Buildings Team. We are a group of volunteers in Name of Town working to improve our community by addressing its vacant, abandoned, and blighted buildings/properties. We are working together with all the members of our town to make it a safe and healthy place to live. Our goal is to return these properties to productivity and make them an asset to the community, rather than a hindrance.

We believe that you may own properties we have identified as potential BAD Buildings:

- Property Address 1
- Property Address 2
- Etc.

Each individual has a role to play in making our community great and that includes maintaining their property in accordance with laws and ordinances of our town. We understand that sometimes compliance with these laws and ordinances can be difficult, so we want to contact you to learn about your plans and interests with your property(ies). We'd also like to hear about what challenges you're facing with your property(ies).

If possible, we would like to help you overcome these challenges and bring your properties back to local compliance and productive use.

Please contact me at phone number or by email at email address. I'd also like to invite you to the next Name of BAD Buildings Team meeting on DATE, TIME, LOCATION to meet the rest of the volunteers or to get involved yourself.

Sincerely,

Volunteer Name

Name of BAD Buildings Team

wvbadbuildings.org

Create a neighborhood association: Things to consider

Why start a neighborhood association?

- Create change and improvements to your community – together!
- Build communication and relationships within the neighborhood and the city
- Development of more neighborhood associations
- Pride in your community
- Having a representative from a neighborhood association speak at City Council meetings gives a stronger voice. They will listen more closely.

Who are you?

- Schedule your first meeting
- Establish your neighborhood boundaries. Will it be based on colloquial understanding of your "neighborhood" or determined by council districts?
- What will you call your neighborhood?
- Remember that the neighborhood association does not represent the whole neighborhood, just the association.

Where are you going to meet?

- Consider a place that has a relationship with neighborhood businesses, schools, churches, council. Perhaps a local business will offer to host the meetings.

When will you meet?

- Determine a date and time that is convenient for most people
- Make sure it's regular and **consistent**
- Will it be monthly, quarterly, twice a year?
- Keep the meeting short (1 hour)

How will you set up the organization?

- What type of leadership? Different levels of involvement?
- Will you establish board positions? Such as President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer?
- Or, chairs of events or committees? Such as block party, safety watch, etc.
- It's helpful to have people rotate in these responsibilities every year or few years, so people do not get burned out.

How will you communicate?

- Email as needed, regular newsletter, blog, PSA local radio and newspaper, Facebook page *(over)*

How will you celebrate? What activities will you pursue?

- Some ideas: ice cream social, annual theme, yard sale, clean-up day, Halloween haunt, Holiday caroling, chili challenge, etc.

Additional recommendations:

- Keep an agenda and meeting minutes of each neighborhood association meeting. This will provide a record or history of all the things you have done to improve your community, will keep projects on track, and hold members accountable.
- Set up a neighborhood coordination council meeting, where representatives from each neighborhood association in your town will meet. This meeting should include representatives from the police or fire marshal to deliver a report, city manager, and others from municipal government. The coordination council should meet regularly and consistently, such as once per month.

Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool

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DISCLAIMER: *This document is provided for information purposes only and may not be interpreted to alter or replace the coverage or requirements of any applicable regulations, policies or guidelines. If you are not clear what the legal requirements are for any aspect of a demolition, you should check before proceeding. Nothing contained in this document provides any defense in a state, local or EPA enforcement action, or creates any rights for or in any parties. While EPA has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the discussion in this document, the obligations of the regulated community are determined by statutes, regulations or other legally binding requirements. In the event of a conflict between the discussion in this document and any statute or regulation, this document would not be controlling.*

Introduction

1. What is Deconstruction?

Deconstruction is a way to systematically dismantle a structure to recover materials for reuse or recycling. Local governments or organizations with active demolition programs have an opportunity to promote environmental stewardship and economic revitalization through deconstruction. While it is possible to completely deconstruct a structure, there are frequently considerations of time, project budget, and material value that result in a more selective approach. In the case of a residential structure, deconstruction may recover materials such as architectural millwork, bricks, or even dimensional lumber. In addition to salvaging these potentially valuable materials, many deconstruction projects provide additional benefits pertaining to public health, waste diversion, job creation, and revenue generation.

2. Why Conduct Deconstruction Rapid Building Assessments?

Picking the best deconstruction candidates can be challenging. Oftentimes, choices must be made among a large quantity of eligible structures and in a short time period. Therefore, a quick scan of property qualities is necessary so that building removal programs can be better designed to recover as many materials as possible while working within funding constraints.

Benefits of Deconstruction

- Blight management.
- Reduce public health and environmental impact.
- Workforce development and job training.
- Improved construction waste diversion.
- Materials market development.

The Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool enables organizations to triage building stock slated for demolition by generating a dataset that can help prioritize structures for deconstruction and salvage. The assessment process identifies candidates for deconstruction by examining information on the building's condition and salvageable material inventory. Whether the project scope is a few structures in a neighborhood, or an entire city's blight program, a rapid assessment can help managers make critical decisions regarding the allocation of resources and time.

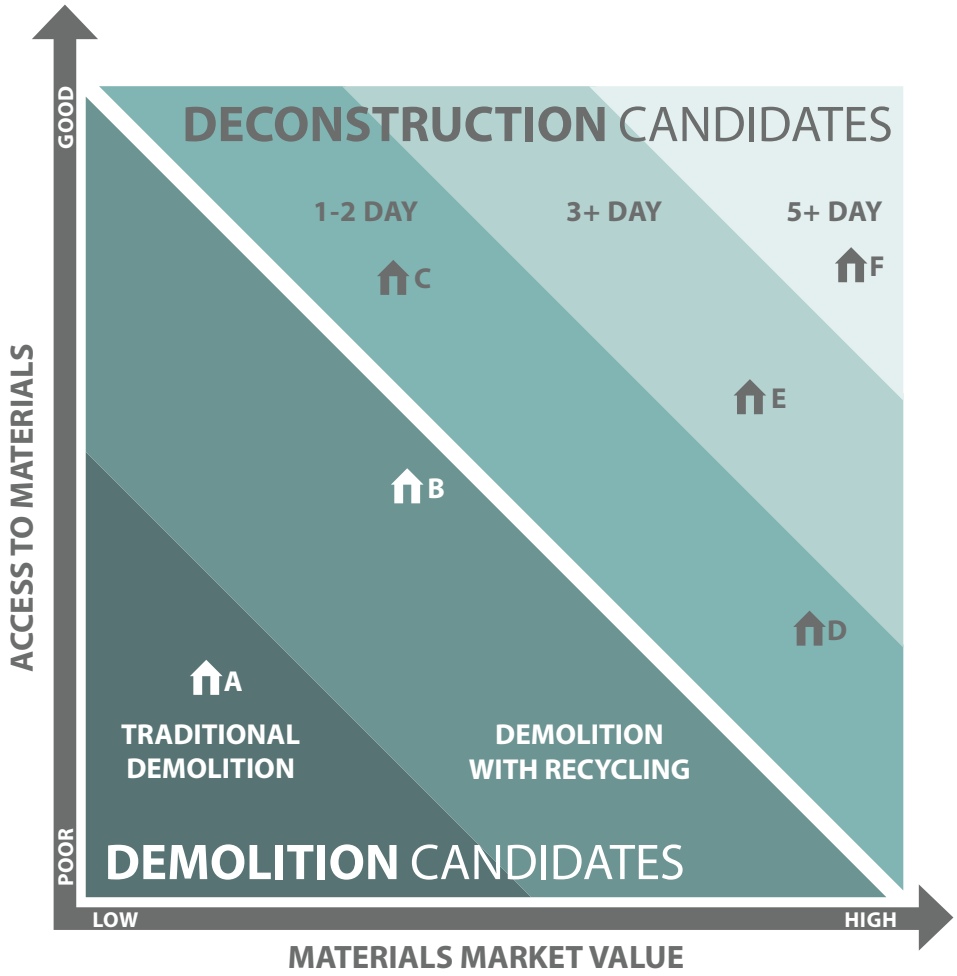
3. How can the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool Data be Used?

Data collected using the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool can provide meaningful information so decision makers can pinpoint the preferred level of salvage operation. As stated above, the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool helps identify structures most eligible for deconstruction and to inventory salvageable materials. Where deconstruction is viable, the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool sheds light on the exact types and quantity of materials that can be recovered. The materials inventory enables program managers to assign a relative duration for deconstruction activities. For example, a deconstruction team may take a "skim" approach of one to two days, or up to 10 days for full deconstruction.

On the Road to Reuse

In 2013, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 produced the "On the Road to Reuse: Residential Demolition Bid Specification Development Tool" that identifies environmentally sensitive activities associated with demolishing residential buildings. These activities include hazardous materials abatement, fill material selection and placement, and material recycling. Environmental considerations are relevant throughout the entire demolition or deconstruction process, beginning with pre-planning and ending with site rehabilitation.

The variability in deconstruction time is dependent on the potential value of materials and the ease in which they can be recovered. However, these aspects of the deconstruction process can be qualitatively and quantitatively explored using the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool. Some targeted materials are more viable to recover than others based on their market value and the level of effort needed to access, dismantle, transport, store, and bring them to market. Many materials need a certain level of expertise to remove and carefully transport, whereas some materials—particularly those targeted for recycling as opposed to reuse—have few restrictions for removal and handling. When considering these variables, a common challenge has been to effectively plan for and manage the deconstruction process, especially for large numbers of planned demolitions within a given city.



Below are hypothetical situations to demonstrate how this scenario framework can inform the deconstruction decision-making process. Localized factors, both for access to materials and materials market value, will impact decisions made by each user.

A **Access:** Impassable entry, building collapse. **Value:** Little wood, no architectural features.

B **Access:** Roof collapse, excessive dumping. **Value:** Aluminum siding, metal roofing.

C **Access:** Significant exterior trash, bulky furniture. **Value:** Solid wood doors, wood-framed windows.

D **Access:** Basement flooding, abandoned cars on site, not fully secured. **Value:** Claw foot tub,sinks, iron gate with fencing.

E **Access:** Limited interior trash, some graffiti. **Value:** Crown and baseboard moulding throughout house, other architectural work, fire place mantel.

F **Access:** Some dumping and tires present on site. **Value:** Dimensional ceiling joists, large dimensional old growth lumber, built-in wood cabinetry, stained-glass windows.

The DRAT Action Framework above is intended to illustrate how access to materials and materials market value can influence decision-making for DRAT users.

Factors influencing access to materials may include:

- The age of the structure, which may indicate the presence of hazards such as lead paint.
- Lot conditions and other nuisances, which may determine ease of access or time required to ready site for deconstruction, such as the availability of a staging area or the presence of obstructions such as trash.
- Damage and deterioration, which may indicate the safety of working conditions, such as compromised structural integrity or fire damage.
- Environmental hazards, such as wasp nests or containers of chemicals, which may require extra precautions or steps for removal.

Data for access to materials will be populated in the first half of the tool under "Site Observations and Hazards."

Assessment of materials market value may be influenced by:

- The size of the structure or quantity of material.
- Type and quality or condition of material.
- Salvage or recycling potential.

Data for market value will be populated in the second half of the tool under "Damage and Deterioration," "Materials Inventory," and "Special Consideration for Architectural Features."

Using information collected during the assessment, managers are able to assign a classification to the structure, broadly defined as follows:

- Demolition may be the best option for candidates with poor access to materials and low materials market value. Local factors, such as tipping, fees may incentivize demolition with recycling.
- Demolition with recycling* may occur when candidates exhibit better access to materials and higher materials market value than traditional demolitions, but materials are better suited for recycling than salvage.
- One to two day deconstruction may occur when candidates exhibit better materials access and higher materials market value than demolition with recycling, but the quantity of salvageable materials can be recovered in fewer than three days. Damage may be present, but isolated to specific rooms or sections.
- 3+ day deconstruction may be the best option for candidates with good access to materials and high materials market value. Local factors such as availability of program funds or time constraints may limit scope. The structure should be demolished, but contains opportunities for salvage or deconstruction of architectural finishes and fixtures and/or other materials. Damage may be present, but isolated to specific rooms or sections. The structure appears stable and safe to work in. The property is either currently secure or should be secured immediately.
- 5+ day (or full) deconstruction may be the best option for candidates with better access to materials and higher materials market value than 3+ day deconstruction and when program funds are sufficient to extend the time for project completion to allow for maximum material recovery.

*Materials recycling should be considered in all cases

Decision-makers should find it possible to determine candidates for demolition, demolition with recycling or for multi day deconstruction. Decision-makers may find it more difficult to determine the tipping point between one to two day and 3+ day deconstruction candidates. This task may be made simpler by using an internal weighting system, which can assign values to some of the data points in the tool based on local priorities and factors such as funding availability, project scale, or local materials markets.

4. Will it Work for All Planned Residential Demolitions?

The tool is applicable to cities and any other organization that has residential structures planned for demolition. Cities with large underutilized building inventories may use the tool to plan and manage the demolition process, whereas a state department of transportation or local hospital expanding into a residential community may use the tool as part of planned demolition activities to demonstrate environmental stewardship or build community support and alleviate environmental impact concerns.

Scenarios	Users	DRAT Potential Uses	Example
Blight Removal	Cities, Municipalities, Land Banks	• Assist program managers with making informed choices on the top prospects for building deconstruction. • Create a more comprehensive understanding of blight issues through tracking, mapping, analysis, and linking addresses to structure conditions. • Determine specific buildings to be bundled in each solicitation for contractors.	Detroit Land Bank and Building Authority
Infrastructure Projects	Department of Transportation, Floodplain Management Districts, Sewer Districts	• Aggregate information about properties acquired as part of large infrastructure projects. • Identify homes in good and habitable condition that may have a considerable amount of salvageable material. • Assess the extent to which deconstruction may reduce project's environmental impact and provide job training.	Cincinnati, Ohio Metropolitan Sewer District Lick Run Project Milwaukee, Wis. Metropolitan Sewer District Kinnickinnic River Project
Institutional Expansions	Hospitals, Universities, Anchor Institutions	• Plan and document how projects align with institutional goals, e.g., promoting health and community values. • Act as an educational exercise for student planners and engineers evaluating large demolition/deconstruction projects.	Detroit, Mich. Ford Hospital Expansion
Workforce Development	Demolition or Deconstruction Contractor, Job Training Programs	• Map landscape of demolition work to help organize demolition/deconstruction training opportunities. • Assist deconstruction educators in identifying potentially salvageable and recyclable materials onsite and set expectations for trainees before beginning work.	Cincinnati, Ohio Building Value Detroit, Mich. Reclaim Detroit

5. Can the Tool be Customized for Specific Applications?

It is expected that the tool may need to be tailored to specific needs based on local opportunities and constraints. The Excel version of the tool enables users to customize it by reducing, adding, or modifying data collection points to fit specific needs. Some users may develop an index by assigning a weight to each variable to calculate an index value or "score," which may aid in the prioritization and local decision-making process. Other users may pursue more integrated solutions by linking the tool to other property management databases or existing property assessments. Users are encouraged to adapt this general version based on local issues and materials market considerations.

6. What About Rehabilitation Candidates?

The Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool is aimed at inventorying structures that are already on a "Demolition List." Preserving existing housing stock is always preferable when structural and market conditions allow. After all, the greenest house is the one that already exists. In many cities, there is a separate evaluation for rehabilitation potential that takes place at an earlier stage. This earlier evaluation would determine the value for rehabilitation and evaluate the risks of associated investment.

However, the Tool can help to identify rehabilitation candidates that have mistakenly been added to the inventory of homes slated for demolition. Intervention could then prevent unnecessary demolition or deconstruction of a home that would otherwise hold its value in the market and help to stabilize neighborhood conditions.

7. Are Specialized Skills or Training Needed?

Completing the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool only requires a basic understanding of construction and assessments can be completed fairly quickly. Data points include general information obtained through site observations, followed by more detailed notes on interior quality. It is important to remember that deconstruction does not have to be all or nothing. It is possible to engage in deconstruction activities at various scales that makes sense under specific site conditions and with available resources.

Instructions:
Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool

Overview

As an alternative to traditional residential demolition, deconstruction is a way to selectively dismantle a structure to recover materials for reuse or recycling. In addition to diverting demolition wastes from landfills, deconstruction protects community health, creates deconstruction jobs, and stimulates the local materials market. The Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool provides meaningful information regarding structure condition and salvageable materials to help organizations identify the best candidates for residential deconstruction projects.

The instructions are intended to provide users with requisite information, including guidance on the assignment of values and terminology, to make the resulting product a useful tool for the organization.

1. **Where Do I Begin?**
2. **What the Tool Includes**
    a. **Site Observations & Hazards**
    b. **Damage & Deterioration**
    c. **Materials Inventory**
    d. **Special Consideration for Architectural Features**
3. **Guidance for Selecting the Best Response**
4. **Why is Completing the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Important?**
5. **Is Additional Documentation Needed?**

1. Where Do I Begin?

The general information section of the tool should be populated prior to a site visit based on available data from public records. It includes fields such as the property address, property index number (PIN), year built, and other basic information. The address and PIN are of particular importance for tracking purposes to ensure that the collected data is matched to specific property records. If linked to existing databases, the majority of this information could be automatically generated based on the PIN.

2. What the Tool Includes

2a. Site Observations & Hazards

The Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool addresses site observations and hazards prior to building characteristics. Site observations will be variable from site to site and between neighborhoods and are of general concern to the community. Depending on what is observed on site, preparation activities may differ. For example, if there are hazards that need to be mitigated – such as the presence of dogs – prior to safely deconstructing the home, this information will help bring such considerations to the attention of program management. The presence of trash, particularly if it is inside, is very important to note as it may lead to more costly deconstruction projects.

The majority of the Site Observation section can be completed outside of the home with a basic walkaround to visually assess the entire site. There are cases when this information may be used for code enforcement purposes in an effort to stabilize the community prior to demolition.

Structures built pre-1978 are likely to contain lead-based paint and asbestos products. Lead and asbestos are not addressed in the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Tool because most individuals are unable to readily affirm their presence, and these considerations should be built into the process separately for inspection by a trained environmental professional.

SITE OBSERVATIONS & HAZARDS						
Is the structure currently secured to prevent unwanted entry?	☐ Fully	☐ Partly	☐ No			
Is there room around the structure to serve as staging area?	☐ Yes	☐ No				
Presence of exterior trash?	☐ No Trash	☐ Limited Trash *(Scattered Debris)*	☐ Significant Trash *(Piles of Trash)*	☐ Large Appliances/ Bulky Furniture	☐ Impassable/ Entry Restricted	
Presence of interior trash?	☐ No Trash	☐ Limited Trash *(Scattered Debris on Floors)*	☐ Significant Trash *(Piles of Trash)*	☐ Large Appliances/ Bulky Furniture	☐ Impassable/ Entry Restricted	
Were any of the following observed on-site?	☐ Tires	☐ Abandoned cars	☐ Graffiti	☐ Signs of Drug-Use	☐ Containers of Chemicals / Oil	
If observed, how many tires are present?						
Were hazards present on-site?	☐ Dogs	☐ Bees/Wasps	☐ Excessive Dumping	☐ Excessive Mold	☐ Basement Flooding	
Is structural evaluation recommended? *(Collapse, partial collapse, or building off foundation)*	☐ Yes	☐ No				

2b. Damage & Deterioration

The Damage & Deterioration section is intended to provide an indication of the condition of materials in the structure. If, for example, there are large portions of the roof missing and clear exposure to the elements or missing windows, the chances of materials being damaged and/or deteriorated is increased, thereby making deconstruction unlikely. This is very important in understanding whether deconstruction will be a viable option. For projects in which the structure was recently occupied and in habitable condition, this section may have diminished relevance.

DAMAGE & DETERIORATION						
Major cracking of brick, wood rotting:					Yes	No
Broken or missing windows:					Yes	No
Missing brick and siding:					Yes	No
Roof damage:	Small open hole	Large open hole(s)	Portion of roof missing		Significant portion or entire roof missing	
Evidence of major fire damage:	1 *(little)*	2	3		4	5 *(lots)*
Evidence of major water damage:	1 *(little)*	2	3		4	5 *(lots)*
Are gutters/downspout operable to control water?					Yes	No

2c. Materials Inventory

The materials inventory includes the types and quantities of building elements commonly found in residential structures. This information is intended to provide estimates of effort required to deconstruct and potential revenue from deconstructed materials.

MATERIALS INVENTORY							
Roof type:		Flat	Pitched				
Siding type:	Brick	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
	Wood	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
	Stone	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
	Vinyl/Synthetic	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
	Aluminum	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
	Other: _____	1 *(little)*	2	3	4	5 *(lots)*	
Wood flooring *(number of rooms)* :		1	2	3	4	Specify:	
Have additional layers of flooring been adhered to the wood in the past?		Yes	No				
Are dimensional ceiling or floor joists observed? *(can be viewed from basement or attic)*		Yes	No				
Dimensional lumber larger than 4x4:		Yes	No				
Are walls plaster or drywall? *(total should equal 100%)*	Plaster		Partly (< 25%)	Some (25-50%)	Mostly (50-99%)	All (100%)	
	Drywall		Partly (< 25%)	Some (25-50%)	Mostly (50-99%)	All (100%)	
	Crown moulding	None	Some	A Lot			
	Casing around doors and windows *(number of rooms)*	1	2	3	4	Specify:	
	Baseboard moulding *(number of rooms)*	1	2	3	4	Specify:	
	Chair railing moulding *(number of rooms)*	1	2	3	4	Specify:	
Foundation:		Monolithic concrete	Concrete block	Combination, specify:			
Basement:		Yes	No	Partial			

2d. Special Consideration for Architectural Features

This section itemizes some of the more valuable items that should be noted when found. Both unique and standard building materials can be safely removed, resold, and ultimately used in another building. The presence of a few special items can oftentimes mean the difference between a traditional demolition and a one- or two-day deconstruction project that "skims" easily accessible items. In some cases, a real "gem" is found when the house is filled with valuable features, which may merit additional deconstruction effort. Similarly, a house slated for removal due to a future infrastructure project may be in good condition and provide a wealth of salvageable items. Tallying up the materials inside a home also provides future deconstruction contractors with a heads-up in case they need to locate a buyer for a particularly rare item.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES						
Interior:	Is a fire place mantel present and intact?	☐ Yes		Decorative architectural wrought iron	☐ Yes	
	Stair treads/railings	☐ Yes		Lighting fixtures	☐ Yes	
	Other architectural woodwork *(cornices, etc.)*	☐ Yes		Radiators	☐ Yes	
	Interior stone details *(counter, fireplace)*	☐ Yes		Registers	☐ Yes	
	Stained / leaded glass	☐ Yes		Sinks	☐ Yes	
	Solid wood doors	☐ Yes		Claw foot tub	☐ Yes	
	Door hardware	☐ Yes		☐ 1st floor	☐ 2nd floor	
	Wood framed windows	☐ Yes		Old appliances *(oven, refrigerator, etc.)*	☐ Yes	
	Built-in wood cabinetry	☐ Yes		Countertops	☐ Yes	
Exterior:	Exterior stone details *(cornerstones, window sills, walkways, etc.)*	☐ Yes				
	Iron gates/fencing	☐ Yes				
	Metal roofing	☐ Yes				

3. Guidance for Selecting the Best Response

Respondents are able to use rough estimates and descriptions to identify how the structure compares to a continuum of options. Some questions have numerical scales or percentage-based options. For questions on a numerical scale of 5, consider 1 to be less than 20 percent, 3 to be roughly half, and 5 to be over 80 percent. Empirical measurements are not necessary. When using the tool, it is good to err on the side of caution. For example, if asked to estimate a response on a scale of 1 to 5, and the user believes the response should be 2.5, use 2 as the response. The rationale of using a scale is to allow users to do quick visual survey and record estimates.

4. Why is Completing the Deconstruction Rapid Assessment Important?

Structures slated to be demolished represent a broad continuum of condition and opportunity for deconstruction or rehabilitation. Upon completion, a recommendation for deconstruction, demolition, or an additional rehabilitation assessment will be made by a central management team based on data collected and reported from the tool. This recommendation can be used for planning and management of the demolition process in cities.

5. Is Additional Documentation Needed?

It is always a good idea to have tool users photo-document each structure by taking both interior and exterior pictures during the evaluation. If the form is completed digitally or through an independently developed app, it may be possible to automatically link the images in a database. Such documentation will enable a more informed decision to be made regarding structure rehabilitation, deconstruction, or demolition.

DECONSTRUCTION RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOL

City name and/or seal. This is an opportunity for your organization to use this base form, customize it for your needs, and brand it accordingly.

GENERAL

Assessor's name:								Date:		
Address:								PIN #		
Year built:	☐	pre-1900	☐	pre-1930	☐	pre-1950	☐ pre-1978	☐	post-1978	
Occupied:	☐	Yes	☐	No						
Approx. size:										
Number of stories:	☐	1	☐	1 ½	☐	2	☐ 3	☐	more	
Number of bedrooms:	☐	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐ 4	☐	5+	
Number of bathrooms:	☐	1	☐	2	☐	3	☐ 4			

SITE OBSERVATIONS & HAZARDS

Is the structure currently secured to prevent unwanted entry?	☐	Fully	☐	Partly	☐	No					
Is there room around the structure to serve as staging area?	☐	Yes	☐	No							
Presence of exterior trash?	☐	No Trash	☐	Limited Trash *(Scattered Debris)*	☐	Significant Trash *(Piles of Trash)*	☐	Large Appliances/ Bulky Furniture	☐	Impassable/ Entry Restricted	
Presence of interior trash?	☐	No Trash	☐	Limited Trash *(Scattered Debris on Floors)*	☐	Significant Trash *(Piles of Trash)*	☐	Large Appliances/ Bulky Furniture	☐	Impassable/ Entry Restricted	
Were any of the following observed on-site?	☐	Tires	☐	Abandoned cars	☐	Graffiti	☐	Signs of Drug-Use	☐	Containers of Chemicals / Oil	
If observed, how many tires are present?											
Were hazards present on-site?	☐	Dogs	☐	Bees/Wasps	☐	Excessive Dumping	☐	Excessive Mold	☐	Basement Flooding	
Is structural evaluation recommended? *(Collapse, partial collapse, or building off foundation)*	☐	Yes	☐	No							

DAMAGE & DETERIORATION

Major cracking of brick, wood rotting:							☐	Yes	☐	No
Broken or missing windows:							☐	Yes	☐	No
Missing brick and siding:							☐	Yes	☐	No
Roof damage:	☐	Small open hole	☐	Large open hole(s)	☐	Portion of roof missing	☐	Significant portion or entire roof missing		
Evidence of major fire damage:	☐	1 *(little)*	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4	☐	5 *(lots)*
Evidence of major water damage:	☐	1 *(little)*	☐	2	☐	3	☐	4	☐	5 *(lots)*
Are gutters/downspout operable to control water?							☐	Yes	☐	No

MATERIALS INVENTORY

Roof type:		☐ Flat	☐ Pitched				
Siding type:	Brick	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
	Wood	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
	Stone	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
	Vinyl/Synthetic	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
	Aluminum	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
	Other: _____	☐ 1 *(little)*	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5 *(lots)*	
Wood flooring *(number of rooms)* :		☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	Specify:	
Have additional layers of flooring been adhered to the wood in the past?		☐ Yes	☐ No				
Are dimensional ceiling or floor joists observed? *(can be viewed from basement or attic)*		☐ Yes	☐ No				
Dimensional lumber larger than 4x4:		☐ Yes	☐ No				
Are walls plaster or drywall? *(total should equal 100%)*	Plaster		☐ Partly *(< 25%)*	☐ Some *(25-50%)*	☐ Mostly *(50-99%)*	☐ All *(100%)*	
	Drywall		☐ Partly *(< 25%)*	☐ Some *(25-50%)*	☐ Mostly *(50-99%)*	☐ All *(100%)*	
	Crown moulding	☐ None	☐ Some	☐ A Lot			
	Casing around doors and windows *(number of rooms)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	Specify:	
	Baseboard moulding *(number of rooms)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	Specify:	
	Chair railing moulding *(number of rooms)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	Specify:	
Foundation:		☐ Monolithic concrete	☐ Concrete block	Combination, specify:			
Basement:		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Partial			

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Interior:	Is a fire place mantel present and intact?	☐ Yes	Decorative architectural wrought iron	☐ Yes
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	Other architectural woodwork *(cornices, etc.)*	☐ Yes	Radiators	☐ Yes
	Interior stone details *(counter, fireplace)*	☐ Yes	Registers	☐ Yes
	Stained / leaded glass	☐ Yes	Sinks	☐ Yes
	Solid wood doors	☐ Yes	Claw foot tub	☐ Yes
	Door hardware	☐ Yes	☐ 1st floor	☐ 2nd floor
	Wood framed windows	☐ Yes	Old appliances *(oven, refrigerator, etc.)*	☐ Yes
	Built-in wood cabinetry	☐ Yes	Countertops	☐ Yes
Exterior:	Exterior stone details *(cornerstones, window sills, walkways, etc.)*	☐ Yes		
	Iron gates/fencing	☐ Yes		
	Metal roofing	☐ Yes		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS & NOTES

Partnership Development Guide

Purpose

When redeveloping a specific property or planning a future redevelopment, you will likely be in need of funding. It is extremely important to develop partnerships with local organizations who can donate materials or other resources that will get your project off the ground.

Communicate early and often

In order to develop a solid relationship with funding partners, you must **identify** potential organizations. Find the right person to contact and call or set up a meeting to discuss the products or services they will be able to donate. It's important to **contact them early** on, even before you have started to execute your project, because they might require certain lead times in order to gather the resources.

Equally important is to **follow up** throughout the planning process. Updating your development partners on your progress will keep them engaged and let them know that their contributions are being put to good use and are appreciated. Use your best judgment to determine how best to provide these updates.

Once you have established useful contacts, keep a running list on file containing each organization's contact information and type of resource they can provide for future projects. Use the **Partnership Outreach List template** spreadsheet to keep track.

Determine what type of resources you need

Depending on the project type, you might need different kinds of resources.

Volunteers
For instance, you might benefit from enlisting volunteers to help with phone calls, community outreach, or to support an event. You might create a resource list of organizations such as churches or nonprofits that can provide volunteer staff time.

Materials
On the other hand, partnering with a supply company such as Lowe's Home Improvement will be useful in securing building or other tangible materials.

Direct funding
Lastly, you might need direct sources of funding, either in the form of a grant or a loan. In this case, it will be beneficial to create and maintain partnerships with local banks.

Know who to contact

Now that you've put together a list of different organizations and businesses in your community that can provide volunteers, materials and/or funding, it will be useful to note the right person within those

organizations to contact. For instance, your local Lowe's might be able to provide a limited amount of materials for your project, but since they are a national company, they might also have a regional or national program that offers a more substantial donation that can move your project along. It's important to ask your local contact if they can connect you with others who can provide a larger or more significant amount of resources.

Partner incentives

It might take some extra convincing to bring certain partner organizations on board. In your initial and ongoing conversations with these partners, inform them of any tax credits or incentives, recognition or publicity that they will receive by donating resources to your project. Also highlight the benefits to the community that the project will add such as:

- Creates jobs
- Encourages business development
- Revitalizes the neighborhood
- Improves safety and walkability
- Creates housing opportunities
- Strengthens existing community
- Preserves natural beauty
- Creates mixed land use