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REVIEW



Residential Demolition Bid Specification Development Tool



IML Committee Leadership Changes



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On the Road to Reuse:

RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITION BID SPECIFICATION DEVELOPMENT TOOL

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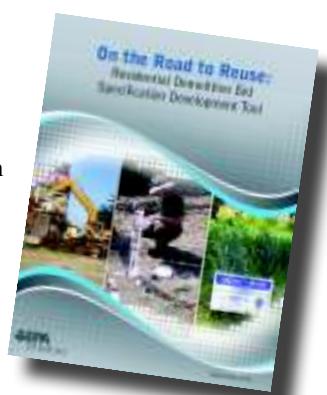
Residential demolitions are on the rise in Illinois and surrounding states that have been hard hit by the foreclosure crisis and shifting economies. Communities are working to stabilize neighborhoods stressed with high vacancy rates by demolishing abandoned residential buildings and repurposing vacant lots. Many of these abandoned residential properties eventually find their way into the hands of county or municipal governments through tax foreclosures. As local governments find themselves owning an increasing number of abandoned residential buildings that are beyond repair, a demolition program may be necessary to tackle the blighting influence of deserted structures.

IMPROVED DEMOLITION PRACTICES BETTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE VACANT LOT REUSE

Cities and counties should consider the use of environmentally beneficial demolition practices that can result in long- and short-term environmental benefits and set the stage for vacant lot revitalization. In contrast, poorly managed demolitions may violate the law, harm human health, and degrade the environment. Since large-scale demolition projects often occur in Environmental Justice areas, impacts may fall disproportionately on vulnerable populations. Even when in compliance, demolitions may miss opportunities to leverage the financial investment in better materials management and deconstruction practices.

A new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency toolkit highlights technical features in the demolition process that can expedite local stabilization strategies through better site preparation for eventual reuse. If current demolition practices were improved, the demolition activity could potentially assist communities in the transformation of vacant properties into new services and opportunities, adding value to a neighborhood.

The toolkit is available online at www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-09/documents/road-to-reuse-residential-demolition-bid-specification-201309.pdf.



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ON THE ROAD TO REUSE CONTINUES

The EPA Region 5 Residential Demolition Bid Specification Development Tool highlights environmental issues associated with residential demolitions and lists specific practices that can be incorporated into the demolition contracting process to achieve better environmental outcomes. Also included in the document is a list of existing regulations and best management practices concerning residential demolitions.

This toolkit identifies environmentally sensitive activities of residential demolition from pre-planning to site rehabilitation. For each activity, the toolkit provides decision-making information and bid specification language to help local government officials update their bid specification documents. Ultimately, the use of environmentally beneficial demolition practices can set the stage for green infrastructure construction, urban agriculture and vacant lot revitalization.

Performing greener demolitions not only has environmental benefits, but also better prepares the vacant lots for future reuse. Benefits that communities may achieve include:

- Reduced air, water and land pollution.
- Improved stormwater infiltration.
- Reduced stormwater runoff.
- Greater adherence to environmental regulations.
- Improved worker safety.
- Maximized diversion of waste from landfills by increasing salvage and recycling.
- Deconstruction and reuse of building materials.
- Proper handling of hazardous waste streams.
- Improved end-use appearance.
- Stabilized and revitalized neighborhoods.

COMMUNITIES CAN USE THIS TOOL FOR PLANNING AND PROCUREMENT

This toolkit identifies the environmentally sensitive activities associated with demolishing residences, from pre-planning to demolition to site rehabilitation. These activities include hazardous materials abatement, fill material selection and placement, material recycling or deconstruction. For each of the actions, the toolkit provides decision-making information and suggests bid specification language to assist local government officials in updating their bid documents. The toolkit is not intended to be a stand-alone bid specification. Local users should identify areas of improvement and then select sections to be inserted into their existing procurement document. Local procurement laws and practices, soil conditions, materials markets, climate and even regional vegetation needs can affect how a specification can be adapted for local use.

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Many cities are exploring urban farming, creating stormwater retention infrastructure, waterfront parks, open space, habitat creation, urban forests, and other environmentally beneficial ways to use vacant land. However, current demolition practices that allow substantial impervious surfaces to remain (driveways, foundations, parking areas, etc.) do not adequately prepare vacant parcels for these reuses. Left in place, these impervious surfaces inhibit stormwater infiltration and become obstacles to the reuse of the property through imposed costs on the next developer.



COOK COUNTY SEES OPPORTUNITY IN DEMOLITION DEBRIS DIVERSION ORDINANCE

A recent Cook County, Ill., ordinance seeks out opportunity to divert demolition materials from landfills and nurture an emerging market for building material reuse. Passed in 2012, the Demolition Debris Diversion Ordinance requires 70 percent of debris for all demolition projects be recycled, and residential properties divert 5 percent of debris for reuse. This ordinance covers the 132 municipalities in Cook County (other than Chicago, which already had its own demolition diversion requirements). In a little over a year, Cook County tracking indicates projects have recycled more than 170,750 tons, and salvaged 58,800 tons of debris.

Cities within Cook County will need to think strategically about demolition material reuse in order to comply with the new ordinance. At the same time, there may be an opportunity to consider other demolition practices that can benefit the environment and economy. After all, you only get one chance to make a first demolition.