

Stakeholder Integration Checklist

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05 Stakeholder Integration Checklist

Integrated restoration projects and integrated revitalization programs integrate along two axes: 1) The twelve sectors of restorative development, and 2) The four stakeholder groups (business/financial, government, NGO/citizen groups, and academic). The Integrated Revitalization Guide offers two checklists to help strategists, designers, and planners quickly and easily ensure the maximum level of integration along both of these axes.

The Asset Integration Checklist integrates the twelve sectors by identifying three key factors for each of the twelve sectors. Each project or program can be audited according to these 36 factors in order to ensure that it contributes to the restoration of all other applicable sectors affecting that community's or region's revitalization.

The Stakeholder Integration Checklist (below) helps integrate the four stakeholder groups. With effective integration, a revitalization program should encounter fewer project delays (such as due to stakeholder groups who learn of a project at the last minute), and be less vulnerable to being held hostage to any particular stakeholder group, such as changing political regimes/ agendas.

Below, you will find the five categories of factors that usually need to be “re-worked” to help a community, region, or nation attract and nurture more “re” activities: restoration, remediation, renovation, replacement, reuse, renewal, regeneration, revitalization, etc. This Stakeholder Integration Checklist of the Integrated Revitalization Guide is designed to make your area more attractive to restorative investment, and more conducive to revitalizing activities. [The Asset Integration Checklist of the I.R. Guide, on the other hand, is designed to help ensure that your “re” projects contribute as much as possible to the revitalization of your built, natural, and social environments.]

The steps below will help ensure more and better involvement of all four stakeholder groups (government, business/financial, non-profit/citizen, and academic) in your area's renewal. This should, in turn, increase the quantity and/or quality of restorative development in your area. Note: The Stakeholder Integration Checklist (below) of the Integrated Revitalization Guide is written from the point of view of public agencies, so the “government” stakeholder group isn't addressed separately, as is the case with the other three stakeholder groups (business/financial, non-profit/citizen, and academic):

1. Education, R&D, and Business Development

OVERVIEW: Integrate with local sources of research, development, education, and workforce. Educational institutions are key, including high schools, community colleges, trade schools, and universities. Many types of restoration are labor-intensive, providing jobs for those with more limited education. Restoration also involves specialized new skills that are not commonly taught, and which don't require a 4-year degree or higher to put into practice. R&D of new technologies and development of new, restoration/revitalization-specific graduate degrees in planning, engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, economics, public policy, life sciences, and a broad spectrum of other disciplines will not only provide the skilled labor force you need, but will help position your area as a global restoration economy leader.

[] A. Academic: Have at least one local institution of higher education join RI's Academic Network (there's no cost). This will aid them in their efforts to create new curricula and degrees that will position graduates for trades and executive careers in the fast-growing global (and local) restoration economy. It will also help them orient current curricula towards restorative development, so that engineers, architects, and entrepreneurs can graduate with degrees bearing an emphasis on restoring the built and/or natural environments, and planners or policy graduates can graduate with degrees bearing an emphasis on the redevelopment and revitalization of communities and regions.

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[] B. Non-profit: Have at least one local non-profit/NGO join RI's Partner Network (there's no cost). This will aid them in re-orienting their current programs (environmental, heritage, sustainable development, etc.) towards restorative development. Non-profits are often the best vehicle for the creation of integrated revitalization initiatives that span multiple jurisdictions, ethnic groups, etc. The non-profit can also serve to connect graduates of the restorative educational and training courses (above) with employment opportunities in local projects, and business opportunities for those with an entrepreneurial bent.

[] C. Business/financial: When contracting redevelopment, remediation, restoration, and other "re" public projects involve the business and financial interests at an early stage. This will ensure that your outside designers, contractors, planners, and other consultants speak the language of restorative development, and understand (and use) the concepts and tools of integrated revitalization (such as this Integrated Revitalization Guide). That way, your vision and strategy will work harmoniously with their methods, and you won't waste valuable time and effort educating them and changing their practices. These firms, many of which will be national or international in nature, will also provide career paths for graduates of your local restorative development education and training courses (above).

2. Vision, Public Dialogue, Phasing, & Strategy

OVERVIEW: Create an integrated revitalization vision for your area, which will lead to the creation of an integrated revitalization strategy.

1. It should address all twelve sectors of restorable assets (the ones relevant to your area, anyway);
2. It should be in trimodal format: You can't accomplish what you don't measure, so your planning, budgeting, and reporting must clearly differentiate all three modes of the development lifecycle: new development/sprawl, maintenance/conservation, and restorative development. [Note: Even sustainable development strategies usually fail to differentiate the three modes of development, which results in a confusing mix of projects being labeled "green" or "sustainable"; some of them truly green, and others highly destructive. All three modes can be "greened", but the biggest payoff is in greening your restorative development (which is inherently sustainable). Finding greener ways to do sprawl developments is like trying to create a healthier form of cancer, rather than trying to eliminate it.]
3. It should be integrated with a GIS database;
4. It should integrate (primarily via shared taxonomy) with other jurisdictions that will affect (or be affected by) your revitalization strategy, as well as with related regional, state, and federal programs;
5. It should be an evolving document, constantly provided with restoration accomplished, newly-discovered restoration needs, new resources, lessons learned, and new insights; and,
6. It should be designed to launch (or accelerate) the self-sustaining feedback loop of increasing public and private investment in restorative development known as "restoration contagion". Investors don't care as much about the condition an asset or community is in as they do the direction in which its value is going. The perception that an area is coming back to life adds to the value of all assets within that area.

[] A. Form an Integrated Revitalization Coalition. Members of this coalition would be primarily recruited from the three categories of organizations (identified in #1 above) with expertise in integrated revitalization. This coalition should be involved in the vision, strategy, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of all restorative development in your area.

[] B. Make a public commitment to restorative development as the dominant economic development paradigm for your future. One way to demonstrate this (and earn extra points) is to hold an annual "**revitalization summit**" that brings together all the stakeholders (government, business, academic, non-profit, citizen groups, etc.) for a day of education, consensus-building, visioning, and plan review.

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[] C. Create and/or support an effective entity for transparent public/private dialogue about development. This can greatly facilitate and speed citizen approval of projects, and can help ameliorate or prevent undesirable effects of revitalization, such as the disruption of older neighborhoods via gentrification, the demolition of treasured buildings, etc. This could be a new non-profit organization, it could be a periodic symposium hosted by a local college, or it could be housed in your Department of Restorative Development (see below).

[] D. Scope: The first step towards the integrated revitalization of your area (see the 3-Step Process) is to establish the appropriate scope for the program: neighborhood, city, county, watershed, estuary, region, nation, etc. In some cases, you'll need to expand your scope to create the necessary critical mass of support. In other cases, you'll need to tighten your scope, focusing all resources on a single neighborhood or community, so it can serve as an inspirational model to others in the region. Establishing the proper scope should take place long before planning, and even before the strategy is devised.

[] E. Phasing: To make maximum use of limited funds--while ensuring that the program increases its momentum over years or decades--a sequenced approach should be used, which makes use of new financial resources, as they are attracted to the area by revitalization achieved in earlier phases.

- I. The goal is a self-sustaining loop of increased property values, which leads to increased tax revenues, which leads to increased public investment in restorative development, which leads to increased policy support for those investments, which leads to increased private investment in restorative development, which increases property values, and so on.

3. Policy, Regulatory, and Legal

OVERVIEW: Develop policies, legal assets, and alliances that encourage a greater quantity and quality of restorative development, and defend your community or area against powerful new development (sprawl) interests. Local governments are often overwhelmed by the legal sophistication, the practiced arguments, and the economic (or political) power of large corporations and agencies who force development projects and policies on them that are not in the local area's best interests. This includes not just the "usual suspects" such as big box retailers and publicly-traded housing developers, but also unexpected ones such as national postal services, federal departments of educational and housing, international development banks, etc.

- I. Avoid confusing effect with cause. For instance, if you wish to attract a particular demographic to a distressed area that has been targeted for revitalization (such as the "Creative Class"), remember that the key to attracting them is to create an environment that is conducive to revitalization, not to overtly market to them. The "Creative Class"--and other pioneers of distressed area redevelopment--are drawn by situations that encourage the purchase and renovation of decrepit housing, and that facilitate small-scale entrepreneurial activities (such as zoning for live-work space). Marginalized groups (artists, gays, "bohemians", immigrants, etc.) want to create their own supportive, stimulating environment; they are repelled by attempts to manipulate and harness their lifestyle by redevelopment agency marketing campaigns. In other words, prepare the soil, and let it seed itself in whatever way is appropriate for that area. Don't try to artificially manufacture what evolved organically in some other community.

Discontinue policies and practices that work at cross-purposes to restorative development, such as those that directly or indirectly subsidize sprawl. An example would be full-cost accounting that makes sprawl developers shoulder the true costs of greenfield development, such as the loss of ecosystem services (clean air, clean water, greenspace, recreation, etc.), the costs of building new schools and new infrastructure; collecting restoration deposits from resource extraction companies, and from developers who construct short-lived assets (non-restorable structures with less than 50-year useful lives), that will become piles of trash that need to be removed and disposed of or recycled. Other undesirable practices include unnecessary destruction of natural and cultural resources, fragmentation of neighborhoods and habitat with poorly-designed infrastructure, etc.

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- [] A. Allow and encourage leading-edge restorative development tools to be used in your area, such as TDRs (Transfer of Development Rights), TIFs (Tax Increment Financing), tax credits (historic, brownfield, etc.), landpooling, etc. Tax credits (and other incentives, where appropriate) should be transferable. They should reward quality (as opposed to encouraging the lowest possible quality). An example of the latter are brownfield remediation tax credit programs that only offset cleanup costs equal to the “least amount necessary”. The flexibility created by transferability helps encourage participation by a broader spectrum of stakeholders.
- [] B. Offer expedited approvals and variances for restorative projects, with extra priority for the most integrated projects (the Asset Integration section of this I.R. Guide can be used to rate them). In other words, restorative projects would go to the front of your queue for approval. Time is money to developers, so this encourages them to renew the capacity of what you’ve already developed--and what’s been damaged along the way--as opposed to replacing lasting assets (such as watersheds and heritage) with short-lived assets (like malls and big-box retail).
- [] C. Transparent Approval Processes: Last-minute objections to projects are the most expensive and damaging. Involving all four stakeholder groups in regulatory meetings and planning from the very beginning minimizes such disruptions.
- [] D. Prioritizing projects: All other things being equal, first priority should always be given to integrated restoration projects. Revitalization works far more efficiently and synergistically when both the project managers/designers and the community (or regional) planners/program officers take an integrated approach. RI’s Integrated Revitalization Guide helps you design projects that integrate with the area’s revitalization program, and helps communities and regions create integrated revitalization programs.
- [] E. Involvement of your Integrated Revitalization Coalition in the initiatives listed in this section.

4. Administration, Funding, and Budget Management

OVERVIEW: The eventual goal is to make restorative development the primary basis of economic growth in your area, so that it, rather than new development (sprawl), is the default mode. That will take time, so you’ll need a dedicated arm of government (or at the very least, an individual) to champion the shift from the inside.

- I. It’s no secret that it’s the civil service--career bureaucrats--along with wealthy stakeholders who exert the most control over what happens in a community or region. Temporary officeholders (elected officials) can seldom effect lasting change in opposition to those with lasting influence. Alternatives to this reality range from dictatorship to collaboration. This I.R. Guide makes use of the integrative (nonpartisan) nature of restorative development to advance the latter (collaboration). This can bring wealthy (i.e. influential) stakeholders into the fold, but civil service (bureaucratic) obstacles often require more forceful, surgical approaches. Fortunately, this sort of structural change is often within the ability of elected officials, whether they be individuals or councils. Being able to offer examples of communities and regions that have successfully transitioned for sprawl development to restorative development makes the process far easier.
- [] A. Create a Department of Restorative Development (or Office of Integrated Revitalization, or similar) to support both public and private revitalization efforts. They would work closely with your Office of Planning (and would likely merge with them, once restorative development is well-imbedded in public policy and practices).
 - I. The department should embrace, serve, and tap the resources of all four stakeholder groups (business/finance, NGO/citizen, academic, and other regional/federal government agencies.)
 - II. It should foster a local cycle of Research (studying/evaluating local restoration projects); Teaching (disseminating the findings of that research); and Application (incorporating the learning into new policies, tools, programs, etc.). This should help ensure that a community’s revitalization competence continually increases.

- [] B. Appoint a Director of Integrated Revitalization (or Director of Restorative Development, or similar) as a first step, if the creation of an entire department isn't presently possible.
- [] C. Establish an ongoing funding process that addresses all aspects of the overall integrated revitalization program. The most reliable way to accomplish this is for your Integrated Revitalization Coalition to address each of the restorable assets identified during your use of the Asset Integration Checklist, and review the local, county, state/provincial, federal, business, and non-profit/foundation funds available for each. The integration resulting from the use of that checklist will make available crossover funding from non-obvious sources. For instance:
 - I. Integrating agricultural, watershed, and ecosystem restoration enables ecosystem restoration projects to tap agricultural and watershed funding, and vice versa.
 - II. Integrating infrastructure, heritage, and brownfields projects enables historic restoration projects to tap funding and tax credits available from brownfields and infrastructure programs, and vice versa.
- [] D. Hitchhike on mandated renewal actions. It's often easier to improve an activity that's going to happen anyway, than to start an initiative from scratch. When some form of remediation or redevelopment is required by law (mining site reclamation/restoration, wetland mitigation, infrastructure upgrade, etc.), communities can often use that activity as a critical enable...a starting point for a larger revitalization effort. For instance:
 - I. The mandated activity can be supplemented with synergetic projects on the same property, or on adjacent properties;
 - II. The quality and value of that activity can be enhanced via supplemental restoration agendas and funding.

New public dialogues/groups/programs can be formed around that action to maintain the momentum towards renewal that was begun by the mandated activity.
- [] E. Involvement of your Integrated Revitalization Coalition in the initiatives listed in this section.

5. Technology, Planning, & Project Management

OVERVIEW: Leading edge management would make use of modern research into the underlying dynamics of complex systems (cities, economies, etc.).

- I. An excellent example would be seven proven factors that contribute to all healthy living communities (natural and human): Flows, Internal models (e.g. trimodal perspective), Nonlinearity, Diversity (e.g. 4 stakeholder groups), Building blocks, Aggregation, and Tagging (e.g. the 12 sectors). If you're not familiar with the research into complex adaptive systems (CAS), read the work of John Holland (books such as *Hidden Order and Emergence*) and other faculty at the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Complex Systems, as well as at the Santa Fe Institute.
- [] A. Create a GIS database of restored and restorable assets in your jurisdiction, in all twelve sectors of restorable assets. Effective planning and execution depends on accurate, complete, accessible information. However, most current systems still assume that economic development is synonymous with sprawl, which uses "new" land and "virgin" resources, mostly trading irreplaceable, long-lasting assets (such as farmland and watersheds) for short-lived assets (such as shopping centers and housing subdivisions). Restorative development is instead based on renewing the capacity of what has already been developed, and on restoring natural resources that were damaged along the way. In other words, it's based on improving our natural and built environments, rather than on extracting natural resources and ignoring or demolishing useful built resources.
 - I. They don't allow public agencies to allocate funds according to all three modes of the development lifecycle--new development (sprawl), maintenance/conservation, and restorative development--so restoration/remediation/replacement projects usually requiring special funding, such as emergency bond issues.

II. Nor do they allow users to perceive and address an area's inventory of restorable assets. A user interface that allows plans and budgets to be seen in a "trimodal" perspective.

III. All four stakeholder groups should have access and input into the database.

[] B. Involvement of your Integrated Revitalization Coalition in the initiatives listed in this section.

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To clarify the difference between a **project** and a **program**:

- **Projects** have deadlines, or endpoints, and are focused on restoring a specific asset: a structure, a watershed, a brownfield, etc.
- **Programs** are ongoing initiatives comprising multiple projects--such as community revitalization plans or regional economic development initiatives--and usually have broader socioeconomic agendas. One goal of an integrated revitalization program is to attract more and better restoration projects. Integrated restoration projects work best when they are supported by an integrated revitalization program.