



*The Leviticus Fund offers the following best practices, plus the Sample Projects sheets for land conservation, market sale, mixed-use and adaptive reuse, as part of our initial learnings from our faith-based property research. We hope that this information inspires faith-based organizations to continue discovering ways to re-vision their land and buildings in the spirit of mission and stewardship.*

## **Questions to Consider Before You Begin**

### RECOGNIZE THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

*Begin with a careful analysis of current and future needs of the community. Knowing why the community is seeking to dispose of the property and what it hopes to gain can help establish priorities in reuse and set parameters for what is possible.*

- What does the community look like now?
- What will the community look like in 5, 10 or 15 years?
- What are the current needs of the community?
- What will the community need in 5, 10 or 15 years?
- What are the concerns that are driving this process?

### ROOT ALL DISCUSSION IN THE COMMUNITY'S VALUES

*Keep the Religious Community's mission and values at the forefront of the process. If possible, schedule a retreat to discuss these issues, rather than just a series of meetings. Make sure to include time for meditation and prayer throughout the process.*

- What is the history of the religious community?
- What was the community like at its peak?
- What is the religious community's current and future mission?
- What does the religious community need to accomplish its mission?
- What is the role of this property in that mission?
- Are there opportunities to plan the community's legacy by repurposing the property and/or buildings?

## IDENTIFY THE NATURE OF THE PROPERTY

*Determine the nature of the property in question. Consider whether the goal is to preserve or maintain a specific building or property or to discover the mission or ministry that the building or property might be able to offer.*

- How much property is in question?
- Is the property undeveloped green space or are there existing structures?
- Are there any unique characteristics of the property that would lend it to one use over another?
- How much is the property costing the community to maintain each year?
- What are the operating costs for the entire site?
- Are there any deferred maintenance issues or necessary infrastructure investments?
- Does the property serve a purpose within the local community?

## CONSIDER ANY POTENTIAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE PROPERTY

*Confirm whether there are any legal, local or canonical restrictions on the sale or use of the property.*

- What does the property zoning allow?
- What is the legal ownership structure of the parcel(s) comprising the property?
- Is the congregation restricted in the sale or development of the property in any way?
- What is the nature of the area around the property and does that limit its sale or use in any way?
- What types of developments have previously been allowed or not allowed in your area?



## DETERMINE WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS

*Do not allow a need for consensus to derail the project. Try to find a proposal that all decision-makers can support rather than one on which they all agree.*

- What is the tradition of decision-making within the community and how does it apply to this process?
- Who in the religious community will be involved in decision-making?
- What is the role of the local community in this process?
- Are there any additional stakeholders in the local community who should be involved in the process?

## SEEK EXPERT HELP

*There are many organizations ready to assist religious communities with the redevelopment or disposal of property. A project that serves a recognized, nonreligious need in the local community may be eligible for tax credits or grants from foundations or government agencies. An expert in development, land preservation or community development may be able to identify viable funding sources that can help the project along. Please see the Resources sheet for a list of such businesses and the geographies they cover.*

- There are organizations that specialize in helping shepherd religious communities through the land stewardship process.
- Land Trusts assist in preserving open space or agricultural land through conservation easements and land acquisitions.
- As a nonprofit lender, Leviticus can provide financing for community development projects that directly serve low-income individuals and families, especially those at very low or extremely low incomes or needing supportive services to address special needs.

## REALIZE THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

*A market-value sale is not the only solution. See the Sample Projects sheets for examples of completed land conservation, mixed use development, adaptive reuse projects as well as market sales.*

- Land Conservation: Projects where open space is preserved through a conservation easement, donation or land purchase.
- Mixed-Use Development: Development projects that blend residential, commercial, cultural or institutional uses in a single project.



- Adaptive Reuse: Projects that reuse an old site or building for a purpose other than what it was originally built or designed for.
- Market Sale: Property that is sold for a maximum, market-value price.