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PHASE ONE RESULTS OF NANTUCKET BUILDING MATERIALS SALVAGE STUDY PUBLISHED

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NANTUCKET, MA:

At least 4,500 tons of building construction, renovation and demolition materials on Nantucket could be salvaged for reuse rather than shipped to a dump, dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, according to research commissioned by ReMain Nantucket and Nantucket Preservation Trust.

[The study](#), led by Boston-based consultants EBP, also found that reusing materials will require Nantucket to build a salvage facility, and bring in skilled tradespeople with expertise in deconstruction rather than demolition. The research is the first phase of a two-part look at how Nantucket might implement building policies that support sustainability without imposing significant costs on the community.

“While the results of EBP’s interviews and research provide a staggering look at the amount of waste generated on Nantucket, we’re heartened to learn about a quarter of the materials could be reused,” said Mary Bergman, Executive Director of the Nantucket Preservation Trust. “Material reuse is part of our history and could be a key to our future as a more resilient community.”

Until the last century, Nantucket routinely repurposed building components and even complete structures. Today, more than 17,000 tons of waste head to landfills off-island each year, as home construction and renovation demand on Nantucket increase. Town building permit data for the fiscal years 2017 to 2021 catalog an annual average of 385 residential renovations, 304 new construction permits and 35 single-family residential demolitions. The pace of construction on Nantucket shows no signs of slowing down: building permits for single-family homes increased from 610 in 2020 to 948 in 2021.

“From this study, we hope that salvage efforts already being made by concerned tradespersons and residents to repurpose useful materials will see their stewardship expanded through a more formalized and united approach to better support our community—and the planet,” said Virna Gonzalez, a project manager with ReMain Nantucket, which funded the first phase of the study.

“We at ReMain Nantucket are very encouraged by the results of this comprehensive report and are glad to have been part of it,” said ReMain Nantucket Executive Director Cecil Barron Jensen.

“It will be fascinating to see how the community comes together to respond to the compelling information and quantified facts about the construction waste we generate annually.”

The study also discovered:

- Stakeholders are generally positive on creating a salvage facility on-island.
- While deconstruction is more expensive than demolition, the additional cost is not significant relative to median and average home prices on Nantucket.
- Deconstruction requires workers with specific skills, knowledge and experience. The Nantucket workforce is limited by the high cost of living on Nantucket.
- Initial research reveals there are several potential operators and locations for a salvage facility, but costs are a concern.

EBP and Nantucket Preservation Trust will continue the study with a second phase, beginning in mid-May, that will explore strategies created by other communities to reduce construction and demolition waste.

[Nantucket Preservation Trust](#) is a nonprofit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and promoting Nantucket’s unique architectural heritage and sense of place through documentation, education, and preservation action.

[ReMain Nantucket](#) and [ReMain Ventures](#) are funded by Wendy Schmidt and her husband Eric to support the economic, social and environmental vitality of the island of Nantucket. In addition to providing grants and sponsorships to support sustainable and cultural initiatives across the island, ReMain Nantucket has worked in conjunction with ReMain Ventures to revitalize the downtown district year-round through the preservation of historic buildings that are home to a mix of nonprofit and commercial businesses.

[EBP](#), formerly EDR Group, is a Boston-based company that provides state-of-the-art economic analysis and research support planning in sustainable transportation, regional development, energy and infrastructure.

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