Real Estate Appraisal Preparation Tips

WisDOT Bureau of Technical Services (link to: Standard Before and After Appraisal Report)

It is possible to create an appraisal entirely in MS Word. However, it can be difficult to manage imagery and tables in Word. This document provides some tips on using Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Professional to prepare an appraisal.

The main benefit of using these methods is that the appraisal sections are created using the most appropriate tool. Tables are created in Excel where calculations are easy to perform. Photo layouts and maps are created in PowerPoint where image placement and manipulation is easy. Another benefit is that tabular data is entered once and then reused everywhere it appears.

This is not an automated appraisal system. You may find that you prefer to use some of these suggestions and not others. That's fine. Use what works best for you.

Process Overview

1. Using Standard Before and After Appraisal template, prepare sections 1-5 in Word as usual.
2. Enter tabular data in Excel. Link the Excel tables and the Word document where appropriate.
3. Remove headers, footers and section 6 from the Word document.
4. Create section 6 pages in PowerPoint.
5. Combine all the pages into a single document with Acrobat.
6. Add page numbers, headers and footers with Acrobat.

Note: In addition to Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Acrobat, you may find the MS Power Tool Image Resizer (free from Microsoft) useful for dealing with imagery.

Project Folder Setup

If you don't already do this, consider setting up a folder for each parcel. You can use a system like the one described below.

1. Setup a file folder for the project. Name the folder with the 8 digit Real Estate Project ID.

2. Make as many parcel folders as there are appraisal parcels on the project. (Name the parcel folders to match the parcel numbers.)

3. Each folder will contain a unique copy of the template files.

4. You will end up with a project folder and several parcel folders that will look something like this.

    Important: once you start work on the appraisals, do not rename or move the folders.
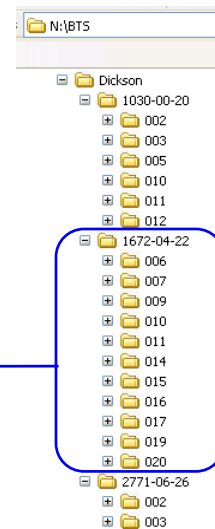
Template Files

In addition to the WisDOT Standard Before and After Appraisal Report template, these 4 files are available for preparing appraisals. They are contained in the appraisal-prep.zip which is available from the same location as the Standard Before and After Appraisal template. Each parcel folder should contain a unique copy of each.

	Name ▲	Size	Type
Tips – read this first	appraisal-TIPS.doc	419 KB	Microsoft Word [
Save tabular data here	data.xls	41 KB	Microsoft Excel \
Prepare pages for section 6	landscape.ppt	26 KB	Microsoft Powerl
	portrait.ppt	35 KB	Microsoft Powerl

Use Word to Prepare Appraisal Sections 1-5

Use the WisDOT Standard Before and After Appraisal template to prepare the appraisal as usual. Here are 2 tips. 1. When including imagery in Word, use tables to control the location of the imagery. 2. When including tabular data, use Excel to enter and format the data as well as to perform calculations, then link the Word document to the data in Excel. When changes are made, change only the Excel file. The Word document will be automatically updated. Detailed instructions for each of these tips follows.

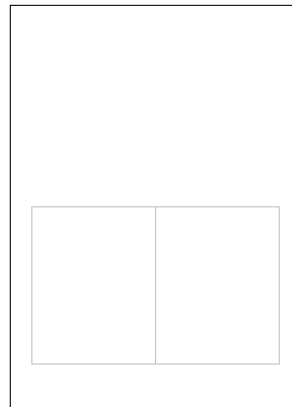**When including imagery in Word, use tables to help control the location of the imagery.**

Decide the numbers of table rows and columns based on how many images you want to include.
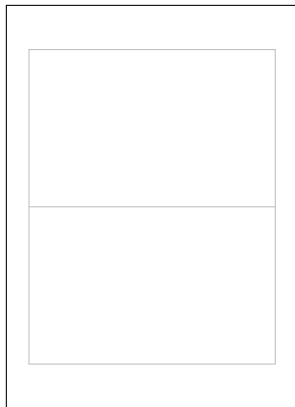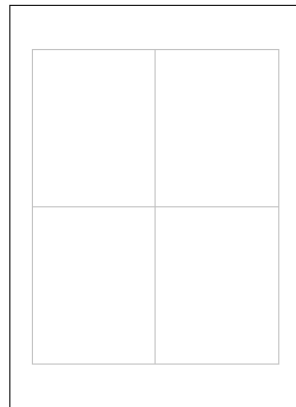
|		
1 column, 2 rows	2 columns, 2 rows	2 columns, 1 row

Position the cursor in the Word document where the images will go.

1. Click Table > Insert > Table.

2. Specify the number of columns and rows and click OK.

Make Word Table Borders Invisible

This is not necessary but may provide a better looking document.

1. Click in the table.

2. Click Table > Table Properties.

3. Click Borders and Shading.

4. Under Apply to: select Table.

5. Under Setting: select None.

6. Click OK, click OK.
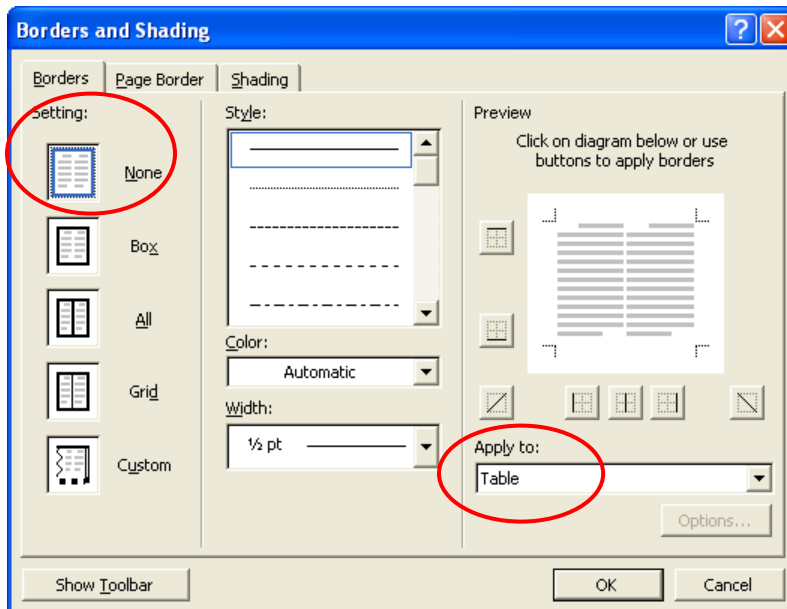
Enter Tabular Data in Excel (data.xls)

Where tables of data are needed, especially if they are used more than once, enter the data in Excel and link to them from Word (or PowerPoint). Consider using Excel for these tables: Summary of Comparable Sales, Vacant Land Before Acquisition, Improvements Before Acquisition, Vacant Land After Acquisition and Improvements After Acquisition.

1. Use the data.xls spreadsheet inside the parcel folder. The spreadsheet contains 6 tables. 1 for each of the following: Comparable Sale Data, Summary of Comparable Sales, Vacant Land Before Acquisition, Improvements Before Acquisition, Vacant Land After Acquisition and Improvements After Acquisition.

2. There are hypertext links in the spreadsheet that will jump to each of the tables.

3. Enter the appropriate data in the designated cells. You can add rows and columns, format text and perform calculations easily in Excel.

Link Word (or PowerPoint) to Excel Data

1. Open the data.xls spreadsheet and the Word (or PowerPoint) document.

2. In Excel, highlight the desired data and click Edit > Copy.
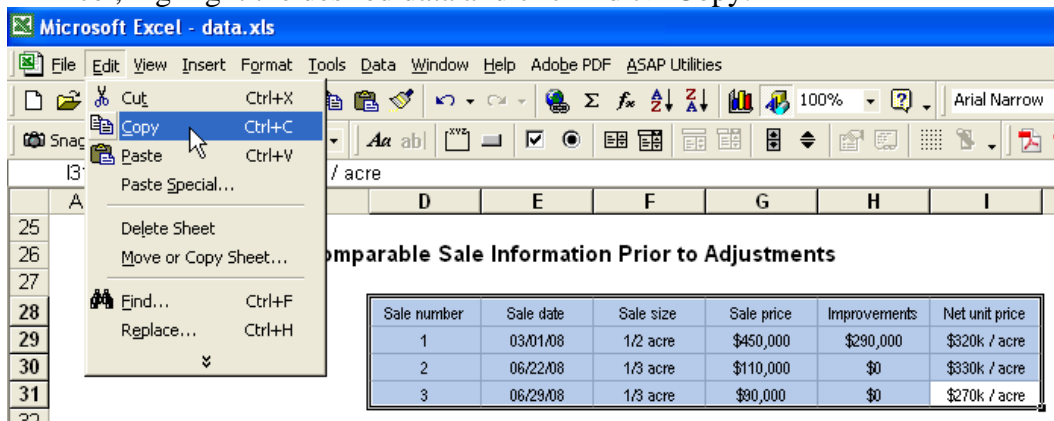
3. Go back to Word/PowerPoint.

4. Position the cursor where you want the table to appear and click Edit > Paste Special.
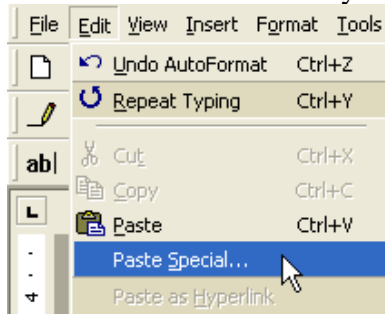
5. In the Paste Special dialog, click the Paste link button.

6. Select Microsoft Excel Worksheet Object and click OK.
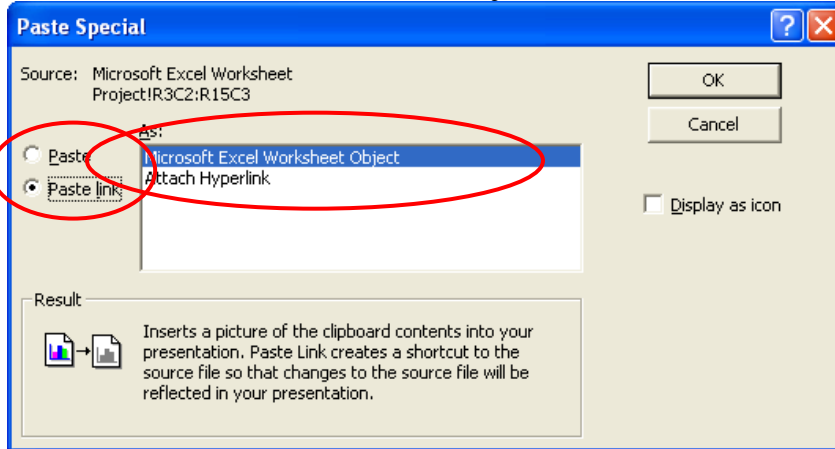
7. Move the pasted item to where you want it by clicking and dragging it.

8. Do not resizing text in Word or PowerPoint. Make all changes in Excel.

9. Click File > Save As and save your pages.

From now on, when you open the Word (or PowerPoint) document, you will see this message. If you have made changes in the Excel file, click Yes. Otherwise you can click No.
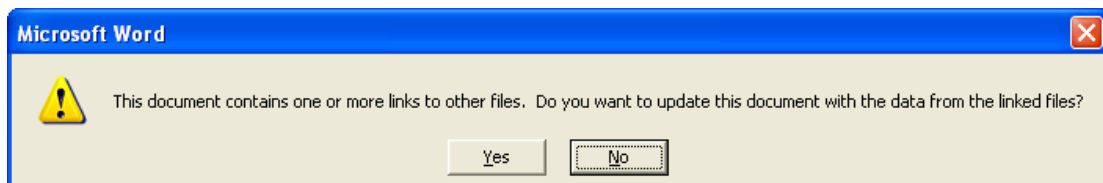
To update the Word (or PowerPoint) document without reopening it, click Edit > Links.

In the links dialog, select the appropriate source and click Update Now.
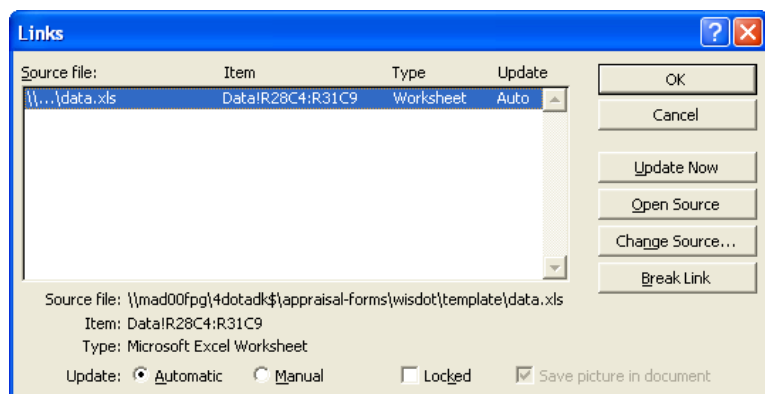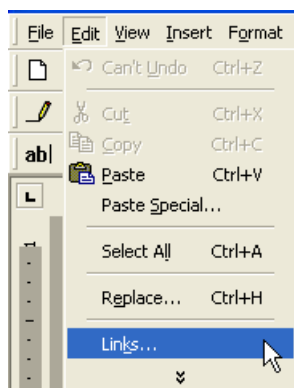
Use PowerPoint to Layout Pages with Imagery and/or Tabular Data

You already know that PowerPoint may be used as a presentation tool. Did you know that PowerPoint is also a respectable drawing tool? PowerPoint includes all the common drawing tools and shapes that you might need when preparing an appraisal. It also has one big advantage over Word. While Word constantly moves drawing elements in seemingly unpredictable ways to accommodate text, PowerPoint drawing elements stay where you place them.

There are 2 PowerPoint files in the appraisal-prep.zip file. There is one for portrait-oriented pages and one for landscape pages. They contain the blank appraisal pages shown below.

Portrait Pages
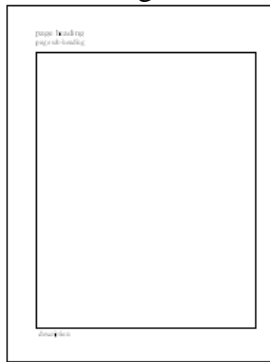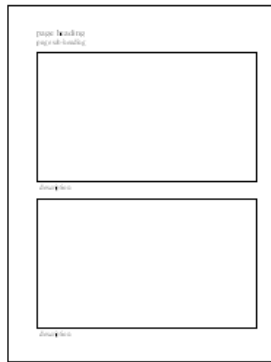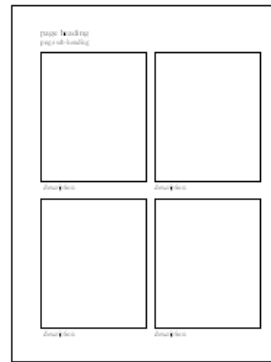
1 frame	2 frames	4 frames	comparable sales
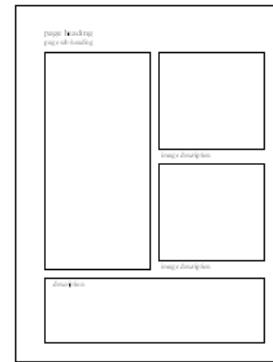
Landscape Pages
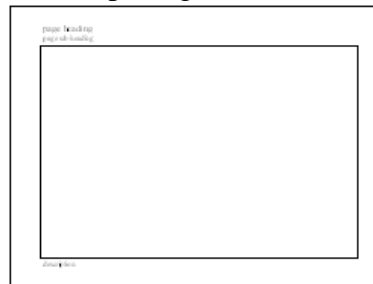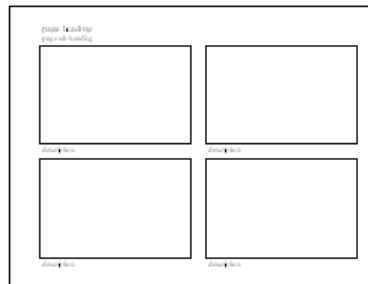
1 frame	4 frames

Do not use the original PowerPoint slides to layout appraisal pages. Always keep a blank copy of each slide. To duplicate one of the original slides:

1. Click View > Slide Sorter.

2. Select the desired slide and press Ctrl-D (duplicate) as many times as needed.

3. Click View > Normal.

Reorder PowerPoint Slides with the Slide Sorter

To reorder the PowerPoint slides, follow the procedure below.

1. Click View > Slide Sorter.
2. Change the Zoom level to 100 so you can see what you're doing.
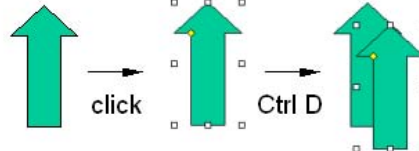3. Click and drag slides to a new location. A gray line appears indicating the new location.
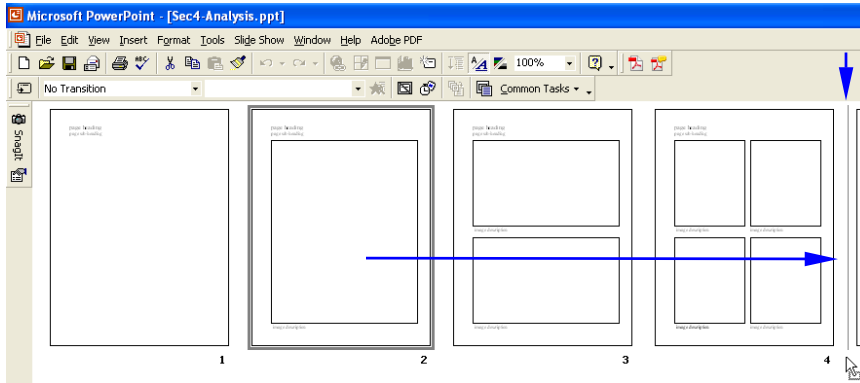
PowerPoint Drawings Tips

There are too many drawing related tools in PowerPoint to cover them all. Browse the PowerPoint Help to see what it is capable of. Pay particular attention to "Drawing and Working with Objects." Here are a few basics.
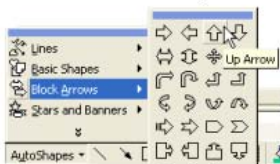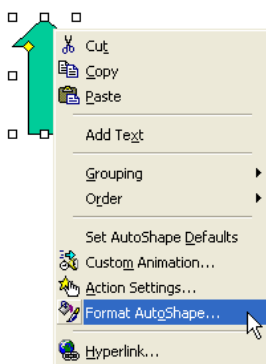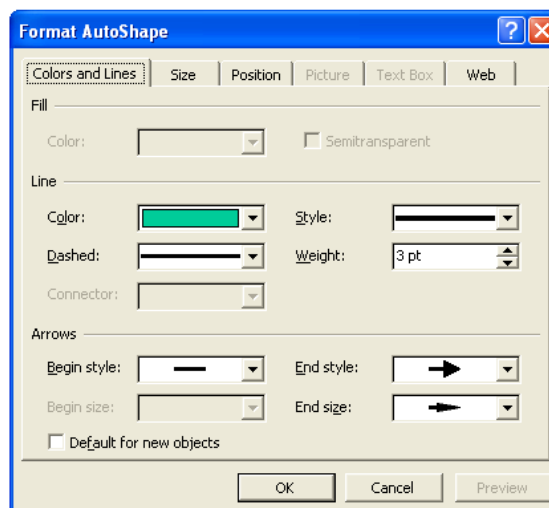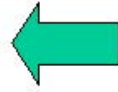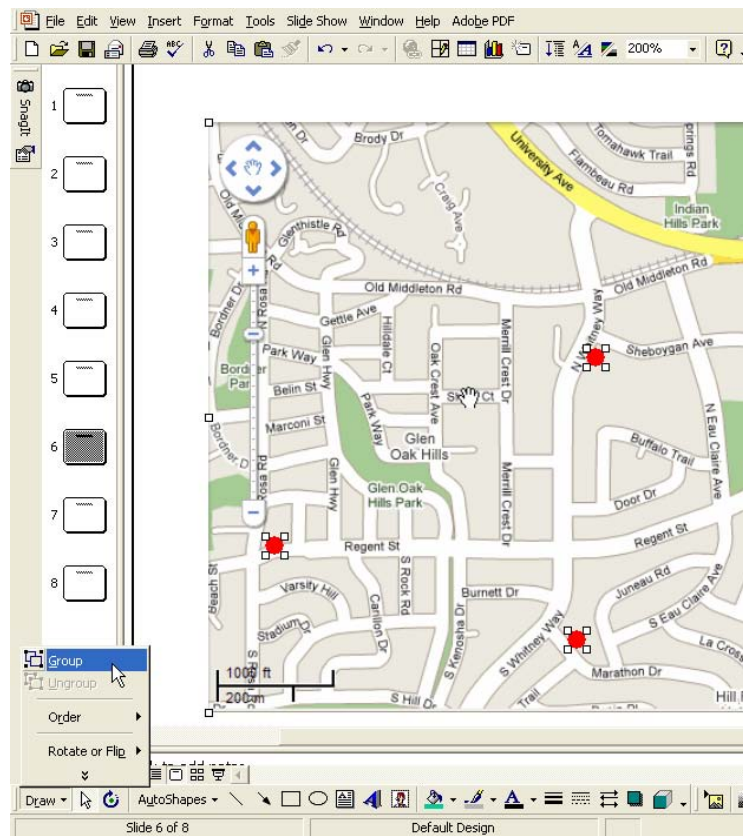
Grouping

Grouping objects can be a big time saver. Say you placed a number of "dots" on your comparable sales map but now you want to resize the map. If you don't use grouping, you'll have to move all the dots too.

Use this procedure to resize everything at once.

1. Click once anywhere on the map to select it.

2. Hold down the Shift key and select each of the other drawing objects that you want included in the group. In the picture below see how each of the 3 red dots as well as the map has "handles" around it?

3. Click Draw > Group

Now the map and the dots will behave as one. Move and resize as desired. To ungroup, click once on the group and then click Draw > Ungroup.

Imagery Tips

Save photographic imagery files in JPEG format.

Save drawings and sketches in GIF or PNG format.

When including photos, reduce the color depth and/or resolution of photos prior to inserting into MS Word. 256 colors and 200 dots per inch (dpi) is generally acceptable.

The Format Picture dialog (Picture tab) includes a Brightness slides for improving image quality. Right-click on an image in PowerPoint and select Format Picture from the popup.
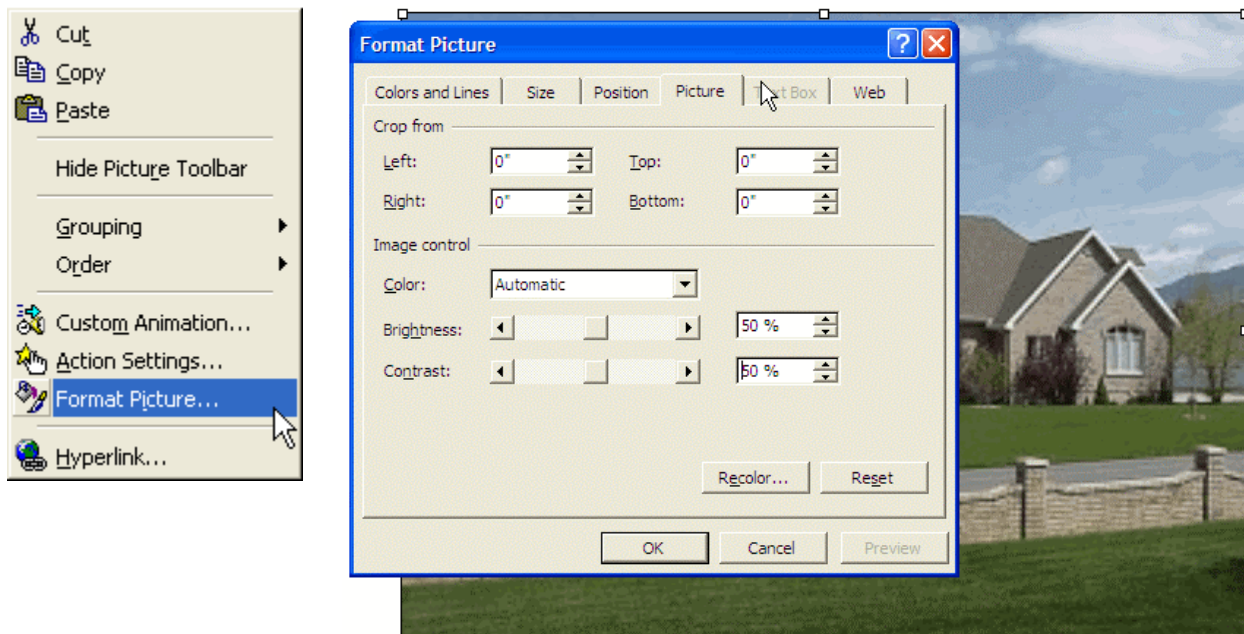
Adobe Acrobat Basics

See http://dotnet/dtid_real_estate/repm/forms/acro8intro.pdf for an overview of using Adobe Acrobat Professional version 8. Pay particular attention to the sections highlighted below.

Create the PDF

1. Open Adobe Acrobat.
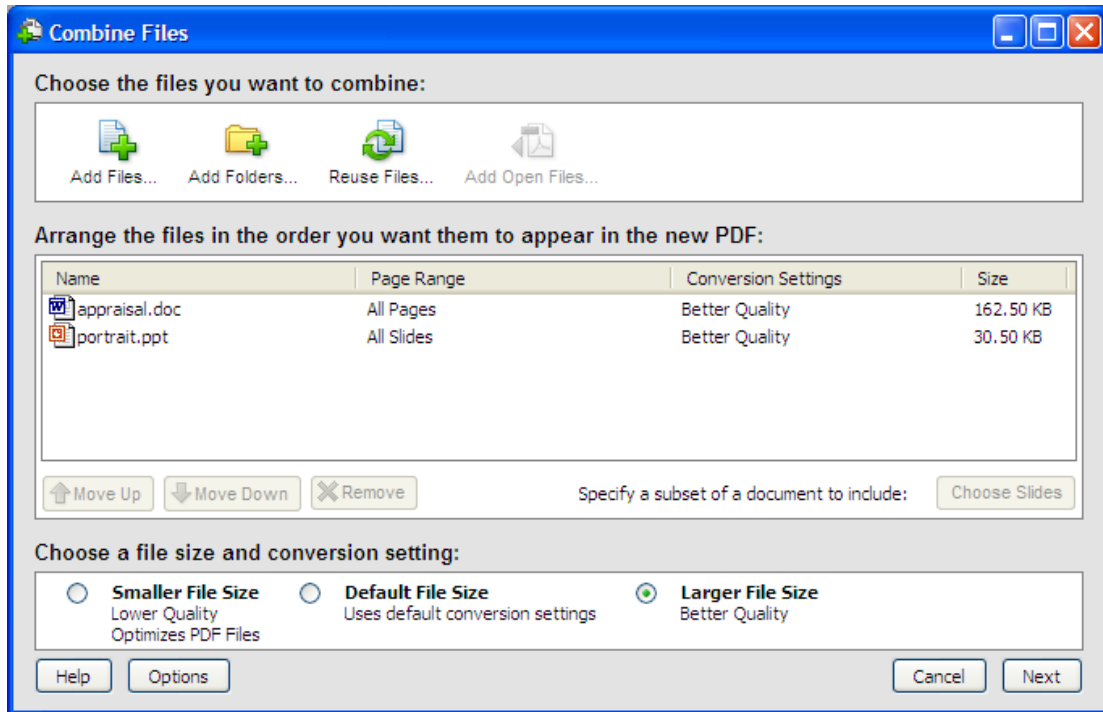2. Click File > Create PDF > From Multiple Files.
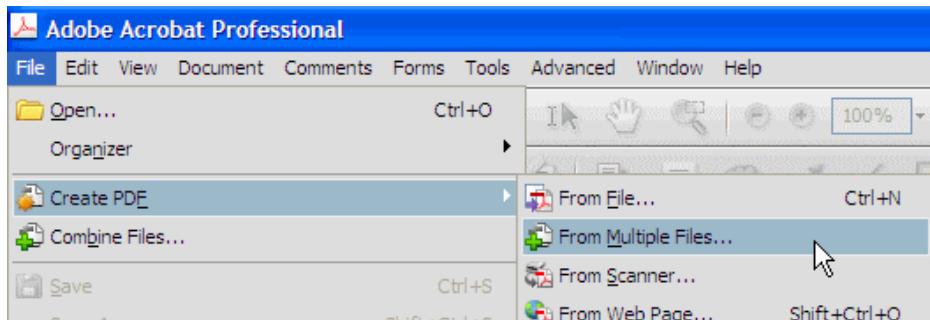
3. Browse to the parcel folder.
4. Hold down the Ctrl key and click once on the portrait file and once on the appraisal file.
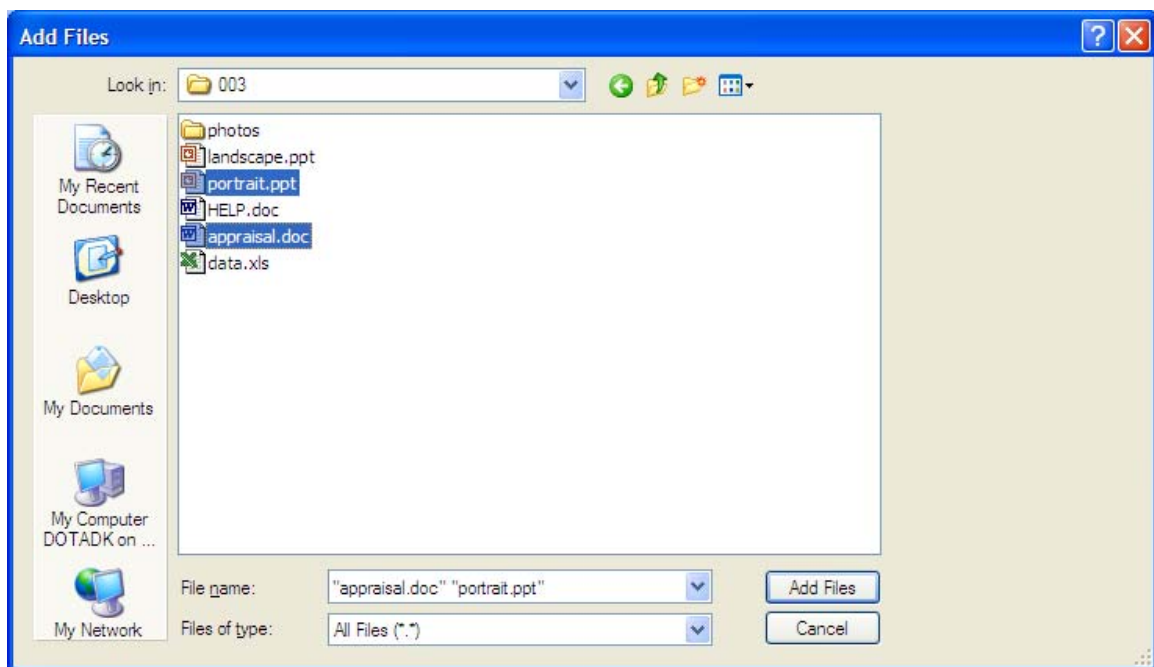

5. Click Add Files.

6. Verify that the files are in the correct order. If they are not, select them and rearrange them with the Move Up and Move Down buttons.
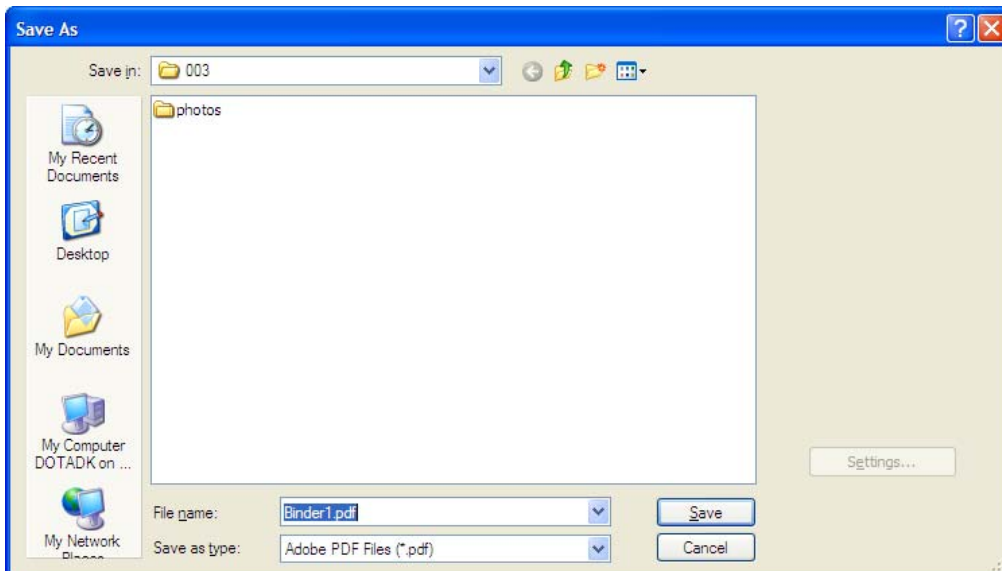

7. Click the Larger File Size – Better Quality option and click Next.
8. Verify that Merge files into a single PDF is selected and click Create.
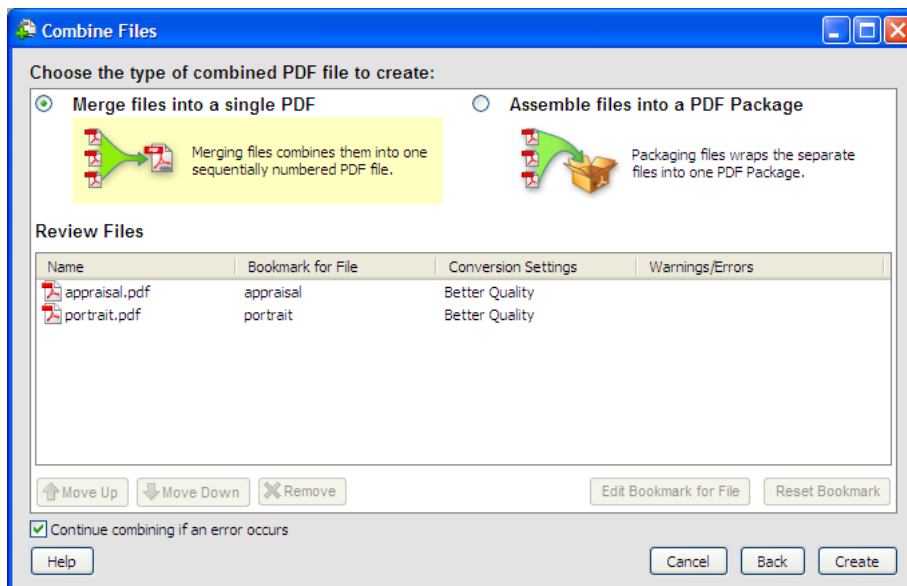
9. Wait while Acrobat processes the documents.
10. When done, you should see "Status: PDF conversion process completed successfully."
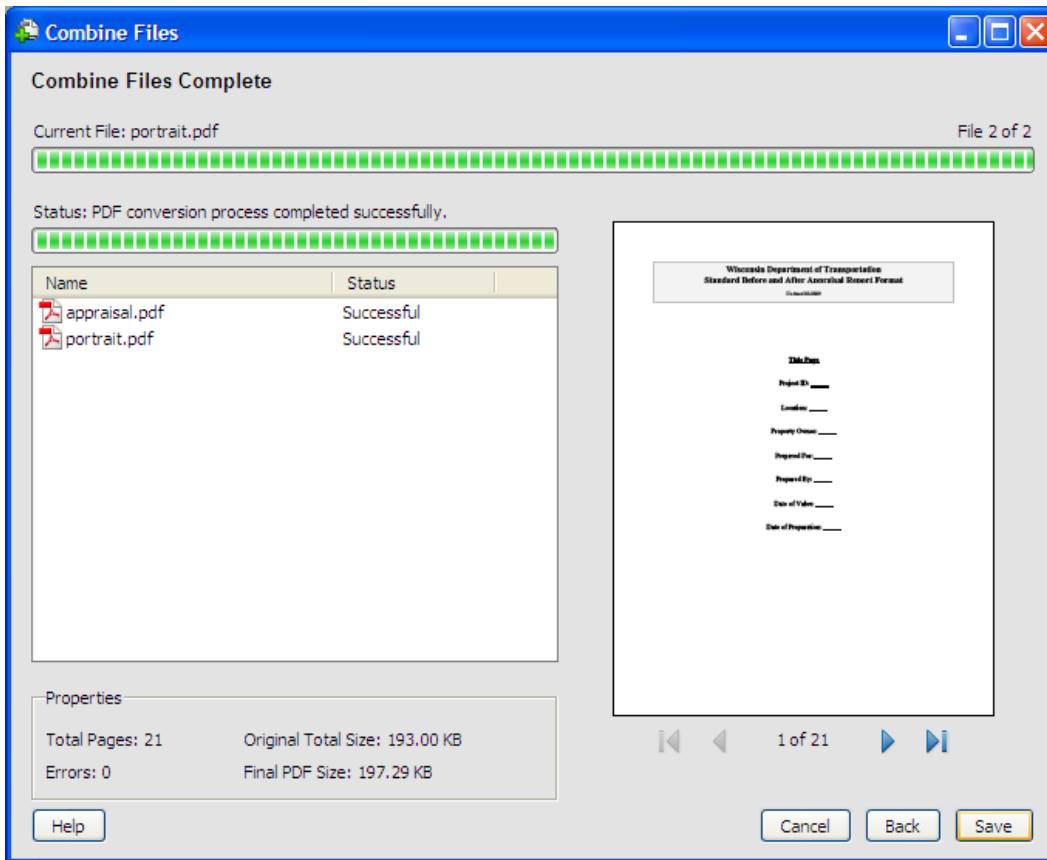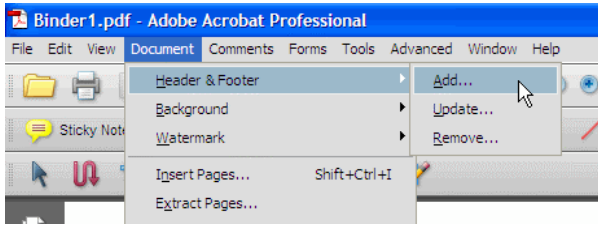
11. Click Save.
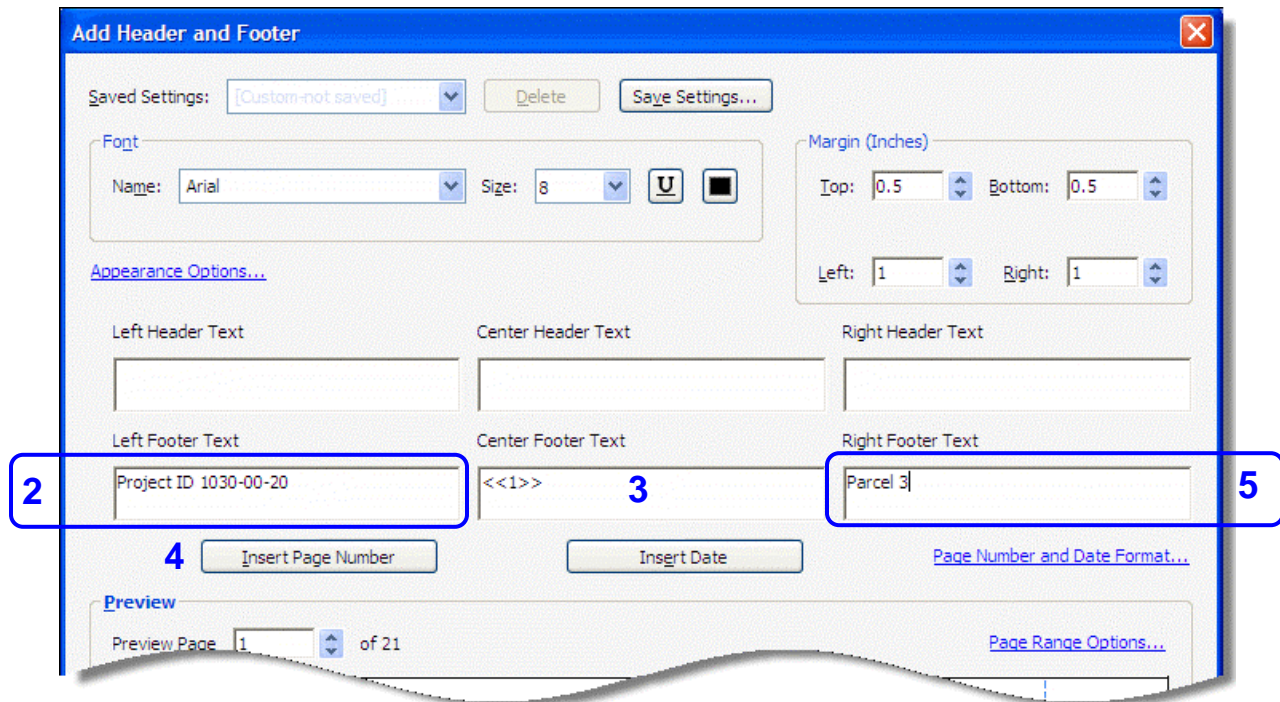12. Save the PDF in the parcel folder.

Add Footers and Page Numbers

1. Click Document > Header & Footer > Add.

In the Add Header and Footer dialog:

2. Enter the Project ID in the Left Footer Text box.
3. Click in the Center Footer Text box.
4. Click Insert Page Number.
5. Enter the Parcel Number in the Right Footer Text box.

6. Click OK.
7. Click Save As and resave the PDF in the parcel folder.