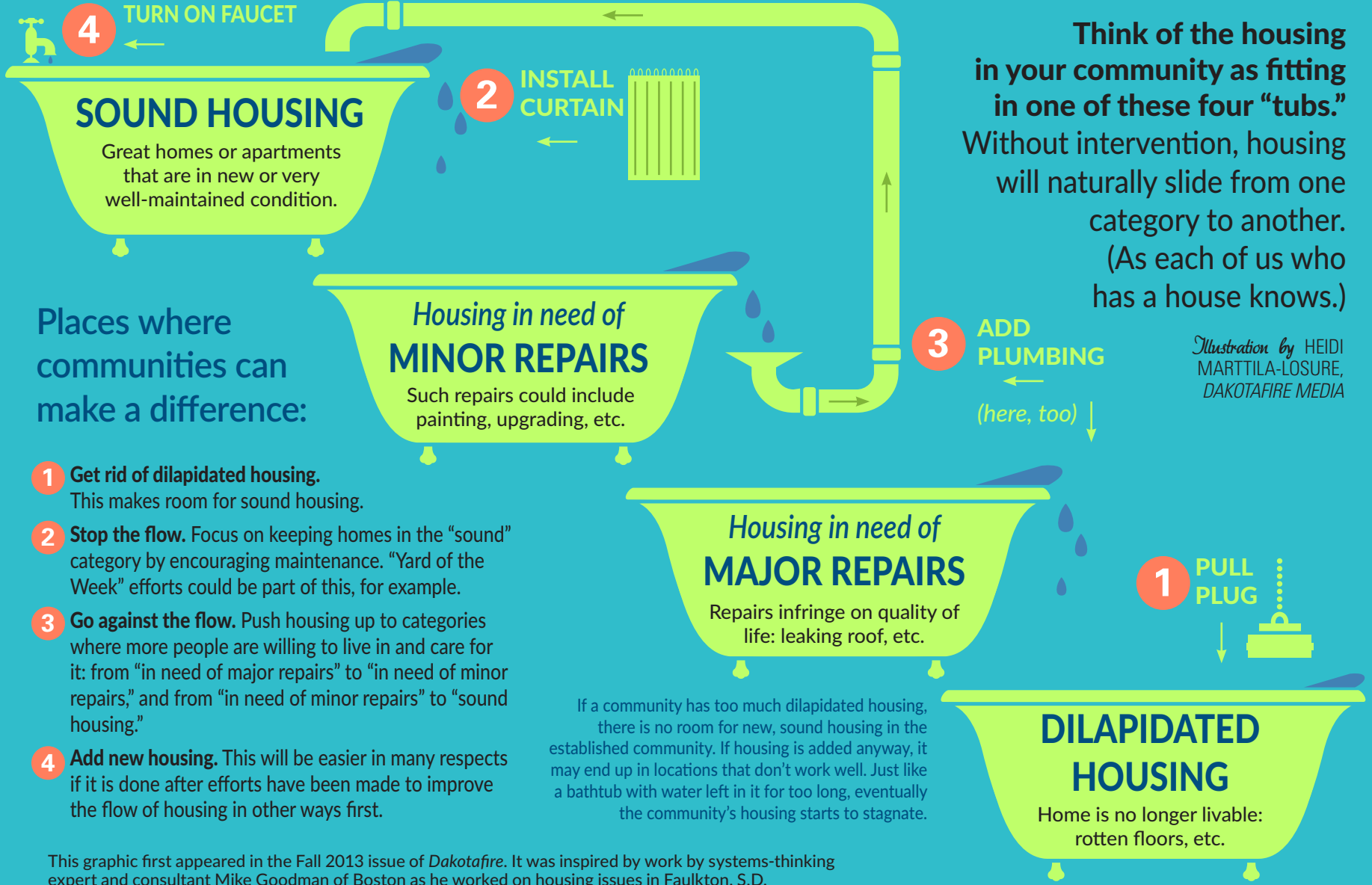


# The natural flow of housing



Think of the housing in your community as fitting in one of these four “tubs.” Without intervention, housing will naturally slide from one category to another. (As each of us who has a house knows.)

Illustration by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE, DAKOTAFIRE MEDIA

Places where communities can make a difference:

- 1 Get rid of dilapidated housing.** This makes room for sound housing.
- 2 Stop the flow.** Focus on keeping homes in the “sound” category by encouraging maintenance. “Yard of the Week” efforts could be part of this, for example.
- 3 Go against the flow.** Push housing up to categories where more people are willing to live in and care for it: from “in need of major repairs” to “in need of minor repairs,” and from “in need of minor repairs” to “sound housing.”
- 4 Add new housing.** This will be easier in many respects if it is done after efforts have been made to improve the flow of housing in other ways first.

If a community has too much dilapidated housing, there is no room for new, sound housing in the established community. If housing is added anyway, it may end up in locations that don't work well. Just like a bathtub with water left in it for too long, eventually the community's housing starts to stagnate.

This graphic first appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of *Dakotafire*. It was inspired by work by systems-thinking expert and consultant Mike Goodman of Boston as he worked on housing issues in Faulkton, S.D.