November 30, 2021

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region IV
Ms. Barbara Alfano
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street SW, 10th Fl
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: RFP No. EPA-OLEM-OBLR-21-4

Dear Ms. Alfano:

The City of Newton, North Carolina is pleased to submit this application for the EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We have identified two target areas containing multiple potential brownfield sites and are confident that our city would benefit from assessment of these sites. We recognize great potential for the revitalization of our city through the assessment, planning, and redevelopment of brownfields. Such activities will benefit our city’s economy, environment, and the health and welfare of our residents.

Below please find the key narrative information for our proposed assessment activities.

**Narrative Information Sheet**

1. **Applicant Identification**: City of Newton, NC Planning & Zoning Department
   401 North Main Avenue
   Newton, NC 28658

2. **Funding Requested**:
   a. **Assessment Grant Type**: Community-wide
   b. **Federal Funds Requested**: $396,000
   c. **Contamination**: Hazardous Substances & Petroleum

3. **Location**: City of Newton, Catawba County, North Carolina

4. **Property Information for Site-Specific Proposals**: Not Applicable
5. Contacts:
   a. Project Director:
      Randy Williams, Planning Director
      P.O. Box 550,
      Newton, NC 28658
      Phone: 828-695-4277
      Email: rwilliams@newtonnc.gov
   b. Highest Ranking Elected Official:
      Eddie Haupt, Mayor
      P.O. Box 550,
      Newton, NC 28658
      Phone: 828-446-0364
      Email: mayor@newtonnc.gov


7. Other Factors Checklist:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Factors</th>
<th>Page #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community population is 10,000 or less.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The redevelopment of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or any energy efficiency improvement projects.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse planning activities for priority brownfield site(s) within the target area.</td>
<td>yes; p. 3-4, 8-9</td>
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8. Letter from the State Environmental Authority: Letter from Bruce Nicholson, Program Manager of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Brownfields Program is enclosed as Attachment A.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to revitalize our economy, improve our environmental and public health, and bring smart growth to the City of Newton.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Eddie Haupt
Mayor, City of Newton
November 22, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Haupt, Mayor
City of Newton
401 North Main Avenue
Newton, NC 28658
mayor@newtonnc.gov

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – City of Newton

Dear Mr. Haupt,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Program acknowledges and supports the City’s application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. This grant would be a tremendous economic development achievement for the City.

We hope that the City is successfully awarded this grant, and we will continue to support you in your Brownfields redevelopment efforts. The Brownfields Program offers technical project guidance in accordance with our program, throughout the life of your project. This is a major key to ensuring grant applicants make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. The liability protection offered by the program is also a primary marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing financing.

The Brownfields Program can also assist with outreach efforts to your local community regarding reuse for commercial purposes and the controls to be put in place to make the property suitable. The liability protection offered by a Brownfields Agreement is a benefit to the whole community and can often facilitate additional economic development in the area surrounding a Brownfields Property.

We look forward to working with you regardless of a grant award or not. We truly believe successful Brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

Bruce Nicholson  Brownfields
Program Manager

cc: NCDEQ Brownfields Public Outreach Team
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION
   a. Target Area and Brownfields
      i. Background and Description of Target Area
         The City of Newton is in the Catawba Valley, approximately 50 miles northwest of Charlotte and 80 miles east of Asheville. The city developed with the arrival of the Norfolk Southern Rail Line in the 1850s, which extends directly through the center of downtown Newton and looping to the northeast through a section of our Target Area. Residential development sprung up adjacent to and near the rail line as industries grew, giving our residents ample direct access to employment opportunities and economic stability. Our Target Area is a major north-south business corridor along the rail line, which leads to our downtown and consists of three primary U.S. Census Tracts. Census Tract 112 (CT 112) lies west of the rail line, Census Track 113 (CT 113) lies east of the rail line and is adjacent to CT 112 with Census Tract 116.01 immediately south of both CT 112 and CT 113. These Area continue to be economically challenged, as evidenced by CT 113’s designation as an IRS-designated Opportunity Zone (OZ). Priority sites occupy each census tract. Our Target Area is an area where development has been occurring for 150 years, and the opportunity for pristine sites is almost non-existent. Heavy dependence on textile and furniture manufacturing as the mainstay of the local economy meant the city was hit hard by the decline of manufacturing in the early 2000s and we have not yet fully recovered from the recession of 2008. Our growth has been further negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially our small businesses, many which have not survived. U.S. Census data indicate that from 2007 to 2012 Newton experienced a 46 percent decline in manufacturing firms and a corresponding 43 percent loss of jobs. Unemployment rose from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 14.6 percent in 2015. Our situation has not improved. Based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Catawba County experienced a -3.3% decline in employment between March 2020 and March 2021. Currently, unemployment in our CT 113 OZ is more than double that of Newton as a whole and triple that of the state. Over one-third of the residents in this area earn less than $35,000 annually, with 12.4% earning less than $10,000 annually. With manufacturing centered along the rail lines and subsequent closure of many of these industries and supporting businesses, the area has become blighted with underutilized, vacant, and abandoned buildings. Unknown environmental impact from closed industries puts our community at risk. These further erode the quality of life for the residents living in our Target Area as these properties are magnets for crime and vandalism. Businesses considering relocation to this area are negatively impressed, further placing our residents at an employment disadvantage.

This proposed EPA Assessment project will focus on the following subsets of our Target Area:

- **North Main Rail Corridor:** The NC-16 Business/Main Street corridor, which parallels the rail line, is the gateway to Downtown Newton from all points to the north, including any traffic from I-40 and US-70. This area was once dominated by manufacturing facilities due in part to its access to major highways and rail, which was extended to Newton because of the City’s once booming manufacturing industry. This connectivity could be an asset to Newton as it seeks to reinvigorate and diversify its economy. The closure of major manufacturing facilities and other businesses that supported them has resulted in a blighted area with antiquated buildings, hindering the redevelopment and regrowth of the City.

- **South Newton Downtown Core:** Downtown Newton is the focus of several efforts to revive the local economy, including the City’s largest infrastructure investment in generations, the Downtown Streetscape Revitalization Project. The downtown area also contains a historic district, has an active development association, and is designated as a North Carolina Main Street to promote economic development through historic preservation. Despite these efforts, former gas stations, dry cleaners, light industrial sites, and other brownfield sites are scattered throughout the area and create a perception of environmental hazards, blight, and risk for investment. We have targeted these sites in our revitalization plans to free the entire area from the limitations imposed by blighted properties.

   ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites
A recent survey identified at least 18 possible sites that have been included in our initial brownfield inventory. These include former industrial sites, gas stations, dry cleaners, a bulk petroleum terminal, former concrete plant, and former retail/automotive sites. These 18 sites range in size from less than one to 6+ acres. Our biggest environmental concern is the potential for vapor intrusion conditions in the densely packed commercial, industrial, and residential properties in and adjacent to our Target Area. Several priority brownfield sites are discussed below. With this grant, field survey and detailed data gathering will be conducted to compile a full inventory of potential brownfield sites in the Target Area. The following 3 sites are our highest priority sites for this project. Focus on redevelopment of these 3 key properties we believe will serve as a “tipping point” for satellite redevelopment, which will bring many of our secondary brownfield sites into play.

- **Former Pinnacle Furniture Company** (20 E 19th St Newton, NC 28658, 2.89 acres) This former furniture manufacturing facility sits vacant on an entire city block and includes two primary brick structures. The City of Newton desires to acquire the property for the construction of a new police complex or a transit facility hub. The facility closed in 2009 and now presents potential contamination from chlorinated solvents, petroleum products and air pollution from particulate matter. Given the mixed industrial and residential use of the area, nearby residents could be exposed to PCE and/or TCE via vapor intrusion. Additionally, persistent rumors of chemical dumping add to the perception of environmental risk at the site. The property owner has walked away from the property and since 2010 has accumulated over $84,000 in delinquent property taxes. A former gas station adjacent to the site (one of our secondary satellite brownfield sites) also contributes to the area blight and hampers surrounding development. Residential Area are located within 500 feet of the site, putting these residents at risk from unquantified environmental contamination. Cleanup and redevelopment of the Pinnacle site is a priority to The City because the site is an eyesore for residents and inhibits nearby investment; it is located along a major transportation corridor and in close proximity (less than 2 blocks) to Newton-Conover Schools and Discovery High School; and, this site is strategically located to provide better responses for municipal services from adjacent and nearby residents, as it is centrally located between CT-112 and CT-113. Brownfield funding for assessment will help quantify the real and perceived environmental risk, enabling the City of acquire the property, removing a blight while providing better access to municipal services.

- **Honeys IGA Shopping Center** (425 West A Street, 6.10 acres) This site is located immediately west of downtown Newton and east of Catawba County’s Government Center, along Southwest Boulevard, a major north-south thoroughfare centrally located through CT 112. Given the age and various tenants in the space over time, the environmental condition of the property is unknown. This Class D shopping center is 70% vacant and formerly contained a grocery store, which has since closed. Previous site redevelopment stalled, with the property partially gutted; however, the “bones” of the center are structurally sound. This site is a priority due to its location along Southwest Boulevard (US-321 Business), adjacent to a residential area, within one-quarter mile of Downtown Newton, and because redevelopment of this center will bring much needed multi-family residential space, with a grocery store and supporting retail establishments to this area.

- **Former Wilson Feed Property** (201 East D Street, ~ 0.32 acres) This site is located at the junction of NC-10 and NC-16B on a prominent corner lot at the southern edge of Newton’s downtown core in an area targeted by the City for revitalization. The site contains one structure which is sound, but functionally obsolete. This site is currently vacant. The 2016 Newton Streetscape Master Plan targets this intersection as a major gateway into downtown Newton. This site is a priority for us as the site separates Newton’s Downtown from a large residential area. We relocated our new Fire Station Headquarters to this area to serve as a catalyst for development and to exploit existing infrastructure for redevelopment (in line with our 2016 Plan). Though the property is well-situated between two Core Area commercial districts and the new Fire Station Headquarters, the perception of contamination from its historical agricultural use as a feed store has left the property vacant. The feed store handled large volumes of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers, which may have resulted in soil and groundwater contamination. Redeveloping this light industrial property will remove
perceived blight in the area, resulting in private investment for commercial redevelopment at one of our gateways into the Downton Newton core.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

Our redevelopment in our Target Area is aligned with two existing major plans: our 2010 Core Area Plan, encompassing parts of CT 112, CT 113 (OZ) and CT 116.01 which outlines smart growth principles to guide redevelopment, and the 2016 Newton Streetscape Master Plan, which sets the vision for redevelopment and reinvestment strategies for our brownfield Target Area. These strategies are outlined in the 2010 Core Area Plan. The 2016 Newton Streetscape Master Plan details projects for implementation, and in January 2019 we implemented Phase I of our Streetscape Project in the South Newton Downtown Core Area, within our brownfield Target Area. We are creating walkable neighborhoods, directing development toward existing communities, attracting a more diverse business base to bolster the City’s economy, and improving utilization of our Target Area. According to the City’s Main Street Director, Mary Yount, “Our streetscape revitalization efforts are already generating significant private investment throughout our core business district, and other strategic public investments in infrastructure, retail recruitment, and livability are paying dividends...” Brownfield property redevelopment aligns with our land use and revitalization plans, presenting us the opportunity to achieve these objectives. Our 3 priority sites offer larger spaces, future use flexibility, and connectivity to existing and proposed infrastructure that will ensure walkability in Area that could benefit from more accessible job opportunities and commercial amenities.

Phase II of the 2016 Newton Streetscape Master Plan will extend improvements to connect the two subsets of our Target Area. We envision extending the project into the North Main Rail Corridor, achieving greenway connections, and enhancing connectivity throughout Newton. With this foundation for alternate transportation infrastructure and expansion/improvement of these facilities underway, our brownfield Target Area is a prime location for redevelopment in line with the City’s existing revitalization plans, principles, and vision. We have identified 3 priority sites, strategically located throughout our Target Area, the redevelopment of which will serve as a “tipping point” to stimulate private sector satellite development. These sites are:

The City of Newton would like to acquire the former Pinnacle Furniture site for our new police complex or transit facility hub development. This location for the proposed use is strategically located near the center of Target Area CT 112 & CT 113. More strategically located municipal services will allow us to service the residents of this area more efficiently and quickly by decreasing response times for resident’s requests and by making the facility more accessible to the community. There are at least 2 secondary satellite brownfield sites, including a former gas station adjacent to Pinnacle Furniture, which will become more attractive once the Pinnacle site is redeveloped.

Addressing the potential environmental conditions at the Honeys IGA Shopping Center and Former Wilson Feed Property, our two additional priority sites, will reduce barriers to redevelopment and project financing. Our 3 priority sites are strategically located in northern, southeastern, and southwestern portions of our community, encompassing our entire Target Area. Addressing these sites first will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment of other secondary sites identified during our initial inventory process. Priority sites’ redevelopment will encourage satellite development that will bring many of our secondary properties into play. The City of Newton will drive this approach by redeveloping the former Pinnacle Furniture site for City use.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

Almost half of Newton is in an OZ. Four of our inventoried sites, including a former gas station and an abandoned bulk petroleum storage facility lie in our OZ, with our highest priority site, the former Pinnacle Furniture facility, immediately adjacent to the OZ. Economic redevelopment resulting from brownfield reuse will generate increased tax revenue, both directly through the reuse of currently vacant and derelict properties and indirectly by spurring reinvestment in nearby Area. As the catalyst for economic development and growth in our Target Area, a new municipal services
complex will increase interest in redevelopment of other underutilized properties in proximity. Additionally, Newton estimates the reuse of Honeys/IGA Shopping Center and Wilson Feed site alone will result in a direct increase in tax revenue of approximately $85,000 annually and is estimated to create between 150-200 construction jobs and a minimum of 35-50 permanent jobs. Increased tax revenues will enable the City to accelerate brownfield Target Area redevelopment through streetscaping, parks and greenway development, small business support, and other initiatives. The additional retail, commercial, and grocery choices created by the reuse of our brownfields will provide currently unavailable options within walking distance to a large part of our community with limited transportation options. All these economic positives will take place directly in or adjacent to our OZ. Additionally, our Target Area and OZ are near rail, NC-10, NC-16, and NC-16B and their connectivity to I-40, which makes these Area prime for redevelopment.

Our 2010 Core Area Plan calls for our revitalization effort to take place within the context of historic preservation. The buildings on our priority sites (and many of our other inventoried sites) are in sound shape and are targeted for reuse. Our vision also includes the reuse/recycling of building materials for those structures (or portions thereof) that may be demolished and the incorporation of energy efficient appliances and building systems for new developments.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse
We have secured $225,000 from the North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC) for implementation of Phase One Downtown Revitalization Streetscape, which commenced in January 2019 and encompasses portions of our North Main Rail Corridor Target Area and OZ. We have secured a $225,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for Phase III of our Streetscape project and NCDOT and federal STP-DA funding supporting revitalization through implementation of the Streetscape Master Plan, and improvements to West A Street, which fronts the Honey’s/IGA priority site. In September 2021, the City received $750,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation and additional $750,000 for COVID-19 response. Much of our CDBG funding will be CDBG funds used to support small businesses and non-profit organizations in our brownfield Target Area and OZ. The City believes that brownfields assessment will bolster efforts to leverage additional funding from these sources to extend these projects. The City has also adopted the Newton Pedestrian Plan funded by the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Division for the further development of a pedestrian transportation network, which supports the City’s ongoing streetscape work. The City has acquired/pursued three, $15,000 Smart Communities Grant and a $10,000 Customized City Program Grant through ElectriCity. We will leverage this brownfields assessment grant for economic development services funding. Some of our existing grant funding could be used to conduct survey work for site plats in support of the acquisition of a Brownfields Agreement from NCDEQ, which will quantify risk for a perspective developer and make subsequent financing commercially available. We plan to pursue EPA Clean-up Grant funds for sites requiring cleanup. The City will pursue grant funding through the North Carolina Main Streets Program to support commercial or industrial development and create jobs. As momentum builds, we anticipate private investment to add additional funds for assessment, remediation, and reuse of sites in our Target Area. With almost half of Newton located in an OZ, we anticipate the tax benefits available to investors through this OZ designation, along with property tax rebates available by taking one or more of these sites through North Carolina’s Brownfield Program, will result in even more private sector funding of assessment, remediation, and reuse of our brownfield properties.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure
The Honey’s/IGA and former Wilson Feed site, two of our priority sites, have good building shells or are ready for reuse after assessment and clean-up. Existing infrastructure in our Target Area and priority sites include paved access ways with stormwater improvements, municipal water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. These are in place and ready to be used for subsequent redevelopment. We have no additional infrastructure needs to implement our redevelopment plans.
2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   a. Community Need
      i. The Community’s Need for Funding
         Newton was once part of a regional hub of textile and furniture manufacturing that provided ample employment and strong wages for area residents. However, as the global economy has shifted over past decades, our manufacturing prominence has declined. Per Bureau of Labor Statistics data, from the passage of NAFTA in 1994 to the end of 2017, Catawba County lost 187 manufacturing establishments and 18,291 manufacturing jobs. This trend was exacerbated by the recession of the 2000s. Per the 2012 Survey of Business Owners, between 2007 and 2012 Newton lost 26 manufacturing firms and over 1,600 manufacturing jobs. Unemployment in Newton rose from 5.9% in 2000 to 14.6% in 2015. The specialization that was once our greatest asset became a weakness. Median household income in Newton is now over 30 percent lower than the North Carolina median household income. In CT-112, 35.5% of our residents earn less than $35,000 annually. In CT-113, it is worse: 45.3% earn less than $35,000 with 14.9% earning less than $10,000 annually, far below any standard for poverty. While North Carolina grew 10% between 2010-2019, Newton’s growth was 1.8%. Costs for providing municipal services have outstripped the tax revenues due to higher service demand and slow growth. Many municipal departments are stretched thin, making it impossible for us to address brownfield sites without the financial assistance provided by a brownfield assessment grant
   ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations
         Award of this grant to Newton will enable the City to address threats to sensitive populations in the Target Area by facilitating the identification and reduction of environmental hazards and their secondary impacts on surrounding communities.

   (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: We have identified two primary sensitive populations: our African-American and Hispanic communities, which are largely concentrated in our Target Area. According to current North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Justice data, CT-113 and CT 116.01 residents are 60.8% minority, including 32.3% Hispanic and 11.6% African American. CT-112’s population is 38% minority. Our Target Area also includes a high percentage of low income families. According to EPA EJSCREEN data, 81% of residents in CT-113 and CT 116.01 are classified as low income. These populations experience disproportionate adverse health. According to 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the most current information available, residents in our Target Area are disproportionately affected by cancer (all types, not speciated by the data), cardiovascular disease, and asthma. The average deaths from these diseases are all above comparable state levels. Heavy historical manufacturing operations near and often intermingled with residential development exposes these residents to potential air-borne contaminants and particulate matter, which may contribute to the higher than average asthma hospitalizations. The priority sites have the potential to cause subsurface soil and groundwater impacts, including leachate of contaminants into groundwater and vapor intrusion of VOCs into nearby structures. Multiple dry cleaners are in our Target Area. These raise concerns about the presence of PCE and degradation components like TCE in groundwater. Recently published scientific articles indicate that short term exposure to TCE by pregnant women can cause birth defects with as little as 3 weeks of exposure. There is also concern regarding the presence of PFAS because these chemicals are associated with textile production, which was a major industry in and around Newton. PFAS contamination can travel long distances due to air transport and deposited in water. PFAS bioaccumulate in the body, and exposure over time has been linked to low infant birth weights, effects on the immune system, cancer, and thyroid hormone disruption. Funding from this Grant will help us address these issues by facilitating site assessments, thereby helping us better understand the environmental impacts to the health of residents in these communities. Understanding these risks is paramount to implementing a clean-up strategy, which will include application for an EPA Brownfield Clean-up Grant to help facilitate mitigation of these threats, reducing the health threats to our sensitive population.

   (2) Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Per
data from Catawba County Health Department, some effects of brownfields may be seen in County cancer incidence rates. As of 2017, cancer incidence and mortality rates in Catawba County were higher than the state average. Contaminants found at brownfield sites have been shown to lead to increased cancer risk. Additionally, most of Newton’s African American population lives in or near the Target Area, and per the 2015 Community Health Assessment, African Americans in Catawba County are 89% more likely to have low birth weight children, have an infant mortality rate 164% above the state rate, and are more likely to die from cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Grant funding will help us understand these risks and address these threats, either through clean-up, land use modifications and/or implementation of engineering controls to reduce exposure to contamination, reducing environmental threats to residents in our Target Area.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: The City of Newton plans to acquire the former Pinnacle Furniture property, one of our priority sites for municipal redevelopment. Strategically located in our Target Area, construction of a new municipal services complex will provide quicker and more effective responses to the community in our Target Area, as well as make these services more readily available to the residents that have disproportionately borne the negative impacts of our manufacturing and industrial past. Assessment and clean-up of this and other priority sites will remove contamination and blight from underuse and abandonment of these sites in largely minority communities, provide additional social services, and encourage private investment in support of the City’s initiative. Redevelopment of these properties, many which are co-located with residential development, will remove sources of noise and light pollution, and reduce the amount of heavy vehicular traffic adjacent to residents, improving air quality and reducing exposures. Using EPA Assessment Grant funding to expedite assessment of satellite brownfield properties near and adjacent to our priority sites will remove environmental impact left behind from former industrial uses, often adjacent to residential development in our Target Area.

b. Community Engagement

i. Project Partners and Project Partner Roles

The following local community partners have committed to involvement in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency/Partner Name</th>
<th>Point of contact (name, email &amp; phone)</th>
<th>Specific Role in the Project</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| First Presbyterian Church                | Rev. David Roquemore
droquemore@fpcnewton.com (828) 464-0648 | Provide meeting space for community outreach meetings.            |
| Commercial First Real Estate Investment and Development | Jenny Eckard jenny@commercialfirst.net (828) 320-8989 | Contact property owners to enter the program and serve as a liaison to the development community. |
| Robinson Building Mart                   | Larry Adams ladams@robinsonbuildersmart.net (828) 464-7700 | Provide professional advice on energy efficient building materials and construction. |
| First Citizens Bank                      | Lisa Crump Lisa.crump@firstcitizens.com (828) 464-8790 | Provide professional financial advice for property transactions.  |
| Catawba County Chamber of Commerce       | Lindsay Keisler lkeisler@catawbachamber.org (828) 328-6111 | Provide professional advice, promotion of Brownfield sites to businesses looking for operational spaces, and meeting space. |
One of our first steps in developing a comprehensive approach to our brownfield redevelopment strategy was to form our Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC). This committee is comprised of key City of Newton representatives, community and business leaders, and economic development personnel. A key role for BAC members is to prioritize the assessment of properties identified in the inventory. During the first BAC meetings, we will facilitate development of prioritization criteria based on community needs, which will be solicited as discussed in 2.b.iii.

iii. Incorporating Community Input

The City considered the most appropriate vehicles to solicit input from our community. Realizing that many in our community will prefer different methods of communication, especially due to COVID-19 concerns, multiple communication channels will be utilized. These include a project website which will be updated quarterly, 3 annual utility bill inserts, and 6 semi-annual e-newsletters, to ensure progress is shared regularly with community members and other project stakeholders. If appropriated/permitted, annual public meetings will be conducted to share progress reports and to solicit feedback from the community. We will also have a brownfield display booth at our community events, including our annual Newton Folk Art Festival, typically held in September and our Soldier’s Reunion, held in August. The City also sponsors a Summer Concert Series that will provide opportunities to educate our community about brownfields, solicit feedback and participation in our initiatives, and share project updates. The BAC will respond directly to a specific question or concern. Ideas provided by stakeholders for project sites or redevelopment requests will be considered by our BAC and responses provided through our multi-media communication vehicles. Responses to general questions or inquiries will be incorporated into our website postings and e-newsletters. We will present project updates for various city boards, commissions, and neighborhood associations as requested to update the community on project accomplishments and provide opportunity to solicit additional feedback from the community. We envision these as “town hall” style meetings where dialog is encouraged. Given the unknowns around the Covid-19 pandemic and to accommodate residents in our Target Area that may be sensitive to public gatherings or lack transportation, some of the project update meetings will be conducted via Zoom or another suitable internet platform. These may either substitute for or be in addition to the 6 bi-annual outreach sessions. We will solicit input from our stakeholders regarding the format and frequency of our outreach so that no stakeholder is disenfranchised. Outreach materials will provide information on the overall project process including project goals, site information, and progress reports. Other outreach methods may include social media outreach, YouTube videos, and/or church bulletin inserts based on review of community input provided to the Brownfield Advisory Committee.

3. TASKS DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

  a. Description of Tasks and Activities

<table>
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<th>Task 1: Project Management / Cooperative Agreement Oversight</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. Project Implementation: This task entails overseeing the cooperative agreement, reporting requirements, the grant budget, and managing project contractors. Anticipated activities include 6 BAC meetings (minimum), 6 public outreach sessions (minimum) conducted bi-annually, distribution of approximately 1,000 project flyer/factsheets, utility bill inserts and 6 semi-annual project update e-newsletters, and a project website, updated quarterly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: October 2022 through end of grant</td>
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<td>iii. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams with Contractor support.</td>
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Task 2: Public Involvement

Project Implementation: - The City has realized efficiency by laying the groundwork for public
outreach in preparation for this and previous grant applications. Outreach will continue under the prospective grant using methods described in Section 2.b to gain trust, educate citizens about the activities underway, and solicit input at project milestones. Anticipated activities include 6 BAC meetings (minimum), 6 public outreach sessions (minimum) conducted semi-annually, development of approximately 1,000 project flyer/factsheets, 6 bi-annual e-newsletters, and a project website. These activities will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites in our Target Area and will not require non-EPA grant resources. The City will be assisted by the contractor and an outreach specialist to lead visioning sessions for the redevelopment and revitalization of the project focus Area.

### ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: October 2022 through end of grant

### iii. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams with Contractor support.

### iv. Outputs: Six (6) BAC meetings, six (6) public outreach meetings, four (4) business group and property owner meetings, six (6) e-newsletters and a project website, updated quarterly.

**Task 3: Site Inventory**

i. Project Implementation: The City has developed an initial inventory of 18 potential sites, but the City intends to perform an in-depth, complete inventory of potential Brownfield opportunities. This process will include the development of a database providing the location of each brownfield property, detailed site observations, site photographs, and publicly available environmental data. The database will be used to prioritize sites for assessment using an algorithm that weights scores entered for identified redevelopment factors. This information will be provided on a platform suitable for community access.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed within 6 months of grant award.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams with Contractor support.

iv. Outputs: Completed potential pollutant source inventory, completed site prioritization.

**Task 4: ESAs**

Project Implementation - Complete 10 Phase I ESAs on eligible sites in accordance with ASTM 1527-05/13 and 40 CFR Part 312 (4 on priority sites and 6 on non-priority sites). Complete 6 Phase II ESAs in accordance with ASTM 1903-11 (4 on priority sites and 2 on non-priority sites). Before initiation of a Phase II ESA, Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) will be prepared and submitted to EPA and NCDEQ for review and/or approval. QAPPs will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites. Task 4 activities will not require non-EPA grant resources.

ii. Anticipated Schedule: Phase I ESAs completed by month 18 with Phase II ESAs completed between months 12 and 30.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor

iv. Outputs: ten (10) Phase I ESAs; six (6) Phase II ESAs; one (1) site in the NC Brownfield Program.

**Task 5: Clean-Up & Reuse Planning (CUP)**

i. Project Implementation

**Clean-up Planning**: Based on the number of Phase II ESAs that are completed and the results of those reports, the City will supervise the selected consultant in the performance of cleanup planning for up to three Brownfield sites, or as many as possible with the budget remaining. This may involve the preparation of an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA), which will include comparing site data with appropriate cleanup standards, identifying cleanup options and costs, identifying redevelopment options, performing marketing and outreach to prospective developers, and working with the property owner or developer to devise a cleanup plan. Where applicable, cleanup planning will include applying data from the assessments to facilitate the acquisition of a Brownfield Agreement (BFA) through the NCDEQ.

**Reuse (Redevelopment) Planning**: Funds will also be used to engage a Community Development Specialist to assist with the envisioning and community charette. Visioning and community feedback will be evaluated in accordance with neighboring residential development and the goals.
and strategies developed in the 2010 Core Area Plan.

i. Project Implementation

Clean-up Planning: Based on the number of Phase II ESAs that are completed and the results of those reports, the City will supervise the selected consultant in the performance of cleanup planning for up to three Brownfield sites, or as many as possible with the budget remaining. This may involve the preparation of an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA), which will include comparing site data with appropriate cleanup standards, identifying cleanup options and costs, identifying redevelopment options, performing marketing and outreach to prospective developers, and working with the property owner or developer to devise a cleanup plan. Where applicable, cleanup planning will include applying data from the assessments to facilitate the acquisition of a Brownfield Agreement (BFA) through the NCDEQ.

Reuse (Redevelopment) Planning: Funds will also be used to engage a Community Development Specialist to assist with the envisioning and community charette. Visioning and community feedback will be evaluated in accordance with neighboring residential development and the goals and strategies developed in the 2010 Core Area Plan.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed between months 24 and 36.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor with oversight/assistance from City of Newton personnel.

iv. Outputs: Three (3) ABCAs; one (1) NC Brownfield Agreement; one (1) Community envisioning session/charette.

b. Cost Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>Project Management</th>
<th>Public Involvement</th>
<th>Site Inventory</th>
<th>ESAs</th>
<th>CUP</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>$396,000</td>
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</table>

Task 1 – Project Management: Total Budget – $12,000 Personnel: This task entails overseeing the cooperative agreement, reporting requirements, the grant budget, and managing project contractors. Labor is estimated at 90 hours at an average of $75/hour, plus $1,500 in associated fringe benefits. Travel: Expenses for travel to Brownfields training for staff is included, with $3,750 budgeted for one City representative to attend the national conference. Therefore, $12,000 is budgeted for project management, or approximately 3% of the overall Grant budget.

Task 2 – Public Involvement: Total Budget - $28,000 Contractual: For our hired contractor’s assistance, this task includes participation in 6 BAC Meetings, 6 public outreach sessions, and an updated website (96 hours at $165/hour); Outreach specialist for visioning sessions (74 hours at $140/hour). Supplies: 1,000 project flyer/factsheets ($1,800).

Task 3 – Site Inventory: Total Budget - $13,000 Contractual: (25 hours @ $165; 50 hours @ $115; $1,400 travel).

Task 4 – ESAs: Total Budget – $310,000 Contractual: (10 Phase I ESAs at $4,000 each; Generic QAPP at $6,000; 6 SSQAPPs at $4,000 each; and 6 Phase II ESAs at $40,000 each). We estimate that 4 of the sites may require asbestos testing as part of the Phase I ESA costs.

Task 5 – Clean-up Planning: Total Budget – $33,000 Contractual: (3 ABCAs @ $5,000 each; 1 NC Brownfield Agreement ($6,000); $12,000 for targeted cleanup/reuse planning).
c. Measuring Environmental Results

Progress will be tracked, measured, and reported by Randy Williams using EPA’s Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES). He will evaluate progress at least monthly in conjunction with our chosen contractor to ensure that we are achieving our outputs, results, and eventual outcomes and that funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. This includes timely scheduling and completion of public outreach activities, completion of inventory activities by month 6, completion of Phase I ESAs by month 18, Phase II ESAs completed by month 30, and ABCAs and reuse planning completed between months 24-36. We will conduct monthly project update phone calls with our EPA Project Manager and submit quarterly reports to EPA, which will also be a mechanism to measure/track results.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE
   a. Programmatic Capability
      i. & ii. Organizational Capacity and Structure
Despite our small Planning Department and limited in-house capacity, we have administered grant funds as demonstrated and detailed in Section 4.b by our record of successfully executed projects. As with all of our grants, this project will be managed by a dedicated project director (PD). The PD will be supported by an assistant PD, our finance director, a qualified environmental firm, and our Brownfield Advisory Committee. Our PD and Assistant PD are serving in the same capacities as proposed in our 2019 Brownfield Grant Application. This team will ensure the timely and successful expenditure of grant funds and timely completion of all technical, administrative, and financial requirements.

      iii. Description of Key Staff
Randy Williams, AICP, Newton’s Planning Director, will serve as Project Director for the prospective grant award. Randy has 35 years of municipal and private planning experience and has managed federal and state grants, on-time, and on-budget. He will be responsible for complying with the administrative and reporting requirements of the grant agreement. Randy will be assisted by Alex Fulbright, Assistant Planning Director, with over 20 years’ experience as a public planner, and Sean Hovis, Assistant City Manager. Vickie Thomas, City Finance Director, with over 25 years of finance and accounting experience, will provide administrative support and perform the necessary draws to EPA to acquire grant funding. Public Works Director James Wentz with 15 years’ experience, will facilitate property assessments.

      iii. Acquiring Additional Resources
The City has established relationships with engineering and environmental services firms, including experts in brownfields assessment and redevelopment. The City will hire a consulting firm, in compliance with federal, state, and local procurement standards, to help manage and address technical components of the grant, including identifying sites, conducting assessments, planning for redevelopment, and supporting outreach.

   b. Past Performance and Accomplishments
      ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Assistance
The City of Newton recently received state-funded assistance to complete the Downtown Revitalization Streetscape (DRS) project and the West A Street Improvement (WASI) project, detailed below.

      (1) Accomplishments: NCDOC and NCDOT provided $225,000 and $75,000 respectively to support replacement of underground utilities, sidewalk extensions, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, an amphitheater, street furniture, and street trees.

      (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: Three road subsurface inspections and two annual progress reports have been completed. The project was completed in June 2020. Additional phases are awaiting additional funding. State oversight of project scope, capability for completion, RFLOI selection process, and engineer selection approval has been completed at project milestones. The City is meeting NEPA, NCDOT, and State Historic Preservation Office reporting requirements. The project is currently under construction.