Narrative Information Sheet – Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

1. **Applicant Identification:** The Randolph County Economic Development Authority ("the County EDA") as an approved regional agency, with an address of 1218 US Highway 431, Roanoke, AL 36274, requests consideration of the following EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant proposal.

2. **Funding Requested:**
   a. **Assessment Grant Type:** Community-wide
   b. **Federal Funds Requested:**
      i. $400,000
      ii. The Randolph County Economic Development Authority is applying for a community-wide grant; therefore, this section does not apply.

3. **Location:** Randolph County, Alabama

4. **Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:**
   a. **Target Area(s):**
      i. The Roanoke Target Area (Census Tract 4)
      ii. Wadley’s Downtown Main Street (Census Tract 6)
   b. **Priority Site(s) Address(es):**
      i. Handley Mill: East of 820 Gordon St, Roanoke, AL 36274
      ii. Johnny Ray Trail: Southeast of 820 Gordon St, Roanoke, AL 36274
      iii. Perry Auto: East of 150 Main Street, Wadley, AL 36276

5. **Contacts**
   a. **Project Director:** Mr. Bryant Whaley, the Executive Director for the Randolph County Economic Development Authority will serve as the Project Director for this proposal. Mr. Whaley’s contact information is as follows: Phone: (334) 863-7243, Email: bwhaley@randolphcountyeda.com, mailing address: 1218 US Highway 431, Roanoke, AL 36274
   b. **Highest Ranking Executive Official:** Mr. Bryant Whaley, the Executive Director for the Randolph County Economic Development Authority will also serve as the highest-ranking executive official. Mr. Whaley’s contact information is as follows: Phone: (334) 863-7243, Email: bwhaley@randolphcountyeda.com, mailing address: 1218 US Highway 431, Roanoke, AL 36274

6. **Population:**
   a. Randolph County Population: 22,574 (American Community Survey (ACS), 2019)
   b. Priority Site(s) Population:
7. **Other Factors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community population is 10,000 or less.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td>NA</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>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area wide planning activities, as described in Section I.A., for priority site(s) within the target area.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2011 or later) or is closing</td>
<td>NA</td>
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8. **Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:**
   See Attachment.

9. **Releasing Copies of Applications:**
   NA; no portions of the application are confidential.
November 22, 2021

Bryant Whaley, Executive Director  
Randolph County Economic Development Authority  
1218 US Highway 431  
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

RE: EPA Brownfields Assessment Community-Wide Grant

Dear Mr. Whaley:

We are pleased to support the Randolph County Economic Development Authority (EDA) in its pursuit of a Brownfield Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for key brownfield sites within their jurisdiction.

The Randolph County communities that have properties that have engaged include the City of Roanoke and the Town of Wadley. The downfall of the textile industry has created a negative environmental legacy. In addition to the priority sites, there are other inventoried sites within the target areas that have redevelopment potential capable of improving the local economy.

Upon request, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management can participate in technical reviews and various brownfield outreach activities needed to accomplish the EDA’s goals. We wish you and the residents of the region served by the EDA success in the pursuit of these funds. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

M. Gavin Adams  
Chief  
Redevelopment Section  
Land Division  
MGA/  
cc: John Hargraves via email, Hargraves@pmenv.com
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Background and Description of Target Area

Located in Eastern Alabama, along the Georgia border, Randolph County is a mere 80 miles east of the Birmingham Metropolis. When founded, the County aspired to be eastern Alabama’s premier regional trading center. The Birmingham and Atlantic Railroad cut through the rural County, increasing local and regional connectivity, allowing for several early agricultural and manufacturing successes. The area primarily processed cotton, which was widely grown at the time, producing textile goods from the fiber. Together, the Handley Mill and Palm Beach Coat Factory employed the vast majority of Randolph County’s working population. These industries thrived throughout World Wars I and II, benefiting from the increased demand in goods. Despite this prosperity, national trade policies resulted in work to being outsourced to other countries with cheaper labor. Randolph County was directly affected as the Handley Mill closed unexpectedly in 1972. Approximately 1,200 people were left without employment overnight and the resulting unemployment rates in some communities reaching more than 25% in a month. About a decade later, the Palm Beach factory closed as well, leaving another 300 of Randolph County’s residents without work. Additional manufacturers in the County continued to close throughout the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. For comparison, manufacturing jobs accounted for 55% of Randolph County’s workforce in 1986, but by 2019 that number has dropped to 26.1% (U.S. Census). On the larger scale, Randolph County has lost 18.8% of its population since peaking in 1920. The slow decline in population and jobs has been met with an incline in poverty and unemployment. Today, nearly 20% of the population (22,574) are living in poverty (American Community Survey (ACS)).

As part of ongoing efforts to bolster living standards and the local economy, Randolph County Economic Development Authority (EDA), partners with local units of government to improve the area’s economic well-being by expanding and diversifying the industrial and commercial base. Brownfield redevelopment, specifically because of decline in manufacturing, is a large part of the EDA’s focus for economic revitalization. Existing brownfield sites include relics from the early manufacturing economy which supported the founding and development of the communities the EDA supports. Such sites include textile mills, decommissioned railroad corridors that once connected textile products to consumers, commercial Downtown buildings, historic railroad depots, and gas stations. Throughout the County, nearly 180 hazardous substance and petroleum product brownfield sites have been identified.

Of the extensive inventory, two tight-knit communities have been selected as Target Areas for this grant. The first Target Area is within the centrally located and most populated community in Randolph County: the City of Roanoke (population: 5,941 (American Community Survey) (ACS)). The Roanoke Target Area is located a block north of Downtown, encompassing a 50-acre Mill Village. The Village is arranged in a rectangular pattern, with residential houses forming the outline on all sides. An elementary school is tucked amongst the houses to the northeast and two churches sit to the west. At the center of the village is a 9-acre open field previously occupied by Handley Mill. To the south of the Mill, an abandoned railroad corridor stretches from east to west, originating from the open field. The second Target Area, located 13 miles west of Roanoke, is Wadley’s Downtown Main Street. Situated between AL HWY 22 and AL S.R. 77, the Target Area encompasses the southern gateway entrance into Town. The 700-foot stretch of road is hugged by deteriorated commercial buildings characterized by historic red brick. Nearly the entire Town’s population (800 people) lives within a mile of the Target Area and the community is considered a food desert (ACS; EPA Environmental Justice Screen (EJ SCREEN) (2014-2018); USDA Food Access Research Atlas). Beyond Main Street, to the east and the west, the landscape quickly transitions to a rural layout; period homes and the winding Tallapoosa River ground the small-town feel. With the help of a Brownfield Assessment Grant, the EDA will be able to continue revitalization efforts throughout these Target Areas and beyond. Such redevelopment will support an improved economy, health, welfare, and life satisfaction by ways of increased property values, jobs, tourism, and recreational opportunities.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

Within the two Target Areas, three priority sites have been selected from the inventory based on current threats to human health, welfare, and the environment, established redevelopment plans, and anticipated benefits. **Handley Mill:** Located within Roanoke’s Mill Village, the 9-acre Handley Textile Mill operated between 1901 and 1972, providing employment for a large portion of residents. The property was donated to the City in 2017 and the County pitched in to demolish the structurally unsound buildings. Today, the neighboring church owns the property. Widely underserved, the Village population located within a mile radius of the site includes over 2,700 residents (EJ SCREEN). The majority of these individuals fall within the sensitive population criteria as 29% are youth, 42% are minority, 32% are considered low income, earning less than $25,000 annually, and 22% of the minority population lives in poverty (EJ SCREEN; ACS). Pollutants
from the Mill may include Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from degreasers used on machinery and dyes. Historic images confirm smokestacks on the property which increases the likelihood of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon (PAHs) and heavy metals, such as lead, arsenic, aluminum, and manganese, associated with the former use of coal to heat the property. Inhalation of VOCs increases the likelihood of respiratory ailments and lung cancer, posing significant health effects if sensitive populations were to be exposed. Ash and coal may be buried on site, causing surficial soil contamination, thus creating a dermal contact risk. The Handley Textile Mill is a priority site because of its centralized residential location (thus intensifying existing environmental justice concerns), connectivity to additional priority sites, and extensive reuse plans. In order for the property to be reused in a meaningful way, these potential contaminants must be assessed and subsequently mitigated prior to redevelopment.

Johnny Ray Trail: Comprised of a decommissioned railroad corridor, the Johnny Ray Trail borders the Handley Mill to the south, connecting the rural region to South Roanoke. The railroad was constructed between 1887 and 1907, and was an important mode of early transportation, moving various agricultural and industrial products, including textiles from Handley Mill. The entirety of the rail line was officially abandoned in 2004 as the need for bulk agricultural and manufacturing transportation has diminished within the Region. Today, this overgrown swath of track is named after the infamous conductor who managed the railroad, Johnny Ray. The Johnny Ray Trail is a priority site for the very same reasons that the Handley Mill is (see text above). The Trail passes through small communities within Randolph and Lee Counties which have high poverty rates for the general population (reaching nearly 36% in the City of La Fayette), and for minorities (upwards of 50.6% in the Town of Five Points) (ACS). Potential environmental hazards along the Trail include the railroad ties and herbicidal defoliants. Creosote, a known carcinogen, is applied to railroad ties in order to preserve the wood (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ASTDR)). Herbicidal defoliants vary in chemical composition and stand to include nontraditional products such as diesel fuel, leaded gasoline, or waste oil to save money. Dermal contact with residual diesel fuel could cause adverse health effects as it is a possible carcinogen (World Health Organization (WHO)). Lead gasoline has been labeled as a “probable human carcinogen” by the EPA and can cause central nervous system damage and neurology impairment in exposed children (ASTDR). Arsenical herbicides, a group of older herbicides that have been used since the 1950s, may have also been applied. Toxicity of the herbicide depends on its’ form, however, arsenic as a whole is recognized by the EPA as a confirmed human carcinogen (ASTDR).

Perry Auto: Located within the second Target Area of Downtown Wadley, Perry Auto is situated on a half-acre corner lot serving as a southern gateway property to Downtown. Constructed in 1936, the approximately 9,200 square foot auto dealership was owned and operated by the Perry family for more than 80 years. Additional past uses for the property include a gas station and automotive service garage. Wadley purchased the deserted cornerstone property in 2019 in hopes to redevelop the building and improve the local economy. Within a mile radius of the priority site, the median household income is only $19,371 and more than 30% of the population is considered low income (EJ SCREEN). Additional sensitive residents include youth, ages 17 and under, which make up of 32% of the population (EJ SCREEN). Pollutants typically associated with such activities include gasoline and diesel fuel (which include Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)). Diesel fuel, a known carcinogen, can cause a wide array of health complications, including headaches, eye irritation, nausea, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, aggravation of asthma, respiratory infection, lung inflammation, and premature death (EPA). Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) associated with in-ground hoists, which are present on the property, can cause cancer and immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine system complications (EPA). Other pollutants from the historical mechanic operations may include Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from solvents and degreasers, and PAHs/Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs) from auto waste oil. Ingestion and/or inhalation of VOCs may cause conjunctival irritation, headache, nausea, damage to the liver, kidney, heart, central nervous system, immune system, and male reproductive system (EPA). Auto waste oil, is a probable human carcinogen, causing rash, anemia, nervous system damage (headaches and tremors), diarrhea, and death in animals. Additionally, due to the date of construction, Lead Base Paint (LBP) and Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) are likely present, both of which pose health concerns.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area
i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The Target Areas and priority sites were chosen based on local and federal planning efforts which include the Roanoke Comprehensive Plan, goals set by the East Alabama Cycling Club, Wadley Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant application, and the EPA Strategic Plan. As a whole, these communities strive to create functional, aesthetically pleasing, and inviting Downtown areas for residents and visitors alike. By focusing on the selected priority sites, these goals will be met as further described through the anticipated
benefits in section 1.b.ii. The City of Roanoke plans to redevelop Handley Mill as the Handley Park as established within their 2012 Comprehensive Plan. The Park will include the installation of a playground, splash pad, covered pavilion, seating structures, bathrooms, designated sport fields, on-site parking, and landscaping features throughout. Upon successful redevelopment, the project will eliminate and/or protect the public from contamination and preserve the greenspace as a community park, catering to the needs of the extensive youth population (29% of the residents) that lives within the Mill Village Target Area (EJ SCREEN). The Handley Park will incorporate Comprehensive Plan goals by protecting the Region’s natural resources, celebrating the Mill Village heritage, and creating infill development.

Additionally, the Hadley Park will serve as an official trailhead to the Johnny Ray Trail. With established Regional support, the 37-mile railroad corridor will be purchased from Norfolk Southern with the intention of repurposing it as a walking and bicycling path. Planning efforts were initiated by the East Alabama Cycling Club; the group holds fund raisers on a yearly basis by orchestrating a multi-county trail ride which closely hugs the defunct trail line. Beginning in 2021, these funds will be used explicitly for the Johnny Ray Rails to Trails project. The railroad’s transformation process begins by removing overgrown vegetation through sustainable methods. Where applicable, the metal tracks will be returned to the rail companies for recycling and the railroad ties will be removed and disposed of in an appropriate landfill. Following assessment, additional leveraging will fund covering the path with crushed gravel to reduce erosion and increase traction for pedestrians. Benches and signage will complete the trail. This redevelopment would fulfill the goals of “promoting and enhancing community facilities” and “improving pedestrian access” within Roanoke’s Comprehensive Plan, which encourages the construction of a walking trail within City limits. Additional planning will include a Resource Roadmap Plan to further investigate legalities of the rails to trails plan as well as locating and securing other leveraging resources and project partners.

The Perry Auto in Downtown Wadley has been reimagined as a locally owned grocery store. Prior to redevelopment, the Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), in-ground hoists, LBP, ACMs, and any residual pollution will be removed and appropriately disposed of. Parking will replace the current tank and awning locations and a driveway will be placed to the north of the building to facilitate a drive-thru pharmacy. These plans are outlined in Wadley’s FY19 TAP Grant application, which includes additional Downtown improvements such as replacing the sidewalk with permeable pavers, incorporating handicap ramp accessibility for ADA compliance, reconstructing drainage solutions, and installing lighting features to improve safety. Additionally, a Site Disposition Strategy (SDS) will be performed to aid in deciding how to transfer the site in a way that provides value to seller and buyer. Performing an SDS will support site goals of providing a local grocery store for the Wadley community, thus eliminating the food desert status.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

The EDA seeks to improve the quality of life for residents by revitalizing the land in accordance with EPA Strategic Plan standards and incorporating recreational programs and food resources. Transforming the Handley Mill site into the Handley Park will create a centrally located recreational space. Therefore, the Park will be widely assessable, particularly for the low-income surrounding residential families. The neighborhood’s sensitive youth and high poverty populations will have increased opportunity for recreation and exercise where it is otherwise currently lacking. The 9.22-acre Park will thus improve quality of life and act as a beneficial asset to the community, bolstering property values and associated taxes. The Johnny Ray Trail, redeveloped as a multi-county pedestrian and bicycling path, will improve walkability and connectivity within Roanoke and beyond. Stretching three miles within the City, the Trail will provide residents with an additional recreation opportunity where such opportunities are needed. The redevelopment will also attract tourists intent on completing the 37-mile-long Trail. In turn, the resulting overnight tourism will create an in increased spending within the community through lodging, restaurants, and purchases at local shops. Spin-off development is expected to increase the number and offerings of such businesses, increasing tax revenues. The development will also improve local health and boost livability standards. Converting Perry Auto into a grocery store and pharmacy will eliminate the food desert within the Town of Wadley. Fresh produce options, which are currently unavailable at local shops, will benefit the overall well-being and health of community members. By reusing the existing building, in-fill development will accompany a historic restoration. Citizens will no longer have to travel outside of town limits to purchase daily necessities, thus keeping local dollars in the community. This local-first approach will allow funding to be reinvested into Wadley, thus bolstering the local economy, increasing job opportunities, and helping to eliminate sustained poverty rates.

iii. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse
A readily available inventory of incentives and grants will allow the EDA to complete these projects from start to finish. The EDA will be eligible to apply on behalf of or in partnership with another municipal entity and/or developer for all resources outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Title and/or Source</th>
<th>Purpose/Role (Assessment/Remediation/Reuse) and Applicable Priority Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Roanoke</td>
<td>Remediation: The City of Roanoke demolished and removed the dilapidated buildings from the Handley Mill site, totaling approximately $15,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA: Community Facilities Direct Loan &amp; Grant Program</td>
<td>Reuse: Due to the population size of Roanoke, the City is eligible to apply for a grant covering 55% of funding for the development of the Handley Mill Park. Applications are accepted year-round.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs: Recreational Trails Program</td>
<td>Reuse: The Recreational Trails Program is a federal program to assist in acquiring, developing, and/or improving trail and trail-related resources. Available funds range from $200,000 to $400,000 and require a minimum of 20% cash or in-kind match. Funding will be used to add gravel, signage, and rest zones to Roanoke’s portion of the Johnny Ray Trail. With applications due yearly in October, the City of Roanoke or Randolph County would be eligible to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rails to Trails Conservancy: Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund</td>
<td>Reuse: The Doppelt Fund provides $85,000 annually to qualifying projects. With a yearly due date of early January, award amounts vary, typically ranging from $5,000 to $35,000. Under this program, the City of Roanoke, Randolph County, or the EDA would be eligible to apply. If successful, gap funding would be received to develop the Handley Park as a trailhead and/or construct the Johnny Ray Trail. Funding may be used to match other programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wadley TAP Grant</td>
<td>Reuse: The TAP grant will improve the aesthetics and functionality of Main Street. Funding is available up to $800,000 with a 20% local match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wadley</td>
<td>Reuse: This leveraged funding, provided by the Town of Wadley, allowed for the aesthetic and structural improvements and roof replacement to the Perry Auto building. A total of approximately $143,000 was invested into the property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Food Financing Initiative Technical Assistance: Reinvestment Fund, U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Reuse: With a rolling deadline, this technical assistance grant is a part of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative. The grant provides early-stage healthy food access projects in underserved areas with a focus on management, financial health, and operations. Funding can be used to facilitate business planning, market or feasibility studies, or financial modeling for the Perry Auto Grocery Store. Eligible applicants include for-profits and non-profits, therefore, the developer, City of Wadley, Randolph County, or the EDA would be able to apply for assistance.</td>
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ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

Current municipal and building infrastructure will be utilized wherever possible in order to maximize funding and sustainability. Serving as a trail head to the Johnny Ray Trail, the Handley site will require on-site parking. If water, sewer, and/or electricity are required on site, nearby infrastructure exists within the neighborhood for an easy tie-in. Due to its backwoods character, the Johnny Ray Trail will reutilize the railroad corridor and will not require additional infrastructure beyond what will be provided at the Handley Park. Due to the Downtown nature of the Perry Auto, the location will allow for reuse on existing sidewalks, on-street parking, and utilities.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community’s Need for Funding

Randolph County’s prosperity has largely been attributed to the manufacturing industry as a whole up until the late 20th Century. At its peak, the industry employed more than 70% of the working population. The collapse of manufacturing has forced the County to replace these lost jobs with limited success. Take for example, the Town of Wadley’s Medowcraft manufacturing plant. Once a robust consumer of natural gas (purchased from the Town) the company laid off the majority of 15,000 employees after filing bankruptcy in 2007. The plant was later purchased and continues to operate today, but at a much slower pace. The loss of natural gas consumption (estimated at $250,000 per year) has severely hindered Wadley’s operating budget, forcing the utility budget to operate in the negatives and borrow from the general fund. The economic impact of this
collapse is evident when comparing poverty and unemployment rates against the textile industry’s rise and fall. Still today, the economic climate continues to struggle toward recovery. Current poverty rates within the Target Areas range from 18.0% in Roanoke to 38.1% in Wadley (ACS, 2019). Between Roanoke and Wadley, the unemployment rates average 13.8% (ACS, 2019). The lack of income tax revenue is compounded by the small County population (22,722 people) (ACS, 2019). Compare this to Alabama’s average county population, which is more than three times greater. Because of the small population and large jurisdiction, the County is forced to allocate the limited revenue geographically further, causing a profound lack of funding for resources beyond basic necessities. Due to this ongoing situation, the County is unable to draw on their own municipal resources for environmental assessment.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Children (18 years or younger), elderly (65 years or older), minority, and low-income (annual household income of less than $25,000) individuals have been identified as sensitive populations most impacted by brownfield properties within the Target Areas. Within a one-mile radius of the Handley Textile Mill, 31% of the population falls within one of these categories (EJ SCREEN). Within the County, exercise opportunities and regular physical activity are nearly twice as rare when compared to Top U.S. Performers (County Health Rankings (CHR)). Consequently, County citizens experience more poor mental and physical health days and are more likely to die prematurely or from adult obesity (CHR). In fact, citizens within Randolph County are more than twice as likely to die prematurely than the Top U.S. Performers (CHR). Furthermore, the Region’s children, on average, experience food insecurity 25 times more frequently than the rest of the U.S. (Kids Count). This statistic is concerning considering health complications, especially in children are compounded by a lack of accessible nutritious foods. Additionally, the entirety of Wadley is a food desert (USDA Food Access Research Atlas). Within the Target Communities, an average of 40% of children live in poverty (ACS). Due to the lack of housing options and expansive cost of living, low-income individuals are more likely to live in close proximity to brownfields. This holds particularly true for the Roanoke Target Area as residential homes surround the priority site. Census Tract 4, in which the Roanoke Target Area falls into, poverty in concentrated within minority homes; (compare 55.4% poverty rate for minorities vs 18.5% poverty for whites) (ACS). Redevelopment following a successful assessment will reduce environmental threats for nearby residents and provide additional jobs and tax revenue through auxiliary ecotourism businesses, thus strengthening the economy, improving food security, poverty rates, and overall economic conditions for sensitive populations.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

In 2019, Alabama was ranked as having the worst overall health outcomes out of all states by America’s Health Rankings (United Health Foundation). Health Outcomes include cancer deaths, cardiovascular deaths, diabetes, disparity in health status, frequent mental and physical distress, infant mortality, and premature death. This statement is backed by statistics published by County Health Rankings (CHR) through the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute which assembles data from a number of national sources. Take for example, Randolph County’s premature death rate is 128% higher than the Top U.S. Performers (CHR). This measure can be traced back to poor diet, lack of exercise, environmental contaminants, and inadequate medical care. Because infant statistics provide an early snapshot of childhood health, it is important to note the State of Alabama experiences a 12% pre-term birth rate, indicating an “F” grade by the March of Dimes. Statistics for minorities are even graver, “with the preterm birth rate among Black women 51% higher than the rate among all other women” (March of Dimes). Randolph County experiences an infant mortality rate of 8.0 per 1,000 (compare to the national rate of 5.9) (Kids Count). As cited by the CDC, exposure of pregnant women to high levels of lead, a heavy metal potentially located within the Handley Mill site and along the Johnny Ray Corridor, can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, and low birth weight. Such health consequences may be due to ingesting toxins via drinking water. Furthermore, in 2018, statistics published by the CDC show the disproportionate death rates related to lung, female breast, and prostate cancer in Alabama. Lung and bronchus deaths occur more than twice as often as the latter two cancers previously mentioned, at a rate of 45.6 per 100,000 people (CDC). Respiratory illnesses are commonly associated with exposure to high concentrations of PAHs such as creosote, herbicides, diesel fuel, and gasoline, which could enter the body through dermal, inhalation, and ingestion routes (EPA). Diesel fuel, often encountered as an off-label herbicide along railroad corridors, can also cause reproductive health complications, birth defects, low body weight, skin and stomach cancer, and asthma (WHO). Finally, VOCs associated with textile mills can cause conjunctival irritation, headache, nausea, damage to the liver, kidney, heart, immune, and central nervous systems, and male reproductive anatomy (EPA). The last health concern- male reproductive damage may explain the state-wide elevated rates of prostate cancer. The successful identification of contaminants will contribute to identifying...
and mitigating causes of elevated diseases, cancers, and premature death, leading to long-term public health improvements.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice

This grant will assist the EDA in the first step towards eliminating environmental hazards by assessing properties that are contaminated and negatively impacting the health of community residents. Once identified, additional financial resources will be sought to eliminate this contamination to limit exposure and reduce environmental justice concerns. Some of our highest minority and low-income populations live within the Target Areas. For instance, the Roanoke Target Area (Census Tract 4) has a minority population rate of 23.8% and minority poverty rates of 55.4% (ACS, 2019). This statistic is approximately 3 times greater than the white population poverty rate (ACS, 2019). Within the Wadley Target Area, 40.8% of the population is a minority, and 47.4% of these individuals live in poverty (ACS, 2019). Again, the poverty rate is disproportionately hindering individuals of color, as only 28.9% of whites experience similar conditions (ACS, 2019). The textile industry that once served as an economic resource, has created liabilities which unfairly impose health and safety hazards upon struggling communities and vulnerable populations. The Appalachian Regional Commission has designated Randolph County as economically ‘at risk’, a measure which incorporates three-year averages for unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. Within the Target Area communities, more than one out of every four people and one out of every three minority persons experience poverty. This figure highlights the fact that minorities are disproportionately impacted, and thus more likely to encounter the negative effects of poverty and environmental justice hazards. Specifically at the Handley Mill site, a potentially dangerous and contaminated property will be eliminated for numerous residents. Remediating environmental contaminants along the Johnny Ray Corridor and Perry Auto will assist in developing an eco-tourism economy poised to gain job opportunities for these residents and reinvent properties that the industry has long left behind.

b. Community Engagement

i. and ii. Project Involvement and Project Roles

The EDA will continually build upon this list to ensure inclusion of all stakeholders, each partner will be included in public involvement opportunities to provide input in making decisions for additional site selection, cleanup, and reuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization and Point of Contact</th>
<th>Project Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith Baptist Church (FBC)</td>
<td>Faith Baptist Church owns the Handley Mill property and is located directly west of the site. The Church has granted property access and is willing to donate the property to the City of Roanoke. Faith Baptist will provide direct updates to community members about involvement and input opportunities and will be included in all public meetings to provide input on upcoming decisions for future reuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Whaley, Pastor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(334) 863-8827</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EACC, in partnership with the Opelika Bicycle Advisory Committee</td>
<td>EACC, in partnership with the Opelika Bicycle Advisory Committee, organizes the fundraiser Johnny Ray Century Trail Ride, an annual bike riding event spanning between Opelika and Roanoke. As such, EACC is committed to implementing regional bicycle and pedestrian masterplans throughout Eastern Alabama and has pledged to allocate raised money (approximately $10,000 annually) to the Johnny Ray Trail project as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shirley Lazenby, President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(334) 787-7679</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee-Russell Council of Governments</td>
<td>Mr. Wyatt has been instrumental in heading the Johnny Ray Trail redevelopment efforts. Located within the neighboring County of Lee, the Council holds important leveraging power associated with their larger population and effluent communities. The Council has pledged to use this influence to garner public and private support in terms of political backing and funding opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Wyatt, Transportation Planner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:DWyatt@lrcog.com">DWyatt@lrcog.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(334) 528-9214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>The Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Ms. Tidwell also volunteers her time at the Randolph County Historical Museum and is extremely active in the daily community politics of the County. As such, she has agreed to update community members about the brownfield program in general and garner information about potential secondary sites for assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Tidwell, Executive Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rancococ@teleclipse.net">rancococ@teleclipse.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(334) 863-6612</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the location of the second Target Area, the Town of Wadley, with great enthusiasm, has pledged to facilitate the project in any way possible, which includes, but is not limited to community engagement assistance, developer acquisition for Perry Auto, input on redevelopment strategies, and providing meeting space.

### iii. Incorporating Community Input

Following this grant’s award, a Project Kick-Off Meeting will be held. This meeting will provide an opportunity to establish a brownfield advisory committee consisting of representatives from across the County. The committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize the assessments. The Kick-Off Meeting will also outline the goals of the grant, how to provide public input, and what the funds would mean to the County, ensuring an educated public and allowing for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in a variety of ways, including regularly held public meetings. To accommodate COVID-19 and in order to practice social distancing, meetings may be held virtually through Zoom, with which the community, project partners, brownfield committee, and local citizens have prior experience using. If COVID conditions improve, in person meetings will be held at the Randolph County Chamber of Commerce. The meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement from all communities. Additionally, those that cannot be present during the live meeting, can access the recorded meeting online, at the EDA’s website and/or can utilize a call-in number provided during the meeting. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected in person, through Zoom’s chat feature, and via email to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. These meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers by showcasing available brownfield sites and providing developers technical assistance in obtaining additional financial incentives for planned redevelopment. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with the local newspapers which will include the Randolph County Leader (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, and flier distribution/website updates via local businesses, project partners, and community organizations. The following Facebook pages will be used as well: Randolph County Chamber of Commerce, Randolph County Economic Development Authority – Alabama, City of Roanoke, Alabama, and Wadley, Alabama, reaching over 4,000 followers.

### 3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

#### a. Description of Tasks and Outputs

**Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight**

i. Project Implementation: General grant management; Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC) selection based on a competitive bid process (per 40 CFR 30); meeting facilitation with, ADEM, and EPA; required reporting; budget reconciliation.

ii. Schedule: Quarters 1-12: The kick-off meeting will be held within 1 month of funding and meetings will be held at regular intervals throughout the project. A QEC will be selected within 1-2 months of funding. Quarterly and MBE/WBE reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis and as needed. ACRES will be updated throughout the grant period.

iii. Task Lead: The EDA will oversee this task, with assistance the selected QEC.


**Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach**

i. Project Implementation: Develop marketing materials, which will be available online and in hard copy; notify the community of site-specific public information meetings and assessment schedules; advertise for public meeting through online and in-person methods; hold public meetings to solicit input, inform, educate, and update the community regarding assessment and redevelopment activities; provide updates at local community meetings. An inventory of approximately 180 sites, including the three priority sites, has already been established, however, the secondary brownfield inventory will continue to grow through community input. The EDA will also attend various brownfield conferences.
ii. Schedule: Quarters 1-12: Community outreach will be performed for the duration of the grant period; the first public meeting will be held within 3 months; the 2nd public meeting will be held after the first round of assessments have been completed; and the 3rd public meeting will be held when assessments are nearing completion and reuse planning begins.

iii. Task Lead: The EDA will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC, ADEM, QEC, and community partners.

iv. Outputs: Public meeting advertisements; press releases and project update reports; educational materials to support public meetings (PowerPoint presentations and handouts); kick-off meeting; 3-12 public meetings; one-on-one meetings with property owners, as needed; updated brownfield inventory; attend various brownfield conferences, including two EPA Region 4 Conferences and the National Brownfield Conference.

Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)

i. Project Implementation: ASTM-compliant Phase I ESAs; Phase II ESAs; ADME and EPA reviewed Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP) and Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (SSQAPPs); Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) Surveys. Costs for these activities include contractual consulting and reporting expenses, and printing.

ii. Schedule: Quarters 1-10: A QAPP will be completed within 1 month of selection. Once approved by ADEM/EPA, site-specific assessment activities will begin within 1 month. Assessment and reporting will occur throughout the grant period, with the goal of completing assessment activities by quarter 10.

iii. Task Lead: The QEC will oversee this task, with assistance from the EDA and BAC.

iv. Outputs: Priority Sites: 3 Phase I ESAs (3 Haz), 3 Phase II ESAs (3 Haz), 1 Haz Mat Survey; Additional Sites: 8 Phase I ESAs (5 Haz and 3 Petro), 3 Phase II ESAs (2 Haz and 1 Petro), 1 Haz Mat Surveys

Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities

i. Project Implementation: Creation of cleanup plans and implementation strategies for developing and utilizing resources; development of Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) for priority sites that require remediation based on Phase II ESA data. The ABCAs will include remedial actions for each identified regulated contaminant that exceeds applicable guidelines. Remedial actions will be compared based on metrics such as cost, feasibility, and effectiveness in protecting human health and the environment. ABCAs will be developed through considering the potential reuse scenario(s) for each site. A public meeting will be held during this reuse planning period to solicit input from the public and community partners; we envision this meeting as a design charettes to encourage public participation. The total estimated budget for this task includes travel to attend meetings with stakeholders related to redevelopment plans, which will incorporate community input, market data, feasibility analysis for various reuse scenarios. The budget also allocates approximately 37% of total funds to create an Area-Wide Plan for the Target Area. The Plan will provide financial projections/estimates, potential leveraging opportunities, incorporate project partners, stakeholders, and community member input, and respond to the surrounding market and environmental conditions and challenges.

ii. Schedule: Quarters 5-10: ABCAs will be completed within 3-6 months of finalizing the Phase II ESA reports. The public meeting/design charette will be held after the draft ABCAs are complete, but before they are finalized.

iii. Task Lead: The QEC will oversee the completion of ABCAs. The EDA will oversee the public meeting/design charettes with assistance from the QEC and BAC.

iv. Outputs: 3 ABCA reports; 1-3 public meeting/design charette (and associated outreach/presentation materials); and 1 EPA-approved Area Wide Plan.

b. Cost Estimates

A list is provided below, which outlines how costs were derived for each task. Allocation of grant funds is included within the following table.

Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight
- Personnel: 100 hours at an average rate of $50/hour = $5,000 for programmatic costs such as financial and performance reporting.
- Fringe Benefits: an estimate $325 ($200 Haz/$125 Petro) is applied per task.
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: $800
- Contractual: 100 hours at an average rate of $100/hour = $10,000 to assist in reporting needs throughout the grant’s lifecycle.

Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach
- Personnel: 100 hours at an average rate of $50/hour = $5,000 for programmatic costs such as financial and performance reporting.
• Fringe Benefits: an estimate $325 ($200 Haz/$125 Petro) is applied per task.
• Travel: Estimating two staff members traveling for three conferences averaging three days each; $250/round trip flight, $200/hotel room per night and $50/day per diem per person. Estimated cost: $6,000
• Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: $800
• Contractual: 100 hours at an average rate of $100/hour = $10,000 to assist in both information gathering for growth of the inventory and community engagement presentations

Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
• Personnel: 100 hours at an average rate of $50/hour = $5,000 for programmatic costs such as financial and performance reporting.
• Fringe Benefits: an estimate $325 ($200 Haz/$125 Petro) is applied per task.
• Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: $800
• Contractual:
  o Priority Sites: $91,000
    ▪ 3 Phase I ESA: estimated cost of $4,000 per ESA = $12,000
    ▪ 3 Phase II ESA: estimated cost of $23,000 per ESA = $69,000
    ▪ 1 Hazardous Material Survey: estimated cost of $10,000 = $10,000
  o Secondary Sites: $103,000
    ▪ 8 Phase I ESAs: average estimated cost of $4,000 per ESA = $32,000
    ▪ 3 Phase II ESAs: average estimated cost of $23,000 per ESA = $69,000
    ▪ 1 Hazardous Material Survey: estimated cost of $10,000 = $10,000
  o Total of All Sites: $202,000
    ▪ 11 Phase I ESAs: $44,000
    ▪ 6 Phase II ESAs: $138,000
    ▪ 2 Hazardous Material Surveys: $20,000

Task 4: Site Specific Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities
• Personnel: 100 hours at an average rate of $50/hour = $5,000 for programmatic costs such as financial and performance reporting.
• Fringe Benefits: an estimate $325 ($200 Haz/$125 Petro) is applied per task.
• Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: $800
• Contractual:
  o 3 ABCAs: average estimated cost of $4,500 per ABCA = $13,500
  o 1 Area Wide Plan: $134,000

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Budget Categories</th>
<th>Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight</th>
<th>Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach</th>
<th>Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments</th>
<th>Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities</th>
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<td>$22,125</td>
<td>$208,125</td>
<td>$153,625</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

C. Measuring Environmental Results

Per the requirements of the EPA Assessment Grant, the EDA will submit quarterly reports to the EPA Project Officer. These reports will cover work progress and current status, as well as any difficulties that were encountered, a record of financial expenditures, data results, and anticipated further action. Quarterly reports will also document information regarding a plan to resolve progress if the EDA ever finds itself off track. The EDA will complete reporting in the ACRES database for each assessment site, noting specific accomplishments, contaminants found, which materials were impacted, if clean-up activities are required and the progress of said activities, and other resources that have been leveraged. The ACRES database will also be
utilized to track job creation and acres of land assessed as part of this grant, as well as the total number of assessments completed and the type of assessment, the amount of funds expended by project, the total project cost, and anticipated jobs created; essentially acting as a tool for both the EPA and the EDA to track and measure the grant’s progress in achieving the outputs and eventual outcomes. At the end of the three-year grant period, a final report similar to the quarterly reports will be produced.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability

i. ii., and iii. Organizational Capacity, Structure, and Key Staff

Project management and grant administration responsibilities will be conducted by the Randolph County EDA’s Executive Director, Bryant Whaley. Mr. Whaley has a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Politics, a Master’s in Public Administration, and is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Philosophy. Working at the EDA since 2018, Mr. Whaley is supported by the EDA Board composed of 11 member, which are appointed by the District. Mr. Whaley manages marketing, redevelopment, and business development activities, as well as a $130,000 annual operating budget. He also coordinates with County and City staff and developers to include the preparation of development agreements, while overseeing the EDA’s budget and administration. These skill sets will allow Mr. Whaley to successfully manage day to day activities associated with the grant such as community engagement, reporting, and the timely expenditure of funds. Mr. Whaley will be assisted by Jared Kirby, the Chair of the EDA Board. Mr. Kirby serves as the president and CEO of First Bank, an independent and family-owned business. During his time at First Bank, Mr. Kirby has fine-tuned his supervisory experience and financial expertise. Throughout the grant, Mr. Kirby will manage invoicing, monitoring all fund expenditures. Mr. Whaley and Mr. Kirby both have a strong understanding of the functional needs of the community and recognize the potential of this assessment grant.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources

The County EDA has extensive experience managing grant funds and thus knows to begin the contractor procurement process immediately following work plan and cooperative agreement approval with the EPA. The desired consultant will be experienced in Brownfield programs including the following services: assisting with Community Brownfield Inventories and Outreach, Phase I and Phase II ESAs/Hazardous Material Surveys, ABCAs, and working with state regulators regarding solid waste and brownfield assessment redevelopment planning and remediation. Additionally, the consultant will be expected to prepare the Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP) within the first 60 days of the grant so that proposed assessments and activities are not delayed. These services will be secured in accordance with the EPA’s selection protocol and the Commission purchasing policies. Standard procedure includes a Request for Qualifications be published for response by qualified firms. Firms will be allotted guidelines with a deadline for submissions, all submissions will be available as public record. Following receipt of proposals, each application will be reviewed by the EDA Board of Directors for approval.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

Coosa Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council’s Rent-a-Desk: In 2018, the EDA received a $7,000 grant to create a business incubator by remodeling 1,000 feet of the EDA’s warehouse into office space. The facility opened its doors in 2019, providing a low-cost meeting space for entrepreneurs and community groups alike, which provide career development opportunities. The successful program has already seen one business take off, opening up an independent shop in Roanoke. Currently, 5 people utilize the space on a daily basis. Alabama State Council on The Arts Grant: The EDA collaborated with the Roanoke Rotary Club in 2019 to provide renovations to Roanoke’s Main Street Theater. A total of $20,000 was allocated to purchase new sound equipment, an electric screen, and projector for the Theater, bringing the facility up to modern standards. Kids’ Town Park Renovations: In 2019, the EDA received a $5,000 grant from the Roanoke Rotary Club. Funding was used to repair infrastructure at Kids’ Town community park. Required reporting for all grants included a final report, financial documents, and before and after photos.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

EDA has had no adverse audit findings and all benchmark compliance goals on each grant have been met. Required reporting was conducted on time and serves as an integral part of maintaining the grants’ timely implementation. Because of successful grant management, the EDA has the opportunity and will continue to pursue all opportunities that support the community. Overall, grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions have been applied in accordance with awarding party requirements.
1. **Applicant Eligibility:**
   The Randolph County Economic Development Authority ("the County EDA") operates as an approved regional authority for Randolph County in the State of Alabama. Please see the attached applicant eligibility documentation.

2. **Community Involvement:**
   Following this grant’s award, a project kick-off meeting will be held. This meeting will provide an opportunity to establish a brownfield committee consisting of representatives from across the County. The committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize the assessments. The kick-off meeting will also outline the goals of the grant, how to provide public input, and what the funds would mean to the County, ensuring an educated public and allowing for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in a variety of ways, including regularly held public meetings. To accommodate COVID-19 and in order to practice social distancing, meetings may be held virtually through Zoom, with which the community, project partners, brownfield committee, and local citizens have prior experience using. If COVID conditions improve, in person meetings will be held at the Randolph County Chamber of Commerce. The meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement from all communities. Additionally, those that cannot be present during the live meeting, can access the recorded meeting online, at the EDA’s website and/or can utilize a call-in number provided during the meeting. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected in person, through Zoom’s chat feature, and via email to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. These meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers by showcasing available brownfield sites and providing developers technical assistance in obtaining additional financial incentives for planned redevelopment. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with the local newspapers which will include the Randolph County Leader (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, and flier distribution/website updates via local businesses, project partners, and community organizations. The following Facebook pages will be used as well: Randolph County Chamber of Commerce, Randolph County Economic Development Authority – Alabama, City of Roanoke, Alabama, and Wadley, Alabama, reaching over 4,000 followers.

3. **Named Contractors and Subrecipients:**
   NA; The Randolph County Economic Development Authority has not selected a contractor nor subrecipient.

4. **Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:**
   NA; The Randolph County Economic Development Authority does not have an existing EPA Brownfield Grant.