Narrative Information Sheet

RE: FY2022 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Application

The City of Austin, Minnesota, is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2022 Brownfields Assessment Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

1. Applicant Identification:
   City of Austin
   500 4th Avenue NE
   Austin, MN 55912
   (507) 437-9940

2. Funding Requested:
   (a) Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
   (b) Federal Funds Requested:
      (i) Requested Amount: $500,000
      (ii) Site-specific Assessment Grant Waiver: Not applicable

3. Location:
   (a) City: Austin
   (b) County: Mower
   (c) State or Reservation: Minnesota

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information
   • Community-wide Assessment Grant applicants, other than tribes: List the target area(s) discussed in the Narrative:
     o Target Area #1 Oakland Ave: between 14th St NW and the Cedar River;
     o Target Area #2 Main St: one block on both sides, north and south of Oakland Ave;
     o Target Area #3 I-90 site: Follows the Soo Line Railroad Corridor between I-90 and Dobbins Creek.
   • For each target area that is smaller than a city/town, list the census tract number(s) within the target area.
     The Target Areas are mostly within Census Track (CT) CT4.10, the OZ, and adjacent portions in CTs 3.00 and 8.00.
   • Provide the address of the priority site(s) proposed in the Narrative.
     o 900 Block W Oakland Ave.
     o 100 block of Main St. S.
     o 1000 1st Ave. SW
5. Contacts:
(a) Project Director:
   Name: Craig Clark, City Administrator
   Phone: (507) 437-9941 | Email: craigc@ci.austin.mn.us
   Mailing Address: 500 4th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912
(b) Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:
   Name: Steve King, Mayor
   Phone: (507) 437-9965 | Email: mayorking@ci.austin.mn.us
   Mailing Address: 1500 4th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912

6. Population: City of Austin – population 25,114

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>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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</table>
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).

1, 2, 4

The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.

1

The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.

3

The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.

3, 4

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.

7-9

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.

Not applicable

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Picture of Austin’s worst-known flooding of the Cedar River, which occurred September 15, 2004. This is the 4th St SE area, the eastern border of the Oakland Ave. Target Area 1.

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: (not included in the three-page limit)
A letter of acknowledgement from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is attached.
November 15, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Craig Clark
City of Austin
500 4th Ave NE
Austin, MN 55912

RE: City of Austin EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application
Letter of Support from the MPCA Brownfield Program

Dear Craig Clark:

On behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), we are writing to acknowledge and support the proposed assessment activities for the City of Austin in fulfillment of the criteria of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fiscal Year 2022 Brownfield Assessment Grant guidelines.

The City of Austin has informed the MPCA that they intend to perform petroleum and hazardous substances assessment activities through a Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant in the City of Austin, located in southern Minnesota. Assessment activities would include assessments and remedial planning at brownfields, including along Oakland Avenue West and First Avenue Southwest, which are also in an Opportunity Zone.

The MPCA is supportive of the City of Austin’s application for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Should this grant be awarded, the MPCA will partner with the City of Austin to help them improve the environment and build a better future for residents in the region. If you have any questions, please contact Shanna Schmitt at 651-757-2697 or by email at shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us, or Stacey Hendry-Van Patten at 651-757-2425 or by email at stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Shanna Schmitt
Hydrogeologist
Remediation Division
Shanna Schmitt, PG, CPG

Stacey Hendry-Van Patten
Interim Supervisor
Remediation Division
Stacey Hendry-Van Patten

cc: Heidi Peper, Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (electronic)
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION; a. Target Area & Brownfields

1.1.i. Background & Description of Target Area: The City of Austin (City), Minnesota (MN) is eligible to receive United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds and is applying for a $500,000 Community-wide Assessment Grant. The City, population 25,114 (2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates), is in the south-central part of MN, just 100 miles south of Minneapolis and 10 miles north of the Iowa border. Founded in 1854 on the south banks of the Cedar River, it is now situated at the junction of highways US 218 (running north/south) and Interstate 90 (running east/west). Mills powered by the Cedar River were the first industries in Austin. In 1891, George A. Hormel opened a small family-owned butcher shop in Austin, which eventually grew into today's Fortune 500 company, Hormel Foods.

While an economic benefit, the Cedar River, flowing through the heart of the City, has also been the cause of great destruction. A series of floods occurred between 1978 and 2010; with the worst flooding on record in September 2004 when the Cedar River crested at 25 feet, 10 inches above flood stage. Following this event, the City embarked on a major flood mitigation program, including the purchase and demolition of buildings within the 100-year flood plain, converting low-lying areas of town to parks, and the installation of a flood wall and levee to protect downtown.

The City is a changing face of rural Minnesota. The non-white population increased from 2% in 1990 to 19% according to the 2015-2019 ACS. There are 46 languages spoken in Austin Public Schools, 55.6% of students are part of an ethnic minority (compared to 34.3% for the State) and 36% have a primary language other than English (16.4% for State). Adding to the challenge of serving non-English speakers, 47.8% of Austin’s students qualify for free and reduced lunch (compared to 36.4% for the State).

Seemingly unconnected points – industry, natural disasters, and changing demographics – connect and frame Austin’s brownfields challenges. Austin is home to a federally designated Opportunity Zone (OZ) due to its demographics of low-income and disadvantaged population (please see Table 1); this OZ includes parts of the City where historic flood damage occurred; and it is also home to a concentration of known and suspected contamination due to previous and current industrial practices.

There are three Target Areas (TA) for the City’s assessment grant; all are near each other and located in or adjacent to the federally designated OZ, CT 4.10: TA #1 Oakland Ave, between 14th St NW and the Cedar River; TA #2 Main St, just north and south of Oakland Ave; and TA #3 I-90 Site, follows the Soo Line Railroad Corridor between I-90 and Dobbins Creek. The I-90 Site TA and portions of the other two are in either the 100 Year Flood Zone or the Floodway. These areas represent the older parts of the City containing some of the oldest housing stock and high concentrations of poverty, as shown in Table 1. These are residential neighborhoods that are most heavily impacted by the brownfields and would benefit the most by having the area cleaned up and redeveloped. All prioritized brownfield sites are in the OZ and adjacent areas. The TAs are mostly within Census Track (CT) CT4.10, the OZ, and adjacent portions in CTs 3.00 and 8.00. Demographic indicators for the TAs based on CT data are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015-2019</th>
<th>CT 3.00</th>
<th>CT 8.00</th>
<th>CT 4.10</th>
<th>Austin</th>
<th>Mower County</th>
<th>State of MN</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>5,154</td>
<td>3,841</td>
<td>4,890</td>
<td>25,114</td>
<td>40,029</td>
<td>5,7M</td>
<td>331M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White population</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic population</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Population</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita income</td>
<td>$24.9K</td>
<td>$29.1K</td>
<td>$18.2K</td>
<td>$28.0K</td>
<td>$29.7K</td>
<td>$37.6K</td>
<td>$34.1K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td>$59.2K</td>
<td>$61.9K</td>
<td>$38.3K</td>
<td>$64.5K</td>
<td>$70.7K</td>
<td>$89.8K</td>
<td>$77.3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home value &lt;$60K</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: CT = Census Tract. All data from the US Census Bureau 2015-19 American Community Survey. Data downloaded from www.policymap.com on 10/16/21. Bold font highlights data that demonstrate higher levels of economic distress or disadvantage than the County, State or US.

Seemingly unconnected points – industry, natural disasters, and changing demographics – connect and frame Austin’s brownfields challenges. Austin is home to a federally designated Opportunity Zone (OZ) due to its demographics of low-income and disadvantaged population (please see Table 1); this OZ includes parts of the City where historic flood damage occurred; and it is also home to a concentration of known and suspected contamination due to previous and current industrial practices.

There are three Target Areas (TA) for the City’s assessment grant; all are near each other and located in or adjacent to the federally designated OZ, CT 4.10: TA #1 Oakland Ave, between 14th St NW and the Cedar River; TA #2 Main St, just north and south of Oakland Ave; and TA #3 I-90 Site, follows the Soo Line Railroad Corridor between I-90 and Dobbins Creek. The I-90 Site TA and portions of the other two are in either the 100 Year Flood Zone or the Floodway. These areas represent the older parts of the City containing some of the oldest housing stock and high concentrations of poverty, as shown in Table 1. These are residential neighborhoods that are most heavily impacted by the brownfields and would benefit the most by having the area cleaned up and redeveloped. All prioritized brownfield sites are in the OZ and adjacent areas. The TAs are mostly within Census Track (CT) CT4.10, the OZ, and adjacent portions in CTs 3.00 and 8.00. Demographic indicators for the TAs based on CT data are outlined below.

Table 1 – Demographic Indicators

1. Description of Priority Brownfield Site(s): The City is applying for a $500,000 EPA Community-Wide Assessment grant to address long term contamination issues. A search of What’s In My Neighborhood (WIMN) produced over 50 suspected or known contamination sites within the City. The City solicited community input on reuse during planning efforts, including the following plans: Vision 2020 Austin, Austin’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan 3, and the 2014 Downtown

1 The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System Fall Enrollment 2018.10.01
2 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, What’s in My Neighborhood, online tool for searching out information about sites and facilities all around Minnesota, 2020.08.06
Master Plan⁴. Priority brownfield sites were selected based on this community input along with the presence of known or suspected contamination, the needs of the low-income community, commitment to support the reuse of these areas by area partners, and the likelihood of reuse in the area in the next five years. Below are descriptions of prioritized sites.

**Table 2 - Priority Brownfield Sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Past Uses</th>
<th>WIMN Activity</th>
<th>Distance to Sensitive Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 900 Block W Oakland Ave</td>
<td>Drycleaner</td>
<td>Multiple Activities: Brownfields, Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup; Hazardous Waste; Site Assessment</td>
<td>400’ to homes, ½ mi. to Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: This block contains a site that has been vacant for decades. There is suspected soil contamination related to historic dry-cleaning operations, below the building and potentially the entire block. There is also a gas station and a landscape business on this block. The businesses and City are interested not only in assessment but then clean up and reuse of the entire block. The convenience store and landscaping building could be reused but the dry cleaner building will likely need to be demolished; however, reuse will be considered first. Suspected contamination includes petroleum products (benzene, toluene), heavy metals (lead) and chlorinated solvents including tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 100 block of Main St. S.</td>
<td>Auto Repair, Gas Stations, Tire Dealer, Flooring company</td>
<td>Multiple Hazardous Waste sites throughout block, Tanks, Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)</td>
<td>500’ to homes, ½ mi. to Cedar River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: This block includes vacant and underutilized sites in the core of Austin on Main Street between Oakland and 1st Avenues. Once assessed, the buildings could be reused. Suspected contamination includes petroleum products (benzene, toluene), heavy metals (lead) and asbestos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 1000 1st Ave SW</td>
<td>Auto repair, gas station</td>
<td>Hazardous Waste, Tanks, USTs</td>
<td>400’ to homes, ½ mi. to Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: This property includes a substandard building in the core of Austin in the Oakland Ave corridor. Suspected contamination includes petroleum products (benzene, toluene), heavy metals (lead) and asbestos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 14th St NE / 11th Dr. NE</td>
<td>Clay mining, a tannery and recently industrial dump site</td>
<td>Investigation and Cleanup, Brownfields, Petroleum Brownfield, Diesel Range Organics, Volatile Organic Compounds</td>
<td>½ mi. to East Side Lake and East Side Lake Park, ½ mi. to homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: This land has been vacant for decades and for sale for six years; there have been interested buyers in the past, but all have passed on the opportunity due to unknown contamination issues. Suspected contamination includes heavy metals (lead, chromium) and volatile organic compounds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 1503 14th St NE</td>
<td>Commercial Printing</td>
<td>Air Quality, Hazardous Waste, Small quantity generator, Stormwater, Industrial Stormwater</td>
<td>½ mi. to E. Side Lake, ½ mi. to homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: Current owner, not a liable party, would like to rehabilitate and reuse existing building but hesitant to do so due to environmental unknowns. Suspected contamination includes solvents and heavy metals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 200 Block W Oakland Ave</td>
<td>Car Wash, Auto Parts/ Accessories Store, Auto Repair</td>
<td>Multiple programs listing - underground storage tank and hazardous waste.</td>
<td>Located in the Cedar River Watershed, less than ½ mi. to Cedar River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes: More than half of block is a parking lot and three buildings suitable for reuse: strip mall, residential home used for office, and the car wash building. Potential contaminants: acids, bases, used oils, and parts washer solvent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there are numerous sites within our TAs, the properties listed above are priorities for the City as they have strong potential of contamination based on the WIMN data and local knowledge of the properties. They also have the greatest opportunity for reuse. The parcels are vacant or underutilized and buildings are substandard, but many could be suitable for reuse with updates and repairs. Current and potential investors are hesitant to develop on these priority sites but have expressed interest in pursuing redevelopment once environmental concerns have been identified and alleviated.

**1.b. Revitalization of the Target Area: 1.b.i. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** The City is requesting $500,000 in funding to assess and plan remediation for reuse of the priority petroleum and hazardous substance brownfields located within the TAs described in Sections 1.a.i and 1.a.ii and will include additional brownfields priority activities including Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments (ESAs) and remedial action plans (RAPs). The Project will also include supplemental investigations, as appropriate, and preparation of remedial action/site-specific reuse plans, and community engagement. If contaminants of concern are discovered in a Phase II ESA, a RAP can then be prepared to address the contamination issues in conjunction with the redevelopment plan. The City intends to complete

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⁴ Downtown Austin Master Plan Update; CR Planning & SEH; 2014; pages 4-1 – 4-2.
most assessment activities within the TAs. These areas have the highest concentration of brownfield sites and have been the focal point for reuse in the City.

The Project strategy for reuse aligns with current City planning documents, including the City’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update (Comp Plan Update) as it supports the land use and reuse plans envisioned in our strategy: “1) Promote redevelopment and infill when feasible to leverage existing infrastructure investments and strengthen neighborhood vitality and cohesion; and 2) Encourage compatible infill residential redevelopment throughout the developed portions of the City, to reduce blight, increase housing choice and improve tax base.” Furthermore, our strategy aligns with identified economic development policy within the Comp Plan Update: “Facilitate Redevelopment of Blighted Properties: facilitate the redevelopment of blighted properties through acquisition, demolition, environmental clean-up, and site preparation—making such sites ready for redevelopment.”

The Project also aligns with Impact Austin, a grassroots movement, started in 2011 as Vision 2020 and then renamed to Impact Austin, where hundreds of volunteers engaged with community organizations including government, business, non-profit and education with a mission of “Building a vibrant community where people and resources connect to revitalize, discover and invest to grow Austin in Authentic ways.” In speaking with Sandy Anderson, former Impact Austin leader, the work of the EPA Assessment Grant supports their impact pillars: Housing, Economic Growth, Downtown and Identity & Connection.

The City’s Comp Plan Update contains the City’s reuse strategy; the funding from this grant will aid in further efforts to refine this strategy. The City has established several high-level priorities/goals for the reuse strategy from the Impact Austin Initiative: Housing: Attention to housing options and needs that allow for safe, desirable, and attractive homes for those considering Austin as a living destination and those who currently live in the community. Identity & Connection: Attention to what influences desirability and decisions on making Austin a place to live well, visit, shop, play, learn and invest. Downtown: Attention to creating strategic connection, action and growth in the greater downtown area that influences growth into the broader community. Economic Growth: Attention to strategies and projects that fuel economic growth and opportunity for community members to improve financial wellbeing.

The Project will also incorporate equitable development and economic competitiveness approaches outlined in the Comp Plan Update: “Promote equitable, affordable housing.” There is housing in or near all TAs and many of these homes are old and substandard, resulting in lower energy efficiencies and increased health risks from asbestos, lead paint, and mold. One of the City’s goals is to attract investment in new energy-efficient housing and rehabilitate older housing in substandard condition, as discussed in the Comp Plan Update’s “Promote Economic Competitiveness” section. All three TAs include vacant or underutilized buildings and land, which also represent unique and culturally rich assets of the City. This Project’s goal of assessment and reuse of vacant/underutilized brownfields will increase the City’s economic competitiveness and aligns with their Comp Plan’s economic development policies and will adhere to existing or future land uses.

1.b.ii. Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Remediation and reuse of sites within the TAs will transform them from vacant/underutilized blighted industrial and commercial properties into viable buildings and sites. This will result in increased jobs and tax base to the local economy and reduces the threat of direct contact with contaminants at the sites, as well as offsite migration of contaminants via stormwater or groundwater migration.

Due to the area’s economic distress, the TAs includes a federally designated OZ, CT 4.10. The western portion of Target Area #1 is in the OZ and the entire Target Area #2 is in the OZ. Target Area #3 is just two blocks west of the OZ Assessment and remediation of properties in these areas will be a catalyst for economic growth in the OZ. The tax incentives of an OZ in and of themselves are often not enough to attract investment and development. However, having potential environmental issues taken care of, and leveraging additional resources as described in 1.c.i, can attract businesses and developers. Some past interested businesses that walked away due to environmental unknowns included an HVAC contractor and manufacture of duct work, a sports and power equipment retailer, as well as a heavy truck repair facility. Due to past interest and other surrounding successful projects, the likelihood of redevelopment along the Oakland corridor is getting very ripe. This is a high traffic area, expanded businesses that have transitioned the neighborhood are doing well, and there is easy access to Oakland Avenue. Numerous studies have proven economic growth in conjunction with the revitalization of brownfield sites. It has been reported that revitalization of brownfields sites and lost economic activity of those sites can not only provide direct benefit to those areas but can also result in secondary and spin-off development in adjacent areas5. This same report showed that on average it takes $3,200 in brownfields incentive to leverage one job. Using that formula, the $500,000 requested in EPA funds would leverage 156 jobs.

The reuse of the Target Area sites will incorporate energy efficiency measures. The City has adopted the Minnesota State Energy Code and reuse of buildings will adhere to that code. Austin Utilities, the electric and natural gas utility provider,

5The Federal Brownfields Tax Incentive – Case Studies and Analysis of Impacts; Redevelopment Economics; September 2015.
is a community-owned, not-for-profit utility that purchases its power from the Mower County wind farm. It also has a community solar program whereby customers can purchase solar without installing it on their rooftop or property. Thus all users in the City facilitate the use of renewable energy from wind and solar. Additionally, SolSmart, a national designation program that recognizes local governments with potential to foster the development of mature local solar markets, recognized the City as a solar ready community.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources: 1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City will leverage state, regional and local funding resources to complement this Project and future reuse of priority sites. Local programs that this project is eligible for and can be leveraged for reuse include Grow Austin Fund, Tax Increment Financing, Tax Abatement, Development Corporation of Austin’s Revolving Loan Fund, and OZ incentives. Using these funds wisely will ensure developers pay their share of costs. There are also regional and state funds that will be pursued for assessment, cleanup, and reuse: MN Department of Employment & Economic Development: Contamination Investigation & Cleanup Grant, Redevelopment Grant Fund, Small Cities Development Program; MN Investment Fund, Job Creation Fund; MN Housing Finance Agency: Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Workforce Housing Grant. Sources for business specific funding is available from Southern MN Initiative Foundation through its Business Loan and Small Enterprise Loan funds.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The TAs and the identified priority sites will use the following existing infrastructure: buildings, roads, water/sewer, utilities, and lighting. Reuse of priority brownfield sites in the TAs will limit uncontrolled, potentially contaminated stormwater runoff, benefitting the Cedar River and Turtle Creek Watersheds. Reuse will also allow for opportunities to integrate long-term sustainable energy resources, stormwater management systems, green landscaping, and green construction. This desire is illustrated in the Comp Plan Update: “Encourage commercial infill redevelopment in appropriate areas to strengthen the vitality of existing neighborhoods, leverage existing infrastructure investments and support active transportation options.”

2. Community Need & Community Engagement
2a. Community Need: 2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding: Many of the priority sites are in or near a federally designated OZ, which promotes investment in economically challenged communities through tax incentives. This OZ designation documents that the areas contain concentrations of low-income persons. Further evidence is shown in the table below, which illustrates the distress of CTs within the TAs. State funding to local governments has been declining for years. According to the City’s audits, their Local Government Aid has increased only 12% since 2002, just barely over 1% year. The state’s funding of brownfields and redevelopment programs have stagnated or even declined. In addition, there have been years where no new funding was given to the Redevelopment Grant program (a significant brownfield program that helps communities with the costs of redeveloping blighted industrial, residential, or commercial sites and putting land back into productive use), most recently FY20. With this, communities do not have access to sufficient funding to clean-up and redevelop brownfield sites. Continued assessment grant funding is needed to provide the City with financial and technical resources necessary to continue the process of revitalizing priority sites. The TAs of this grant application are crucial to continued economic growth within the City. These areas are promising but cannot be redeveloped without assistance. The City has many more demands on its constrained budget and the demands on infrastructure and public safety budgets are growing, making it a challenge to address the demands of brownfield sites given the limited incomes within affected CTs, see Tables 1 and 3. Due to the pandemic, FY20 was an economic shortcoming for the City, resulting in a revenue reduction of 10.7% or $4,180,525 according to the City’s ARPA Revenue Replacement calculation.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations: (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The City’s non-white population has increased from 2% in 1990 to 19% in 2019 (American Community Survey, 2019). There are 46 different languages spoken at Austin Public Schools, and a majority of kindergarten students have been non-white since the 2014-2015 school year, suggesting that this trend will continue (Austin Public Schools, 2020). The public-school system has a non-white enrollment of 50.7%. About 62.9% of the students speak English as their primary language, while 20.7% speak Spanish, and another 16.4% make up the 46 other languages spoken at school6.

As shown in Table 3 below, EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening (EJSCREEN) Tool reports that the target area is above the 84th percentile in the state, as well as high percentiles also for the EPA Region and the US for the categories of overall demographic index, people of color, low income, linguistically isolated, and less than high school education.

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6 Austin Public Schools Demographic Review 2020.10.01
Table 3 - EJSCREEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Variables</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>%tile in State</th>
<th>%tile in EPA Region</th>
<th>%tile in US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Index</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Color Population</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Population</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistically Isolated Population</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population with Less Than High School Education</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Generated using EPA Environmental Justice Screening Tool on 10/18/21.

There is a marked disparity in poverty rates for the population in the TAs relative to State and US numbers, as well as higher numbers of Hispanics, residents who are disabled, and the very old and very young in poverty. See Table 4 for comparisons regarding CT levels of sensitive populations under economic stress. The higher numbers of residents in sensitive population groups coincides with lower incomes, higher poverty and higher unemployment rates.

Unemployment rates in the three TAs (CTs 3.00, 8.00, 4.10) are higher (except 3.00) than US, State, County, and City rates. All CTs have much older housing than State, County and City. Between 74.5% and 97.2% of housing in the CTs are pre-1980 compared to 53.6% for the US and 54.9% for State.

Significant indicators for these tracts are economic and minority population driven. CT 4.10 has 52.3% poverty rate for Hispanic population, 18% have less than a 9th grade education, and 27.0% are non-English speaking people.

Table 4 - Sensitive Populations in TAs – 2015-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CT 3.00</th>
<th>CT 8.00</th>
<th>CT 4.10</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>MN</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate for children &lt;5yrs.</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate for people w/ disability</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate single female w/children</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate for adults &gt;65 yrs.</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate for Hispanic</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1980 housing</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian unemployment</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;9th grade education</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English speaking</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: CT = Census Tract. All data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2015-19 American Community Survey. Data downloaded from www.policymap.com on 10/16/21. Bold font highlights data that demonstrate higher levels of economic distress or disadvantage than the County, State or US.

Unemployment rates in the three TAs (CTs 3.00, 8.00, 4.10) are higher (except 3.00) than US, State, County, and City rates. All CTs have much older housing than State, County and City. Between 74.5% and 97.2% of housing in the CTs are pre-1980 compared to 53.6% for the US and 54.9% for State.

Significant indicators for these tracts are economic and minority population driven. CT 4.10 has 52.3% poverty rate for Hispanic population, 18% have less than a 9th grade education, and 27.0% are non-English speaking people.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Public health impacts from cumulative sources and brownfield sites in the TAs are largely undocumented as studies rarely target this type of threat in rural and small-town settings. However, according to data from the Minnesota Department of Health, CTs 3.00, 8.00 and 4.10 have approximately three times higher elevated blood lead levels than compared to the state average of 1.1%\(^7\). The levels for CTs 3.00, 8.00, and 4.10 were 4.1%, 4.6% and 3.6% respectively. The City is one of the highest rated above the national median set by the CDC\(^8\) in the southeast MN region. According to a 2019 report by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, fine particles and ozone contributes to significant health issues in Mower County (county Austin is located in) and makes a correlation to high rates of asthma hospitalizations for children and respiratory hospitalizations in adults\(^9\).

Deteriorating structures on brownfield sites pose additional hazardous substance exposure and safety hazards, particularly to children who may explore abandoned buildings and debris piles or play in contaminated soil. There are residential neighborhoods adjacent to all TAs. This grant program will assess and plan for clean-up and reuse of TA sites, removing lead from the environment, decreasing the exposure to hazards and improving overall health of sensitive populations.

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\(^7\) [https://mndatamaps.web.health.state.mn.us/interactive/leadtract.html]
\(^8\) Guidelines and Recommendations | Lead | CDC
(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: Significantly higher levels of economic distress, percentages of minority residents, and lower overall incomes are present in the TAs making residents more susceptible to the negative health and economic impacts of brownfields. These high concentrations of those in poverty, from a minority population, linguistically isolated, senior citizens, children under five, and/or disabled, who live adjacent to the TAs are not able to relocate away from the sites due to their economic disadvantages. Additionally, approximately 72.7% of City renters with incomes below $35,000 are cost burdened and 38.1% of owners with incomes below $50,000 are cost burdened$9. As a result, these residents unjustly share the largest negative environmental consequences caused by their close location to the potentially contaminated sites. The assessment, followed by clean-up and reuse of brownfield properties will directly positively impact those who are currently living adjacent to these sites by providing them with healthier living environments and the potential for an influx of investment into their neighborhoods.

2.b. Community Engagement: 2.b.i. Project Involvement / 2.b.ii. Project Roles: The City will form a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) with representatives the various community-based organization partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization / Entity / Group</th>
<th>Point of contact</th>
<th>Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Center</td>
<td>Dora Arizola, 507-434-2863 <a href="mailto:dora@austinwelcomecenter.org">dora@austinwelcomecenter.org</a></td>
<td>Will support promotion, information dissemination to and engagement with immigrant populations, including non-English speaking residents, regarding nominations for site assessments and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Corporation of Austin</td>
<td>John Garry, 507-433-9495, <a href="mailto:jkgarry@austindca.org">jkgarry@austindca.org</a></td>
<td>Conduit with the development and investment community, will help to promote the program, including site nominations, and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Utilities</td>
<td>Keven Maxa, 507-437-0845 <a href="mailto:kevenm@austinutilities.com">kevenm@austinutilities.com</a></td>
<td>Facilitation and promotion in the use of renewable energy, support use of existing infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Taggert Medgaarden, 507-433-1866 <a href="mailto:taggert@austinhra.org">taggert@austinhra.org</a></td>
<td>Provide synergies with affordable housing programs, provide input regarding site nominations and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland Community College &amp; Austin Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>Miguel Garate, 507-460-0067, <a href="mailto:miguel.garate@riverland.edu">miguel.garate@riverland.edu</a></td>
<td>Provide perspective of and outreach to minority and disadvantaged populations to gain input on site nominations and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE MN Realtor’s Association/National Association of Realtors</td>
<td>Mary Lindgren, 507-279-0025, <a href="mailto:mary.lindgren@results.net">mary.lindgren@results.net</a></td>
<td>Will support promotion and information dissemination to and engagement with business and real estate communities regarding site nominations and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Law Center of MN and owner of Ky/Naw grocery store</td>
<td>Maylary Apolo, 803-261-2272 <a href="mailto:maylary.apolo@ilcm.org">maylary.apolo@ilcm.org</a></td>
<td>Will support promotion and information dissemination to and engagement with minority-owned businesses and non-English speaking residents regarding site nominations, and reuse of properties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input: Engaging the public, local project partners, redevelopment community, local environmental groups, members of disadvantaged and sensitive populations, and the neighborhoods surrounding the TAs are the goals of incorporating community input into this Project and bringing them into the decision-making process. Information dissemination, community input, and public meetings will be critical to providing stakeholders a chance to be informed and provide input into all phases of the Project. The intent is to engage stakeholders with traditional, innovative, and targeted outreach tools and methods to reach as great an audience as possible and provide them the opportunity to learn about important brownfield details and to provide feedback to inform future phases of the Project. We will meet stakeholders where they live, shop and play to make sure the community’s voice is heard.

City staff will provide Project information and, with assistance from a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), will meet with local representatives and host hybrid (in-person and Zoom) public meetings as needed. When sites are identified for assessment, information will be disseminated to the community, notifying stakeholders about assessment activities that will occur, providing results of the assessments and explaining health and environmental impact findings. If potential health threats to the community are identified, the City will work with Mower County to educate residents regarding the health risks. If a health threat is identified, the City will work with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minnesota Department of Health for certain brownfield sites, as appropriate. When cleanup and/or redevelopment planning is initiated for a site, more intensive involvement activities will be implemented. The intensive information out, feedback in process will continue throughout the cleanup and redevelopment process.

- The City plans to convene the BAC on a quarterly basis.
• An initial public meeting will be offered in a hybrid model with virtual and in-person options that adhere to COVID-19 and other health practice guidelines and will serve to: educate the local stakeholders on the EPA brownfields grant, eligible activities, eligible sites and initial plans for the inventory process, inform the BAC representatives of the current status of the revitalization efforts within the TAs, and refine the public input and communications strategy. Approximately 25% of households in the City are identified by the US Census Bureau (ACS, 2015-19) as speaking a language other than English therefore, a one-page summary of the program goals in Spanish and other native languages as requested will be prepared and available at all public meetings. BAC representatives from the Welcome Center and the Immigrant Law Center will be very helpful in reaching non-English speaking residents.

• Subsequent public meetings will be held approximately 3 to 4 months after the initial meetings to solicit public input regarding candidate brownfield sites identified during the inventory task and being considered for assessment. Representatives of the local press will be invited to each meeting and information on the grant and a tool for the public to submit comments (including suggestions or nominations of sites to be included in the inventory and prioritization process) will be added to the City’s website.

• Lastly, the City will reach out to local real estate professionals and developers, both to increase the level of participation by those individuals who are “closest to the ground” in terms of knowing sites that would have the greatest likelihood of attracting investment or redevelopment.

METHODS: With consideration to COVID-19 and other health practice guidance, the City will monitor protocols and use multiple methods for promotion and engagement (regardless of restrictions that may be in place to accommodate those with health risks): traditional, targeted, innovative, and virtual. These will also help reach a broader and more inclusive audience. Traditional: This includes public meetings that will have a virtual participation option, and in-person meetings as allowed. Communications will be provided in print and online in English, Spanish, and other requested languages so that all households are aware of environmental activities that impact them. The City will also offer translation/interpretation services as needed. Printed items will be placed in local government buildings, libraries, schools, and businesses within the TAs. Targeted: Outreach to specific groups that may not otherwise participate in the planning process. Notable groups include disadvantaged/sensitive population groups including the elderly. Examples include listening sessions (virtual or in-person), presentations at other meetings/gatherings, and partnering with community-based organizations. Innovative: Non-traditional ways to collect information, increase awareness, and boost participation. Examples are bike or walk audits to collect data by photo or video, pop-up events, demonstration projects, and scavenger hunts. These activities can be socially distanced but still encourage interactions in the TAs. Virtual: Internet-based outreach can help increase awareness and participation while helping to reach people who may not otherwise participate. Geographic Information System (GIS) StoryMaps can be used in lieu of public meetings as they bring participants through a story of the project that include narrative, interactive and static maps, survey questions, videos, infographics, and more. Virtual tools, such as Zoom or Facebook Live, will be invaluable during these times as will updates to the City’s website.

3. TASK DESCRIPTION, COST ESTIMATES, & MEASURING PROGRESS
3a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: The scope of work for the Project has been organized into four tasks and will be completed in the three-year grant period. Please note that all sites assessed using EPA grant funds during implementation of Tasks 2 and 3 will meet the site-specific eligibility requirements as confirmed by EPA and/or the MPCA. All contracted services will be procured in accordance with two CFR 200.317-326 requirements. Cost estimates of each task were calculated through a Professional Engineering Report that took equivalent activities and inflation into consideration. EPA grant funds will not be used for administrative costs as defined in the Proposal Guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/Activity: Task 1 Supplemental Brownfields Inventory and Site Prioritization ($35,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Project Implementation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of EPA-funded activities for the priority site(s): Detailed review and assessment of the identified sites as well as other sites within the TAs to ensure they meet the EPA and MPCA eligibility criteria to assist in prioritization of sites by the City and BAC. These properties will be incorporated into the City’s GIS. The inventory activities will include tours and inspections, a review of City and MPCA records, a review of historic fire insurance maps, a survey of local real estate professionals, and a review of County health records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of EPA-funded activities for non-priority site(s), if applicable: Activities are designed to identify and prioritize priority sites. However, all potential brownfield sites will be identified and evaluated as part of the inventory and prioritization work. Hence, by definition, some non-priority sites will be identified. Those not prioritized will not receive continued scrutiny under the following tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out task/activity, if applicable: The City does not charge the EPA grant for salary dollars and therefore will contribute its own resources to carry out grant administration, oversight of the QEP, and integration of the files onto the GIS format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
eligibility confirmation, Phase I ESAs will be completed in accordance with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule submitted to EPA (for hazardous substance brownfields) or MPCA (for petroleum brownfields) for approval. Upon completion of Phase I ESAs, eligibility determination requests will be prepared and submitted to EPA for review, and revised as necessary until approved by EPA, prior to conducting any Phase II ESAs, supplemental assessments, or site investigations. Site-specific sampling and analysis plans (SAP), as well as health and safety plans (HASP), will be prepared for each site and submitted to EPA prior to initiating field work. Phase II ESAs will be completed in accordance with the standards set forth in ASTM E1903-19 and the standards set forth in ASTM E1527-13 (or -21 if as approved). Printed copies of all reports will be prepared on recycled paper, and electronic facsimiles of reports (e.g., Adobe Acrobat files) will be generated for all Phase I ESA reports and linked to site information contained on the City’s GIS.

Discussion of EPA-funded activities for non-priority site(s), if applicable: Not applicable.

i. Project Implementation:

Discussion of EPA-funded activities for the priority site(s): Includes completion of Phase I ESAs at an estimated 16 priority brownfield sites. Prior to performing Phase I ESAs, eligibility determination requests will be prepared and submitted to EPA (for hazardous substance brownfields) or MPCA (for petroleum brownfields) for approval. Upon eligibility confirmation, Phase I ESAs will be completed in accordance with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule and the standards set forth in ASTM E1527-13 (or -21 if as approved). Printed copies of all reports will be prepared on recycled paper, and electronic facsimiles of reports (e.g., Adobe Acrobat files) will be generated for all Phase I ESA reports and linked to site information contained on the City’s GIS.

Task/Activity: Task 2 Phase I ESAs ($85,000)

i. Task/Activity Lead(s): Activities will be led by the City’s Project Manager with support by the QEP and QEP.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: The majority of the Task 2 activities will be completed following completion of Task 1 through year two, to allow Task 3 work to be completed by Project’s end. However, since some of this work will be driven by development of specific sites, work may be initiated prior to completion of the inventory all the way through year three.

iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): Activities will be led by the City’s Project Manager and work will be done by the QEP.

iv. Output(s): Approximately 25 Eligibility Determinations requests and 16 Phase I ESA reports.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: The majority of the Task 3 activities will be completed during years one through three following completion of Tasks 1 and 2 work.

iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): Activities will be led by the City’s Project Manager, work completed by the QEP.

iv. Output(s): Approved QAPP, completion of four asbestos/lead paint/mold surveys, completion of 14 Phase II ESAs (including SAPs and HASPs for each site), preparation of five response action plans, assistance from the QEP completing updates to Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) and quarterly and annual reports.

Task/Activity: Task 4 Community Engagement ($25,000)

i. Project Implementation:

Discussion of EPA-funded activities for the priority site(s): Comprehensive community engagement will be performed including public meetings and forums, development/distribution of marketing and informational materials, joint outreach and education efforts with community partner organizations as detailed in Section 2.b. This task also includes working with the BAC to advise the City of all aspects of the brownfield grant project. Under this task, City staff will attend 1 EPA National Brownfields Conference and participate in environmental assessment or redevelopment workshops and training sessions. Travel and associated costs for 2 City staff members is in the budget.
FY2022 EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Proposal
City of Austin, MN

Discussion of EPA-funded activities for non-priority site(s), if applicable: Not applicable.
Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out task/activity, if applicable: The City will not charge the EPA grant for salary dollars and will contribute its resources for grant administration and oversight of the QEP, as well as public outreach activities and BAC meetings.

| II. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities under Task 4 will be completed throughout the duration of the three-year grant, with the first public meeting to be held within four months of grant execution with EPA. |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): Activities will be led by the City’s Project Manager, work completed by the QEP, and in cooperation with the BAC. |
| iv. Output(s): Engagement plan, 10 BAC meetings, 10 outreach meetings, city web site updates, project fact sheets, and press releases. Meetings include agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes. Attendance by City staff at brownfields convention and other to be determined training workshops. |


Task 1: Supplemental Brownfields Inventory and Site Prioritization ($35,000) – Budget includes $27,650 (221.2 hours at an average of $125/hr) for QEP to assist with the inventory which includes records research, meetings, and mapping. The $7,350 (147 hours at $50/hr) for City staff assisting with identifying and locating more sites and GIS entry.

Task 2: Phase I ESAs ($85,000) – Budget assumes 16 Phase I ESAs will be completed by the QEP at an average cost of $5,000 ($80,000 total). The $5,000 budget for City staff assisting with securing information required for eligibility determinations and site access.

Task 3: Phase II ESAs, Site Investigations and Remedial/Reuse Planning ($355,000) – Budget includes: preparation of a QAPP at a cost of $8,000; completion of 4 asbestos/lead paint/mold surveys at an average cost of $3,500 ($14,000); completion of 14 Phase II ESAs; consisting of 10 small sites at $13,500 each and 4 large sites at $25,220 ($235,880 total); preparation of 5 remedial action plans at an average cost of $8,200 ($41,000); preparation of 2 Brownfields area-wide reuse plans at an average cost of $15,000 ($30,000); and updates to the ACRES and preparation of quarterly and annual reports ($18,000). The costs include $3,500 for preparation of site-specific sampling and analysis plans and health and safety plans for each site. The $4,620 budget is for City staff assisting with securing information required for reuse plans.

Task 4: Community Outreach ($25,000) – Budget includes $8,000 of work by the QEP and $5,000 for City staff to facilitate community outreach meetings, $5,000 of work by the QEP for preparation of outreach meeting documents; and $2,600 of work by the QEP for preparation of online communications. Budget includes $3,400 ($1,700 per person) and includes travel, fees, incidentals, and lodging expenses for the City’s brownfields project manager and one other staff person to attend two EPA sponsored National Brownfields Conferences. Budgeted supply costs for Task 4 include $250 for printing costs, $250 for mailing expenses associated with public notices, and $500 for display boards and similar graphic displays for use at public meetings ($1,000 total).

A summary of the overall proposed budget for grant funded activities is provided on Table 5. Please note that no funds are being requested for equipment and unless otherwise stated.

Table 5 - Budget for Grant Funded Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Categories</th>
<th>Project Tasks ($)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task 1 Brownfields Inventory</td>
<td>Task 2 Phase I ESAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Costs</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$7,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contractual</td>
<td>$27,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td>(Total Direct Costs + Indirect Costs)</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Travel to brownfields-related training conferences is an acceptable use of these grant funds. ²Administrative costs (direct and/or indirect) will not exceed 5% of the total EPA-requested funds.

3.c. Measuring Environmental Results: Progress in completing the anticipated outputs will be tracked and reported to EPA through ACRES and quarterly reporting. The City, with support from the QEP, will track and document project results through quarterly reporting: (1) number of potential brownfields sites prioritized, (2) number of Phase I ESAs performed, (3) number of Phase II ESAs performed, (4) number of environmental site investigations performed, (5)
number of sites for which remedial planning is performed, (6) number of BAC meetings held and who attended (7) number of community engagement meetings held along with number of persons attending. Sites assessed will be linked to parcel identification numbers, to allow for better tracking and documentation using GIS.

The City, with support from the QEP, will track and document the following outcomes on a quarterly basis for brownfield sites on which assessment funding is utilized: (1) number of sites assessed, (2) number of sites for which off-site risks have been identified, (3) number of sites for which property title transfers are facilitated, (4) number of sites and acres of land set for redevelopment, (5) acres of parks or greenspace created, (6) amount of private investment leveraged for reuse projects, (7) amount of other funding leveraged for redevelopment projects, (8) number of jobs created or retained associated with reuse projects, (9) increased property and sales tax revenue generated, and (10) increased property values.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE:

4.a Programmatic Capability: 4.a.ii Organizational Capacity/Organizational Structure: The City has planning, engineering, legal, and other staff with experience and expertise to manage the brownfields assessment grant project and to provide support to move sites from the initial assessment and planning through the complete redevelopment process. Staff from City Planning, Engineering, and Communications, as well as the City Administrator will be involved in managing the grant and QEP.

4.a.iii. Description of Key Staff: Project Manager: Craig Clark, MPA, City Administrator – Holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and History. He has 25 years of municipal administrative experience including the development of a tax abatement program for new housing and business incentive for tax base and job growth. Additionally, he is responsible for managing a municipal budget of over $31 million and a staff of 140 employees. Mr. Clark’s role will be fiscal and overall management of this grant.

Assistant Project Manager: Holly Wallace, City Planner – Holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology with an emphasis in water resource management and water chemistry; she also received her Juris Doctor from Hamline University, School of Law, licensed in MN and WI. She has worked with the city for the last eight years and is charged with all facets of planning, building, zoning and rental divisions as well as assisting with economic development. Ms. Wallace’s role will be day to day grant activities.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City has access to substantial resources including City staff to assist with grant implementation activities. The City also routinely contracts with consultants and has established equal opportunity procurement procedures for ensuring a fair bidding process and adhering to 2 CFR 200.317-200.326 to contract a QEP team to assist with grant implementation activities. The City has significant experience with grant funding, as shown below, and tracks additional opportunities to pursue funding resources that align well with the project’s goals.

4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments: 4.b.ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements. The City has been a superior performer with federal and state funding that they have received over the years. Three recent examples include:

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)

1. Purpose and Accomplishments: In March 2020, the Federal Government passed the CARES Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. The City received $1,927,882 in CARES funding in 2020.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: These funds were utilized by the City of Austin to help cover wages and benefit costs of our first responders (police and fire) for a portion of the 2020 year. Single Audit Act was completed with no findings.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

1. Purpose and Accomplishments: The City successfully managed more than $13 million in funding received from the FAA for a large municipal airport project including construction of runways, hangars and administration building.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City complied with work plans, schedules, terms/conditions of the grant. Outcomes were achieved, and all reporting was completed on time. There were no audit findings of noncompliance.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Flood Hazard Mitigation Grants: Three grants totaling $4.8 million.

1. Purpose and Accomplishments: The City received the funding for flood hazard mitigation projects including the Turtle Creek Comprehensive Flood Risk Reduction, Dobbins Creek Flood Plan Acquisition and N. Main St. Flood Risk Reduction & Final Phase Construction projects.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City complied with work plans, schedules, and terms/conditions of the grant. Outcomes have been achieved, and all required reporting was completed on time.
THRESHOLD CRITERIA
1. Applicant Eligibility

The City of Austin is a “general purpose unit of local government” as that term is defined in 2 CFR § 200.64 and is therefore eligible to receive a United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant. If awarded funding by US EPA, the City of Austin will administer this grant.

2. Community Involvement

Austin’s focus will be on engaging the public, local project partners, the development community, members of economically disadvantaged and sensitive populations, and the neighborhoods surrounding the Target Areas. The City will engage stakeholders, while being mindful of physical distancing measures and other restrictions that may evolve overtime in response to the pandemic. Alternatives to in-person events will be utilized such as online meeting platforms, social media, QR codes and a dedicated webpage and email updates. Non-digital approaches will also be used such as phone calls, flyers, newspaper ads and local radio spots. Community members will be virtually brought into the process so they can learn about critical brownfield details and provide informed feedback to influence the next phase of work.

City staff will provide project information and, with assistance from a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), will meet with local representatives and host hybrid public meetings as needed.

- The City plans to convene the BAC on a quarterly basis.
- An initial public meeting will be offered in a hybrid model with virtual and in-person options adhering to COVID-19 and health practice guidelines and will serve to: educate the local stakeholders on the EPA brownfields grant, eligible activities, eligible sites and initial plans for the inventory process, inform the BAC representatives of current status of the revitalization efforts within the TAs, and refine the public input and communications strategy. A one-page summary of the program goals will be provided in Spanish and other native languages as requested. BAC representatives from the Welcome Center and the Immigrant Law Center will be very helpful in reaching non-English speaking residents.
- Subsequent public meetings will be held approximately 3 to 4 months after the initial meetings to solicit public input regarding candidate brownfield sites identified during the inventory task and being considered for assessment. Representatives of the local press will be invited to each meeting and information on the grant and a tool for the public to submit comments will be added to the City’s website.
- The City will reach out to local real estate professionals and developers to increase the level of participation by these individuals who are closest to the ground regarding which are more likely to attract investment or redevelopment.

METHODS: With consideration to COVID-19 and other health practice guidance, the City will monitor protocols and use multiple methods for promotion and engagement (regardless of restrictions that may be in place to accommodate those with health risks): traditional, targeted, innovative, and virtual. These will also help reach a broader and more inclusive audience. Traditional: This includes public meetings that will have a virtual participation option, and in-person meetings as allowed. Communications will be provided in print and online in English, Spanish, and other requested languages so that all households are aware of environmental activities that impact them. The City will also offer translation/interpretation services as needed. Printed items will be placed in local government buildings, libraries, schools, and businesses within the TAs. Targeted: Outreach to specific groups that may not otherwise participate in the planning process. Notable groups include disadvantaged/sensitive population groups including the elderly. Examples include listening sessions (virtual or in-person), presentations at other meetings/gatherings, and partnering with community-based organizations. Innovative: Non-traditional ways to collect information, increase awareness, and boost participation. Examples are bike or walk audits to collect data by photo or video, pop-up events, demonstration projects, and scavenger hunts. These activities can be socially distanced but still encourage interactions in the TAs. Virtual: Internet-based outreach can help increase awareness and participation while helping to reach people who may not otherwise participate. Geographic Information System (GIS) StoryMaps can be used in lieu of public meetings as they bring participants through a story of the project that include narrative, interactive and static maps, survey questions, videos, infographics, and more. Virtual tools, such as Zoom or Facebook Live, will be invaluable during these times as will updates to the City’s website.

3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients

The City will require the services of a QEP and routinely contracts with consultants. The City has established equal opportunity procurement procedures for ensuring a fair bidding process and adhering to 2 CFR 200.317-200.326 to contract a QEP team to assist with grant implementation activities.

4. Expenditure of Assessment Grant Funds

N/A – Austin, MN has not received previous assessment grant funds.