1. **Applicant Identification**: City of La Junta, P.O. Box 489, 601 Colorado Ave., CO 81050

2. **Funding Requested**
   - **Assessment Grant Type**: Community-wide
   - **Federal Funds Requested**: $500,000
   - **Not Applicable**

3. **Location**

   City of La Junta
   Otero County
   Colorado

4. **Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information – Community-wide**

   209 Colorado Ave. La Junta, Colorado (CT9686)
   Former East Otero School, 1500 San Juan Ave., La Junta, Colorado (CT9683)

5. **Contacts**

   - **Project Director**
     Rick Klein
     City Manager
     City of La Junta
     P.O. Box 489
     601 Colorado Ave.
     La Junta, CO 81050
     719-469-1110
     rick.klein@lajuntacolorado.org
Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Mayor Joe Ayala
City of La Junta
P.O. Box 489
601 Colorado Ave.
La Junta, CO 81050
719-384-5991
joe.ayala@lajuntacolorado.org

6. Population
6,893

7. Other Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information on the Other Factors</th>
<th>Page #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community population is 10,000 or less.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>8</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>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: See attached

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

The applicant understands that the information included will be treated in accordance with 40 CFR §2.203. No passages are considered confidential.
November 24, 2021

Melisa Devincenzi  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 8 Brownfield’s Program  
1595 Wynkoop Street (EPR-B)  
Denver, Colorado 80202-1129

Via email - Devincenzi.Melisa@epa.gov

RE: City of La Junta Assessment Grant Proposal.

Dear Ms. Devincenzi:

Like many rural communities in Colorado, La Junta has faced multiple challenges in recent years due to a combination of factors including changing economic conditions, declining population and a limited tax base. In spite of these challenges, La Junta has actively worked, often in partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to address sources of environmental contamination that could negatively impact the community and its residents. Over the last ten years, La Junta has worked with CDPHE on multiple occasions, hosting a regional brownfields workshop, taking advantage of CDPHE financial resources, and working with CDPHE to enlist assistance from the EPA Region 8 removal program. They have also have implemented a number of tools to facilitate brownfields assessment and redevelopment, including development of a comprehensive plan and establishing an urban renewal authority and Main Street program.

In spite of their recent success, La Junta continues to struggle with resource limitations that inhibit the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of multiple brownfields properties within the community. The activities outlined in the assessment grant proposal would complement their efforts to date and improve the community’s ability to position unused properties for sale and redevelopment or reuse. In summary, we feel the proposed project is a vital component of overall efforts to revitalize not only the priority site outlined in their proposal but additional properties within the City. For these reasons CDPHE fully supports the La Junta proposal, and looks forward to supporting their efforts pending a successful proposal.

If additional resources are necessary after completion of activities outlined in this application, CDPHE has the ability to provide funding for Brownfields cleanup through the Colorado Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund and the State of Colorado Brownfields grant (H.B. 1306) program. Furthermore, Colorado’s Voluntary Cleanup Program provides a mechanism to remediate contaminated sites and provide State approval of the cleanup.
Finally, Colorado tax credits for remediation of contaminated land that can provide additional resources to both local governments and/or private developers. CDPHE has informed the City of the availability of these resources and can assist with the application process if requested.

Sincerely,

Douglas C. Jamison
Superfund/Brownfields Unit Leader
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division

cc: Rick Klein, La Junta City Manager
Keith Ziobron, Cardno
1. **PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

1.a. Target Area and Brownfields

1.a.i. **Background and Description of Target Area:** La Junta (City), meaning junction in Spanish, is the county seat of Otero County and is named for its geographical position as the juncture between the historic Santa Fe Trail and the road to the City of Pueblo, Colorado in a relatively flat barren and remote area of southeastern Colorado. The northern border of the City (pop. 6,893) is marked by US Route 50 that leads 65 miles west to Pueblo, the largest population center in the region. First used by Europeans as a base for wagon train shipping, La Junta rapidly expanded as a railroad town when the *Pueblo and Arkansas Railroad* branches were built in the 1870s. Later, the *Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway* made La Junta the headquarters for its Colorado Division and established a roundhouse and repair station here in 1879.

The sugar beet boom began in 1900 when canals were dug to irrigate the Arkansas River Valley. Three sugar factories were built on the La Junta outskirts, with the railroad providing transport of the refined sugar to commercial markets. In the mid to late 20th century, La Junta functioned as a transportation and tourism hub. The Lower Arkansas (River) Basin wetlands are the largest in the state of Colorado and serve a vital function in protecting water quality downstream. The wetlands provide habitat for a diverse bird population, including the endangered Least Tern and Piping Plover. Tourists came to the area for birdwatching opportunities and to visit the Comanche National Grasslands and the Picket Wire Canyonlands – the largest dinosaur track site in the US, where prints of the Apatosaurus, Stegosaurus, and Allosaurus can be found.

However, over the past century, La Junta has suffered staggering blows to its economic foundation. Situated at the outer rim of the Dust Bowl, the City suffered through the 1930s as wind erosion devastated crops, cattle, and people alike. Though the City rebounded during the 1940s and hit its peak in 1950 as a result of the second wave of the sugar beet boom, farming and the sugar manufacturing process became less profitable due to water scarcity/high-water costs. Decreasing profits compounded by an increase in the popularity of artificial sweeteners drove most beet farmers in La Junta out of business, and the last sugar factory closed in 1978. La Junta lost its major employers with the loss of this cash crop, and the lessening importance of rail freight meant that nearly all rail repair and business operations in town also closed. As a result, the population of La Junta has been in steady decline since the 1980s. Further impacting the City’s economy, the northern edge of the city is within the Arkansas River flood zone and is prone to flooding, endangering crops and livestock as well as residents. In fact, flooding in 1999 associated with a levee breach resulted in millions of dollars in damages (FEMA Declaration DR-1276-CO).

Today, La Junta is still largely an agricultural and cattle ranching community. The ongoing economic distress in the City is visually apparent in the form of blight from dozens of inventoryed deteriorating vacant structures and properties left behind as the population and area businesses fled the City. Potential and known contamination from previous industrial and agricultural uses exacerbate the environmental conditions, which are of great concern to us especially due to the demographic make-up of sensitive populations within our community (see 2.a.ii). The combination of excessive poverty (22.1%; US Census, 2019 5-year estimates), a shrinking population, low property values and declining tax revenues make it difficult for the City and our residents to rebound from major setbacks, such as recurring floods and wildfires. That is why the City seeks funds for critical Brownfield assessment and cleanup/reuse planning. The primary goal of this project is to identify and quantify the environmental contamination within the City’s **downtown (the Target Area for this project)**, which includes Otero County Census Tract 9686. A preliminary windshield survey of this **downtown Target Area identified no less than 21 potential brownfield sites in a two-square mile area.** The goal of the work to be completed by the grant is to better understand environmental liabilities associated with key sites, identify additional sites for assessment with community input, and to develop and reenergize existing community-driven reuse strategies This brownfield assessment project is an essential starting point for us. It will enable La Junta to
revitalize our economy, reclaim our relevancy as an inviting tourist destination, create new job opportunities, design safer and affordable housing options, and lead to a more walkable downtown.

1.a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Community input from the initial activities regarding the development of this application (described in section 1.b.i.) resulted in the selection of the Downtown Target Area. Additionally, based on their location and the regenerative results expected from their reuse, the following priority sites were selected as catalysts to transform our downtown and adjacent neighborhoods into a vibrant area that will attract visitors and residents.

Site #1: 209 Colorado Avenue: 209 Colorado Avenue is blighted brick two story multi-tenant historic structure located on a 0.161 acre parcel just blocks from La Junta City Hall. This property is located in the center of our business district and has fallen into a state of disrepair, and is potential target for trespassing and vagrancy. Given the age of the building, it will need to have a Phase I, Phase II, and asbestos and lead-based paint surveys completed so that environmental conditions and associated remediation and likely abatement costs may be understood. Potential contaminants include petroleum, asbestos, and lead from historical commercial and industrial uses adjacent to the site. As an example, area structures housed auto repair, dry cleaners and a metal shop. Site access has been secured, and a local entrepreneur who is in the process of redeveloping La Junta’s historic Fox Theater is interested in purchasing and redeveloping the property. Reuse concept: Proposed redevelopment concept includes affordable/workforce housing and mixed-use development that will provide essential and accessible services for City residents.

Site #2: Former East Otero School, 1500 San Juan Ave. (2.177 acres): This school was built in 1954 and donated to Inspiration Field, a local non-profit, during the 1990s. It has been vacant since 2013 when Inspiration Field moved to a new location. Probable contaminants include asbestos and lead-based paints. The building is 60 feet from residences. (The assessed value of the building has decreased by $124,063 from 2019-2021, largely due to the significant amount of asbestos containing material thought to be present). Site access has been secured. Reuse concept: Workforce housing with a portion of units allocated for developmentally disabled residents. As Inspiration Field is a non-profit that acquired the site through donation, eligibility for a future cleanup grant may be considered.

The two priority sites are representative of brownfields conditions throughout La Junta. Again, more than 21 brownfield properties were identified within an approximately 2-mile radius of these sites during a recent windshield survey. We believe the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of these priority sites and other area properties will act as a catalyst for sustainable development in the Target Area, downtown La Junta.

1.b. Revitalization of the Target Area

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The assessment, cleanup and reuse of the properties in the target area are in alignment with the reuse plans. More Specifically, in 2017, La Junta completed a Comprehensive Plan. This Plan details efforts to be taken to facilitate the revitalization of the City, including what downtown enhancements would make La Junta more attractive. One important element identified in the City’s comprehensive plan is mixed use housing: 2nd Story Residential (as planned/proposed for Site #1): Many of the buildings in Downtown have second stories that are suitable for reuse as residential dwellings. Downtown is an area of La Junta with a lot of character, which will be motivation for residents to move to this portion of the city.

In the August 2021 draft of the La Junta Economic Development Action Plan, “Redeveloping blighted and/or vacant properties” was identified as the most important action by community survey respondents as being essential for achieving their vision for La Junta in the year 2030 (p. 1). The redevelopment strategy for this project includes repurposing the two priority sites from their current state as blighted, vacant, and perceived contaminated community liabilities into suitable workforce and affordable housing and commercial/retail space that will generate tax revenue.

The Comprehensive Plan and Economic Development Action Plan will be implemented in part by the La Junta Urban Renewal Authority (LJURA) and La Junta Main Street. LJURA serves as
the City’s redevelopment agency and La Junta Main Street is an Accredited Main Street Program that works to promote, design, and increase the economic vitality of downtown La Junta. These organizations will serve as assets to this proposed project, especially with regard to community engagement efforts and aligning reuse strategies with evolving community needs. Many of the potential brownfield sites in the Target Area of downtown La Junta are suitable for mixed use commercial/residential redevelopment. The priority sites, in particular, have character and charm that residents wish to preserve, which is in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan (pgs. 2-5) and an economic revitalization strategy that will leverage the proposed funds from this project for measurable change in the Target Area.

1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The proposed project will provide environmental due diligence, cleanup planning, and reuse planning services necessary to position the priority properties and other sites for sale and redevelopment. These activities will accommodate new investments by stimulating the availability of other funds and resources, creating new jobs (particularly in the sectors of health services and small business), increasing access to medical/social services, and increasing the tax revenues in the area by bringing in new businesses. We estimate >20 jobs and increased tax revenue will be generated from redeveloping this area. Specific outcomes also include the development of 20-25 new workforce housing/affordable housing units.

In each instance, the priority properties are blighted with perceived environmental concerns that represent significant roadblocks to reuse/redevelopment. Once assessed, and if necessary, cleaned up (possibly by subsequent EPA cleanup grant(s)), redevelopment and reuse of the sites have the potential to bring jobs and needed resources (parks, pedestrian and transportation improvements, healthy food options) while preserving the Target Area’s natural beauty, which are goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The reuse and/or rehab of key downtown properties and encouraged use of energy efficient building practices and use of renewable energy methods are in keeping with community priorities. Solar energy developments have been highlighted as an area of opportunity for the City in the 2017 CEDS (p. 3-7). Further, redeveloping blighted properties that incorporate renewable energy options or energy-efficient building practices will further promote best practices in natural resource protections and improve air quality by using sustainable heating systems as alternatives to outdated wood stoves. Addressing the stigma, blight and health issues created by brownfields is the essential first step in enabling the City to effectively re-visit available economic revitalization strategies (See section 1.b.ii.) and create new opportunities in the target area.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.c.1. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The assessment and redevelopment projects proposed in this brownfield assessment project will require both public and private investment. The Target Area is a state designated Tax Increment District and downtown La Junta has access to Tax Increment Funds (TIF), which captures the tax value increment over time within an area as a pool of money accessible for capital improvements exclusively within the Tax Increment District. Priority Site #1 - The 209 Colorado Ave. building in downtown La Junta is in this district. This grant will stimulate the availability of these resources by providing assessment dollars to position properties for reuse and determine what, if any, remediation will be required to facilitate reuse. Based on conversations with M. Douglas Jamison, Superfund/Brownfield Leader for the State of Colorado, Dept. of Public Health and Environment, The City and developers can leverage the state revolving loan, tax credits, and state cleanup grants to facilitate the cleanup of the the priority sites and other Brownfields identified by the City and community. The City will work with community partners, including LJURA, La Junta Main Street, and the La Junta Cultural Creative District to identify potential developers and investors willing to support ended redevelopment concepts or other suitable revitalization projects. The City is also eligible for apply for grants and loans from the USDA Community Facilities Program, which is applicable for both health and recreation projects or, if necessary, for demolition of Brownfield Properties. Collectively, these actions will address blight
in the target area in order to provide a safer La Junta.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The Target Area is located in downtown La Junta. Priority Site #1 - The 209 Colorado Ave. building is a block away from the Amtrak station, blocks from City Hall, and a block from Santa Fe Plaza Park (a gateway park to the City with picnic tables and a gazebo). The target area is equipped with municipal roads, water, and sewer, power, and broadband/fiber optic cable for commercial needs. Further, streets and sidewalks are in place to promote vehicular and pedestrian access. The City can also utilize Tax Increment Funds (see 1.c.i) to make necessary upgrades to existing infrastructure, if required.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. Community Need

2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding: La Junta, in addition to being a small, rural, and comparatively isolated city, has a poverty rate of 22.1%, which is more than double that of the State of Colorado (10.3%) and significantly elevated as compared to the US (13.4%; US Census 2019 5-year estimates, abbreviated CENSUS throughout). The USDA considers the area as a persistent-poverty county for children.

In addition to the area’s high poverty, the City budget garners only 1.02% of its total from property tax revenues (2021 City Budget, p. 26). Further, property tax revenues are expected to fall by approximately $11,000 from 2020 to 2021. The 2021 budget anticipates a revenue of $8.6 million but our anticipated expenditures in this budget year are estimated at $9.8 million, meaning funds from our cash reserves will need to be drawn down (2021 Adopted Budget, p. 7) leaving no resources for assessment or reuse planning for the foreseeable future.

Furthering our need for financial resources, COVID-19 has upended the resiliency of our community. The Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center, the only area hospital, has just 29 hospital beds. As of October 22, 2021, 2,618 cases of COVID have been diagnosed of which 80 have resulted in death, a 13,004 per 100,000 people incidence rate (and a 3% mortality rate) (https://covid19.colorado.gov/data). Unfortunately, the vaccination rate in the County is now at only 49.7% (Oct. 22, 2021, CDC). During the height of the pandemic, the saw a decrease of well in excess of 50% in our tourism sector which resulted in the shuttering of numerous long-standing family run businesses. Due to the budgetary constraints, as well as the events that have been outside budgetary planning and control, the City requires EPA assistance to assess these properties.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Most of our citizens can be classified as members of sensitive populations. In our small community, 41.8% of our people are Hispanic (CENSUS), and the census tract where the priority sites are located is in the 80th percentile for linguistic isolation as compared to EPA Region 8 (EJ Screen). People who don’t speak English well are less likely to seek healthcare and, of specific concern to brownfields, more likely to miss community health information. A 2021 study by the University of Georgia’s College of Public Health found that linguistic isolation predicts higher mortality even after adjusting for contextual health factors (“Linguistic Isolation and Mortality in Older Mexican Americans”). La Junta also has a large population of people aged 65 years and older (19.2% compared to 13.8% statewide; CENSUS) and children under age 6 (6.9% compared to 6.0% statewide; CENSUS). Forty-four percent of women residing in the census tract that includes the priority sites are of typical child-bearing age (compared to 38.7% nationally). The combination of linguistic isolation with elevated concentrations of the elderly, young children, and pregnant women in the Target Area poses a significant synergistic threat to the health and well-being of La Junta’s sensitive populations. In addition to brownfield proximity, the health threat to the sensitive populations in the Target Area is exacerbated by significantly elevated environmental indicators. The EJ Indexes for the wastewater discharge indicator (proximity to contaminated streams) and lead paint indicator (percent of pre-1960 housing) are in the 99th and 95th percentiles statewide, respectively (EJ Screen). The welfare of our
sensitive populations also suffers from higher rates of poverty; the poverty rate for children in the Target Area is 65.9% higher than the State rate, and a staggering 235% higher for our population aged 65 and above as compared to the rest of Colorado (CENSUS). Redevelopment concepts for the priority sites will address health and welfare issues in the community by providing code-compliant affordable housing, additional job opportunities in the City’s downtown, and access to healthcare, with specific benefits realized by our predominant sensitive populations.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Health conditions in La Junta are exacerbated by exposure to brownfields, and lack of access to services and healthy foods. Potential contaminants that exist at the target sites include asbestos, lead, petroleum, and other hazardous substances. These contaminants can have serious impacts on the health of our residents living in proximity to brownfields sites. As mentioned above, the EJ Index Lead Paint Indicator for the Target Area is in the 95th percentile statewide. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Lead Poisoning Prevention Profile for Otero County, 10.5% of children tested under age 6 had a blood lead level ( BLL ) above 5 mcg/dL; the CDC Blood Lead Threshold Value is 3.5 mcg/dL. Even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in permanent damage to the brain and nervous system, leading to behavior and learning problems. Pregnant women are also highly vulnerable to lead exposure. In Otero County Infant Mortality was documented at 13.4 deaths during the first year of life per 1,000 live births for 2019 (versus a statewide rate of 4.9; cdphe.colorado.gov).

Asbestos, another potential contaminant can cause asbestosis, a scarring in the lungs caused by breathing asbestos fibers; and mesothelioma, a rare cancer of the membrane that covers the lungs; and lung cancer. Asbestos exposure can also exacerbate and trigger asthma. The Colorado Department of Public Health statistics report that La Junta has an Age-Adjusted Asthma Hospitalization rate of 1,300.8 per 100,000 people versus 635.9 for the state of Colorado (Colorado Hospital Association through the CDPHE Health Equity/Environmental Justice Collaborative http://www.cohealthmaps.dphe.state.co.us/cdphe_community_health_equity_map/).

The Age-Adjusted Heart Disease Mortality Rate is 306.5 in the Target Area versus 127.5 per 100,000. The Age-Adjusted Diabetes Hospitalization Rate for La Junta is 3,038.7 per 100,000 people vs. 1,286.5 for the State of Colorado. Walkability and access to green space were two environmental factors found to have a significant association with lower diabetes type II risk and heart disease (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5800177/). The assessment of sites and the cleanup of those contaminants can reduce these exposures and facilitate improvement in health statistics.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: The residents of the Target Area suffer disproportionately from cumulative negative environmental impacts. The Target Area is 58% minority and 61% low income, with a Demographic Index in the 93rd percentile for EPA Region 8 (EJ Screen). In addition to these demographic indicators and the environmental indictors listed previously, all 11 EJ Indexes for the Target Area are in the 78th to 98th percentiles as compared to EPA Region 8 (EJ Screen). Blight, poverty and proximity to pollution sources and brownfields in the Target Area can compound or trigger physical and mental health issues (such as depression and anxiety) and exacerbate drug use for the disadvantaged populations living here. The Age-Adjusted Drug Poisoning and Overdose Mortality Rate for La Junta is 28.6 per 100,000 people (versus the statewide rate of 8.9 per 100,000 people; cdphe.colorado.gov).

Crime has a high impact on city residents. Violent crime is 20% higher than the national average, and the property crime rate is 162% higher than the national average. (www.cityrating.com). The aging vacant buildings in the downtown (including the priority sites) contribute to blight and the propensity for crime, such as vagrancy and drug use in the City. This project will enable La Junta to begin to erase the visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior, and civil disorder by creating a city-wide environment that residents are proud of, thereby discouraging further crime.

According to the USDA Economic Research Service Atlas, the Target Area is a low-
income, low-access tract with urban residents being more than one mile from a full-service grocery store that stocks fresh food. Poverty and lack of access to fresh food affects our vulnerable populations disproportionately as 34% of Otero County families received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or cash public assistance income in the past 12 months (CENSUS). 13.3% of children under 6 years old live in extreme poverty (under 50 percent FPL) in Otero County (https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9842-children-in-extreme-poverty-under-50-percent-fpl?loc=7&loct=2). Within La Junta schools, 70% of children were eligible to receive free/reduced cost lunches (versus 42% of school children in Colorado; NCES.ed.gov - CCD Public school district data for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 school years).

Otero County is ranked 59th out of 60 counties in Colorado for overall health outcomes. 13.9% of Adults in La Junta reported Frequent Physical Distress (versus 9.4% for CO; cdphe.colorado.gov). This is exacerbated by a lack of access to healthcare; the entirety of Otero County, which includes the target area, is a medically underserved area (MUA:56.9 score – data.hrsa.gov). The shortages are evident in primary care, dental and mental health care providers, and federally qualified health centers. The result is that life expectancy in La Junta is 73.7 years (versus 80.5 years for CO; cdphe.colorado.gov) and our residents, especially those who are members of sensitive populations, are more likely to suffer from or die from chronic health conditions that are caused or exacerbated by possible exposure to hazardous substances or petroleum contaminants from brownfields sites, such as the priority sites to be addressed through this project. To address these poor health and welfare issues affecting our sensitive populations, the grant strategy will focus on assessing and developing community driven reuse plans that will look to leverage funding for La Junta and Otero County to improve health and welfare-related programs. Assessment and planning efforts funded by this project will allow La Junta to identify the actual risks on the sites and take actions to mitigate any potential environmental threats in the all-important process to plan for and then provide the strategic planning and infrastructure for a complete vision for a healthy and economically vibrant City. The project will draw upon existing resources and support a plan for prioritized site reuse driven by a robust community engagement program.

2.b. Community Engagement

2.b.i. Project Partners and ii. Project Partner Roles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner Name</th>
<th>Point of Contact</th>
<th>Specific Role in the Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA Junta Rotary</td>
<td>Aimee Hill 719 469 2289</td>
<td>The Club will support community outreach by encouraging members to attend public meetings and nominate sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECO News.org</td>
<td>Adrian Hart 719 468-9720</td>
<td>The media outlet will notify the public of upcoming meetings and will provide project updates to the public via Social Media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Junta Tribune Democrat</td>
<td>James DeBartolo 719 384-8121</td>
<td>Newspaper of record that publishes public meeting notices. The paper will support public engagement through news releases regarding the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Junta Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Greg Kolomitz 719 384-7411</td>
<td>The Chamber will assist in the identification of possible sites beyond the priority sites for assessment. They will also encourage property owners to participate in the program. The chamber also intends to participate in site reuse planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Junta Cultural Main Street</td>
<td>Cynthia Nieb 303-518-8261</td>
<td>Main Street will be a key participant in the reuse planning process. They will also encourage property owners in the target area to participate in the program by allowing site access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Junta Tourism</td>
<td>Pam Denahy 719-468-1439</td>
<td>The Tourism group will has a vested interest in the assessment and potential reuse of sites in the downtown. Improvements in the downtown will be critical to improving tourism rates to La Junta. The group will encourage public participation through publicizing meetings and attracting developers to the City.</td>
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2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input: Our community engagement plan includes the following: 1) assist the public in contributing to and understanding the decision-making process
during project planning, assessment phases, and cleanup, and the community’s role in that process; 2) give the public accessible, accurate, timely, and understandable information about the project as it moves forward; 3) ensure adequate time and opportunity for the community and community groups to provide informed and meaningful participation and for that input to be considered; 4) reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs; and 5) respect and fully consider and include public input. The Brownfields team will develop a written Community Involvement Plan to document and formalize the process to share information and seek public input to decision-making. Input will be sought on site selection, project planning, and cleanup/reuse planning. The public will be given ample opportunity to submit suggested sites for assessment through community meeting participation. The community will participate in the prioritization and planning processes through public meetings. The City will use the following strategies to communicate with the public. Maintain Point of Contact: The City will designate points of contact for the project and contact information will be provided. Maintain Communication with Local Officials, Agencies, and Residents: Project staff will attend civic organization meetings and provide updates on project activities and answer questions. Prepare and Distribute News Releases, Fact Sheets, Newsletters, Social Media Updates: Updates summarizing current information about the project and describing upcoming activities (including public meetings) will be prepared and distributed to those on the project mailing and email lists. For residents that do not have access to the Internet or other online sources, the City will also prepare and release announcements to local newspapers and radio to provide information about events such as opportunities for public input, significant site investigation findings, completion of major milestones, important scheduling information, and other pertinent information. Social media outlets will also be employed to convey these messages. Establish and Maintain an Information Repository: Documents including project fact sheets, technical reports, the CIP, site nomination forms, and access agreement templates will be kept at a central repository in the project office. Conduct Public Meetings and Information Sessions with Virtual Alternatives: A minimum of four public meetings will be held to communicate information and to solicit input from the community. The achievement of certain project milestones or discovery of new information may warrant an additional formal public meeting with presentations of technical information. A live stream will be available as possible. The project team will also reach out to local residents through partner community organizations for additional project sites and to determine priority redevelopment needs from a community perspective and to respond to community input and feedback. The City will communicate progress and seek input at regularly scheduled meetings. The project team will also gather input for use at planning meetings and will seek candidate sites for assessment at the scheduled community meetings. Community member input will be responded to through direct discussion or through meeting minutes, using a collective visioning approach that embraces community diversity and focuses on solutions and positive visions for the future rather than problems. The discussion, visioning and proposed solutions will be included in the comments in the public records and incorporated into the City’s vision for economic revitalization plans in relation to the identified sites. The meetings will be held in person but can be conducted virtually as dictated by current COVID-19 restrictions/guidance. When possible, the City will find appropriate methods to hold in person meetings due to the lack of internet or reliable internet access to a significant portion of our population. All meetings will provide access to information in Spanish for our linguistically isolated population.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS
3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:
3.a.i. – iv. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: The City is proposing a three-year time frame to complete the following tasks, but will work to expedite the process as appropriate in order to justify additional EPA funding. Note, the City personnel costs will be provided as in-kind support/non-EPA grant resources contributed for each activity below.
### Task/Activity 1: Programmatic Support

**i. Project Implementation:**  
EPA-funded activities for the priority/non-priority site(s): cooperative agreement implementation and oversight; monthly team meetings; reporting; ACRES data entry

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Months 1-36

**iii. Task/Activity Lead(s):** Project Director with support from QEP and project staff  

**iv. Output(s):** Quarterly reports, ACRES data entry; notes from monthly team meetings

### Task/Activity 2: Community Engagement

**i. Project Implementation:**  
EPA-funded activities for the priority/non-priority site(s): securing site access; community engagement activities and meetings; site selection; development of community engagement documents

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Months 2-33, initial community meeting within the first 6 months

**iii. Task/Activity Lead(s):** Project Director with support from QEP and project staff

**iv. Output(s):** Community Involvement Plan; community meeting summaries; community input for reuse plans

*Notes:* Public meetings will include reuse and redevelopment planning components and will be held virtually should COVID-19 protocols prohibit in-person meetings.

### Task/Activity 3: Environmental Site Assessments

**i. Project Implementation:**  
EPA-funded activities for the priority site(s): In total, 12 Phase I and 5 Phase II Assessments are planned. A City-wide inventory of brownfields sites will be developed for future reuse

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Months 4-30, assessment of priority sites within first 6 months

**iii. Task/Activity Lead(s):** QEP with oversight by the project director and technical coordinator

**iv. Output(s):** GIS-based site inventory; 12 Phase I and 5 Phase II environmental site assessment reports; 3-5 Asbestos and Lead Based Paint surveys; 1 Generic Quality Assurance Plan (QAPP) and 5 site-specific QAPPs

### Task/Activity 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning

**i. Project Implementation:**  
EPA-funded activities for the priority/non-priority site(s) will include: cleanup planning at 5 specific sites; 2-3 reuse plans for the priority sites; Land Use Assessment to analyze local, county and state land use regulations for priority site reuse; and a brownfields revitalization plan for the downtown target area and strategies/new regulations pertaining to the redevelopment of the brownfield sites (may also include site disposition strategies as needed). EPA-funded activities for non-priority site(s): identical work to be completed at sites identified in the public engagement and brownfields inventory processes, if warranted and as funds allow.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Months 9 through 33

**iii. Task/Activity Lead(s):** project director with assistance from QEP

**iv. Output(s):** 2-3 Brownfields revitalization plan, 2-3 site-specific land use assessments; 2-3 reuse plans and visual renderings for priority sites

*Notes:* Proposed planning efforts require a 30% budget allocation.

### 3.b. Cost Estimates:

The following cost estimates are based on past project management experiences and with input from our experienced brownfields QEP.

**Task 1 – Program Management: Travel:** $6,000 in travel expenses for attendance for two persons at one national and one regional brownfields-related training conferences/workshops. **National brownfields conference attendance = $4,000** (Breakout - $1,600 for hotel (2 persons X 4 nights x $200 per night), $700 registration ($350 per person), $900 flights ($450 per person), $600 per diem expenses ($75 per person X 2 for 4 days) and $200 ground transport (parking and airport transfers, taxis). **Regional brownfields conference attendance = $2,000:** $1,050 for hotel (2 persons X 3 nights (including travel days) x $175 per night), $300 registration ($150 per person), $450 per diem
expenses ($75 per person X 2 for 3 days) and $200 ground transport. If workshops are held virtually, the City will apply any excess funds towards community engagement and assessment. **Supplies:** $1,000 is allocated to typical offices supplies, including stationary, paper, ink, printing, and postage for all programmatic tasks over the three-year grant project. **Contractual:** $18,000 is budgeted for program support by a contracted QEP, which will provide for 180 hours at $100 per hour over the three-year project period. The City project team, with support from the QEP, will complete EPA quarterly reports, MBE/WBE forms, & EPA ACRES database and other programmatic support with contractor assistance while providing oversight and review of programmatic grant elements.

**Task 1 total:** $25,000

**Task 2 – Community Engagement:** Contractual: QEP support is budgeted for developing a Community Involvement Plan ($4,000) and approximately 210 hours (over three years) at $100 per hour ($21,000) for assisting with 4 community-wide meetings, meeting planning, outreach, focus groups & visioning sessions as well as for meetings with site owners and potential developers. Should COVID-19 safety precautions be required, the City staff and QEP are experienced at conducting virtual community engagement activities online. **Task 2 total:** $25,000

**Task 3 – Assessment:** Contractual: QEP to conduct Environmental Site Assessment activities: GIS-based brownfields inventory, set fee $25,000; 12 ASTM-AAI compliant Phase I ESAs @ $3,500 each = $42,000; 1 Generic Quality Assurance Plan (QAPP) = $5,000; 5 Site Specific QAPPs (@ $3,000 each)=$15,000 and 5 Phase II ESAs (approx. $25,000-45,000 per site, Phase II ESA costs vary due to the complexity of sites for estimating purposes $39,600/ea) = $198,000; and finally an additional $15,000 is allotted for 3-5 supplemental lead/asbestos screening assessments; **Task 3 total:** $300,000

**Task 4 – Planning:** Develop site appropriate remediation/ reuse plans to reduce health & environment risks for selected sites. Community vision and input will continue to be considered in planning. 5 Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) @ $5,000 each = $25,000; Reuse planning and renderings for 3 priority sites @$8,000 per site = $24,000; Land Use assessments for priority sites and additional sites that may be identified in community engagement process for estimated 5 sites @ $5,000 per site=$25,000; Brownfields Revitalization Strategy for Target Area (includes site disposition strategies)=$76,000 (set fee). **Task 4 Total:** $150,000

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<tr>
<th>Budget Table</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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<td>Supplies</td>
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<td>Contractual</td>
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<td>Subtotal/Total</td>
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3.c. Measuring Environmental Results: The Project Director with support from key staff and the QEP will document, track, and evaluate the following outputs and outcomes continually through quarterly progress reports, annual disadvantaged business enterprise reporting, and in monthly communication with the EPA Project Officer. These will be compared to the workplan to ensure they are on track and on schedule. The activities and outcomes are tracked through a project management and invoice management system. **Outputs:** Number of sites assessed (Phase I/II ESAs); Number of ABCAs; Number of formal community meetings, updated Community Involvement Plan; ACRES data entry **Outcomes:** Number of sites for which property title transfers are facilitated; Acres of land redeveloped, and square footage of buildings positioned for adaptive reuse; Amount of private investment and other funding leveraged; Jobs created or retained; Increased property and sales tax revenue generated. An overall gauge of success will be the creation of jobs and the improvement in environmental justice conditions. Should the project run into delays or obstacles, the City will work the assigned EPA Project Officer and the QEP to implement countermeasures, such as budget reallocation.
4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a. Programmatic Capability

4.a.i. Organizational Capacity and  iii. Description of Key Staff: La Junta has the organizational capacity to carry out the programmatic and financial requirements of the grant as demonstrated by our successful management of other grants. Quarterly reviews and updates will be provided from City project staff to the City Council prior to delivery of EPA quarterly reports. **Mr. Rick Klein**, City Manager will serve as project director. Mr. Klein has 40 years of experience managing city programs, such as TIGER, FAA and DOLA grants, with multiple partner agencies and organizations to deliver economic/business development. His experience has included administering TIGER 7, State and Federal grants. **Mrs. Aliza Libby** will be responsible for fiscal management of the EPA Brownfield funds. She has 16 years of experience in public finance. **Mr. Mike Webber** will serve as Technical Coordinator. Mr. Webber currently works as City Engineer and has managed grant and community development projects in the areas of Federal and State Water and agriculture projects. The team will participate in monthly project meetings and offer ongoing input in decision making. The City has retained an experienced Brownfields QEP following EPA procurement requirements.

4.a.ii. Organizational Structure: The Project Director, will oversee day-to-day project operations and will be responsible for oversight of the contracted QEP. the Technical Coordinator, will support the Project Director in QEP oversight. The Financial Coordinator will be responsible for ASAP drawdowns and the fiscal management. The City has established systems and procedures to replace project staff or obtain additional contractual support, if necessary. The City will work with the experienced Brownfields QEP to meet the required programmatic objectives. The City Project Director will work with the EPA Project Officer and QEP to implement countermeasures, such as reevaluating management strategies to resume the project schedule and meet workplan milestones should delays or obstacles be encountered.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City has secured the services of a professional QEP experienced in brownfields redevelopment projects through an open bid process that complies with state and federal requirements (2 C.F.R. 200 and EPA rule 2 C.F.R. 1500).

4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.b.ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Assistance

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Accomplishments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2017 US DOT Tiger 7</td>
<td>$15,210,143</td>
<td>Railroad upgrades and safety improvements</td>
<td>38 miles of new rail, 28 turnouts, 12 at-grade crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2020 US FAA</td>
<td>$645,000</td>
<td>Taxiway/apron rehabilitation</td>
<td>Milled and resurfaced taxiway. Project completed on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2020 CO Department of Local Affairs</td>
<td>$585,298</td>
<td>Intergenerational park build</td>
<td>Currently in progress; completed to date: ADA bathroom construction, two foot bridges, pedestrian pathways</td>
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(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: Project staff members have a history of timely compliance with all federal and state grants. All grant terms and conditions as well as reporting requirements are met in a timely manner and in accordance with set work schedules, and applicable grants have been closed. No adverse findings were reported with regards to grant awards/financial assistance programs, internal controls or audits, compliance or any other matters as per the FY 2020 A-133 audit completed by Hancock Froese &Co. for the period ending June 30, 2020 (current audit underway).
1. **Applicant Eligibility**
The City of La Junta is a general-purpose unit of local government and therefore an eligible entity as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64 pursuant.

2. **Community Involvement**
The project community involvement goals are to achieve the following: 1) assist the public in contributing to and understanding the decision-making process during project planning, assessment phases, and cleanup, and the community’s role in that process; 2) give the public accessible, accurate, timely, and understandable information about the project as it moves forward; 3) ensure adequate time and opportunity for the community and community groups to provide informed and meaningful participation and for that input to be considered; 4) reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs; and 5) respect and fully consider and include public input. The Brownfields team will develop a written Community Involvement Plan to document and formalize the process to share information and seek public input to decision-making. Input will be sought on site selection, project planning, and cleanup/reuse planning. The public will be given ample opportunity to submit suggested sites for assessment through community meeting participation. The community will participate in the prioritization and planning processes through public meetings. The City will use the following strategies to communicate with the public. Maintain Point of Contact: The City will designate points of contact for the project and contact information will be provided. Maintain Communication with Local Officials, Agencies, and Residents: Project staff will attend civic organization meetings and provide updates on project activities and answer questions. Prepare and Distribute News Releases, Fact Sheets, Newsletters, Social Media Updates: Updates summarizing current information about the project and describing upcoming activities (including public meetings) will be prepared and distributed to those on the project mailing and email lists. For residents that do not have access to the Internet or other online sources, the City will also prepare and release announcements to local newspapers and radio to provide information about events such as opportunities for public input, significant site investigation findings, completion of major milestones, important scheduling information, and other pertinent information. Social media outlets will also be employed to convey these messages. Establish and Maintain an Information Repository: Documents including project fact sheets, technical reports, the CIP, site nomination forms, and access agreement templates will be kept at a central repository in the project office. Conduct Public Meetings and Information Sessions with Virtual Alternatives: A minimum of four public meetings will be held to communicate information and to solicit input from the community. The achievement of certain project milestones or discovery of new information may warrant an additional formal public meeting with presentations of technical information. A live stream will be available as possible. The project team will also reach out to local residents through partner community organizations for additional project sites and to determine priority redevelopment needs from a community perspective and to respond to community input and feedback.

The City will communicate progress and seek input at regularly scheduled meetings. The project team will also gather input for use at planning meetings and will seek candidate sites for assessment at the scheduled community meetings. Community member input will be responded to through direct discussion or through meeting minutes, using a collective visioning approach that embraces community diversity and focuses on solutions and positive visions for the future rather than problems. The discussion, visioning and proposed solutions will be included in the
La Junta, Colorado  
FY22 EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant  
Threshold Criteria

comments in the public records and incorporated into the City’s vision for economic revitalization plans in relation to the identified sites. The meetings will be held online and modified for in-person public meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions. When possible, the City will find appropriate methods to hold in person meetings due to the lack of internet or reliable internet access to a significant portion of our population.

3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients
Not Applicable - no contractors or sub-recipients are named in this application. The City of La Junta pledges full compliance with the fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500 in the selection of all consultants and contractors.

4. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds
The City of La Junta does not have an open EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.