



November 3, 2023

R03-24-A-001

Anthony Geiger
Geiger.Anthony@epa.gov
1650 Arch St.
Mail Code 3LD50
Philadelphia, PA. 19103

Dear Mr. Geiger:

This is to serve as the cover letter to our application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a Community Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant.

- 1) Applicant Identification: Penn-Northwest Development Corporation
- 2) Funding Requested:
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community Wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
- 3) Location:
 - a. Cities: a) Sharon, Farrell, Grove City, PA.
 - b. County: b) along with all of Mercer County, PA.
- 4) Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information
 - Targeted Areas: Sharon, PA., Farrell, PA., Grove City, PA.
 - Census Tracts: Sharon: 42085030100, 3200, 3300.
 - Farrell: 42085030500, 0900, 3200, 3300.
 - Grove City: 42085032900.

Address of Priority Sites:

- Site #1** - Hall Industries -180 Lincoln Ave., Grove City, PA. 16127
Census Tract: 42085032900
- Site #2** - Former Sharon Tube – 134 Mill St., Sharon, PA. 16146
Census Tract: 42085033200
- Site #3** - DSF Slag – 2 N. 6th St., Sharon, PA. 16146
Census Tract: 42085033300
- Site #4** - CIT Site – 2426 Perry Highway, Hadley, PA. 16130
Census Tract: 42085031800



5) Contacts

i) Project Director

Gary Dovey
724-662-3705 ext. 102
gtd@penn-northwest.com
3580 Innovation Way
Hermitage, PA. 16148

ii) Chief Executive

Rod Wilt
724-662-3705
3580 Innovation Way
Hermitage, PA. 16148

6) Population

Mercer County, PA. - 110,656, Sharon - 13,150, Farrell - 4,666,
Grove City - 7,945, Hadley - 2,112.

7) Other Factors – Attached.

- Community population is 10,000 or less – Farrell, Grove City, Hadley, PA.
- Priority Site impacted by mine-scarred land – see Page 2 - **Site #18**.
- Priority Sites adjacent to a body of water – see Page 1 - **Sites #1,2,&3**.
- Priority Sites in federally designated flood plain – see Page 1 - **Sites #1,2,3,7&8**.
- Priority Site - renewable energy – see Pages 3&4 – **Sites #2&18**.
- Priority Site will incorporate energy efficient measures – see Page 3&4.
- Proposed project will improve local climate adaption/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments – see Page 4.

8) Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority – Attached.

9) Releasing Copies of Applications – Confidential Information.

Penn-Northwest requests that salary information for its Executive Director and Vice President be kept confidential.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Penn-Northwest Development Corporation

Rod Wilt,
President



October 31, 2023

Mr. Rod Wilt, Executive Director
Penn-Northwest Development Corporation
3580 Innovation Way
Hermitage, PA 16148

RE: U.S. EPA Brownfields Grant Proposal | State Letter of Acknowledgement
Penn-Northwest Development Corporation
Mercer County, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Wilt:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is pleased to support your efforts to redevelop brownfield properties in your regional area. Returning environmentally challenged and underutilized land and buildings to productive use improves our environment, safeguards our residents, and helps boost Pennsylvania's economy.

The DEP supports the Penn-Northwest Development Corporation's application for a US EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Assessments, as well as develop reuse plans on selected sites in Mercer County, PA.

The corporation's efforts to examine the redevelopment potential of aggregated, underutilized sites to create renewed neighborhoods and business districts in Pennsylvania is a worthwhile endeavor.

Both Central Office and Regional Office Staff in the Land Recycling Program look forward to supporting Penn-Northwest Development Corporation and U.S. EPA Region 3 on this project.

If you have any questions, please contact John Gross by email at johngross@pa.gov or by telephone at 717-783-7502.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Maddigan".

Michael Maddigan
Land Recycling Program Manager
Bureau Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

1a. Targeted Area and Brownfields

1(a)(i) Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Targeted Area.

Mercer County in Northwest Pennsylvania has a rich industrial heritage. Manufacturing is still a critical component of the County economy, and accounts for 18% of County employment compared to 9.8% for the State. However, several of these manufacturers over the years have either downsized or gone out of business, leaving a legacy of underutilized industrial sites. Many of these sites are in the Shenango River Valley, the main industrial corridor of the region. The towns of Farrell and Sharon lie in this Valley. With this Grant proposal, we are primarily targeting the Shenango Valley and the City of Sharon (population – 13,150) and the City of Farrell (population - 4,650). According to the EPA EJ Screening Tool, Sharon and Farrell are Environmental Justice communities that are above the 95% percentile in unemployment, median income and poverty compared to Mercer County, the State, and the U.S. See Section 2.a. for more details.

The County is strategically located at the crossroads of the east/west Interstate 80 and the north/south Interstate 79. This access, along with a skilled workforce has led to strengths in: steel coil and tubes, with companies such as NLMK, and Wheatland Tube together employing over 1,500; fabrication and specialty equipment, such as Hall Industries, who purchased and expanded onto **Site #1** below, assessed with our previous Assessment Grants; plastics spurred by the new Shell cracker plant in Beaver County creating opportunities for local production, and most recently in electronic vehicle battery production and recycling. In this 2024 Assessment Grant proposal, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation (“P-NW”) is continuing our efforts to target underutilized brownfield sites for manufacturing/industrial reuse and related job creation. We also will continue to address blighted residential and commercial properties, particularly in Farrell.

1(a)(ii) Description of Brownfield Sites.

The first four sites (see below) are priorities because of their job creation ability; the first three are a continuation from our previous Assessment Grant as they are large sites with extensive industrial history requiring ongoing groundwater monitoring. They are also adjacent to lower income residential communities. In response to an active marketplace for manufacturing and distribution sites in the County, we have also identified additional industrial sites including **Sites #5, 6, 7, 8, 18-20**. In the Borough of Farrell, we have also identified **Sites #9-17** as blighted with potential asbestos, mold, and lead paint. We are working closely with Farrell on a blight remediation program, and to repurpose these sites for workforce housing and/or park space. We also want to take advantage of federal incentives and developer interest in solar energy production on **Site #2** (solar roof) and **Site #18** (solar fields).

	Sites	Acres	Past Land Use	Site Conditions	Environmental Issues
	Priority Sites				
1	Halls - Grove City	80	Manufacturing	Exp - job creation	groundwater monitoring
2	Former Sharon Tube	70	Manufacturing	vacant near River	metals, solvents, petroleum
3	DSF - Sharon/Sharpsville	67	Slag Dump	Vacant near River	heavy metals/near Superfund site
4	CIT Site, Hermitage, PA	50	Manufacturing	Vacant	near public water system
	Sharon Sites				
5	Fesler Machine Site	15	Vacant	Underutilized	heavy metals/near Superfund site
6	196 N. Sharpsville Ave	2	Gas Station	Vacant	petroleum products
7	Sharon/Sharps Flats	10	Vacant/storage	Underutilized	heavy metals
	Farrell Sites				
8	land behind NLMK	100	Vacant	underutilized	heavy metals/near Superfund site
9	206 & 221 Florida	0.5	Residential	abandoned/wet	asbestos/lead paint/mold

10	1013 & 1116 Emerson	0.25	residential/church	abandoned	asbestos / lead paint
11	1029 Hamilton	0.25	Residential	abandoned	asbestos / lead paint
12	609 Idaho St.	0.5	Residential	abandoned/wet	asbestos/lead paint/mold
13	327 & 613 MLK Blvd.	2	garage/auto repair	abandoned/wet	asbestos / lead paint/petroleum/mold
14	201 Idaho St.	2	garage/auto repair	abandoned/wet	asbestos / lead paint/petroleum/mold
15	717 Union St.	0.25	corner store	abandoned	asbestos/lead paint
16	717-719 Mid Ave.	2	garage/auto repair	abandoned	asbestos / lead paint/petroleum
17	901 Hamilton Ave.	0.25	corner store	abandoned	asbestos / lead paint
Other Locations					
18	Mine, Grove City	80	Mining	abandoned	acid mine drainage
19	743 Crestvw, Transfer, PA	4	Machining	retiring owner	solvents, heavy metals
20	Reynold Ind., Greenville	3	underutilized	growing EV company	heavy metals
TOTAL		489			

(a)(iii) Identifying Additional Sites

P-NW is the County's economic development organization that has over 175 members, including representatives from the business, educational, government, and the non-profit service community. Our Vice President that manages the current Assessment Grant also has years of experience working in Mercer County, attending public meetings, and addressing the concerns of owners and neighborhood residents. Through these networks, we have identified the properties listed in this inventory and will identify others throughout the life of this prospective grant period. As with previous Assessment Grants, we gather input from these various stakeholders – site owners, public officials, concerned citizens and others. This includes attendance at public meetings, particularly in Farrell and Sharon. It also includes one-on-one meetings with site owners. We weigh such factors as whether the owner or buyer is cooperative, the reuse potential of the site, access to transportation and infrastructure, and environmental threats. *We also prioritize sites in our distressed census tracts in Sharon and Farrell.* In addition, from our experience with two previous Assessment Grants, the cooperation of the owner is critical to both the completion of the environmental assessment, and the reuse of the site. Consequently, we only proceed where we can develop a cooperative relationship with the owner/buyer. This cooperation requires trust among both parties. Since this is a voluntary program, the owner must come to trust us that through the Assessment Grant, we can resolve environmental issues, not just identify them. In turn, we must develop trust in the owner, that they are looking to improve their property and create value for the community in terms of investment, job creation, or other public benefits.

1. (b) Revitalization of the Target Area.

(b) (i) Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Plans

Based on input from its membership and the community at large, P-NW annually updates its Strategic Plan for Mercer County. This planning process culminates in our annual meeting, just held November 1st. Throughout this planning process, our brownfield Sites inform our Plan our Plan then advances reuse of our Sites.

Local Entrepreneurial Development. As in past years, our first goal is to retain and grow existing companies, and we reach out to over 40 local businesses per year. This includes coordinating Federal and State resources such as workforce training, government lending programs, site selection for expansion and possible environmental issues. P-NW also functions as a trade association and links Mercer County businesses together for business-to-business commerce. Our industrial sites, particularly those with small to mid-size industrial bay space are good candidates for local business expansion, including **Sites #1, 4, 5, 6, 19 & 20.**

New Industry Recruitment. The pandemic combined with world events has generated interest in domestic U.S. production and simplified supply chains, driving interest in our larger sites including **Sites #1, 2, 3, 7&8**. P-NW generates site leads through both virtual and live marketing efforts including maintaining an enhanced website (www.penn-northwest.com), search engine optimization, cultivating relationships with site selection firms, cultivating “ambassador” relationships with our members and with the PA. Dept of Community & Economic Development. *Regarding **Site #18**, Pennsylvania now requires all solar energy credits earned under its Alternative Energy Standards Act to be produced in Pennsylvania - stoking solar developer interest.*

Removing Blight and Developing Workforce Housing. With the two goals above, we strive to bring new wealth into the region through industries that sell outside the region such as manufacturing and warehousing. However, in order to advance this goal, we also need to offer affordable housing and amenities in safe communities. The sites in Farrell, **Sites #9 – 17**, can offer new housing and parks space to this community.

1. (b)(ii) Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy

Our 2019 Assessment Grant leveraged a \$3.5 million initial investment by Hall Industries in the former Cooper – Bessemer site in Grove City (**Site #1**), a 400,000 square foot industry facility that was underutilized for decades. Our 2022 Assessment Grant leveraged an additional \$3.5 million in this site, \$2 million in the JCL Energy project in Wheatland, a \$1 million investment in Howes Candy, and a \$1.3 million investment in the former Sharon Tube Site (**Site #2**). These investments created 160 direct jobs, and approximately 400 jobs through multiplier impacts. These investments would not have materialized, but for the environmental assessment work that gave the buyer assurances that environmental risks were manageable and posed no threat to workers or the public. With this 2024 Assessment Grant, we will similarly address and remove the uncertainty of the environmental issues, thus reducing the risk and timeframe to redevelop these properties and generate jobs, investment and other public benefits. Projected benefits of a 2024 Grant include:

Local Entrepreneurial Development - Sites #1, 4, 5, 6, 19 &20. These sites have industrial bays for local manufacturers/distributors, and we project a total investment of \$10 million and approximately 200 jobs on these sites. **Site #1** has 150,000 sq.ft. of additional bay space, which Hall’s will lease to tenants. We have already identified potential users for several of these sites such as Advanced Power and Energy, a local vehicle battery company whose zinc batteries can charge a car from 30% to 100% within a half hour.

New Industry Recruitment - Sites #1, 2, 3, 7&8. These larger sites are candidates for our national and international recruitment efforts. In the last year, we generated 28 new industry leads, distributed 21 prospect proposals, led 9 site tours, which led to 4 new companies locating in Mercer County. We project investment of over \$20 million on these sites, with over 200 jobs. **Site #18** could generate 20 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 10,000 homes.

Removing Blight and Developing Workforce Housing - Sites #9 – 17. Farrell has identified funding for the demolition of these **Sites**. As we succeed in job creation efforts above, we then project the development of 30 - 50 units of affordable housing on these sites at a total investment of approximately \$10 million.

1.(c) Strategy for Leveraging Resources. 1(c) (i). Resources Needed for Site Reuse

Throughout our history, P-NW successfully leveraged public and private resources, including our 2019 and 2022 Assessment Grants. It starts with our membership; they contributed \$245,000 this year to fund our development activities. Over the last year, P-NW leveraged almost over \$7.5 million of public investment and assisted in the retention/creation of 1,200 jobs. In addition to private investment, P-NW will secure public resources for this Assessment Grant, tailored to the needs of each site:

Federal:

- Federal Opportunity Zone Tax Incentive – Sharon & Farrell. **Sites #1&4.**
- EDA– Economic Adjustment Assistance Program – infrastructure on priority **Sites #1-4.**
- New Market Tax Credits – Sharon and Farrell sites are eligible for funding – 20-24% credit.
- ARC – POWER Grants – another source for infrastructure improvements on Priority **Sites.**
- Interior/NPS – Conservation & Outdoor Recreational Grants - near Shenango River. – **Sites #2&3.**
- HUD – funding through the CDBG received by Sharon and Farrell – **Sites #9-17.**

State of Pennsylvania:

- Enterprise Zone Tax Credits – Sharon & Farrell – **Sites #1-8.**
- PA. Intermodal Transportation Assistance – Roads and infrastructure on priority **Sites.**
- Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program – grants of 50% – potential source for all Priority **Sites.**
- PA. Business in Our Sites- potential source of funding for development of Priority **Sites.**
- PA. Industrial Site Reuse Program (“ISRP”) – funds are currently not available.
- PA. Abandoned Mine Program – source of funding to remediate acid mine drainage – **Site #18.**
- Keystone Communities – potential source of funding – **Sites #9-17.**

Local: Mercer County Innovation Fund – for small business expansion on **Sites #1, 4, 5, 6, 19 & 20.**

1. (c) (ii). Use of Existing Infrastructure. The Shenango Valley disadvantaged communities, Sharon and Farrell, as well as Grove City are built communities that are well served by existing infrastructure. **Sites #1 – 5** have water, sewer, stormwater, electric, and gas main lines at their property boundaries and laterals to the building locations with extensive capacity, as they serviced manufacturers. This existing infrastructure lowers development costs and time. For example, it was a critical issue for attracting Hall Industries to **Site #1.** These three communities also feature walkable street grids where employees can walk to work. **Sites #3, 7&8** are undeveloped land, so new lateral lines may be needed as development plans materialize. In addition to the programs described above, the State PENNVEST program is available for these infrastructure improvements. *The redevelopment of the sites in our inventory will not destroy any greenspace, will not destroy trees or habitat and creates jobs while improving the resilience of our local economy and climate.*

We will also encourage development of all properties to high energy efficient standards. This includes insulating to an R-20 factor on the exterior walls and up to R-30 for the ceiling or using double or triple pane windows with a low E-factor to further conserve energy. We also encourage energy efficient heating and cooling systems and renewable energy. *For example, on Site #2 we are working with the owner to install solar panels as part of the new roof on this 200,000 sq.ft facility. On Site #18, P-NW is currently working with a solar energy developer who specializes in creating solarfields out of brownfields.*

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.(a) Community Need. 2. (a) (i) The Community’s Need for Funding –

The need for funding is evident below based on the loss of population, poverty rate, median household income in our targeted communities and loss of population in Mercer County compared to the State and National data.

	Sharon/Farrell	Mercer County	PA	US
Population Change 2010 - 2020 *	-6.9%	-5.1%	2.4%	7.4%
Unemployment **	9.9%	4.0%	3.5%	3.8%
Poverty Rate *	28.8%	12.9%	11.8%	11.5%
Percent Minority *	30.8%	11.2%	25.5%	41.1%
Median Household Income *	\$32,884	\$52,810	\$67,587	\$69,021

* Data are from the U.S.Census American Community Survey available at www.factfinder 2.census.gov/
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** Data from the PA. Ctr. Workforce Info. at www.dli.state.pa.us/.Sharon/Farrell data from CEJST

Sharon and Farrell are both financially stressed municipalities due to thirty years of retrenchment in the steel industry. Sharon Steel, which once employed thousands, shut down permanently in 1992. As a result, both communities have lost over 20% of their population since 2000, impacting property values, taxing capacity, and municipal budgets. Farrell had to enter into a “financially distressed” status under Act 47, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Financial Recovery Act. Consequently, there are no financial resources or staff in either community to address brownfield redevelopment. P-NW provides this capacity to both communities. As listed above, the State has the ISRP that can fund environmental assessment and clean-up, but that requires a 25% match and these communities do not have this match, and the State program is currently out of funds.

2. (a)(ii). Threats to Sensitive Populations. (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

In Sharon, Farrell, and Grove City, our priority sites are adjacent to low-income residential neighborhoods. According to EPA’s Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool (CEJST), there are seven census tracts that are disadvantaged in Sharon and Farrell, representing 16,677 residents or 94% of the population. Approximately 40% of those residents are either younger than 18 or older than 65. The young and old are particularly sensitive to environmental contamination, and the health impacts are outlined further below. Sharon and Farrell, along with the larger Shenango Valley are above the 90% percentile for particulate matter, air toxic risk, lead paint, hazardous waste proximity, and superfund proximity. This is actually a slight improvement from two years ago, when it was above the 95% percentile in several of these categories. A former Westinghouse facility in Sharon, where transformers were manufactured, is a Superfund site. Polychlorinated biphenyls contaminated the Shenango River and groundwater. **Sites #2 & #3** are in close proximity to this Superfund site. Through this requested Assessment Grant as with our past Assessment Grants, we monitor any continuing groundwater impacts on adjacent sites. Through both institutional and organizational controls, we can limit any pathways of exposure to residents.

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

According to the EJScreen; Sharon and Farrell were above the 90th percentile in life expectancy and above the 95th percentile in heart disease, cancer, asthma, and disabilities. Environmental factors such as air pollution - both outdoor and indoor, soil and ground water contamination, and the stress of unemployment all contribute to these health conditions. In addition, Mercer County as a whole also experienced higher disease rates in comparison, including:

- higher rates of cancer compared to the State For males, cases were 521 per 100,000 compared to 494 for the State. In particular, lung was significantly higher for men in the County compared to the State. Cancers can all be impacted by environmental factors such as air and groundwater and public water contamination.
- experienced higher rates of heart disease compared to the State, 210 per 100,000 compared to 176 for the State and higher rates of chronic respiratory disease (41 to 35). These can be impacted by the amount of particulate matter in the air.
- was rated in the bottom 25% for overall health outcomes with 20% of residents in fair or poor health and 31% with adult obesity.

Source: PA. Department of Health County Health Profiles and County Health Rankings.org

With this Assessment Grant, we will assess, monitor, and ameliorate conditions such as asbestos exposure, contaminated soil and groundwater, and prepare sites for job creating uses. Unemployment contributes to the overall health issues outlined above and we have shown we can provide productive employment opportunities with this Assessment Grant with no exposure to environmental contamination.

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Issues (b) Advancing Environmental Justice

The majority of our inventoried sites are in Sharon and Farrell, which as described above are disadvantaged according to the CEJST. Also, as described above, according to the EJScreen, these neighborhoods are in the: 90th percentile and above for toxic air releases, hazardous waste proximity, superfund proximity, water discharges, and lead paint. With our Assessment Grant, we will directly address such issues as lead paint, hazardous waste and underground storage tanks through the assessment and remediation process. In addition, through our working relationships with the PA DEP and EPA, we will also address issues of toxic air releases and wastewater discharges among the violators. We will communicate with both PADEP and EPA to understand when release violations occur and bring it to the attention of the community, thereby advancing environmental justice in Sharon and Farrell and throughout Mercer County.

These neighborhoods and particularly those living adjacent to these sites also suffer economic loss, as these sites provide disincentive to reinvestment. This impacts elderly homeowners particularly hard as they do not recoup a nest egg when they sell their home and retire in poverty. With these Assessment Grants, we are working to break these vicious cycles and attract new wealth to these communities, consequently advancing environmental justice. By conducting environmental assessments on selected sites, we address health impacts caused by contaminants including asbestos and volatile organic compounds that can be inhaled, heavy metals in the soil that can be ingested, and contaminated groundwater that can end up in drinking water or local fish that are eaten. Then, by attracting job creating uses to these sites, we combat unemployment in these communities, offering an antidote to idleness and potential crime. By bringing new income into the community, this also positively impacts the housing market, providing an antidote to blight and disinvestment.

2 (b) Community Engagement 2(b)(i) Project Involvement Partners (ii) Project Partner Roles

We will continue to work as a team with our targeted municipalities, community – based organizations and the public. We have been in contact with the supporting organizations listed below to solicit input on potential sites, and will continue engagement with them throughout the implementation of a 2024 Grant.

Support Organization	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement
Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce	David Grande, Ex.Dir. 724-981-5880 info@svchamber.com	Consult with Penn-Northwest on site selection. Recruit prospects for priority sites.
Waterfire-non-profit arts organization and Foundation	Karen Winner, Chair, 724-981-1868 info@waterfiresharonpa.org	Sponsor festivals and work with developers on Sharon & Farrel sites.
Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone	Jim Cardamon, Coord. 724-342-1300	Leverage Resources from the State Enterprise Zone Program – Sites #2,3,5,6,7,8.
Sharon Industrial Development Authority	Melissa Holmes, Exec. Dir. 724-983-3230 mholmes@cityofsharon.net	Provide access to State funding on Site #2-3, 5,6,7.
City of Sharon	Bob Fiscus, Manager, 724-983-3220 Rfiscus@cityofsharon.net	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Sites #2,3,5,6,7 with City permitting.
City of Farrell	Ben Prescott, Manager, 724-983-2703 b.prescott@cityoffarrell.com	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Sites #8-17 with City permitting.
Grove City	Vance Oakes, Manager, 724-458-7060 vance@grovecityonline.com	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #1 with City permitting.
Hermitage	Gary Gulla, Asst. Manager, 724-983-0900 ggulla@hermitage.net	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #4 with City permitting.
Sharpsville Borough	Ken Robertson, Manager, 724-962-7896 krobertson@sharpsville.org	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #3 with Borough permitting.

2(b)(iii) Incorporating Community Input

We work closely with all of the support organizations listed above and provide regular updates to them on individual projects. As these are small municipalities, the local elected councils serve as community-based

organizations as they do not have a non-profit neighborhood-based community organization. Our municipal partners listed above hold monthly public meetings, where residents can attend and raise concerns. P-NW attends those meetings and responds to all comments received at the meeting and follows up with regular communication, and we will continue to do so. When there are newsworthy items to report, (such as the Hall Industries and Howes Candy expansions) we notify the local newspapers such as the Grove City Reporter or Sharon Herald. As we have with previous Assessment Grants, we will issue a press release with the local newspapers for a new Grant. In addition, we will distribute a brochure with “Questions and Answers” on brownfields and the Assessment Grant via e-mail, websites and print newsletters to our support organizations, local developers, code enforcement/municipal officers, and interested citizens. We will also continue to provide a progress report to all members and the public at our annual public meeting.

We also deploy virtual outreach and communication. We regularly update our website to show project activity, and our website asks for public comments. We respond in writing and incorporate these concerns into our planning. We also network our website with other websites including our support organizations. Our foreign-born population is less than one percent, however we do participate in a State “Language Access Plan” for those with limited English proficiency. Should a pandemic such as COVID force us to again work entirely remotely, we will meet via Zoom or other software, and provide updates via our website.

3 TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3. (a) Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs (i) Project Implementation.

Discussion of EPA-funded activities for both priority sites and other sites:

TASK 1 - Program Management - Cooperative Agreement Oversight and Consultant Selection. Initially, we select our consulting team. We publicly solicit Qualifications in the Sharon Herald, rank responses according to those Qualifications, and select the highest ranked consultants. The team initially consists of a Qualified Program Manager (“QPM”) to assist with reporting and site selection, and a Qualified Environmental Professional(s) (“QEPs”) who can also provide reuse planning expertise. Then, as with our current Grant, P-NW will continue its monthly meetings of its Steering Committee, providing oversight of the Grant.

TASK 2 -Community Engagement/Site Selection. Our Steering Committee seeks input from our many support organizations, particularly Sharon and Farrell, site owners, and others. This will include public meetings discussed above. In addition, from our experience, the one-on-one meetings with site owners is critical to developing trust between P-NW and the owners. We will only proceed where we can develop a cooperative relationship with the owner/buyer. *NOTE: P-NW will assess a minimum of 5 sites.*

TASK 2(a) - Obtaining and Securing Site Access. As indicated in Section 1(a)(iii), P-NW has extensive relations with private property owners throughout the County. Developing these relationships with the owners is critical to success, just as we did with **Sites #1 & #2** and Howes Candy. Our team does not just identify a potential problem, but resolves it, if needed, through Pennsylvania’s Land Recycling Act (“Act 2”) voluntary program. To proceed with a Phase II, the owner will execute the site access agreement of the QEP.

TASK 2(b) - Reuse Planning. We intend to develop a reuse plan for one priority site. Working with our consultants, we will develop a Reuse Vision, Site Plan, and Resource Roadmap for this selected site. These work products will further advance the prospects for redevelopment and attract investment.

TASK 3 - Phase Is. After selecting a site, our QEP conducts Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) according to the All-Appropriate Inquiry Final Rule at 40 CFR Part 312. These all-appropriate inquiries are conducted in compliance with ASTM Standards to secure protection from liability under CERCLA.

TASK 4. - Phase IIs & Cleanup Plans. While completing a Phase I ESA, if our QEP determines Recognized Environmental Conditions are present, our Steering Committee will consider a Phase II ESA based on the factors above. On selected sites, our QEP conducts Phase II ESAs according to ASTM E1903-19. Where needed, on selected sites, we will develop Cleanup Plans and where appropriate guide the project to obtain the

PA. Act 2 Liability Release. With our consulting team, we will coordinate Cleanup Plans with appropriate Reuse Plans, working with appropriate EPA, PADEP, and State Health Department staff.

3(a)(ii) Anticipated Project Schedule (a)(iii) Task/Activity Lead

Key Project Activities	Schedule	Responsibility
TASK 1 – PROGRAM MANAGEMENT		
Completion of Work Plan	Pre – Award	Penn-Northwest (“P-NW”)
Public Ad & select QPM & QEPs	3 Month of Award	P-NW
ACRES & Quarterly Reports	Ongoing	P-NW & QPM
Close-Out Report	36 months by September 2027	P-NW & QPM
TASK2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, SITE SELECTION, AND REUSE PLANS	Ongoing	P-NW & Support Organizations
Outreach & Public Input	Ongoing	P-NW & Support Organizations
Site Selections	4 months of Award & Ongoing	Steering Committee
Reuse Plan – site selection	6 months of Award	Steering Committee
Complete Reuse Plan	9-24 months of Award	Steering Committee & QEPs
TASK 3 – PHASE I ASSESSMENTS	4 months of Award & ongoing	QEPs. Reviewed by P-NW
Access to sites for Phase II	4 months of Award	Steering Committee & QEPs
TASK 4 – PHASE II ASSESSMENTS	8 months of Award & ongoing	QEPs. Reviewed by P-NW
Cleanup Plans	12 months of Award & ongoing	QEPs. Reviewed by P-NW

3(a)(iv) Outputs

Our outputs will follow in somewhat chronological order as we proceed through grant implementation:

- *Program Management:* 12 Quarterly Reports, ACRES Reporting and updates, Close-out report.
- *Community Participation:* Monthly Steering Committee, 10+ individual site owner meetings, 12+ Progress Reports to support organizations, 3 Annual Meetings.
- *Site Selection/Reuse Planning:* select 10 sites, complete 1 site/area Reuse Plan.
- *Phase I Assessments:* complete 10 Phase I ESA.
- *Phase II ESAs and Cleanup Plans:* complete 10 Phase II ESAs, complete 3 Cleanup Plans.

3(b) Cost Estimates.

P-NW requests a Community Wide Assessment Grant of \$500,000 budgeted as follows: Note: P-NW is forgoing the 5% administration fee, and only charging for billable hours to the Grant.

Penn-Northwest Budget Categories	Task 1 Management Reporting	Task 2 Community Inv. Selection & Reuse	Task 3 Phase I Assessment	Task 4 Phase II & Cl-Up Plans	TOTAL
Personnel	\$5,940	\$16,335			\$22,275
Fringe	\$2,376	\$6,534			\$8,910
Travel	\$2,400				\$2,400
Equipment					\$0
Supplies					\$0
Contractual	\$34,415	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$312,000	\$466,415
Other					\$0
TOTAL Direct	\$45,131	\$97,869	\$45,000	\$312,000	\$500,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$45,131	\$97,869	\$45,000	\$312,000	\$500,000

Task 1. Program Management and Reporting. Our Vice President (“VP”) has the management and reporting responsibilities. Our Executive Director (“ED”) will oversee the budgeting and disbursement. Their billable rates are [REDACTED] and we have budgeted

2 and 1 hours/month respectively for 36 months to this Task. Because they have many other responsibilities, we have also budgeted consulting time of \$34,415 to assist with this Task. We also budgeted \$2,400 for travel to a Brownfield Conference ((2 attendees * (\$400 airfare + \$800 for 2 days lodging, food, etc.)). We understand the 2022 Quality Assurance Program Plan will qualify for five years, so we have not budgeted for an update.

Task 2. Community Participation/Site Selection/Reuse Planning. Our VP will have primary staff responsibility for Community Participation, Site Selection and Reuse Planning, again with oversight by the ED. We have budgeted 9 and 1 hour/month respectively for 36 months to this Task. This includes our monthly meetings, outreach to our support organizations, and meeting with site owners/buyers. We do not own any inventoried sites, so developing cooperative relations with the buyers/owners is critical. We budgeted \$25,000 of consulting time to assist with this Task & managing reuse planning. We budgeted a total of \$50,000 for reuse planning on one selected site.

Task 3. Phase I Assessments: We anticipate selecting 10 sites for Phase I ESAs at an average cost of \$4,500 per assessment. Our VP will review these Phase Is, and their time will be donated as an in-kind contribution.

Task 4. Phase II Assessments & Clean-Up Plans: We anticipate selecting 10 sites for Phase II ESAs, at an average cost of \$30,000 along with 3 cleanup plans at an average cost of \$4,000. This includes several asbestos surveys, lowering the average cost cited above. Our VP and appropriate support organizations will review these Phase IIs., as an in-kind contribution. *Note: Over 60% of Grant proceeds are for Phase Is & IIs.*

3.(c) Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results. Currently, our Steering Committee meets monthly to timely track each project through milestones. VP, Gary Dovey (see below), addresses any lack of progress by making team assignments and requiring accountability at each meeting. We will continue this process with a hopeful 2024 Grant. We deploy an Excel spreadsheet that tracks Outputs: Phase I start, Phase I completion, Field Sampling Plans (“FSPs”) submission, EPA FSP approval, Phase II start, Phase II completion, cleanup plan (if necessary), and Pennsylvania ACT 2 (Liability Release) Status, redevelopment start and completion. We also track the “Outcome” and redevelopment status during and after the environmental assessment process. We reach out to supporting organizations, owners, and others to track such Outcomes as site development status, private investment, public investment, jobs created, blight eliminated, recreational space created, and reduction in public health threats. Using these tracking mechanisms, we file timely Quarterly Reports and Property Reports using ACRES. We will generate a timely Close-Out Report and continue to track outcomes in ACRES after close-out of the Grant.

4. PROGRAMMATIC ABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.(a) Programmatic Capability (i). Organizational Capacity (ii). Organizational Structure

(iii). Description of Key Staff. P-NW was incorporated in 1985, and has a successful 38+ year operating history. We serve as the lead organization for economic development in Mercer County, governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors that meets monthly. Local hospitals, local banks, a local utility, and local citizens are represented on the Board. P-NW’s annual operating budget is over \$700,000; it also conducts an annual financial audit, with no audit exceptions noted. Rod Wilt is the ED, with decades of experience in regional economic development, including serving in the PA. House of Representatives. Rod will provide oversight of Assessment Grant. Gary Dovey, our VP, will manage the Grant. Gary has 25 years of experience in brownfield redevelopment, and grants administration. He also has excellent relationships with the PADEP Northwest Regional staff. Gary and Rod regularly provide Assessment Grant progress reports to the Board.

Gary will manage completion of the reporting requirements under the Assessment Grant, including: development of the work plan, property profiles, quarterly reporting, and close-out reports. We will assess the status of each project at least Quarterly, as part of the submission of the Quarterly Report. Our Steering

Committee consisting of Gary, QPM, and QEPs, will also meet monthly to review project costs relative to budgets, pursue leveraged resources, and coordinate all tracking and budget decisions.

4(a)(iv) Acquiring Additional Resources. Upon award of an Assessment Grant, P-NW will publicly advertise for a QPM and QEPs. The public advertisement will include the criteria for the selection of these consultants such as approach, experience, references, personnel assigned to the project, and pricing. We will rank the responses according to each advertised criteria and select the consultants with the highest ranking. We anticipate selecting one QPM and one or two QEPs, including one with reuse planning experience. The contracts will be reviewed by the P-NW solicitor and approved by the Board at their monthly meetings. Because of our strong track record in grants management, we expect very quick approvals by the Board and very rapid implementation of the Assessment Grant. As part of the selection of consultants, P-NW will include as criteria minority and women business (MWBE) status and track our MWBE expenditures as required.

4.(b) Past Performance and Accomplishments (b) (i) (1) Currently Has Received an EPA Brownfields Grant. Penn-Northwest received a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment Grant award, beginning October 1, 2022, through the Grant period ending September 30, 2025. As of October 1, 2023, there is \$0 balance. **Sites #1 and #2**, due to their size and operating history, have required a significant share of this funding.

(b) (i) (1) Accomplishments.

- *Hall Industries - Site #1.* Hall's preferred this site for industrial expansion, but was concerned based on prior environmental reports. We completed a Phase II ESA with extensive soil and groundwater testing, indicating minor and isolated exceedances of PA. Statewide Health Standards for non-residential locations, with no pathways of exposure. We are currently proceeding with final groundwater testing for PA. Act 2 Liability Release. As discussed, Hall Industries acquired the **Site**, invested \$7 million to date, and created 70 jobs to date, with more to follow.
- *JCL Energy - Wheatland Industrial Sites.* A local entrepreneur was seeking an existing industrial property to start a business that rebuilds electrical transformers. We proceeded with Phase I and Phase II ESAs on two underutilized industrial sites in the Farrell/Wheatland area indicating only minor exceedances of Statewide health standards and no pathways of exposure. JCL purchased these sites, invested \$1.5 million and created 50 jobs.
- *Howe's Candy – Grove City, PA.* A new buyer with expansion plans purchased Howe's Candy, but was reluctant to take ownership of the real estate because of an incomplete Phase II ESA. We completed an extensive Phase II ESA that indicated no exceedances of Statewide Health Standards for industrial property. The buyer is taking title to the property, and expanding the roasting lines for coffees and mixed nuts, preserving 50 jobs and adding 20.
- *Broadway Blvd Site - Farrell.* We completed a Phase II ESA with finding petroleum contamination in a limited area. Soil was removed during excavation for this new Dollar General, creating 25 jobs.
- *Flynn Tire Site, Wheatland.* Assessed with 2019 Grant, Flynn is planning a 200,000 sq.ft. warehouse.

These projects have generated or retained over 200 jobs, with another 200 jobs anticipated over the next several years, along with over \$15 million of current investment and an additional \$20 million anticipated.

(b)(i)(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements. P-NW performed 2019 and 2022 Assessment grant activities in compliance with work plans, terms and conditions, expenditures, and reporting requirements, generating the above outcomes despite the pandemic. We file timely Quarterly Reports, ACRES Updates, and rigorously track the budget. **Over 80% of our 2019 and 2022 Assessment Grants were spent on direct assessment activities.** This Assessment Grant has become a critical component of our economic development strategy. A 2024 Assessment Grant will enable us to continue our job creation and revitalization success on brownfield sites in the Shenango Valley and throughout Mercer County. Thank you for your consideration.

ELIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Applicant Eligibility

The applicant, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation (“Penn-Northwest”) is a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. See the attached Articles of Incorporation, dated June 26, 1985 and the IRS tax-exemption under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, dated June 23, 1986.

Penn Northwest is also certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, specifically the PA. Industrial Development Authority (“PIDA”), as an “industrial development company” as defined by the PIDA act of 1956. This Certification is also included in the Attachments, and can be further verified on the Pennsylvania Department of Community Development website, <https://dced.pa.gov/cedo>. As such, Penn-Northwest is also “Government Entity Created by the State Legislature”, and is eligible for the Assessment Grant.

2. Description of Community Engagement

(i) Project Involvement (ii) Project Partner Roles

We will continue to work as a team with our targeted municipalities, community – based organizations and the public. We have been in contact with the supporting organizations listed below to solicit input on potential sites, and will continue engagement with them throughout the implementation of a 2024 Grant.

<u>Support Organization</u>	<u>Point of Contact</u>	<u>Specific Involvement</u>
Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce	David Grande, Ex.Dir. 724-981-5880 info@svchamber.com	Consult with Penn-Northwest on site selection. Recruit prospects for priority sites.
Waterfire-non-profit arts organization and Foundation	Karen Winner, Chair, 724-981-1868 info@waterfiresharonpa.org	Sponsor festivals and work with developers on Sharon & Farrel sites.
Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone	Jim Cardamon, Coord. 724-342-1300	Leverage Resources from the State Enterprise Zone Program – Sites #2,3,5,6,7,8.
Sharon Industrial Development Authority	Melissa Holmes, Exec. Dir. 724-983-3230 mholmes@cityofsharon.net	Provide access to State funding on Site #2-3, 5,6,7.
City of Sharon	Bob Fiscus, Manager, 724-983-3220 Rfiscus@cityofsharon.net	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Sites #2,3,5,6,7 with City permitting.
City of Farrell	Ben Prescott, Manager, 724-983-2703 b.prescott@cityoffarrell.com	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Sites #8-17 with City permitting.
Grove City	Vance Oakes, Manager, 724-458-7060 vance@grovecityonline.com	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #1 with City permitting.
Hermitage	Gary Gulla, Asst. Manager, 724-983-0900 ggulla@hermitage.net	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #4 with City permitting.
Sharpsville Borough	Ken Robertson, Manager, 724-962-7896 krobertson@sharpsville.org	Consult on site selection. Assist developers of Site #3 with Borough permitting.

2(b)(iii) Incorporating Community Input

We work closely with all of the support organizations listed above and provide regular updates to them on individual projects. As these are small municipalities, the local elected councils serve as

community-based organizations as they do not have a non-profit neighborhood-based community organization. Our municipal partners listed above hold monthly public meetings, where residents can attend and raise concerns. P-NW attends those meetings and responds to all comments received at the meeting and follows up with regular communication, and we will continue to do so. When there are newsworthy items to report, (such as the Hall Industries and Howes Candy expansions) we notify the local newspapers such as the Grove City Reporter or Sharon Herald. As we have with previous Assessment Grants, we will issue a press release with the local newspapers for a new Grant. In addition, we will distribute a brochure with “Questions and Answers” on brownfields and the Assessment Grant via e-mail, websites and print newsletters to our support organizations, local developers, code enforcement/municipal officers, and interested citizens. We will also continue to provide a progress report to all members and the public at our annual public meeting.

We also deploy virtual outreach and communication. We regularly update our website to show project activity, and our website asks for public comments. We respond in writing and incorporate these concerns into our planning. We also network our website with other websites including our support organizations. Our foreign-born population is less than one percent, however we do participate in a State “Language Access Plan” for those with limited English proficiency. Should a pandemic such as COVID force us to again work entirely remotely, we will meet via Zoom or other software, and provide updates via our website.

3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients.

Not Applicable.

4. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The Applicant, Penn Northwest Development Corporation, does have an active EPA Assessment Grant (BF 95301201). As of October 1, 2023, there was a balance of \$0 remaining in the budget. See attached ASAP.gov printout.