

# Southest Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

P. O. Box 1406  
Dothan, AL 36302-1406

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Phone: 334-794-4093  
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[www.searpc.org](http://www.searpc.org)

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## Narrative Information Sheet - Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC)

1. **Applicant Identification:** R04-24-A-005  
Southeast Alabama Regional Planning  
Development Commission  
462 N Oates Street, 4th floor  
Dothan, AL 36303
2. **Funding Requested:**
  - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
  - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
3. **Location:**
  - a) City: Eufaula, Ozark, and Elba
  - b) County: Barbour, Dale, and Coffee
  - c) State: Alabama
4. **Target Area and Priority Site Information:**
  - Target Areas:
    1. City of Eufaula (TA 1)
    2. City of Ozark (TA 2)
    3. City of Elba (TA 3)
  - Census Tract Numbers: CT 9507 & 9508 (Eufaula), CT 204, 205, 207, and 208.02 (Ozark), CT 105 (Elba)
  - Addresses of Priority Sites:
    1. Former Lumber Mill, 216 South Livingston Avenue, Eufaula, AL
    2. Former Hardy Gas Station, 2742 U.S. Hwy 231, Ozark, AL
    3. Elba Ford Company, 1681 Coraline Street, Elba, AL
5. **Contacts:**
  - a. Project Director:  
Name: Emily A. VanScyoc, Community and Economic Development Director  
Phone: 334-794-4093 ext. 1414  
Email: [evanscyoc@searpc.org](mailto:evanscyoc@searpc.org)  
Mailing Address: 462 N Oates Street, 4th floor, Dothan, AL 36303
  - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:  
Name: Scott Farmer, Executive Director  
Phone: 334-794-4093  
Email: [sfarmer@searpc.org](mailto:sfarmer@searpc.org)  
Mailing Address: 462 N Oates Street, 4th floor, Dothan, AL 36303
6. **Population:**  
Eufaula: 1,880 (Census, 2020)  
Ozark: 8,511 (Census, 2020)

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Serving Municipal and County Governments in:  
Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties*

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Elba: 3,508 (Census, 2020)

## 7. Other Factors:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
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).	
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	

## 8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:

Please see the ADEM State Letter on the following page.

## 9. Releasing Copies of Applications:

Not applicable

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Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties*



**Alabama Department of Environmental Management**  
[adem.alabama.gov](http://adem.alabama.gov)

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November 1, 2023

Mrs. Emily A. VanScyoc  
Community & Economic Development (CED) Director  
Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
P.O. Box 1406  
Dothan, Alabama 36303  
[evanscyoc@searpcdc.org](mailto:evanscyoc@searpcdc.org)

RE: FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Support

Dear Mrs. VanScyoc:

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) is pleased to support the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) in its pursuit of a Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

We understand that the focus of the grant application will be economically challenged cities in Southeast Alabama, known as the Wiregrass Region. Some of these cities include Elba, Ozark, and Eufaula, Alabama, but we understand there are others facing multiple challenges, and there is no shortage of brownfield sites throughout the region. We applaud your efforts to bring resources to the region, and to help them with their brownfield challenges.

Upon request, ADEM can participate in the various brownfields outreach activities needed to accomplish redevelopment strategies. We wish SEARP&DC success in the pursuit of these funds. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Crystal Collins".

Crystal Collins, Chief  
Redevelopment Unit  
Land Division



## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### a. Target Area and Brownfields; i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) was created in 1969 under legislation passed by the Alabama State Legislature to advance regional community development. SEARP&DC provides valuable regional services to these seven counties including community development, grant writing and administration, planning and mapping services, economic development grants and administration, early childhood education, public transportation, small business development lending, senior employment training/community service, and special project assistance. The Commission is administered and governed by a group of 35 individuals from the seven-member counties (this grant's geographical boundary), which include Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties. These counties comprise the Wiregrass Region of Southeast Alabama, bordered by Georgia to the west and Florida to the south. Barbour, our northernmost county, extends nearly to our capital city, Montgomery, and Covington, our westernmost county, extends to the center of our state. The SEARP&DC covers over 4,358 square miles and has a total estimated population of 268,280 (2021 ACS).

The first economic boom of the Wiregrass Region was fueled by timber in the 1800s due to abundant resources and the river and road access to move logs. However, as timber was over-harvested and railroad expansion occurred in the region, agriculture became the main driver of the economy with cotton, peanuts, and soybeans becoming staple crops for the region. Today, more of these crops are grown in this part of the country than anywhere else in the world.<sup>1</sup> The Wiregrass Region grew with postwar prosperity that brought manufacturing plants and subsequent well-paying jobs in the manufacturing of plastics, medical supplies, and home entertainment products. The Target Area towns peaked in the 1960s-1970s following the diversification of agricultural commodities and burgeoning manufacturing economy.

Economic prosperity in the region did not last long: the impact of the nation's agricultural crisis immediately followed their economic peak when record production led to a fall in the price of commodities, causing large-scale farm debt for land and equipment. The crisis was compounded by high-interest rates and oil prices of the 1970s-1980s. With decreasing economic activity in the region and the rapid rise of globalization, the manufacturing landscape began to change alongside the agricultural industry with plant closures beginning in the 1990s through the present day.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 1,466 people were laid off just in Eufaula since 2006 from plant closures. This represents >11% of the City's population, and when considering the family members of those laid off, these closures impacted one-third of Eufaula's population. Ozark lost 790 people and Elba lost 650 to layoffs and plant closures, representing 5% and 18.5%, respectively, of these small towns' once-employed populations. The last decade also brought several natural disasters that devastated the region. 2018's Hurricane Michael caused \$200 million in agricultural industry damage alone. Then in 2021, Elba was devastated again by the third disastrous flood in 10 years – a testament to the changing climate and the need for resiliency in the region. This hurricane created numerous brownfield sites across the Wiregrass Region since many businesses never reopened. These blighted structures drive down the value of surrounding properties, which contributes to a reduced tax base.

Blighted brownfields are increasingly prevalent across the rural, underserved Wiregrass Region from years of fleeing industry, disinvestment from a reduced tax base, and an onslaught of back-to-back natural disasters. These brownfields create a number of **challenges** threatening the environment and the health and welfare of their communities if these sites are not properly assessed and cleaned up, and negatively impact the potential for new investment and development. EJScreen and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) indicate that our target areas (which have high concentrations of brownfields) are experiencing high poverty, low income, lack of jobs, high percentages of neighborhoods living in substandard housing conditions, overall distressed neighborhoods, and disproportionate impacts from climate change.

**We plan to focus grant activities in three target areas, which are the jurisdictional limits of the most impoverished cities our Region: Eufaula, Ozark, and Elba.** According to CEJST, all census tracts that comprise these communities are considered disadvantaged today. **Eufaula** is located in Barbour County and encompasses 59.5 square miles with a population of 12,882. Eufaula is located along the Walter F George Reservoir, which is a part of the Chattahoochee River and forms the Georgia/Alabama border. **Ozark** is located in Dale County and is only 23 miles northwest of Dothan, the largest City in the Wiregrass Region. Ozark covers 34 square miles, has a population of 14,368, and lies along US Highway 231, which is the primary route for beach traffic from surrounding states to Northwest Florida. **Elba** is located near the center of Coffee County. Elba encompasses 15 square miles and has a population of 3,508. Elba is situated along US Highway 84, which traverses across several southern states and connects Savannah, Georgia to Abilene, Texas.

The Target Area communities are already struggling as evidenced by the prevalence of low-income households and high poverty rates. For instance, 1 in 4 of Eufaula's population is living below the poverty line and the per capita income is over 65% less than the national average. Substandard housing averages 20% more in the Target areas than the rest of the state.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, all of the target cities have lost population over the past 10 years (Ozark –

<sup>1</sup> <https://alfafarmers.org/uploads/files/counties/Peanuts.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Alabama Warn List

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20



5%; Elba – 11%; and Eufaula – 2%).<sup>4</sup> By tackling our brownfield sites, we can address their **impacts**. The identified brownfield site reuses will aid in tackling our disadvantaged communities' three biggest issues: low income, high poverty, and lack of jobs.

## ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s):

According to EPA's Enforcement Compliance History Online Database (ECHO), in the three Target Areas, there are 64 inactive sites (35 in Eufaula, 17 in Ozark, and 12 in Elba), all of which are located in areas with EJ Indexes above the 80<sup>th</sup> Percentile (US) for various categories like sensitive populations, people of color, low income, unemployment, and low life expectancy.<sup>5</sup> A preliminary windshield inventory was conducted in the target communities, where at least 64 potential brownfield sites, or approximately 120 acres, were identified from the list of inactive sites and include former gas stations; former automotive repair shops, former drycleaners, closed retail businesses in old buildings; industrial plants, and former maintenance yards. The following are the top three priority sites (*each with planned reuses as described in Section, 1.b.i.*) that have environmental concerns associated with their historical uses.

**City of Eufaula – Former Lumber Mill (~9.8 acres)**, is located at 216 South Livingston Avenue at the end of Merrill Alley. The property previously had 10 different buildings on site, but they have since been demolished. The site is bordered to the east and west by low-income housing along with a railroad that runs along the west property boundary. Environmental concerns include 1) arsenic associated with herbicide spraying along the railroad tracks; and 2) oils, solvents, creosote, and pentachlorophenol associated with historical use of the site as a lumber mill. **This site is a priority due to its proximity and potential impact to neighboring low-income housing; environmental injustice to the surrounding population comprised primarily of People of Color, and the City of Eufaula's desire to purchase the property to use for natural disaster emergency supply storage and staging.** EPA's EJScreen indicates 93% of the community within a 0.5-mile radius are People of Color and 91% are low-income populations indicating this site as an environmental justice opportunity.

**City of Ozark – Former Hardy Gas Station (~1.0 acre)** is located at 2742 US Highway 231, which is the main thoroughfare through Ozark, just north of Claybank Avenue. The property is bordered by small, local businesses. This highly visible and severely blighted property was built in 1970 and has been closed for years. Its structures have rapidly deteriorated, impacting the potential of new businesses moving in nearby. EPA's EJScreen data indicates nearly a third of the population living within a 0.5-mile radius is low-income, and in that same radius there is a concentration of a sensitive population of elderly people nearly a third higher than the national average. Contaminants of concern are petroleum constituents from gasoline and diesel and asbestos fibers. There does not appear to be any evidence of previous environmental assessments performed at the site. **This site is a priority based on potential vapor migration and the potential for asbestos fibers to become airborne and could contaminate an apartment complex less than 200 feet from the gas station.**

**City of Elba – Elba Ford Company (~9.5 acres)** is located at 1681 Caroline Street at the intersection of Hickman Avenue. It is located within 200 feet of numerous low-income apartments, residential trailers, and other housing. Much of the site has become overgrown with vegetation, and there is one dilapidated 8,000 sq. ft. industrial manufacturing building near the north end of the property. EJScreen indicates the community within a 0.25-mile radius of the site is comprised of 51% People of Color, 51% low income, and higher than average sensitive elderly populations. **The site was selected as a priority as a result of input received from community meetings, its location adjacent to low-income housing, and the City's interest in this site's redevelopment to become a medical facility, which would promote environmental justice in the community.** There does not appear to be any evidence of previous environmental assessments performed at the site. Contaminants of concern are primarily solvents, VOCs, and heavy metals from tractor repair.

## iii. Identifying Additional Sites:

A preliminary inventory was performed along the main thoroughfares of all three Target Areas and indicated there are at least 64 potential brownfield sites. Because this was not a complete and comprehensive inventory of all the sites within the three Target Areas, our **plan** is that the inventory will be updated to be more comprehensive to include any additional sites that were not previously included. A database search will also be acquired for each of the Target areas for the purpose of identifying additional sites once the grant is awarded. The preliminary list will be provided to the Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) to review and add sites that are not on the list. This BAC will be made up of a diverse group that will include realtors, chamber of commerce representatives, and local economic development agencies. With the BAC's input, **we will develop a scoring criteria for the prioritization of additional sites that will include factors such as risk to human health and the environment, present or past redevelopment interest, relevance to strategic or comprehensive development plans, and potential benefit to the community.** Since all census tracts in the Target Areas are disadvantaged, special consideration will be given to sites that promote the largest benefits to environmental justice (proximity to sensitive populations, etc.), or redevelopment that promotes climate change resiliency or renewable energy projects.

<sup>4</sup> US Census Data

<sup>5</sup> [Facility Search Results | ECHO | US EPA](#); [Facility Search Results | ECHO | US EPA](#); [Facility Search Results | ECHO | US EPA](#)



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

Redevelopment Plans for the three priority sites align with the goals and strategies listed in the SEARP&DC’s 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Redevelopment goals for each priority site aligns with each City’s own Comprehensive Plan or Redevelopment Plan. Our overall strategy is to assist in strengthening economic growth that supports markets that are already showing success for each region. This includes tourism for Lake Eufaula, Aerospace manufacturing for Ozark, and agriculture for Elba. Our goals, as stated in SEARP&DC’s CEDS are: **Goal 1** - Provide adequate infrastructure throughout the Region that will improve the quality of life for citizens and support the expansion needs of existing and development of new industries that will provide employment opportunities and increase tax revenues; **Goal 2** - Promote a balanced regional economy with a broad business, industry, and employment mix capable of supporting quality employment opportunities, including high-wage, high-skill jobs; **Goal 3** - Continue to coordinate secondary, technical training, and community college curriculums with the needs of business and industry; **Goal 4** - Enhance public and private partnerships in determining and executing economic development policies and projects; and **Goal 5** - Protect and promote the diversification of the Region’s agricultural economy. In addition to advancing SEARP&DC’s vision, the revitalization strategies as outlined in the CEDS will promote these goals by “identifying local, state, and federal funding sources available for business expansion/retention programs for the Region”.

**City of Eufaula – Former Lumber Mill** will be used as a City-owned Emergency Staging and Storage Facility. The City intends to purchase the property to use the site as a storage area and a staging area for emergencies, including natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes to help climate resiliency. The site is located along a railroad and could easily be developed for industrial uses, however, redevelopment of this site for that purpose would not promote environmental justice. The site is surrounded by neighborhoods, and the City purchasing the property for its own use would serve to prevent any other businesses from developing the site for industrial use so close to low-income and primarily minority housing developments. The redevelopment of the site as a City-owned facility would promote **Goal 1** to provide adequate infrastructure throughout the Region that will improve the quality of life for citizens. **Goal 5** will be promoted by relying on brownfields redevelopment to protect the agricultural properties from becoming developed.

**City of Ozark – Former Hardy Gas Station** will be redeveloped into a locally-owned restaurant. The site is situated between two hotels within 500 feet. One of these hotels is an extended stay establishment and this reuse will provide a healthy food choice within a walkable distance. The City of Ozark plans to add an access lane in front of the property to provide greater walkability and easier access from Highway 231. This highway receives the bulk of the traffic heading towards the Florida beaches, and the City of Ozark would like to capture more of the traffic of vacationers taking breaks along their route. Assessment and redevelopment of the site will serve to promote **Goal 1 and 2** by improving the quality of life for citizens and supporting the expansion needs of existing businesses and development of new industries that will provide employment opportunities and increase tax revenues. Goal 2 will be supported by a balanced regional economy with a broad business, industry, and employment mix capable of supporting quality employment opportunities.

**City of Elba – Elba Ford Tractor Company** will be redeveloped into a medical clinic, in-line with a longstanding City goal for this site. The City was hoping that the South Central Mental Health Board would pick this site for a Crisis Diversion Center, but there are too many unanswered questions concerning the environmental conditions related to this site. Therefore, the center chose a site in Brantley, 22 miles to the north. Assessment and redevelopment of the facility will serve to promote **Goal 1** by improving the quality of life for citizens and supporting the expansion needs of existing and development of new industries that will provide employment opportunities and increase tax revenues. **Goal 3** would be promoted through workforce training for the medical center by Wallace Community College.

**ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy**

SEARP&DC’s CEDS 2022-2026 incorporates plans to improve local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and resilience in Section 4 - Economic Resilience. Because the entire SEARP&DC jurisdiction is vulnerable to climate change by existing in hurricane and flood prone areas of the Gulf Coast, the plan includes strategies like “**Encourage local governments to develop a plan that identifies economic vulnerabilities as well as the resources to harness in the event of a disaster.**” Each of the proposed projects (revitalization plans) will stimulate economic and non-economic development upon completion by creating jobs, creating a larger tax base, and attracting other private investment, and will benefit entirely disadvantaged communities. This is done through writing and administering planning grants for our local governments utilizing funds from ADECA, USDA, EDA, etc. Each of these sites can serve as a catalyst to spark even more redevelopment in the surrounding sites due to their prominent location. Outcomes by priority site are listed below.

Site	Revitalization Plan	Outcome
Former Lumber Mill	City of Eufaula Emergency Staging and Storage Area	Improve the aesthetics in a persistent poverty area. <b>Make 9.8 acres ready for reuse</b> by the City following the reduction of the threat of soil and groundwater contamination, prevention of unwanted industrialization of the property leading to environmental issues with nearby low-income residences. Improve the ability to quickly respond to emergencies and natural disaster issues in underserved areas of Eufaula. The new



		development would include energy efficient buildings, lighting, and other infrastructure. SEARP&DC will also seek options for renewable energy such as the use of solar panels at the site.
Former Hardy Gas Station	Locally-owned or Co-operative Restaurant	Create an estimated <b>15 jobs</b> for the local community, support surrounding hotels, improve tax base, provide healthy food alternatives within walkable distance, and reduce threat of vapor inhalation and/or groundwater contamination. The new development would include energy efficient buildings, lighting, and other infrastructure.
Elba Ford Tractor Company	Medical Center	Create <b>20 well-paying jobs</b> , improve tax base, reduce sickness and other health issues, improve the aesthetics, reduce the threat of groundwater contamination. The new development would include energy efficient buildings, lighting, and other infrastructure. The new medical facility could serve to reduce health concerns like lowering the percentage of population reported with poor health. (See 2.A)

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources; i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

There are several sources of funding that will be used in addition to this Community-wide Assessment (CWA) grant to help stimulate reuse projects at our priority sites. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds, which will be utilized in the Target Areas. CDBG funds will support the completion of remediation and site reuse planning.<sup>6</sup> The **Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)** offers Enterprise Zone tax incentives throughout our Region for the purchase of construction-related materials, machinery, and equipment used in development projects, which will aid in site reuse. Eufaula is investing in the tourism industry with Lake Eufaula. The City is renovating the esteemed Bluff City Inn into a newly remodeled hotel called The Former House. This redevelopment will offer an innovative interpretation of the building’s historical legacy. The renovations will be designed to house 85 guestrooms and a coffee shop. In addition, the **Delta Regional Authority (DRA)** was granted \$2,276,745 in funding for improvement in agriculture, infrastructure, and workforce training. SEARP&DC is seeking to secure this DRA funding throughout the 4-year grant period to leverage these and other brownfield grant funds. SEARP&DC also plans to leverage in-kind services such as assisting farmers with taking advantage of available Conservation Reserve Programs that conserve greenspace. We will also leverage our low-interest **Revolving Loan Fund** to incentivize new small businesses to locate within the Target Areas. Elba and Eufaula will seek grant funding for revitalization efforts through **Main Street, Alabama**, since they have both been designated as Main Street Cities.

**ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure**

All three priority sites, and nearly all of the potential brownfield sites identified are located within the existing infrastructure footprint of the Target Areas. This makes these projects particularly appealing for reuse, as the sites will make use of existing infrastructure including transportation, power, utilities, water and sewer.

**2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**a. Community Need; i. The Community’s Need for Funding**

All three Target Areas are comprised of entirely disadvantaged census tracts, have small populations, and have some of the lowest income households in the country according to the CEJST, making these communities unable to draw on other initial sources of funding to carry out these environmental assessments or remediation, and subsequent reuse.

The largest census tracts in each target area are as follows: Elba – 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, Eufaula – 93<sup>rd</sup> percentile, and Ozark – 97<sup>th</sup> percentile for low-income households. There is a growing need in the Target Area communities for community investment,

Demographic & Economic Indicators	Eufaula	Ozark	Elba	Alabama	US
Population	12,675	14,396	3,449	4,997,675	329,725,481
Minority Rate	52.0%	37.7%	39.3%	33.2%	31.8%
Per Capita Income	\$22,753	\$26,131	\$18,835	\$30,457	\$37,767
Poverty Rate	29.7%	19.7%	13.7%	15.8%	12.7%
Median Household Income	\$35,127	\$44,014	\$39,913	\$54,943	\$69,021
Children Eligible for Free Lunch	52.0%	65.0%	66.7%	49.2%	51.7%
<b>Source: US Census, ACS, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates</b>					

while there are decreasing funds from which to draw. For the past two decades, the population has continued to decline in all three Target Areas, anywhere from 5% to 16.9% (2020 US Census). This decline has contributed to a shrinking tax base and City budget shortfalls. Additionally, the Per Capita Income (PCI) is as low as **82% less than the national average**. Poverty is high in all three Target Areas, but is especially high in Eufaula, which is **almost 3 times the national average**. This table illustrates the economic distress of our Target Areas when compared both across the state and nationally.

Inflation, which is exacerbated due to crop failures, has also hit low-income populations hard in this area. Hurricane Michael caused farmers and communities to lose entire crops, and they were forced to take out loans to keep running in the face of this major loss. The natural disaster response necessary to help clear the roads and repair infrastructure has drained the local governments’ already strained funds. In addition, much of the disaster funds from Hurricane Michael went elsewhere and left insufficient funds to cover all the losses in our Region. Furthermore, our Region experienced a drought in 2019 resulting in another bad year for agriculture, an

<sup>6</sup> Pg 47 of EPA’s 2023 Federal Program Guide lists the uses applications associated with CDBG funds



economic driver this Region is dependent upon. Ozark (82<sup>nd</sup> percentile), Eufaula (93<sup>rd</sup> percentile), and Elba (94<sup>th</sup> percentile) are experiencing some of the highest agriculture loss rates: a measure of economic loss of agriculture value from natural hazards each year according to the CEJST for the target areas' largest census tracts.

## ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations; (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

The following table demonstrates the sensitive populations' health and welfare issues that are living in the Target Areas. The Whitehouse Environmental Justice Advisory Council added other indicators to this list in their Justice40 publication, such as low birthweights, rates of asthma, rates of heart disease, rates of COPD, and rates of cancers. All of these indicators are elevated in the Target Areas. Alabama is ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the country for heart disease and the rates in the Target Areas are more than 10% higher than the national average.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, minority populates in these target areas are have much higher rates of poverty than the state and the nation.

Addressing environmental issues prior to redevelopment will reduce the risk of these sensitive populations being impacted by contaminants from brownfield sites in the Target Areas. Assessing contamination in the shallow soil at the former lumber mill site in Eufaula will help reduce the risk of exposure to the very young children that live adjacent to the site. Providing a medical clinic at the former Elba Ford Tractor Company will help

Sensitive Population Indicators <sup>8</sup>	Eufaula	Ozark	Elba	AL	US
Minority Rate	52.0%	37.7%	39.3%	33.2%	31.8%
Minority Children below Poverty Rate	68.4%	64.8%	51.6%	32.3%	31.2%
Population with a Disability	18.7%	23.3%	24.6%	16.1%	12.1%
Elderly Population	21.6%	21.7%	22.0%	16.9%	16.0%
Populations with Diabetes	11.5%	12.2%	13.4%	11.5%	8.3%
Adults with Poor Health	30.9%	25.8%	29.2%	22.7%	18.6%

to provide better, more accessible medical care to the high elderly population in Elba. Access to a medical facility will also help improve birth weight statistics since mothers and babies would be monitored on a more regular basis. EJSscreen also shows nearly a quarter of the population that live within a 0.5-mile radius of the former Hardy Gas Station are elderly. Providing healthy food options to the elderly within a walkable distance will positively impact the health of this sensitive population while removing the risk of vapor inhalation to nearby homes and apartments.

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

Available health statistics shown in the table below demonstrate almost every rate of occurrence of adverse health conditions is substantially higher than the state and national averages. Exposure to many of the contaminants that

Adverse Health Conditions <sup>9</sup>	Eufaula	Ozark	Elba	Alabama	US
Asthma Prevalence	11.5%	10.7%	10.6%	9.8%	8.9%
Cancer Incidence Rate	449.2	431.0	418.6	440.7	442.3
Cancer Mortality Rate	191.2	170.2	161.3	167.3	149.4
Kidney Disease	4.40%	3.80%	4.10%	3.41%	3.1%
Lung Cancer Incidence Rate	64.2	67.3	64.6	60.1	54.0%
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	12.0%	10.2%	11.4%	8.85%	6.6%
Mortality Lung Disease	ND	61.8	ND	56.0	39.1
Low Birthweight Births	11.9	8.5%	8.7%	10.4	8.2

will most likely be found at the three priority sites due to their historical uses have been linked to the adverse health conditions shown in the table.<sup>10</sup> Arsenic is a contaminant of concern at the former lumber mill site in Eufaula and is linked to asthma, COPD, lung cancer, and kidney disease. In addition, the CEJST also has the largest census tracts in each target area at the following: Elba - 77<sup>th</sup> percentile for asthma, 91<sup>st</sup> for diabetes, and 94<sup>th</sup> for heart disease; Ozark - 89<sup>th</sup> percentile for asthma, 96<sup>th</sup> for diabetes, and 92<sup>nd</sup> for heart disease; and Eufaula - 94<sup>th</sup> for asthma, 95<sup>th</sup> for diabetes, and 93<sup>rd</sup> for heart disease. There is also evidence that creosote may have been present at the lumber mill, which is linked to lung cancer. VOCs and heavy metals that could be present at the former Elba Ford Tractor Company in Elba and the Hardy Gas Station are linked to kidney disease as well as respiratory compromise and disease. These contaminants are also linked to cancer that occurs 40% higher than the national average in Eufaula. Air toxics that are prevalent at the former lumber yard in Eufaula according to EJSscreen (99<sup>th</sup> percentile in the state and nation) are linked to low birth weight. Dilapidated structures that may have asbestos at the priority sites can exacerbate asthma and cause lung cancer. Furthermore, although Alabama does not have birth defect data at the local level, studies indicate that most birth defects are significantly associated with low birth weight.<sup>11</sup> Low birth weights are as high as 45% higher than the national average in the Target Areas.

The assessment of the target sites will address communities with higher levels of asthma, low birth weight, and cancer that may be associated with exposure to the priority sites due to their historical uses. Assessing these sites will provide the information necessary to determine if these properties need to be remediated and if they are contributing to the greater than normal incidence of disease and adverse health conditions.

## (3) Environmental Justice

<sup>7</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

<sup>8</sup> Community Health Needs Assessment 2023

<sup>9</sup> Community Health Needs Assessment 2023

<sup>10</sup> Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

<sup>11</sup> [Prevalence of birth defects among low-birth-weight infants. A population study - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)



3(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: All three of the Target Areas are disadvantaged communities according to the CEJST. This indicates that disproportionate adverse environmental impacts affect these communities. Studies have shown that **disadvantaged populations** encounter greater susceptibility to environmental hazards.<sup>12</sup> The cities targeted by this application are mostly sensitive populations with low access to community resources. The Justice40 Initiative defines “Disadvantaged Communities” by 13 factors, which include higher populations of minorities, higher rates of health disparities, low income, lack of grocery stores, poorly maintained housing, children receiving free lunch programs, high asthma rates, number and proximity of superfund sites, landfills, and toxic facilities, to name a few. The Target Areas have **30-40% higher minority rates than the national average**. All three Target Areas have higher rates of health disparities including asthma rates that are **20- 30% higher than the national average**. In some cases, the health disparities are as high as **80% higher than the national average**, such as the rate of COPD in Eufaula. Poverty rates in the Target Areas are as high as **2.5 times the national average**, while the percentage of children eligible for a free or reduced lunch is as high as **59% higher than the national average**. There is also a lack of grocery stores creating widespread food deserts **at a rate 50-70% higher than the national average** in Elba and Ozark.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, many of these target areas are close to toxic facilities. For example, Eufaula is the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile for RMP facilities in the state and 97% percentile for wastewater discharges in the state (EJScreen).

3(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: **The proposed brownfield reuses will advance environmental justice** in Eufaula by eliminating any lingering issues from soil and groundwater contamination at the former lumber mill, identifying any off-site migration of contaminants to neighboring low-income residential properties, and reducing exposure to contaminated shallow soil that may pose a risk to children living adjacent to the site. Reuse of the Hardy Gas Station as a restaurant will create fresh, healthy food access and local jobs within a walkable distance while potentially reducing exposure to contaminants in shallow soils or local use of groundwater through potential cleanup and redevelopment. Developing the former Elba Ford Tractor in Elba will promote environmental justice through the removal of blight and providing needed health care to improve the poor public health outcomes of the surrounding community. **None of these redevelopment projects are anticipated to cause displacement of existing residents or businesses.**

We will work with Wallace Community College to help train for the jobs created by brownfield redevelopment in the Target Areas, meeting Justice40 recommendations for training and workforce development. Proposed site reuses will be prioritized that fill the needs of the Target Area communities and most comprehensively address environmental injustices.

**b. Community Engagement; i. Project Involvement and ii. Project Roles**

The SEARP&DC has worked with many partners in the Target Areas, and we will continue to maintain these community partnerships to make the brownfields program successful and responsive to community need. We are a collaborative organization, and as such our partners represent a variety of interests and types of assistance. The BAC, community partners, and members of the Target Area communities will be meaningfully involved in decision-making regarding’s site selection, cleanup, and reuse of all of the brownfield sites as shown below:

Name	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement or Assistance Provided
Southeast Alabama Works	Ann Marie Carr, <a href="mailto:acarr@southeastalabamaworks.com">acarr@southeastalabamaworks.com</a>	Will encourage new businesses to consider brownfield sites to locate businesses.
Alabama Brownfields Association	Mike McCown, 205-8365650 <a href="mailto:mike.mccown@ppmco.com">mike.mccown@ppmco.com</a>	Will assist in promoting economic revitalization, site reuse, restoration, remediation, financial and regulatory incentives, legislative advocacy, and real estate resources.
Southeast Alabama Council for Economic Development	Melody Lee, <a href="mailto:melody@likemindmarketing.com">melody@likemindmarketing.com</a>	Will foster job creation and future reuse input for brownfield site by assisting local governments in fostering an environment that will support development initiatives.
Wallace Community College	Linda Young, <a href="mailto:lyoung@wallace.edu">lyoung@wallace.edu</a>	Will offers job training programs and commits to assist with job training such as nurse training for medical clinics and for other new businesses relocating to brownfield sites.
ADECA	Kenneth Boswell, <a href="mailto:kenneth.boswell@adeca.alabama.gov">kenneth.boswell@adeca.alabama.gov</a>	Will attract potential developers to consider redeveloping available brownfield sites and will direct businesses to tax or other local incentives for using brownfield sites.
Houston County Health Department	Corey Kirkland, <a href="mailto:corey.kirkland@adph.state.al.us">corey.kirkland@adph.state.al.us</a>	Will offer clinical, environmental, and home health services to the public. They pledge their support by providing health monitoring and statistics for the areas surrounding the brownfield sites.
The Wiregrass Foundation	Barbara Alford, <a href="mailto:barbara@wiregrassfoundation.org">barbara@wiregrassfoundation.org</a>	Will work with the Target Area cities to offer input as a stakeholder and potentially leverage funding.

<sup>12</sup> Sexton et al. 1993

<sup>13</sup> Community Health Needs Assessment 2023



The Cultural Arts Center (CAC)	Ann Cotton, <a href="mailto:ann@theculturalartscenter.org">ann@theculturalartscenter.org</a>	Will provide meeting space for community outreach events.
Restoration 154	Justin Maddox, <a href="mailto:Restoration154@gmail.com">Restoration154@gmail.com</a>	Will provide assistance with community outreach by advertising community meetings online.
Friends of Lake Eufaula	Dennis Fineout, [REDACTED]	Will serve on the BAC and assist with community outreach.
Retail Strategies	Lacey Bacchus, <a href="mailto:lbacchus@retailstrategies.com">lbacchus@retailstrategies.com</a>	Will provide economic and community development technical assistance such as market and economic analysis, strategic positioning for economic development, and negotiating agreements as needed.

### iii. Incorporating Community Input

The process of soliciting and incorporating input around brownfield sites from the community started in 2017. Eufaula held community meetings in support of a FY2018 brownfields grant application. Although they were unsuccessful, they received valuable input from the community regarding brownfield sites they were concerned about and redevelopment projects that they would like to see in the future. This same type of community input continues to be sought for Eufaula and outreach is underway in Ozark and Elba and will continue on a tri-annual basis for the duration of the grant. **These outreach meetings allow communities to express concerns, aid in prioritization of the sites, and give input on redevelopment plans.** SEARP&DC plans to work with our Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to assist in preparing a Community Engagement Plan (CEP). This plan will be updated throughout the project period, as needed. We are also in the process of creating a BAC made up of SEARP&DC staff, members of our target neighborhoods, and community organization partners. The BAC will keep Target Area communities informed on project progress and will solicit input on the most pressing needs of their communities.

The first community meeting will be an initial kickoff meeting that will host the EPA and Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) alongside community members. SEARP&DC will reach out to the community through the distribution of flyers in grocery stores and other prominent places, local newspaper advertisements, social media, news media, our website, and partner and Target Area city websites. Community input will be encouraged through visioning sessions to gain input on what redevelopment is most important to the community for brownfield sites. Adjacent property owners/occupants to priority brownfield sites will be personally invited to community meetings. Translation services will be provided if it is determined to be needed based on individual RSVPs for attending the meetings. Meetings will be held after business hours at the Cultural Arts Center, the public library, and at other locations in the Target Areas that are easily accessible via public transportation from any of the EJ Communities. Families are invited to make these meetings and childcare will be made available upon request. All documents associated with the project will be made available through document repository located at the public library within each target area and online. **All community meetings will have a virtual option, recordings will be made available online, and feedback can be provided in writing or via email to SEARP&DC.**

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

### a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

#### Task/Activity: Project Management (PM)

i. **Project Implementation:** Management tasks include: preparation of a work plan, preparation of quarterly, semi-annual, annual, and final closeout reports, ACRES database reporting, financial reporting, and meetings and communication with EPA. Reports will be sent electronically to both the EPA Project Officer and to the ADEM Brownfields Coordinator and will cover work status, work progress, difficulties encountered, financial expenditures, preliminary data results, anticipated activities, and any changes of key personnel. SEARP&DC will select a QEP to assist with project management tasks and to perform technical aspects of the project such as environmental assessments and remediation planning for efficiency and consistency. The QEP will report to the Grant Project Director for scheduling and reporting progress of all contracted work. SEARP&DC will establish a contract with a QEP following a qualifications-based procurement process in compliance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500. After the QEP is selected, the project team, including the QEP, EPA, and ADEM, will hold a project kick-off meeting to review the work plan and terms, and the conditions of the cooperative agreement as well as provide a brownfields 101 educational session for the community. The project team will distribute a timeline, review responsibilities and partnership roles, and explain the modes of communication that will be utilized between the community and announce the location for the document repository.

#### ii. **Anticipated Project Schedule:**

- Cooperative Agreement & Work Plan – July 2024
- Kickoff meeting – October 2024
- Quarterly reports – Jan 30, Apr 30, Jul 30, Oct 30 for each year of the 4-year grant period
- Federal Financial Reports (FFR) – October 31 annually Dec 30 for final report
- DBE Reports – October 30 annually
- Final Performance Report – end of grant
- ACRES Updates – Continuously

iv. **Task/Activity Lead(s) (5 points):** SEARP&DC Project Director with QEP Assistance

v. **Output(s):** 16 Quarterly Reports; 1 Final Report; 4 DBE Utilization Reports; 4 Federal Financial Reports; prompt ACRES updates; 3



brownfield conferences attended by 2 staff; and monthly check-in meetings.
<b>Task/Activity: Site Selection, Inventory, Community Engagement, Site Access (Sites)</b>
<p><b>i. Project Implementation:</b> <i>(a) Site Selection:</i> In Q1, the BAC will review and prioritize sites using input from community partners. Key criteria will incorporate measures of environmental justice, redevelopment plans, community need and impact, funding support, project size and scope, existing infrastructure, health conditions, and ease of completion. <i>(b) Inventory:</i> The QEP will complete Eligibility Determinations throughout the grant period for selected sites from the previously completed inventory. Activities will include reviews of environmental records, property records, and historical documentation for prior uses and concerns. It will also include surveys of property owners, employees, real estate brokers, and other people with knowledge of site operations. The brownfield inventory will include a GIS database and will be updated as sites are nominated and selected. <i>(c) Community Engagement:</i> SEARP&amp;DC, the BAC, the QEP, and community partners will work together to engage the community continuously. A CEP will be prepared and submitted to the EPA. A grant program webpage and data repository will be created. <i>(d) Site Access:</i> SEARP&amp;DC and the QEP will contact property owners to secure site access and obtain signed Access Agreements that will extend at least throughout the first two years of the grant period.</p> <p><b>iii. Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> The GIS-based site inventory will be finalized during Q1 of the grant. This GIS-based site inventory will be updated by the end of each quarter. The CIP will be submitted during the Q1 of the grant. BAC meetings will be held at least semi-annually if needed. Community meetings will also be held semi-annually.</p> <p><b>iv. Task/Activity Lead(s):</b> Emily VanScyoc with QEP Assistance</p> <p><b>v. Output(s):</b> Eligibility Determinations; Access Agreements; 1 Brownfield Inventory GIS Database; 1 Community Involvement Plan (CIP); several community outreach materials; 1 website; 16 quarterly website updates; and 12 community outreach meetings.</p>
<b>Task/Activity: Phase I &amp; II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)</b>
<p><b>i. Project Implementation:</b> The QEP will begin by preparing a Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) will include site investigation and inspection, ground penetrating radar (GPR) surveys, and report preparation. Phase I ESAs will be prepared in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiry (AAI) and ASTM E1527-21. Phase II ESAs will involve the collection of soil, groundwater, surface water, and/or soil vapor samples for analysis of COCs. Phase II ESAs can also include asbestos-containing materials (ACM) surveys and lead-based paint (LBP) surveys and associated reporting. Each Phase II ESA will require a Site-Specific QAPP (SSQAPP) and will include sampling and analysis activities, health and safety planning, and standard operating procedures for fieldwork activities. Activities will be performed concurrently to maximize economies of scale in field and contractor staff mobilization time.</p> <p><b>iii. Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> The Generic QAPP will be completed in Q 1. In general, Phase I ESAs will take 3-4 weeks to complete; Site-Specific QAPP Addendums will take 2 weeks to prepare; and Phase II ESAs will take 2 months to complete. Site profiles will be updated quarterly in the EPA ACRES database by the QEP. The three priority site Phase I ESAs will be conducted in Q2, upon approval of the Eligibility Determinations by EPA. The three priority Phase II ESAs, if eligible, will be conducted in Year 2. The remaining 17 Phase I ESAs will be conducted in Year 2, Quarters 1-4 and in Year 3, Quarters 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>iv. Task/Activity Lead(s):</b> QEP</p> <p><b>v. Output(s):</b> 1 GQAPP, 18 Phase I ESAs, 11 SSQAPPs, 11 Phase II ESAs.</p>
<b>Task/Activity: Cleanup Planning and Area-Wide Planning (Planning)</b>
<p><b>i. Project Implementation:</b> SEARP&amp;DC will rely on its selected QEP to perform cleanup planning activities that may include Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs), development of remedial action plans, and redevelopment planning. ABCAs for each site will include an analysis of three different remedial alternatives and a cost/benefit analysis for each alternative. SEARP&amp;DC estimates that four ABCAs will be developed in the second and third years of the grant period. These plans will be developed after the Phase II ESAs have been completed for a site and will only be developed for sites that have pending redevelopment interests, have the greatest likelihood of being redeveloped, and/or are subject to EPA Cleanup Grant applications. We also propose conducting a Market Study for Market Viability to help determine economically feasible options for the redevelopment of all brownfield sites in Eufaula, Ozark, and Elba.</p> <p><b>iii. Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> All ABCAs will be completed immediately following Phase II report completion. The Market Study for Market Viability of the brownfield sites will be completed by Q2 of Year 4 of the grant.</p> <p><b>iv. Task/Activity Lead(s):</b> QEP</p> <p><b>v. Output(s):</b> 4 ABCAs, 1 Market Study for Market Viability that will include all three Target areas.</p>

**3.b. Cost Estimates:**

The following table breaks down the planned allocation of grant funds for the project tasks:

**TASK 1 – Project Management**

**Cost Breakdown:** SEARP&DC will charge \$10,000 for Task 1 Personnel (200 hours X \$50 per hour). Travel: approx. \$10,900 budgeted for two personnel to attend three conferences: Conference registration at \$250/conference x 2 people x 3 conferences = \$1,500; Airfare at \$550/flight x 2 people x 3 conferences = \$3,300; Hotels at \$190/night x 3 nights x 2 people x 3 conferences = \$3,420; Per Diem at \$75/day x 6 days x 2 people x 3 conferences = \$2,700. Contractual: \$12,000 budgeted for an average professional rate of \$150/hour x 80 hours. – Total \$32,900.

**TASK 2 - Site Selection, Inventory, Community Engagement, Site Access (Sites)**

**Cost Breakdown:** Supplies estimated at \$1,100



- 500 postcards @ \$0.60 each = \$300
- Five 40" by 60" poster display boards @ \$50 each, one per public meeting = \$250
- 500 tri-fold brownfield project brochures @ \$0.70 each = \$350

Contractual - \$12,000 (average professional rate of approximately \$150/hour x 80 hours including CIP preparation, and web page creation, attending local org meetings, community outreach meetings, etc.), plus meeting preparation by SEARP&DC (200 hours x \$50 per hour) = \$10,000- Total \$23,100.

BUDGET CATEGORIES		PROJECT TASKS (\$)				Total
		Task 1. Management	Task 2. Outreach	Task 3. Assessments	Task 4. Planning	
DIRECT COSTS	Personnel	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$4,000	\$24,000
	Fringe Benefits					
	Travel	\$10,900				\$10,900
	Equipment					
	Supplies		\$1,100			\$1,100
	Contractual	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$395,000	\$45,000	\$464,000
	Construction					
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>		<b>\$32,900</b>	<b>\$23,100</b>	<b>\$395,000</b>	<b>\$49,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>						
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>\$32,900</b>	<b>\$23,100</b>	<b>\$395,000</b>	<b>\$49,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

### TASK 3 – Phase I & II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)

**Cost Breakdown:** One generic QAPP will be prepared. It is estimated that there will be 18 Phase I ESAs and 11 Phase II ESAs to delineate the contaminated sites (SSQAPP costs included in Phase II costs). The cost per site will vary due to site size and varying need for testing. As outlined in the table above, a total of \$395,000 or 79% of grant funds will be allocated for tasks/activities directly associated with Phase I and Phase II Assessments.

Subtask	Avg. Est.. Cost	Output	Est. Total
Generic QAPP	\$6,000	1	\$6,000
Phase I ESA	\$4,500	18	\$81,000
Phase II ESA	\$28,000	11	\$308,000
<b>Total Assessments</b>			<b>\$395,000</b>

### TASK 4 – Cleanup Planning and Area-Wide Planning (Planning)

**Cost Breakdown:** A total of 5 ABCAs are budgeted at an estimated cost of \$5,000 each (5 x \$5,000 = \$25,000), and one Market Study \$20,000. SEARP&DC will charge \$4,000 for Task 1 Personnel (80 hours X \$50 per hour).

#### 3.c. Plans to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

When preparing the project work plan, we will develop a detailed schedule of key project milestones such as GQAPP completion, task start and end dates, and scheduling and holding outreach events. At least monthly, we will track and evaluate progress in achieving outputs and milestones against the work plan schedule. We will set up weekly calls with the QEP, inviting ADEM and EPA as needed, to evaluate project status and act quickly to address any unanticipated changes or deviations from the SSQAPP. We will monitor the project budget concurrent with tracking the schedule, on at least a monthly basis. We will document project outputs, outcomes, and results in the quarterly progress reports to EPA and in EPA's ACRES database. Outcomes beyond the end of the grant term will also be tracked in the ACRES database. Anticipated outputs are described in Section 3.a. Anticipated outcomes and results that we will track include: square feet of Target Area prepared for reuse, increase in property values, number of jobs created, removal of hazardous materials, funding leveraged, increase in tax revenues, and environmental resources protected.

## 4. CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

### a. Programmatic Capability; i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, and iii. Description of Key Staff

SEARP&DC is comprised of 7 counties and has a large, experienced staff to draw from to provide skilled assistance to ensure the success of this project. **As a planning commission, we specialize in aiding the members of our commission in future development planning and have assisted the Target Area communities with the development of their regional plans.** We apply for and successfully manage federal grants regularly, and we have the capacity to carry out the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements to successfully manage this project. We have been working together with the leaders of each city targeted by this application and our community partners identified for this grant. SEARP&DC's Emily A. VanScyoc, Community & Economic Development (CED) Director, will act as the Project Director for this grant. Mrs. VanScyoc has 26 years of experience at the SEARP&DC, which includes experience with grant writing, grant administration, managing small-business loan programs, and economic development. Mrs. VanScyoc works on all housing and economic development-related activities for SEARP&DC. SEARP&DC's Chief Financial Officer, Lakisha Davis, has been performing accounting duties for more than 20 years, and rounds out our **key staff** involvement in the grant project.

SEARP&DC's Rachel Armstrong, CED Specialist, has been with SEARP&DC for 20 years and will serve to assist Mrs. VanScyoc and as the alternate project manager for this grant should Mrs. VanScyoc be unable to complete her service as Project Manager for the full 4-year term of the grant. Mrs. Armstrong has experience successfully preparing and managing CDBG and EDA grants. She works exclusively with administration and appropriation of state and federal funding from a variety of sources. She also serves as a liaison between city/county administrators and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. She has a Bachelor of Science in Administrative



Systems. Both Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. VanScyoc have extensive experience, qualifications, and expertise in successfully managing many federal grants and planning activities, which will result in the successful administration of this grant. This team is structured to ensure the timely and successful expenditure of funds to complete all the technical, administrative, and financial requirements of this project and grant, as we complete for our other grants.

SEARP&DC's Chief Financial Officer, Lakisha Davis, will be responsible for the financial aspect of the projects, including drawdowns from the EPA Exchange System. Ms. Davis has extensive experience in accounting dating back to 1999. Currently, Ms. Davis analyzes and presents all financial reports in an accurate and timely manner; clearly communicates monthly and annual financial statements; collates financial reporting materials; and oversees all financial, project/program, and grants accounting.

**iv. Acquiring Additional Resources**

In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33, a QEP experienced in brownfield projects has already been contracted through a competitive process to assist with **expertise and gain additional resources as needed**. SEARP&DC will link members of the community to **potential employment opportunities** by coordinating with local partners like Wallace Community College in regards to job opportunities that match their training programs with new businesses that will be locating on brownfield sites to attract local labor and promote strong labor practices. It is the desire of the SEARP&DC to move quickly on this project to ensure that all goals and milestones are met as efficiently as possible. The QEP will aid SEARP&DC in the management of this grant and will help ensure the highest rate of project success.

**b. Past Performance and Accomplishments; ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements; (1) Purpose and Accomplishments**

The SEARP&DC has never received an EPA Brownfield grant; however, we have a solid history in millions of dollars of grant administration and compliance in reporting under various federal and state programs that has equipped us to successfully manage and implement the EPA grant. The SEARP&DC also works with several state and federal agencies and receives funding totaling nearly \$2 million annually to provide planning, transportation and economic development services to communities in the Region. Listed below are grants that have been successfully awarded and administered that have similarities to brownfield grants such as quarterly reporting, procurement of professional services, follow Public Works Law in bidding and contracting, conduct public meetings:

Type & Amount	Purpose and Accomplishments
Economic Development Administration \$210,000 (30% match)	<b>Purpose</b> – Promote economic development and alleviate unemployment, underemployment, and outmigration in distressed regions. <b>Accomplishments</b> – We developed a CEDS for the Southeast Alabama Economic Development District. We provided technical assistance, grant writing, and grant administration to our member governments located throughout our 7-county region. These grants include Community Development Block Grants for infrastructure, planning and housing rehabilitation; Recreational Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund grants; Economic Development Administration Public Works grants; and USDA loans and grants. We also provided assistance to local businesses by offering three small business loan programs; Intermediary Relending Program (IRP), Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and Microloans.
Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment - Joint Land Use Study \$97,915 (10% match)	<b>Purpose</b> – Address cooperative land use planning between military installations and surrounding communities so that future community growth and development are compatible with the training and operational mission of the installation. It also seeks ways to reduce the operational impacts on adjacent, influenced land. <b>Accomplishments</b> – SEARP&DC conducted open forums that encouraged and allowed community leaders and Fort Rucker leaders to study the issues, taking into consideration both community and military viewpoints. The primary areas addressed in the JLUS program were adjacent to Fort Rucker and the outlying aviation facilities utilized in Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, and Houston counties. The result was an examination of land use conditions and development of strategies to help protect the mission of Fort Rucker and to foster additional communication and understanding between the mission of Fort Rucker and the welfare of the surrounding communities.
US Department of Transportation \$450,000	<b>Purpose</b> – Develop a long-range transportation plan for a multi-jurisdictional project. <b>Accomplishments</b> – Development of a study to determine the feasibility of widening Alabama Highway 167 and Alabama Highway 52 from two-lane undivided roadways to four-lane divided roadways. The implementation includes the purpose and need of the widening project, collection of vital data, corridor demand analysis and provide engineering work.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements**

We maintained compliance with the workplan, schedule, federal grantor terms and conditions, and achieved the expected results. All progress reports and other deliverables were submitted on time and in compliance with grantor standards. We successfully implemented the workplans and met the schedule and reporting requirements. Financial and program reporting has been completed and accepted by the grantors.



## THRESHOLD CRITERIA - FY24 - Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

### 1. Applicant Eligibility:

- a. Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) is one of twelve regional commissions in the State of Alabama as provided for in Act 1126 of the 1969 Alabama Legislature (attached documentation). This allows SEARP&DC to be an eligible entity for EPA brownfield assessment grant funds.
- b. SEARP&DC is not a 501(c)(4) organization.

### 2. Community Involvement:

The SEARP&DC has worked with many partners within the target areas, and we will continue to maintain these community partnerships in order to make this brownfields program as successful as possible for our communities. We are a collaborative organization, and our partners represent a wide variety of interests and types of assistance. The BAC, community partners, and members of the target communities will be meaningfully involved in decision-making regarding site selection, cleanup, and reuse of all of the brownfield sites as described in the table below:

Name	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement/Assistance Provided
Southeast Alabama Works	Ann Marie Carr, 334-792-5138 <a href="mailto:acarr@southeastalabamaworks.com">acarr@southeastalabamaworks.com</a>	Will encourage new businesses to consider brownfield sites to locate businesses.
Alabama Brownfields Association	Mike McCown, 205-8365650 <a href="mailto:mike.mccown@ppmco.com">mike.mccown@ppmco.com</a>	Will assist in promoting economic revitalization, site reuse, restoration, remediation, financial and regulatory incentives, legislative advocacy, and real estate resources.
Southeast Alabama Council for Economic Development	Melody Lee, 334-6183318 <a href="mailto:melody@likemindmarketing.com">melody@likemindmarketing.com</a>	Will foster job creation and future reuse input for brownfield site by assisting local governments in fostering an environment that will support development initiatives.
Wallace Community College	Linda Young, 334-983-4255 <a href="mailto:lyoung@wallace.edu">lyoung@wallace.edu</a>	Will offers job training programs and commits to assist with job training such as nurse training for medical clinics and for other new businesses relocating to brownfield sites.
ADECA	Kenneth Boswell, 334-242-5591 <a href="mailto:kenneth.boswell@adeca.alabama.gov">kenneth.boswell@adeca.alabama.gov</a>	Will attract potential developers to consider redeveloping available brownfield sites and will direct businesses to tax or other local incentives for using brownfield sites.
Houston County Health Department	Corey Kirkland, 334-792-9070 <a href="mailto:corey.kirkland@adph.state.al.us">corey.kirkland@adph.state.al.us</a>	Will offer clinical, environmental, and home health services to the public. They pledge their support by providing health monitoring and statistics for the areas surrounding the brownfields sites.
The Wiregrass Foundation	Barbara Alford, 334-699-1031 <a href="mailto:barbara@wiregrassfoundation.org">barbara@wiregrassfoundation.org</a>	Will work with the Target Area cities to offer input as a stakeholder and potentially leverage funding.
The Cultural Arts Center (CAC)	Ann Cotton, 334-699-2787 <a href="mailto:ann@theculturalartscenter.org">ann@theculturalartscenter.org</a>	Will provide meeting space for community outreach events.
Restoration 154	Justin Maddox, 334-494-2952 <a href="mailto:Restoration154@gmail.com">Restoration154@gmail.com</a>	Will provide assistance with community outreach by advertising community meetings online.
Friends of Lake Eufaula	Dennis Fineout, [REDACTED]	Will serve on the BAC and assist with community outreach.
Retail Strategies	Lacey Bacchus, 205-540-4095 <a href="mailto:lbacchus@retailstrategies.com">lbacchus@retailstrategies.com</a>	Will provide economic and community development technical assistance such as market and economic analysis, strategic positioning for economic development, and negotiating agreements as needed.

The process of soliciting and incorporating input from the community started as early as 2017. Eufaula had submitted for an EPA Community-wide Assessment and held community meetings associated with their brownfields grant application. Although they were unsuccessful, they



received valuable input from the community regarding brownfield sites they were concerned about and potential redevelopments that they would like to see in the future. This same type of community input will continue to be sought for Eufaula as well as Ozark and Elba during the duration of the project. SEARP&DC plans to hold regular community outreach meetings so that the community can express concerns, aid in any necessary reprioritization of the sites, and give input on redevelopment plans. Meetings will be held tri-annually. SEARP&DC plans to work with our Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to assist in preparing a Community Engagement Plan (CEP). This plan will be updated throughout the project period, as needed. We are also in the process of creating a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) made up of SEARP&DC staff, members of our target neighborhoods, and community partners to ensure the success of this project. We will be relying on the BAC to keep members of the target area communities informed on the progress of the project and to solicit input regarding the most pressing needs of their communities.

The first community meeting will be an initial kickoff meeting that will host the EPA and ADEM. SEARP&DC will also reach out to the community through the distribution of flyers, newspaper advertisements, social media, and news media, our website, as well as the city websites within the target areas. Community input will be encouraged through visioning sessions to gain input on what redevelopment is most important to the community for the brownfield sites. Adjacent property owners/occupants to priority brownfield sites will be personally invited to community meetings. Translation services will be provided if it is determined to be needed based on individuals attending the meetings. All documents associated with the project will be made available through document repository located at the public library within each target area.

### 3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:

The SEARP&DC does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

### 4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients:

- **Contractors:** Not Applicable. SEARP&DC has not selected a Contractor for this grant.
- **Subrecipients:** Not Applicable